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Djokovic moves into the quarterfinals

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INSIDE



Russia fires over 100 drones into Ukraine; 10 killed

KYIV
Russia fired more than 100 drones at civilian areas of Ukraine overnight, authorities said on Monday. At least 10 civilians were killed and 38 injured, including three children, in Russian attacks, officials said. » PAGE 14

173 people on Nipah contact list in Kerala

KOZHIKODE
As a Palakkad native who tested positive for Nipah is fighting for her life, the Kerala government has intensified measures to prevent the spread of the disease around her village. As many as 173 people have been included on the contact list. » PAGE 3

China slams PM's greetings to Dalai Lama on birthday

NEW DELHI
The Chinese government has protested to India over PM Narendra Modi's greetings for Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama and the presence of Ministers at the 90th birthday celebrations in Dharamshala, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. » PAGE 4

J&K witnessing rise in tourism, says Minister

SRINAGAR
Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday appreciated the recent rise in tourist footfall in Kashmir. He added that the Centre and the J&K government worked in tandem to "ensure this turnaround in tourism". » PAGE 2

SC will hear roll revision pleas on July 10

- Opposition parties, NGOs, and activists move top court challenging the legality of the exercise
- They say crores of people in the election-bound State face the prospect of disenfranchisement
- Bench told to ensure EC explain its 'ill-timed and hasty' decision to conduct the exercise in Bihar

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear urgently on July 10 a batch of petitions challenging the legality of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being conducted by the Election Commission in poll-bound Bihar.

The petitions were mentioned for early hearing before a Bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Joymalya Bagchi by a battery of lawyers, including senior advocates Kapil Sibal, A.M. Singhvi, Gopal Sankaranarayanan, and Shadan Farasat. The Bench asked the petitioners to supply the Centre, the Election Commission, the Attorney-General, and other respondents with copies of their petitions in advance.

The petitioners for whom the mentioning was made in the morning included Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Jha, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra, the non-governmental organisations Association for Democratic Reforms and People's Union for Civil Liberties, and activist Yogendra Yadav.

However, the day saw the challenge against the exercise gain further momentum, with leaders from various other Opposition parties, including K.C. Venugopal of the Congress, Supriya Sule of the Nationalist Congress Party (SP), D. Raja of the Communist Party of India, Harendra Malik of the Samajwadi Party, Arvind Sawant of the Shiv Sena (UBT), Sarfraz Ahmed of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, and Dipankar Bhattacharya of the CPI(ML) Liberation moving the top court.

Mr. Sibal informed the Bench that the need for an urgent hearing and an interim relief of stay of the June 24 notification announcing the SIR was necessary as crores of voters from marginalised sections of society had been put on a tight leash to produce documents to prove their domicile or face the prospect of disenfranchisement. The petitioners' side urged the Bench to issue notice to the EC and ensure that the poll body explain its "ill-timed and hasty" decision to conduct the exercise in Bihar.

Mr. Sibal said the last date for the submission of the enumeration forms was July 25.

'No prior consultation'

The applicant's name would not feature on the draft electoral rolls, to be published on August 1, if the forms were not submitted in time.

Mr. Jha, in his petition, argued that the decision was taken by the poll body without prior consultation with political parties and would be employed to "justify aggressive and opaque revisions of electoral rolls that disproportionately target Muslim, Dalit, and poor migrant communities".

The petitioners contended that the SIR process violated the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and Rule 21A of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. The petitioners variouslyargued that the SIR shifted the onus of being on the voters' list from the state to the citizens.

Appearing for the Association for Democratic Reforms, advocate Prashant Bhushan said the SIR process had "excluded identification documents such as Aadhaar or ration cards which further make marginalised communities and the poor more vulnerable to exclusion from voting".



Serious questions: The petitioners variously argued that the SIR shifted the onus of being on the voters' list from the state to the citizens. ANI

Immediately stop roll revision, say INDIA leaders

PATNA
Demanding a halt to the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, INDIA bloc leaders on Monday said the Election Commission was in a confused situation. The INDIA bloc coordination committee, headed by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, asked the Election Commission to stop the SIR immediately and continue it after the election. » PAGE 5

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Floating homestead



Difficult times: People use a banana raft to move from a flood-affected area at Dighal Jarani village in Hojai district, Assam, on Monday. PTI

Trump issues threat of extra 10% tariffs on BRICS nations

Agence France-Presse
RIO DE JANEIRO

U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened China, India, and some of the world's fastest-emerging economies with higher import tariffs, hitting back at BRICS's criticism of his trade policies as the 11-nation bloc concludes its two-day summit in Rio de Janeiro on Monday.

On Sunday, leaders of the bloc – which also includes U.S. allies Brazil, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia – described Mr. Trump's stop-start tariff wars as "indiscriminate", damaging, and illegal, drawing a quick rebuke from the pugilistic U.S. President. "Any Country aligning themselves with the Anti-American policies of BRICS, will be charged an ADDITIONAL 10% Tariff. There will be no exceptions to this policy," Mr. Trump wrote on social media.

BRICS members account for about half the world's population and 40% of global economic output.

Defending the bloc, which accounts for about half of the world's population, as "an important platform for cooperation between developing countries", China on Monday insisted that BRICS was not seeking confrontation with the U.S.

"China has repeatedly stated its position that trade and tariff wars have no winners and protectionism offers no way forward," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

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Web portal, apps to make Census data 'available early': RGI

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Data from the 2027 Census will be "available early" as the exercise will be conducted digitally, the Registrar-General and Census Commissioner of India (RGI) posted on X on Monday.

The country's "first digital Census" will be conducted in two phases, and "for the first time, technology will be used to collect data and send it electronically to the central server", the RGI said, adding this will "result in early availability of Census data". After the previous Census exercise concluded, it took nearly two to three years for primary data to be available.

The RGI said Census 2027 would offer the option of self-enumeration "through a dedicated web portal". All States have also been asked to appoint nodal officers for the exercise, and "residents will be able to self-enumerate in both phases", the RGI said. "Data will be collected using Mobile Apps (both Android & iOS) in English, Hindi, and regional languages. Enumerators/Supervisors will use their own mobile device for data collection," the RGI added.

The Census will have a focused publicity campaign for nationwide awareness, inclusive participation, last-mile engagement and support for field operations. "It'll emphasise on sharing accurate, authentic & timely information ensuring cohesive & effective outreach effort," the RGI said, while adding that "caste of household members will be enumerated in the ensuing Census".

According to the constitutional mandate, the first Census after 2026 can be used as the basis to redraw Lok Sabha constituencies. The next general election is due in 2029.

The first phase of Census 2027, Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO), will start from April 2026, followed by the Population Enumeration (PE) phase in February 2027.

For the 2021 Census, 31 questions were notified for the first phase, related to household particulars such as building number; Census house number; predominant material of the roof; floor of the house; name and sex of the head of the household; number of persons residing in the household; main source of drinking water; main source of lighting; access to latrine; main fuel used for cooking; access to radio, TV, laptop, computer and car; main cereal consumed; and mobile number.

On June 16, the RGI notified the process in the Gazette of India.

Updated count

The 2027 population count will be the first digital Census in India

- Mobile apps to collect data in English, Hindi, and other regional languages
- Central server to facilitate early availability of primary data
- Dedicated portal for residents to self-enumerate

Conflict in Myanmar drives 4,000 into Mizoram

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A battle between two ethnic armed groups in Myanmar has forced some 4,000 Chin people in the country to take refuge in Mizoram.

Officials in Champhai district of Mizoram said waves of Myanmar nationals began crossing a border bridge at Zokhawthar and the Tiau river since the gunfights broke out on July 3. The river demarcates a part of the 510-km border between India and Myanmar. "The refugees are taking shelter in the houses of their relatives, schools, and community halls. They are concentrated in the Zokhawthar and Vaphai villages," a district official said, declining to be quoted.

Volatile situation

"Given the volatile situation across the border, we have not asked these refugees, many of them women and children, to go back. Our villagers and members of NGOs such as the Young Mizo Association are looking after the basic needs of the refugees," the official said.

On Sunday, Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma's political adviser Lalmuanpuia Punte reportedly visited the border area to hold talks with the leaders of the two extremist groups for cessation of violence.



Displaced population: Children from Myanmar families who have taken refuge in Mizoram. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Chins of Myanmar, and the dominant Mizos of Mizoram are members of the greater Zo community, as are the Kukis, Zomis, Hmars, and Kuki-Chins (Bangladesh).

It is not unusual for these ethnic groups to have relatives on either side of the border.

According to community elders in Zokhawthar, the refugees started trickling in after observing the movement of armed men in areas close to the border less than a week ago.

The "warning shots" erupted into a fierce gunfight on Saturday.

Security officials guarding the border said the fight was between the Chin National Defence Force (CNDF) and the Chinland Defence Force-Hualngoram (CDF-H) for the control of areas deemed strategic for border trade with India.

The two groups are part of the People's Defence Force that is leading a resistance movement against Myanmar's military junta, which captured power through a coup in 2021. After two days of exchanging fire, the CNDF was learnt to have captured all eight camps of the CDF-H in the area.

INBRIEF



Naveen Patnaik discharged from hospital after surgery

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president Naveen Patnaik was on Monday discharged from a private hospital in Mumbai, where he underwent a spine surgery for cervical arthritis, a party leader said. The Leader of the Opposition in the Odisha Assembly underwent the medical procedure on June 22 at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai. "The LoP was discharged from hospital on Monday. He will stay in Mumbai for now. Doctors will suggest when he can return to Odisha," BJD leader Santrupt Mishra said. Hospital sources said that Mr. Patnaik was discharged as his health condition improved. PTI

Amarnath Yatra: over 8,600 pilgrims leave Jammu camp

Amid a multi-tier security cover, more than 8,600 pilgrims left the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu early on Monday to join the annual Amarnath pilgrimage, officials said. More than 70,000 pilgrims have paid obeisance at the holy cave shrine located at a height of 3,880 metres since the start of the 38-day yatra, which commenced from the twin tracks of Pahalgam in the Anantnag district and Baltal in the Ganderbal district on July 3. More than 3.5 lakh people have registered online for the pilgrimage so far. Thirty-four accommodation centres have been set up across Jammu. PTI

HC tells Bengal govt. to bar 'tainted' candidates from fresh recruitment

Justice Saugata Bhattacharya orders application forms of 'tainted or ineligible' candidates to be rejected, fresh selection process to be completed by Dec. 31 deadline set by Supreme Court

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday directed the West Bengal government to exclude "tainted" candidates from the fresh recruitment process being conducted by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2025.

Counsel appearing for West Bengal government and WBSSC had argued that the Supreme Court has terminated jobs of tainted candidates but it has not barred them from appearing in the examination. A Bench of Justice Saugata Bhattacharya ordered that if any "tainted or identified ineligible" candidate has already applied, the application form should be rejected.

The High Court was hearing multiple petitions challenging the 2025 recruitment guidelines issued by the WBSSC, after the Supreme Court order on April 3 scrapped the entire 2016 State Level Selection Test recruitment panel and annulled 25,753 appointments of teachers of Classes 9-11 as well as Group C and Group D staff.



The Calcutta High Court was hearing multiple petitions challenging the 2025 recruitment guidelines issued by the WBSSC. FILE PHOTO

'Tainted' refers to candidates who took help of corruption and fraud in getting the jobs while 'untainted" refers to teachers against whom no such allegations are there by the WBSSC or Central Bureau of Investigation. Since the West Bengal government and the WBSSC did not make a clear distinction on the number of tainted and untainted candidates, the Calcutta High Court in 2024 and then the Supreme Court in April 2025 cancelled the entire panel.

The High Court in its order on Monday stated that the WBSSC will have to complete the fresh selection process as per the timeline set by the Supreme Court. Fresh hiring for over 44,000 posts started in the State on May 30 and the process of filing application is going on.

The Supreme Court has directed that the fresh recruitment process be completed by December 31, 2025.

'The tainted are axed'

Senior advocate Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, referring to the April 3 of the judgment of the Supreme Court, said that the 'tainted' have been completely knocked out from the recruitment process by the apex court order.

He said that the apex court has not modified its April 3 order except allowing 'untainted' candidates to continue till end of this year. He added that the Supreme Court has allowed disabled candidates and "candidates who are not specifically tainted" to take part in the fresh selection process.



Poll mode: AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami speaking at a roadshow in Mettupalayam on Monday. M. PERIASAMY

'DMK has no *locus standi* to question AIADMK-BJP tie-up'

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

Having aligned with the BJP for the 1999 Lok Sabha and 2001 Assembly elections and shared power at the Centre (1999-2003), the DMK has no *locus standi* to criticise the AIADMK's alliance with the national party for the 2026 Assembly election, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami said on Monday, starting off his Statewide campaign from Mettupalayam in Coimbatore.

The campaign is titled 'Puratchi Tamizharin Ezhuchi Payanam-Makkalai Kaapom, Tamizhagathai Meetpom'.

Mr. Palaniswami, who began the campaign under the Z+ security protection announced by the Union government just days ago, addressed people from a retractable podium atop a customised bus painted green and featuring the photos of himself and former Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers C.N. Annadurai, M.G.Ramachandran, and Jayalalithaa.

Scores of AIADMK and BJP workers took part in Mr. Palaniswami's first-ever joint road show with BJP leaders, three months after the alliance was forged.

The Leader of the Opposition wondered how the BJP could be perceived as "ideal" by the DMK when it was in its company and castigated as "communal" when in alliance with the AIADMK. "The people cannot be cheated anymore," Mr. Palaniswami said, directing his tirade at DMK president and Chief Minister M.K.Stalin.

Dropped from official holiday list by J&K L-G, Martyrs' Day to be celebrated by ruling NC

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The ruling National Conference (NC) on Monday held a special meeting in Srinagar to review arrangements for the annual observance of the death anniversary of Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah, wife of party founder Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, on July 11, and Martyrs' Day on July 13.

Prior to August 5, 2019, when the Union government ended J&K's special status, the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir observed July 13 as 'Martyrs' Day', an official holiday, in remembrance of 22 civilians killed during an uprising against the Dogra rule in 1931. However, it was removed from the list of official holidays in December 2019 after J&K's status changed to a Union Territory (UT).



Martyrs' Day was removed from the list of official holidays in 2019 after J&K's status changed to UT, headed by the L-G.

The preparations assume significance amid growing demands from regional parties to reincorporate July 13 in the holiday calendar. The ruling NC too have been advocating for its inclusion but failed to do so because of the special powers vested in the Lieutenant-Governor in the UT.

"A review meeting was convened at the party headquarters, Nawa-e-Subha, Srinagar, to assess the ongoing arrangements for the annual observance of the death anniversary of Madar-e-Maharban Begum Akbar Jehan Abdullah on July 11 and Martyrs' Day on July 13. The meeting was chaired by the general secretary Haji Ali Muhammad Sagar," an NC spokesman said.

Mr. Sagar directed the party cadre to ensure a special prayer ceremony at the Naqsband Sahib graveyard where 22 local residents, who lost their lives in the rebellion, are buried.

Following the development, J&K Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari said, "The government should declare July 13 as a gazetted holiday in memory of the martyrs of 1931. Martyrs' Day should be observed at the State level, as it used to be."

BJP appoints former Punjab unit chief as working president

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH/BHUBANESWAR

Ashwani Sharma, the former president of Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Punjab unit, was on Monday appointed as the party's State working president. He is currently an MLA from Pathankot constituency in the Punjab Assembly.

The appointment comes into effect immediately, according to a letter issued by Arun Singh, the party's national general secretary. Sunil Jakhar, the present party president, was appointed in 2023 replacing Mr. Sharma.

Samal all set

Meanwhile, Odisha BJP president Manmohan Samal is all set to retain his post as he was the only candidate to file nomination on Monday. A unanimous choice of the State unit, he filed his papers in the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Majhi, the party's election officer Sanjay Jaiswal, several MPs and MLAs and senior party leaders.

A veteran of the Sangh Parivar, Mr. Samal rose through its ranks and had previously served as BJP's State president during the party's coalition government with the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in 2000. He was also the Revenue Minister in the first Naveen Patnaik-led government.

Mr. Samal assumed leadership of the State BJP again in March 2023 and focused on strengthening the party at the grassroots level, ensuring that booth committees across the State were active and manned by committed BJP workers. The effort paid off, with the BJP ending the BJD's 24-year unbroken rule in Odisha and forming a government on its own for the first time.

With government push, J&K witnessing a strong revival in tourism sector: Union Minister

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday appreciated the recent rise in tourist footfall in Kashmir.

Mr. Shekhawat, who is touring Kashmir, said tourism had come to a standstill in J&K after the Pahalgam terror attack in April, which left 26 civilians, most of them tourists, dead. However, tourism has "bounced back, and infused a new life to the Valley", he added.

The Union Minister said the Centre and the J&K government worked in tandem to "ensure this turnaround in tourism".

He said regular visits of Ministers and inter-Ministerial coordination meetings were helping in "the revival of tourism". "Tourism in Kashmir will once again reach its peak," Mr. Shekhawat said.



Nature's glory: Tourists relax along a river in Pahalgam, about 112 km south of Srinagar. AFP

Meanwhile, J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha targeted Pakistan for "trying to create a divide along communal lines".

Mr. Sinha, who attended *Harbah Utsav* at Mata Sidh Lakshmi Temple in Anantnag, said, "People need to identify and isolate those who, on behalf of the terrorist nation Pakistan, are trying to create a divide along communal lines. They are enemies of peace and development and we must stand united against such elements."

He urged everyone to strengthen the bond of brotherhood and values of selfless service.

Medical student's campaign brings smart school to Rajasthan's Chambal ravines

Mohammed Iqbal
JAIPUR

A unique campaign led by a young medical student to improve the living conditions in a village in Rajasthan's Chambal ravines, which was devoid of basic infrastructure to sustain life, has brought a smart school to the region. The Indian-Norwegian Community, a voluntary group from Oslo, Norway, has rendered help for the campaign.

The Rajghat village in Dholpur district is deprived of the benefits of schemes designed for panchayats because of its location in the municipal limits. The 'Save Rajghat Campaign' of Ashwani Parashar, 28, first brought electricity to the village with a population of just 350 and later drew the attention of international donors who have pitched in to support the efforts to build the infrastructure.



A toilet being constructed at the government primary school converted into a smart school at Rajghat. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Village of boatmen

The village is inhabited mostly by boatmen, who work as daily wage labourers. Interestingly, the shooting for Hindi films *Bandit Queen* and *Paan Singh Tomar*, based on the Chambal dacoits, was done near Rajghat.

An old and single-room government primary school in a dilapidated condition - the only educational institution in Rajghat - has given way to a smart school with two classrooms, an office room and a small verandah, constructed in the shape of train coaches. The installation of a smart board in the school has stopped student dropouts.

Dr. Parashar told *The Hindu* that the Indian-Norwegian Community carried out crowdfunding to support the 'Save Rajghat Campaign' through a project called *Saksham*. The school, which was on the verge of closure because of decline in admissions, is now functioning with a newly installed smart board. It has over 30 students enrolled, and new admissions are coming in the academic session which started on July 1.

Dr. Parashar said his campaign would now focus on "dignified life" for villagers, with a motorable road, clean drinking water and a fully functional hospital.

Rajasthan Cong. decides not to ally with BAP for panchayat polls

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The Opposition Congress in Rajasthan has started preparations for the local body and panchayat elections. In a coordination committee meeting held on July 5, the Congress has decided to contest the polls "on its own" and not have an alliance with the Bharat Adivasi Party (BAP) in the tribal-dominated Vagad region, unlike it did for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Founded in 2023 by Rajkumar Roat, ahead of the State Assembly election, the BAP emerged victorious on three seats in 2023 Rajasthan Assembly poll and won one seat in the by-election in 2024, taking its tally in the Assembly to four. Concerned about the inroads made by BAP in the region, the Congress is now promoting its own Other Backward Classes (OBC) leaders in its organisational activities.



Govind Singh Dotasra.

"The Congress is strengthening [its] organisation in the Vagad region. The leaders and party workers who wish to come back after leaving [the party] will need to explain why they had deserted the Congress," said AICC State incharge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa.

Meanwhile, Pradesh Congress Committee president Govind Singh Dotasra said the booth-level agents would be appointed within a week to monitor the voter list revision.

The Congress has also accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of deliberately delaying the polls.

Mr. Dotasra on Monday said that the State government had appointed the OBC Commission after 18 months in office to meet the Supreme Court-mandated condition for a survey before giving reservation in the municipal elections. "The pending OBC report will be used as an excuse to postpone the polls," he said.

The party plans to launch protests across the State over the BJP's alleged misuse of constitutional provisions.

HC junks pleas against U.P. govt.'s school pairing move

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court on Monday dismissed the pleas challenging the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to pair primary and upper primary schools with fewer than 50 students with nearby institutions.

The petitioners' advocates had argued that the State government's action violates Article 21A of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to education for children aged between six and 14 years. The State government's counsel said many schools had very few, or no students, and that the government did not "merge" the schools but "paired" them, assuring no schools were closed.

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Suresh Gopi questioned over *Pooram* 'disruption'

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Police confirmed on Monday that Crime Branch (CB) investigators had questioned Union Minister Suresh Gopi as part of a government-ordered inquiry into the alleged disruption of the Thrissur *Pooram* in 2024. However, CB officials averred that the agency preferred to keep the time or place where they questioned Mr. Gopi confidential for now, given the politically sensitive nature of the investigation.

The *Pooram* controversy took on political overtones as it dominated the campaign narrative in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha election. Mr. Gopi's opponents in the election, Communist Party of India (CPI) leader V.S. Sunilkumar and Congress candidate K. Muraleedharan, accused the State police of allowing the BJP candidate to gain political mileage by emerging as a champion of Pooram lovers.

The alleged disarray in the conduct of the festival prompted Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to order a three-tier investigation last year. Subsequently, the CB formed a special investigation team (SIT) to investigate the cognisable offences detailed in the preliminary police inquiry report about the festival "disruption."

The SIT will likely submit its report to Additional Director-General of Police, Crime Branch, H. Venkatesh.

Nipah patient from Palakkad remains in critical condition; 173 people on contact list

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE


Veena George

As a Palakkad native who tested positive for Nipah is fighting for her life at the Government Medical College in Kozhikode, the Kerala government has intensified measures to prevent the spread of the disease around her village.

Health Minister Veena George told presspersons in Palakkad after a review meeting on Monday that the 38-year old patient was administered two doses of monoclonal antibody, used as a potential treatment for Nipah infection.

As many as 173 people have been included on the contact list, 100 on the primary list and 73 on the secondary list. Of them, 52 are in the high-risk category, while 48 are in the low-risk category.

The samples of five people who had developed symptoms tested in the district so far have turned out to be negative for Nipah, while four other samples are being tested at the Government Medical College Hospital in Manjeri. As many as 12 people have been placed under isolation.

The area within a three-kilometres radius of the patient's house has been declared a containment zone. The District Collector and the District Police Chief are leading the surveillance in this area.

As Nipah spreads mostly when the patient is in a critical condition, surveillance is focussed on people who met the patient after July 1. A person identified to have had close contact with the patient at a private clinic in Mannarkkad, is yet to be traced. The Health Department will revisit cases of death due to brain hemorrhage and similar ailments during the past month with the help of private hospitals and the Indian Medical Association.

As field surveillance has been strengthened in Palakkad, efforts have been made to ensure social and mental support to those in quarantine. Animal deaths in and around houses are also monitored.

Ms. George came down heavily on those spreading false information and making unfounded statements. "Nipah has been reported in Palakkad for the first time. The global death rate due to Nipah is 70% to 90%. Even as Kerala faced Nipah in 2018 and 2023, the death toll was very low. It was only 33% in 2023," she added.

A.P. govt. approves Amaravati Quantum Valley Declaration

The AQVD reflects the State's aspiration to transform Amaravati into a globally competitive centre for quantum science and technology

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Monday approved the Amaravati Quantum Valley Declaration (AQVD), setting the stage for it to serve as a framework for the State's efforts in advancing quantum technologies and nurturing a vibrant innovation ecosystem.

Bhaskar Katamneni, Secretary (IT, Electronics and Communications), stated in a Government Order that the government organised the Amaravati Quantum Valley Workshop on June 30 as a landmark initiative aimed at catalysing collaboration across sectors.



New vistas: Bhaskar Katamneni, Secretary (ITE&C), speaking at the workshop on 'Amaravati Quantum Valley' last month. K.V.S. GIRI

As a key outcome of the deliberations held during the event, the stakeholders brought out the AQVD as a forward-looking document that encapsulates shared commitments, long-term vision and strategic priorities for quantum research, innovation, talent development, infrastructure creation and international engagement. The AQVD reflects the aspiration to transform Amaravati into a globally competitive centre for quantum science and technology. It contains six joint commitments of the government of Andhra Pradesh and IBM, TCS and L&T, which are partnering to develop the Amaravati Quantum Valley.

Police interrogates Soubin, other *Manjummel Boys* producers

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Actor-producer Soubin Shahir, his father, Babu Shahir, and producer Shawn Antony, partners of Parava Films, a limited liability partnership firm, were interrogated by the Maradu police here on Monday in connection with the alleged denial of the principal amount and profit share to an investor in the Malayalam movie *Manjummel Boys*.

The Kerala High Court last month dismissed their petitions seeking to quash the cheating and forgery cases registered against them on April 23, 2024. The police registered the case after Siraj Valiyathara Hameed alleged that he was denied a 40% share of the profits as reportedly promised. As per producers' claim, the film had collected over ₹200 crore following its massive theatrical success.


The Bench has directed that no quarrying activity be allowed unless penalties for past violations are paid. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NGT directs TNPCB to adopt stricter norms for quarries

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal has directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to adopt stricter standards while granting or renewing Consent to Operate (CTO) for quarrying and mining units.

Delivering the judgment in a cluster of cases against quarrying and mining violations, the Bench, comprising Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana and expert member Satyagopal Korlapati, said that no quarrying activity shall be allowed to continue unless all penalties for past environmental violations are fully recovered.

In the cases addressed in the verdict, violations included non-compliance with mandated safety distances, absence of proper fencing and greenbelt development, failure to implement dust control measures, and extraction beyond approved limits. The Department of Geology and Mining has imposed penalties ranging from a few lakhs to over ₹33 crore, several of which are currently under appeal.

Highlighting the severe environmental and health risks posed by dust emissions from quarrying operations, particularly from activities such as drilling, blasting, excavation, and transportation, the bench advised TNPCB to impose mandatory conditions such as water sprinkling, greenbelt development, laying of tarred roads, and enclosure of dust-generating equipment before granting CTO. The order recommended that project proponents begin greenbelt development at the application stage itself.

In its verdict, the bench made it clear the TNPCB must not grant fresh CTOs or renew existing ones unless full compliance with earlier directions and penalties is ensured. It also directed the authorities to initiate recovery proceedings wherever penalties remain unpaid.

MSC Elsa-3: Kerala seeks ₹9,531 crore as compensation for marine pollution

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala government on Monday filed an admiralty suit in the High Court against the vessel *MSC Akiteta-2,* which is owned by MSC Shipping Company, as security for a ₹9,531-crore compensation claim for marine and coastal pollution, the subsequent loss of livelihood caused to fishers, and the "remediation" measures following the sinking of the company's container vessel *MSC Elsa-3* off the Alappuzha coast on May 25.

Following this, the court ordered interim arrest of *MSC Akiteta-2,* currently berthed at the Vizhinjam port, till July 10.


A container from the ship *MSC ELSA-3* that washed ashore at Tharayilkadavu in Alappuzha on May 25. SURESH ALLEPPEY

Ecological damage

The admiralty suit was filed before the Bench of Justice M.A. Abdul Hakim by Advocate-General K. Gopalakrishna Kurup, who was assisted by government pleader Parvathy Kottol, citing the grave environmental, ecological, and economic damage due to the sinking of the vessel.

The maritime compensation has been sought under the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Act, 2017.

Among others, the vessel was carrying 643 containers, which included hazardous cargo and plastic pellets known as 'nurdles'.The subsequent oil slick and floating cargo is a serious threat to not only coastal fisheries but to public health. As of June 30, a total of 61 containers washed ashore and about 60 tonnes of plastic nurdles were collected as part of the clean-up operations by over 600 government personnel and 300 volunteers.

The fisheries market has suffered a severe crash due to the fear of contamination, while six carcasses, including those of dolphins and a whale that are suspected to have died due to exposure to microplastics and toxic substances from the vessel, were found washed ashore.

This has in turn affected the coastal economy and public confidence, said the admiralty suit, while claiming ₹8,626.12 crore for the damage due to pollution, ₹378.48 crore to restore the environment, and ₹526.51 crore for economic loss to fishers.

Sudden heart attack deaths among younger population made 'notifiable' in Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

All sudden heart attack deaths among the young (aged below 45) in Karnataka will now have to be notified to the Health Department.

The department said on Monday that sudden heart attack deaths among people below the age of 45 were made 'notifiable' on the basis of a recommendation by the expert committee that was set up to study the link between COVID-19 vaccination and sudden cardiovascular events. The committee is headed by K.S. Ravindranath, Director the State-run Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, Bengaluru.

State will start annual health screening for all government staff, the Health Minister says

The panel has not found any association between premature cardiovascular disease and a prior history of COVID-19 infection or COVID vaccination.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao said the government of Karnataka would start monitoring sudden heart attack deaths reported among those below the age of 45. "Any such deaths that occur outside a hospital will have to be mandatorily reported to the department. Following the committee's recommendations, we will now make the autopsy of all such deaths compulsory to ascertain the cause of death. Directions in this regard will be issued soon," the Minister said.

He said, "We will start screening of congenital heart defects in school children aged 15 and above. Training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), an emergency procedure that is done when someone's breathing or heartbeat has stopped, will be provided to the general public through NGOs and like-minded organisations. We will also start annual basic health screening for all government employees, including outsourced and contract staff," Mr. Rao said.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and Dy. CM visiting Delhi

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar are set to go to Delhi for official purpose. According to sources, discussion on appointments to Boards and corporations could figure in meetings.

A note from the Chief Minister's Office on Monday said that Mr. Siddaramaiah will reach Delhi on Wednesday to meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss the air show during Dasara festivities in Mysuru. Mr. Shivakumar said that he was going to Delhi on Tuesday to meet Union Jal Shakthi Minister C.R. Patil to discuss forest land issues related to the Yettinahole project.

Strikes to bring public transport in Kerala to a standstill for 2 days

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The public transport system in Kerala is set to witness major disruptions for two days. Private bus operators will go on a token strike on Tuesday and this will be followed by a nationwide general strike called by various trade unions on Wednesday.

The Joint Committee of Bus Owners decided to go on a token Statewide strike on Tuesday as the meeting held between its representatives and the Transport Commissioner failed to address the issues raised by the former. The owners warn of an indefinite strike from July 22 if the government fails to address their long-pending demands.

Key demands

The key demands raised by the bus owners include renewal of expired permits without delay, withdrawal of the directive converting limited-stop buses into ordinary services, revision of student concession rates, withdrawal of the requirement for police clearance certificates for bus workers, among others.

Revanth seeks Central funds for sports infrastructure development in Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has requested the Union government to take steps to hold the Khelo India Games 2026 edition in the State.

He wanted the Centre to explore options for holding national and international sports events other than Khelo India in the State. The Chief Minister made the request when he met Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in New Delhi on Monday.

He urged the Union Minister to sanction adequate funds to Telangana for developing sports infrastructure, training of sportspersons and other works. The Centre should consider sanction of ₹100 crore for various sports infrastructure development works such as a synthetic athletic track, multi-purpose indoor stadium, archery range in Hakimpet on the city outskirts, and a squash court in LB stadium.


Funds drive: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy calling on Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He explained to Mr. Mandaviya that his government was taking all necessary steps to improve and strengthen sports infrastructure and urged him to ensure that Telangana would host at least two events in the Olympics to be held in the country in 2036.

Mr. Revanth Reddy wanted the Union government to restore concessional travel in trains to sportsmen participating in the national level sports events.

Student abducted, assaulted by gang of youth in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru police have arrested a group of eight youth who allegedly assaulted and tortured a student after disrobing him in an isolated place, and made a video of the attack referring to the Renukaswamy murder case, in which Kannada film actor Darshan was arrested. The incident took place on June 30.

The victim, Kushal K.M., 19, was reportedly in a relationship with his classmate, a minor girl, who broke up with him and got into another relationship.

Enraged by this, Kushal allegedly started arguing with her over messages. He allegedly also sent indecent and lewd messages, forcing the girl to complain to her friend. Kushal, in his complaint, said that when he went to meet the girl he was confronted by a group of youths.

The group allegedly asked him to delete the girl's photos and videos from his mobile and started beating him. They forcibly took him in a car near a college and assaulted him.

Maharashtra House panel moves against Kamra and Andhare

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI


Kunal Kamra

The Privileges Committee of the Maharashtra Legislative Council has decided to issue a show-cause notice to stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sushama Andhare. The 11-member committee has approved the proposal with a full majority, Prasad Lad, BJP MLC and the chairperson of the committee, told *The Hindu* on Monday.

"The proposal has been accepted by everyone. It has now gone for legal opinion. Soon thereafter, the show-cause notice will be sent to both of them by the police," he said.

The grounds of the showcause notice are – insult to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and the State of Maharashtra, and the usage of expressions insulting the State Legislature. "Sushama Andhare issued comments in support of Kamra and made similar comments," Mr. Lad said.

Once the notice is issued, the respondent is asked to give a written reply within 15 days. Failure to do so leads to a second show-cause notice. In case the respondent does not respond to three notices, the committee can ask the police to arrest them, Mr. Lad said. Thereafter, their statement is recorded in front of the committee.

"The respondent can choose to apologise, or be represented by a lawyer if we give them the permission to, or put forth their side by themselves. Whatever decision the committee takes thereafter, is the final decision. Even the courts have no jurisdiction in the matter," he said.

The motion was proposed against Mr. Kamra for his stand-up comedy in March 2025, in which he sang a parody song about Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Shiv Sena workers had thereafter ransacked the comedy club where the show was performed.

India will give new form to BRICS in 2026: Modi

India prioritised issues of Global South during leadership of G-20, and will take BRICS forward in the spirit of humanity first, says PM as New Delhi prepares to take over chairmanship of forum

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI


United for a cause: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BRICS members, partners and outreach invitee countries during a group picture at the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on Monday. ANI

India will attempt to give a "new form" to BRICS next year, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his intervention at the grouping's summit in Rio De Janeiro on Monday, as the Indian side prepared to take over its leadership from current president Brazil.

"Under India's BRICS presidency, we will work to define BRICS in a new form. BRICS will mean Building Resilience and Innovation for Cooperation and Sustainability. Just as, during our G-20 chairmanship, we gave priority to the issues of the Global South in the agenda, similarly during our chairmanship of BRICS, we will take this forum forward in the spirit of people-centricity and humanity first," said Mr. Modi speaking at the session on "Environment, COP-30 and Global Health".

Mr. Modi dealt with a number of topics, including the post-pandemic recovery of the global economy, and called for global cooperation in combating common threats. "The COVID pandemic taught us that viruses do not come taking visas, and solutions, too are not chosen by looking at passports. The solution to common challenges is possible only through joint efforts," he said.

Earlier, talking at a segment of the BRICS summit, Mr. Modi shared the Indian position on Artificial Intelligence and said, "We believe that AI governance, addressing concerns and encouraging innovation should both receive equal priority." Mr. Modi also held a number of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the BRICS summit.

Among those who met Mr. Modi were President Miguel Diaz-Canel Bermudez of Cuba, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia, President Yamandu Orsi of Uruguay and President of Bolivia Luis Alberto Arce Catacora. "We talked about the need for improving and diversifying trade linkages on a priority basis. We discussed how we can collaborate in sectors such as digital technology, critical minerals, healthcare, space and more. Also conveyed my best wishes on the historic occasion of Bolivia's 200 years of Independence," Mr. Modi said.

Mr. Modi's participation in the closing day of the 17th BRICS summit will be followed by a state visit to Brazil that is scheduled to begin on Tuesday at the Alvorado Palace. During his stay in Brasilia, Mr. Modi will hold restricted and delegation-level talks and attend a lunch hosted by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

China protests PM's greetings to Dalai Lama on birthday

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI


Mao Ning

The Chinese government has protested Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday greetings for Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama and the presence of Ministers at his 90th birthday celebrations in Dharamshala, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said on Monday.

The statement was made in response to a question at the daily press briefing, asking for a response to Mr. Modi's message on X, where he had praised the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, as an "enduring symbol of love, compassion, patience and moral discipline", as part of his birthday wishes.

While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs did not confirm receiving Beijing's protest, government sources pointed out that Indian Prime Ministers have a long-standing practice of wishing the Dalai Lama on his birthday, including on occasion over telephone calls.

"India needs to be fully cognisant of the sensitivity of issues related to Xizang, see clearly the anti-China and separatist nature of the 14th Dalai Lama, honour the commitments India has made to China on issues related to Xizang, act prudently, and stop using those issues to interfere in China's internal affairs," the Chinese MFA's spokesperson Mao Ning told presspersons, using the Chinese term 'Xizang' for Tibet or the Tibet Autonomous Region, which India uses.

"China has protested to India regarding its actions," Ms. Mao added, without sharing details on how the protest was delivered.

This is the second time in the last few days that China has objected to official greetings for the Dalai Lama, whose week-long birthday celebrations were marked in Dharamshala.

Over 30 crore workers, farmers will take part in strike, say trade unions

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Members of various trade unions raise slogans during a rally in support of their proposed nation-wide strike. PTI

Thirty crore to 40 crore workers and farmers will participate in the general strike on Wednesday, claimed leaders of 10 Central trade unions here on Monday while addressing a joint press conference.

The leaders said preparations for the strike were complete and workers had supported the 17-point charter of demands of the strike.

"The economic policies are resulting in more unemployment, rising prices of essential commodities, depression in wages, cuts in social sector spending in education, health, basic civic amenities, all this leading to more inequalities and miseries for the poor, lower income group and even middle classes. The government has abandoned the welfare state status of our country and is working in the interest of foreign and Indian corporates and it is so evident from its policies being pursued vigorously," the leaders said.

In a statement, they said the trade unions had been fighting against the privatisation of public sector enterprises and public services, the policies of outsourcing, contractualisation and casualisation of workforce, against the anti-workers, pro-employer four labour codes meant to suppress and cripple the trade union movement, increase in working hours, to snatch their right to collective bargaining, right to strike, decriminalisation of violation of labour laws by employers, while criminalising the activities of trade unions.

'False claims'

"The government is making false claims on employment and provisions of social security. The existing social security schemes are being weakened and attempts to bring private players into it are pushed," they said.

They added that unions in the coal and minerals sectors, steel, banking and insurance sectors, power, petroleum and telecom industries, and the transport sector have given notice for a strike.

"We are making continued efforts forging unity and solidarity between the two major productive forces of the country, the workers and farmers," they said.

BJP president should be held accountable for NMC, PCI bribery scandal: Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


Onika Mehrotra

BJP president and Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda should be held accountable for the massive bribery scam in the National Medical Commission (NMC) and the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) that has been unearthed by the CBI recently, the Congress said on Monday.

Addressing a press conference, Congress leader Dr. Onika Mehrotra accused Dr. Jitu Lal Meena, a former member of the Medical Assessment and Rating Board, to be at the centre of the NMC scandal, wherein bribes worth crores were allegedly taken from private institutions in exchange for NMC recognition.

Dr. Meena's rise from being a doctor at a rural primary health centre in Gujarat to holding a prominent position in the NMC happened during the tenure of Narendra Modi as Gujarat Chief Minister and later as Prime Minister.

"Who will take the responsibility when a person close to Prime Minister Modi is named at the centre of this scandal? Is the Prime Minister aware of this individual's involvement?" she asked.

Dr. Mehrotra asked, "Why should the Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda not be held accountable for the multi-crore bribery scandal unfolding right under his nose within his own Ministry? How could such widespread manipulation of inspections, approvals, and biometric systems happen without tacit approval from above?"

The Congress spokesperson wondered how the inspection process was shifted to an online system without the Ministry's knowledge?

"Will PM Modi now seek immediate resignation of Nadda from the posts of Union Health Minister and BJP President?" she asked, adding that Mr. Nadda boasted of increasing the number of medical seats in the country but "now the country knows how these medical seats were being manufactured under these fake medical colleges".

HC rejects plea against ban by Turkiye-based firm Celebi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed the Turkiye-based airport services firm Celebi's challenge to the revocation of its security clearance by the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, in the "interest of national security".

"On perusal of the relevant inputs/information, it indeed transpires that there are compelling national security considerations involved, which impelled the respondents to take impugned action," the court ruled. "There are impelling geopolitical considerations, impinging upon the safety of the country, which are also involved," Justice Sachin Dutta said.

Celebi had contended that the move was in violation of the procedure under the Aircraft (Security) Rules.

'Don't violate Supreme Court judgment on Chakma-Hajong issue'

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A rights activist and member of the core group of the National Human Rights Commission has warned officials in Arunachal Pradesh against violating the Supreme Court's 1996 judgment, seeking the protection of the rights of all Chakma and Hajong people living in the State since the 1960s.

Senior officials and District Magistrates in Arunachal Pradesh could face contempt of court if they held a meeting with representatives of the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) on the contentious Chakma-Hajong issue, Suhas Chakma, also director of the Delhi-based Rights and Risks Analysis Group, said.

In a notification on July 3, the State's Home Department called for a meeting with the AAPSU on Tuesday with a three-point agenda – deportation of illegal immigrants, review and rectification of the voter list/electoral roll, and land records and encroachment by Chakma-Hajong settlers.

The court had directed the State government to protect the life and personal liberty of each Chakma and Hajong person from organised groups, Mr. Chakma said. It also said that quit notices issued by any group, "which tantamount to threats to the life and liberty" of the communities concerned, "should be dealt with in accordance with the law".

For indigenous defence push, Rajnath Singh stresses swift decision-making

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI


Rajnath Singh with Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Army chief Gen. Upendra Dwivedi, Navy chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh in New Delhi. PTI

The valour displayed during Operation Sindoor and the demonstration of domestic equipment during the operation have further increased the global demand for India's defence equipment, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in Delhi on Monday.

He was addressing the Controllers' Conference of the Defence Accounts Department (DAD), where he emphasised the department's critical role in strengthening the operational readiness and financial agility of the armed forces.

"Our effort is to ensure that decisions are taken swiftly so that we can begin manufacturing larger engines right here in India and that this journey begins with the hands of Indians," he added, reaffirming the government's commitment to building advanced indigenous defence manufacturing capabilities.

"The world is looking at our defence sector with new respect. A single delay or error in financial processes can directly affect operational preparedness," he said.

"Most of the equipment we once imported is now being made in India. Our reforms are succeeding because of the clarity of vision and commitment at the highest level," he added.

Addressing the larger geopolitical context, Mr. Singh mentioned the rising global military expenditure, reaching $2.7 trillion in 2024 as per Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and stated that this opens up tremendous opportunities for India's indigenous defence industries.

"Until recently, defence budgets were not seen as part of the national economy. Today, they are growth drivers," he asserted.

Mr. Singh mentioned that India, along with the rest of the world, is entering a new phase of re-armament, marked by capital-intensive investments in the defence sector. He urged the department to incorporate defence economics in their planning and assessments, including social impact analysis of R&D projects and dual-use technologies.

Anti-Sikh riots: court records statement of former Congress MP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday recorded the statement of former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar in a case of violence in Janakpuri and Vikaspuri localities during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

The Congress leader, present in the court of special judge Dig Vinay Singh, claimed innocence in the case. He said there is not an iota of evidence against him and alleged that the investigation agencies were partial against him. "I am being implicated by unsubstantiated allegations. The case is false and politically motivated," he said.

The matter will be further heard on July 29.

The case stems from two separate FIRs filed over the anti-Sikh riots in 1984, being probed by a special investigation team (SIT). The first FIR, lodged in 2015, is about the murders of Sohan Singh and his son-in-law Avtar Singh on November 1, 1984, in the Janakpuri area. In the second case, on November 2, Gurcharan Singh was allegedly set ablaze by a riotous mob in Vikaspuri. The SIT has accused Kumar in both cases.

A Delhi court in August 2023 had dropped the charges of murder and criminal conspiracy against Kumar in both cases, but charged him with offences such as rioting with deadly weapons and promoting enmity between different groups.

He is currently lodged in the Tihar jail.

Halt revision of Bihar poll rolls immediately: INDIA bloc leaders

Tejashwi says poll body is yet to respond to doubts and questions raised by the Opposition alliance; he says no clarification has been made on use of Aadhaar or ration card as key document, complains that EC advertisement has created confusion

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Demanding a halt to the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance leaders on Monday criticised the Election Commission and said the panel was in a confused situation.

Addressing a press conference, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, Congress, Vikassheel Insaan Party and the Left parties said the EC should not create doubts in the minds of common people, and it should end the complex process in order to strengthen democracy.

The INDIA bloc coordination committee headed by RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav asked the EC to stop the SIR immediately and continue it after the polls.

Mr. Yadav said Bihar Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Vinod Singh Gunjiyal had not yet responded to the doubts and questions raised by the INDIA bloc leaders on Saturday.



Raising queries: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and other INDIA bloc leaders addressing a press conference in Patna on Monday. ANI

"People are confused... no answers to the questions and every day the Election Commission is issuing new guidelines. Instead of clarifying the contradictory situation, people are being misled," Mr. Yadav said.

The RJD leader said, "No clarification is being made on Aadhaar card, MGNREGS card, ration card as all these documents have been considered valid for the inclusion of new voters in Form-6 by the EC but in the notification issued on June 24, 2025, there is no recognition of these documents and 11 other documents have been sought, which are not easy to provide by the poor and deprived sections."

Different instructions

Talking about the EC advertisement which was published in local newspapers of Bihar on Sunday, Mr. Yadav said the EC released a full-page advertisement but two different things were being said.

"The EC says some things in the advertisement but the guidelines say something else. In the advertisement, it was said the enumeration form has to be filled and submitted immediately to the booth level officers and the documents should be given later but soon after, the EC said the form has to be filled according to the order that has already been issued," Mr. Yadav said.

He said there was a lot of difference between the June 24 order and the advertisement released on Sunday, due to which voters were confused.

Bihar Congress chief Rajesh Kumar said that the decision to give the sole responsibility to the Election Registration Officers was wrong. "The right of one person to make a decision can reduce impartiality because anyone can influence them because they are a government person, so they will work under the pressure of the government," he said.

Revision of rolls in Bihar an attempt to exclude two crore voters, says Kharge

Shubhomoy Sikdar
Sandeep Phukan
RAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Attacking the Union government over the Election Commission-mandated special intensive revision (SIR) of Bihar's electoral rolls, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday called it an attempt to exclude two crore voters to secure a poll victory.

Addressing a public meeting in Raipur, Mr. Kharge called the exercise a 'fraud' even as he warned that the ruling party would regret the move.

"This [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi government is going to destroy everyone. Fraud has started in the voter list. Fraud happened in Maharashtra. Today, they are fighting elections in Bihar and there, 2 crore votes are being excluded. If you people want to win elections by excluding them, a time will come when you regret it. You will have to regret the wrong you are doing today," the Congress president said.



Mallikarjun Kharge

The assertions came on a day when the Congress along with nine other parties challenged the SIR in the Supreme Court.

'Mass-scale rigging'

Stepping up the party's attack on the EC over the issue, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal in an X post said the SIR was "blatantly unconstitutional".

"It has wreaked havoc across the villages and towns of Bihar – giving crores of voters anxiety about whether their right to vote will be stolen. This is mass scale rigging and mischief being carried out by the EC, under instructions from the ruling regime. We have faith that the Supreme Court will deliver justice," Mr. Venugopal said.

His party colleague Randeep Surjewala shared a news report in his X handle that claimed the EC had updated Bihar's electoral roll in January, the data were found to be "robust and processed in June".

"Then, suddenly, it was discarded," Mr. Surjewala said. "This isn't voter list clean-up; it's an attempt to rob the public of their voting rights."

He asserted that "the process called 'Special Intensive Revision' has neither any legal basis nor any mention in the rules".

At the Raipur rally titled, "Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan-Jai Samvidhan", Mr. Kharge asked people to remain united in the fight to protect their '*jal*, *jungle* and *zameen*' (water, forest, land).

Over 2 cr. voters have submitted forms: EC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Over 11% of enumeration forms have been uploaded on the EC website, say poll body

The Election Commission on Monday said that enumeration forms were received from 36.47% of the voters as part of the special intensive revision (SIR) in Bihar and 11.26% of the forms have been uploaded on the EC website.

The names of those who have submitted the forms will be included on the draft electoral rolls to be published on August 1.

As of Monday, 2,87,98,460 enumeration forms of the total of 7,89,69,844 (nearly 7.9 crore) electors in Bihar who are enrolled as on June 24, 2025, have been received. A total of 1,18,49,252 enumeration forms have been collected in the last 24 hours, the EC said in a statement.

The uploading of forms is also being done simultaneously with 11.26% uploaded till 6.00 p.m. on Monday. Partially filled forms are also available for download on the EC portal as well on ECINET App and filled forms can be uploaded by the elector on the ECINET App.

A senior official said 77,895 Booth-level officers (BLOs) are going house-to-house to help the electors fill out their forms and collect them. Additionally, 20,603 BLOs are being appointed for the smooth and timely completion of the process.

In SIR challenge, Supreme Court refers to 1977 judgment on Election Commission's powers

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Even as a pitched legal battle lies ahead for the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise in Bihar, the Supreme Court on Monday drew petitioners' attention to a judgment which observed that the Constitution does not "exalt" the Election Commission as a "law unto itself".

As Opposition parties joined forces in the court, claiming the SIR of electoral rolls would inflict an ugly dent on the rights of crores from the marginalised sections of Bihar society, and even disenfranchise them, Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia, heading a Division Bench, referred to the court's 1977 judgment in *M.S. Gill versus Chief Election Commissioner*, which said the "little, large Indian shall not be hijacked from the course of free and fair elections... A free and fair election based on universal adult franchise is the basic".

The judgment was discussing the ambit of the power of the EC under Article 324 of the Constitution. The Article gives the poll body the power of "superintendence, direction and control" over "all elections".

'Norms of fairness'

However, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, who authored the 1977 judgment, said an Election Commissioner was still subject to the "norms of fairness and cannot act arbitrarily".

"Article 324 does not exalt the Election Commission into a law unto itself... Unchecked power is alien to our system... It is well-established that when a high functionary like the Commissioner is vested with wide powers, the law expects him to act fairly and legally. Discretion vested in a high functionary may be reasonably trusted to be used properly, not perversely. If it is misused, certainly the court has power to strike down that act," Justice Iyer, who was part of the five-judge Constitution Bench, had emphasised in the judgment, which may come up prominently for discussion in the next hearing scheduled for July 10.



> Article 324 does not exalt the EC into a law unto itself... Unchecked power is alien to our system... If it is misused, certainly the court has power to strike down that act
>
> **SC JUDGMENT OF 1977**

The verdict was based on a reference after the EC cancelled the election to the 13-Ferozepur Lok Sabha constituency in Punjab in 1977 after mob violence broke out and ordered fresh election. Mr. Gill had challenged the decision, claiming the violence was orchestrated to thwart his probable win. The court upheld the EC's power to cancel the election and order fresh polls under Article 324 of the Constitution.

However, the court said the power of the EC under Article 324 to do whatever was necessary to conduct an election, for that matter, any election, must not end up creating a "constitutional despot". The terms "superintendence, direction and control" as well as "conduct of all elections" were the "broadest" of terms, Justice Iyer said.

These terms opened doors to "myriad maybes, too mystic to be precisely presaged". The EC could explain away certain actions by justifying them as necessary to reach the goal of free and fair election.

Rahul to join Bihar bandh against SIR, labour codes

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will visit Patna on Wednesday to join a Statewide bandh called by Opposition parties over the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the poll-bound Bihar, new labour code and deteriorating law and order situation in the State.

The announcement was made at a press conference addressed by Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav and other Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance leaders. According to Mr. Yadav, protests will be held across the State.

Assembly elections in Bihar are scheduled for October-November this year.

Modi govt. is fixated on big businesses, says Jairam

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Targeting the Centre over its handling of the economy, the Congress on Monday said the industry's share in GDP was shrinking but big businesses are gaining in strength.

In a post on X, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Centre of focusing on big businesses, saying that the growth of such business groups was not accelerating economic growth. Mr. Ramesh said that concentration of resources was one of the main causes of inflation due to rising prices.

"While tall claims continue to be made by the PM and his drum beaters on industrial growth, three facts are incontrovertible – Industry's share in GDP has been declining, just as concentration in industry has been increasing. This has raised prices for consumers and is one of the main sources of inflation," he said. "The Modi Government is fixated on big business," he said.

Maritime cooperation



Land ahoy: Japan's Coast Guard Ship *JCGS Itsukushima* arrived at the Chennai Port on Monday as part of its 'Global Ocean Voyage Training' programme. The ship, commanded by Captain Naoki Mizoguchi, was accorded a warm welcome. During its week-long port call, the crew of the visiting ship will participate in training and interactive sessions, a statement from the Indian Coast Guard said. PTI

Rahul targets govt. over 'F&O manipulation by big players'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Attacking the Narendra Modi government over the alleged "manipulation" of the futures and options (F&O) market, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the Centre of "making the rich richer and pushing ordinary investors to the brink of ruin" by remaining silent on "manipulation" of the F&O market by big players.

Mr. Gandhi's comments came days after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in an order on Friday, found the New York-based hedge fund Jane Street guilty of manipulating the Indian indices by taking bets in the cash and F&O markets simultaneously for profits.



Rahul Gandhi

In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi claimed he had predicted the loopholes in the F&O market. "I clearly stated in 2024 – the F&O market has become a playground for 'big players', and small investors' pockets are continuously being drained. Now SEBI itself is admitting that Jane Street (Group) manipulated thousands of crores. Why did SEBI remain silent for so long?" he said in a post.

Accusing the Union government led by Mr. Modi of turning a blind eye to the revelation, Mr. Gandhi asked if there were more players rigging the market.

The BJP accused Mr. Gandhi of peddling fear and misinformation about the stock market, asserting that it has created wealth for lakhs of retail investors who have participated in it through mutual funds and IPOs.

(With PTI inputs)

Those involved in killing of Gopal Khemka will be arrested soon, says Bihar DGP

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Bihar Director-General of Police (DGP) Vinay Kumar on Monday said that the people involved in the murder of businessman Gopal Khemka would be arrested soon. Khemka was shot dead from a point-blank range here on July 4.

While the Bihar police have formed a special task force and special investigation team to nab the bike-borne shooter, held multiple raids, and have detained over a dozen people, it is yet to make any breakthrough in the case.

"We have detained over one dozen people in the case and their interrogation is going on. The police are also collecting evidence, and investigation is also being carried out on technical evidence. I expect that soon we will catch the killer," Mr. Kumar told presspersons.

Meanwhile, Opposition parties have been mounting pressure on the State government, accusing Chief Minister Nitish Kumar of losing control over the law and order.

On Sunday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi lashed out at the State government over the murder of the industrialist, who was previously associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), terming Bihar India's crime capital.

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partner Chirag Paswan, who heads Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), also lashed out at the Bihar government on Monday over the deteriorating law and order situation in the State, saying that it is matter of great concern that murders take place in the State every passing day.

INBRIEF



Army chief commends Major who helped pregnant woman

Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday praised Major Bachwala Rohit for his outstanding professionalism and selfless dedication in assisting a pregnant woman in distress at the Jhansi railway station. Major Rohit, a doctor with the Army Medical Corps, performed an emergency delivery on the platform of the railway station on July 5. Major Rohit's swift and decisive action, under non-clinical and resource-constrained circumstances, is a testament to his medical proficiency, composure under pressure, and unwavering commitment to the ethos of the armed forces, the Army said in a statement.

Bear that killed three men battered to death in M.P.

Three men were killed and two were injured by a bear at a village near the Sanjay-Dubri Tiger Reserve (STR) in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh on Monday, officials said. The animal was also injured in the clash and was later killed by angry people. Rajesh Kanna, Deputy Director, STR, told *The Hindu* that the incident took place on Monday in Bastua village in the Madwas range of the Tiger Reserve after the bear attacked a buffalo. Mr. Kanna said that five villagers tried to chase the bear away to rescue the buffalo, which caused the animal to attack them. The deceased have been identified as Babbu Yadav, 80, his son Santosh Yadav, 43, and Deenbandhu Sahu, 70.

Social Justice Ministry seeks more funds for scholarship

While the Ministry selected 106 marginalised students for National Overseas Scholarship scheme, it will give provisional award letter to 40, while the rest will get it subject to 'availability of funds'

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI



Helping hand: The scholarship is given to students from marginalised communities for pursuing higher studies abroad. GETTY IMAGES

The Union Social Justice Ministry is in the process of seeking additional allocation for administering the National Overseas Scholarship (NOS) scheme for marginalised students, officials told *The Hindu*, days after the Ministry withheld provisional award letters to 66 selected candidates "subject to availability of funds" in the 2025-26 cycle.

On July 1, the Ministry declared the results for the 2025-26 cycle of the NOS, saying that 106 students had been selected for the 125 annual slots available. But it added that only the first 40 candidates will be given provisional award letters, and the rest will get the letter "subject to availability of funds".

The Ministry administers this scholarship for students from the Scheduled Castes; Denotified, Semi-Nomadic, and Nomadic Tribes; landless agricultural labourers; and traditional artisans, for pursuing their postgraduate studies in top universities abroad.

This is the first time in at least three years that the first round of results for the NOS has seen the selection committee unable to fill all 125 available slots.

Further, the applications received for the scholarship also dropped to a low of around three years to about 440. This comes even as the Budget Estimates for 2025-26 showed that the scheme received the highest allocation it has in around five years – ₹130 crore.

A senior government official said, "We are seeking more allocation to administer the scheme. The allocation this year is higher than others. But what must be considered is that the scholarship is paid throughout the period of education of the candidates. So, a part of this year's allocation must be used for this as well, that is for candidates selected in previous years who are continuing their studies. As a result, the Ministry is seeking more allocation and soon this will be worked out."

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi shared a report on this on Monday and asked the Union government to "immediately reverse the inhumane decision and send these 66 students abroad". Taking a dig at the Narendra Modi-led government, Mr. Gandhi said the government "suddenly remembers its budget" when backward and Dalit students want to study "but thousands of crores are spent without hesitation on Modiji's foreign trips, propaganda, and event extravaganza".

Notably, the fund crunch for the NOS administered by the Social Justice Ministry comes even as the government is in the middle of evaluating the scheme in time for the 16th financial cycle, which will be beginning from financial year 2026-27. "All the issues in administering the scholarship are being considered," the official said. The evaluation is part of the government's procedure to check how the scheme is performing and decide if it should be continued.

Earlier this year, the department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment had pointed out several issues with the gamut of scholarship schemes administered by the Ministry. The panel had noted that the amounts of scholarships were not enough and the slots for schemes such as NOS need to be increased.

Five of Bihar family burnt to death on witchcraft allegation

Amit Bhelari
PATNA



Relatives mourn the murder of five in the name of witchcraft in Purnea on Monday. ANI

Five members of a family, three of them women, were burnt alive in Purnia district of Bihar over allegation of practising witchcraft, the police said. The incident took place on Sunday night at Tetgama village in the Muffasil police station limits.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Purnia Deputy Inspector-General of Police Pramod Kumar Mandal said, "The child of a resident, Ramdev Mahto, fell ill and he had approached Babulal Oraon, 50, for treatment but the child did not survive. The death happened three days ago. Hence, Oraon and his family were beaten with sticks and then burnt alive. The bodies were stuffed into sacks and dumped."

Mr. Mandal further said that three persons were arrested in connection with the incident and a tractor used to dump the bodies was seized.

The murders were witnessed by Oraon's 16-year-old son, who managed to escape and inform his maternal grandparents. The deceased were identified as Oraon, Sita Devi, 48, Kato Devi, 65, Manjit Oraon, 25, and Rani Devi, 23.

The 16-year-old told the media that his mother was accused of performing witchcraft and a meeting was held under the leadership of Nakul Oraon. "About 200 people attended the meeting. My father and mother were called and the villagers decided to kill them. They were assaulted with sticks and then burnt alive. Their bodies were loaded on a tractor and dumped," the boy said.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Tejashwi Yadav said "anarchy is at its peak in Bihar" and "law and order has collapsed". He further said while "criminals are alert, the Chief Minister is unconscious".

'Blueprint for 50,000 jobs for northeast's youth ready'

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Centre has made a blueprint to prepare the youth of northeastern States for 50,000 jobs in the maritime sector over the next 10 years, Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said on Monday.

He said the Centre has set a target of generating 5,000 jobs for the eight-State region's youth annually through the Maritime Skill Development Centre in Guwahati and the upcoming Centre of Excellence in Dibrugarh worth ₹200 crore.

"We plan to train and empower 50,000 youth from the northeast with world-class maritime skills over the next decade," Mr Sonowal said at an event in Guwahati to mark 11 years of the Modi government.

ISRO chief, officials speak to astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU



Shubhanshu Shukla poses for a photo with a panoramic view of earth as background. ANI

Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla, currently aboard the International Space Station (ISS) as part of the Axiom-4 mission, had a telephone conversation with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman V. Narayanan and senior officials of the space agency.

The conversation took place on Sunday. During the call, Dr. Narayanan expressed keen interest in Group Captain Shukla's well-being and enquired about the various scientific experiments being conducted on the ISS.

The Chairman emphasised the significance of documenting all experiments and activities meticulously after Mr. Shukla's return to earth, as this will provide valuable insights and inputs for the development of Gaganyaan, India's human spaceflight programme.

The Gaganyaan programme aims to demonstrate India's capability to launch a crewed spacecraft into low earth orbit, and the experience and knowledge gained from this mission will be crucial for its success. Mr. Shukla's ISS mission has been executed under the ISRO-Axiom Spaceflight agreement.

Other participants in the discussion included Dr. Unnikrishnan Nair, Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) and Chairman of the Program Management Council for Human Space Programme, M. Mohan, Director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Padmakumar E.S., Director of ISRO Inertial Systems Unit (IISU), M. Ganesh Pillai, Scientific Secretary of ISRO, and N. Vedachalam, former Director of LPSC. These officials also interact with Mr. Shukla during the call.

They discussed various aspects of the mission. The ISRO said the astronaut expressed his heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing him this incredible opportunity to represent India on the ISS. He acknowledged the efforts of the Chairman and the team at the ISRO in ensuring his safe travel to the ISS.

Linguistic groups, actors, politicians protest over Narendra Jadhav panel

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

The Shaley Shikshan Abhyas Samiti (School Education Study Committee) held a protest on Monday at Mumbai's Azad Maidan, to oppose the Maharashtra government's decision to appoint a committee to study implementation of the three-language formula in schools.

"At least 25 organisations backed the protest, demanding resignation of the School Education Minister Dada Bhuse," Sushil Shejule, a member of the Marathi Shala Sanstha, told *The Hindu*.

Days after the Mahayuti-led government withdrew two government resolutions (GRs) introducing Hindi as the third language from grade 1 to 5 in Marathi and English medium schools, the linguistic controversy continues in the State. Regional linguistic groups, academicians, civil society members, and television artists have raised concerns over "Hindi imposition" and "suppression of Marathi".



Actors Sumeet Raghavan and Chinmayee Sumeet, along with their children, participate in the protest at Azad Maidan. SNEHAL MUTHA

The government-appointed committee, to be headed by economist and educationist Narendra Jadhav, also received much flak. The protesters questioned the need for the committee after the GRs being scrapped.

Maharashtra Congress president Harshawardhan Sapkal opposed the government move and said that the "imposition" was done to implement the "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan" policy by the BJP. MP Varsha Gaikwad and MLA Jyoti Gaikwad participated in the protest. Actor Sumeet Raghavan and Chinmayi Sumeet were present with their children.

Primary education must be in mother tongue: RSS

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Primary education should be given in mother tongue, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh said on Monday.

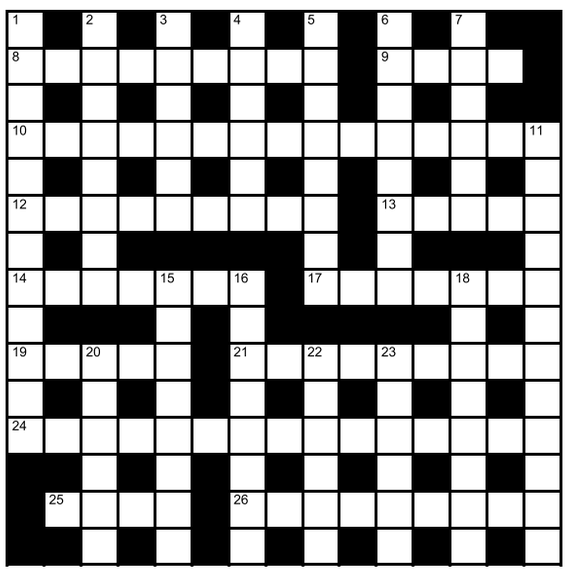
"All Indian languages are national languages. This has been the RSS's position for a long time now. In each State, people speak their own language, they insist that primary education should be in that language. I think, this is a well-established fact for some time now," Sunil Ambekar, RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh, said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14531

(set by Crescent)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Snigger on ordinary uniform being worn by female in clothing establishment (9)
9 Tree's energy absorbed by people from the East (4)
10 Mere tip of nose stuck out with photo finish (3,3,7,2)
12 Up the creek where fish stock might be going for food? (2,3,4)
13 Bird for example on edge of nest (5)
14 Subject of Queen's lavender clothing collection (7)
17 Harness team shifting every other horse (3,4)
19 Month in Thailand with some music, March? (5)
21 A fellow with fun and zeal distraught in sudden-wealth syndrome (9)
24 Completely changing trend tough on trailing index (4,2,3,6)
25 Lifeless apartment (4)
26 Bosom buddy's first act done was dear (4,1,4)

Down

1 Place India secured by say, education is lauded (12)
2 Images shared by leader of terrorist acts (8)
3 Fruit slice, chilli cheese sandwiches (6)
4 Worried old prime minister withdrawing in time (1,5)
5 Crazy joke turning head (8)
6 Heavily involved in store checking requirement (4-4)
7 Minor wind capsized circling ship (6)
11 New Deal not a bit deranged, government's outstanding (8,4)
15 Wild animal biting tame animal, it's hunger (8)
16 They stretch decency essentially to hold out topless pictures (8)
18 One not taking oath nor holding up our end for Union Jack (8)
20 Principle in arithmetic: multiply in addition? (2,4)
22 Iron collars help to alter line of light skin (6)
23 Fertiliser containing nitrogen a little less fancied (6)

SUDOKU

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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle

P	R	A	S	B	G	R		
O	R	F	E	N	O	W	O	R
N	E	V	E	R		O	S	G
A	A	N	L		C	H	E	E
S	E	N	A	K	E	D	E	Y
E		I	R	L		E	E	
A	B	O	V	E	A	L	L	P
I	R	A	C	Y		I	E	
O	A	L		S	T	U	D	
B	L	O	N	D		G	O	O
D		E		R	T		E	C
A	D	A	G	I	O		S	H
I	I	T	A	K	E		A	
A		M	R	T		S	U	M
M	E	D	U	P		P	R	I
S	O	N		R	B	E	L	
I	D	W		A	D	M	I	S
S	I	O	N	S		O	V	E
N		U	A	T		T	H	F
R								

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Undertaking good deeds

It is good to think of all beings as being well. It is better to put the thought into action by praying to God to extend his blessings upon all. The easiest medium is to chant his names and recite stotras composed by various Acharyas. The mental peace that a person derives from doing a good job or helping others cannot be compared to or equated with anything else. Bhattadri says, "I cannot do yaga or yoga, but I want to bathe in the stream of your divine stories and get immersed in the same."

Recitation of stotras is equal to performing poojas a million times. Undertaking penance (*Tapas*) is equivalent to reciting stotras a million times. Adi Sankara prays to the Goddess that if she wants to show mercy to anyone, he should be the first person. Worshipping the Sun God is believed to yield wealth and good health. Circumambulating a cow is equal to going round all the 14 worlds. Our elders have reaped significant benefits by performing small good deeds. Saint Sridhara Ayyaval says he should not happen to see the faults or blemishes of others. If at all, he had to know, it should be of his own. The grandsire Bhishma says that a person may have rebirth even after performing the Aswamedha Yaga several times, but will have no rebirth if they worship Lord Krishna.

Kesava Vajapeya Swamy said in a discourse that Hanuman helped Rama in locating Sita. When Hanuman saw her in Ashokavana, he gave her Rama's ring, and she was in tears. Sita told Hanuman that she gained confidence that Rama would come and rescue her. Hanuman was all ecstatic and told Sita that he would inform Rama of the good news.

Ahead of COP30, Bonn climate talks fumble the pressure test

The gathering set the groundwork for COP30 in Brazil. Beyond setting the agenda, the talks could be considered a litmus test to gauge how seriously countries are committed to implementing past pledges and how prepared they are to scale up ambition in the face of a shrinking climate window

Indu K. Murthy



Members of the G-77/China huddle to find a way forward on the Global Goal on Adaptation, on June 26. IISD/ENB - KIARA WORTH

As the world braces for another climate summit in November this year, the Subsidiary Bodies meeting in Bonn, Germany, brought together negotiators, scientists, policymakers, and civil society actors to tackle the complex, behind-the-scenes work that shapes the outcome of the Conference of the Parties (COP) summit.

Held annually in Bonn, this mid-year gathering sets the technical and political groundwork for the ensuing COPs, with the 30th Session of the COP (COP30) scheduled for later this year in Belém, Brazil. Beyond setting the agenda, Bonn could be considered a litmus test to gauge how seriously countries are committed to implementing past pledges and how prepared they are to scale up ambition in the face of a rapidly closing climate window.

Sadly, this year's Bonn conference was marked by delays, deep disagreements, and mounting frustration, especially over procedural priorities and climate finance. As global temperatures continue to break records, the urgency to act was palpable – as was the resistance to revisiting entrenched political differences.

Delayed start, deep divisions

The conference got off to a slow start as agenda adoption, a procedural step, was stalled by disputes over finance and trade measures. The Like-Minded Developing Countries (LMDCs, including India) demanded the inclusion of Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement, which obligates developed countries to provide climate finance and unilateral trade measures, such as carbon border taxes, on the agenda. India, along with the LMDCs, continues to see carbon border taxes as unfair, undermining principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.

Both these propositions were opposed by developed nations, particularly the European Union, which argued that finance issues were being addressed under other agenda items. Eventually, a compromise was reached to address these issues: not as standalone agenda items but through informal consultations. Disappointed with developed countries' reluctance to discuss the legal obligations to provide financial support to developing countries, the LMDCs stated their intention to revisit this contentious issue at COP30.

This prolonged deadlock delayed the start of formal negotiations by nearly two days and underscored the persistent divide. While developing nations pushed for historical responsibilities to be acknowledged and operationalised, developed countries advocated forward-looking frameworks and voluntary support mechanisms.

An elusive agreement

One of the most intensely negotiated themes at Bonn was the Global Goal on Adaptation, which aims to reduce vulnerability to climate change, enhance adaptive capacity, and strengthen resilience. There were also discussions on integrating the National Adaptation Plan progress into the goal, which the G77+China rooted for.

One of the key drawbacks of the goal thus far has been the lack of metrics. At Bonn, about 490 indicators from a list of nearly 9,000 were shortlisted, with the aim of consolidating them further to about 100. These indicators will be used to track adaptation actions under health, water, agriculture, and infrastructure, among others. India emphasised that adaptation must not be assessed through a uniform lens and backed indicators that are flexible, context-sensitive, and don't overburden national reporting.

However, differences and tensions arose over whether and how to include indicators on the means of implementation, including finance, capacity, and technology transfer. Many developing countries and regional blocs, such as the African Group and Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), stressed that without finance-related indicators, adaptation efforts will remain an unfunded mandate.

However, countries like Japan and Australia pushed back against including finance-related indicators. Additionally, the African Group and AILAC were opposed to including indicators to track domestic finance allocation and development assistance, while Australia supported their inclusion, emphasising the importance of tracking national adaptation processes.

The process to refine indicators was thus contentious. Countries including Australia warned against micromanaging expert groups tasked with technical work, while others demanded clear guidance and tight timelines. Towards the end of the conference, parties agreed on a globally applicable headline indicator set, which would be complemented by regionally or nationally tailored context-specific sub-indicators. Guidance on indicators to reflect the means of implementation wasn't agreed on, however.

'Safe space' debate

The Mitigation Work Programme (MWP) – created to scale up action to meet the 1.5° C target – also came under scrutiny. While many parties acknowledged the usefulness of dialogues under the MWP, several questioned its ability to deliver actual emissions reductions.

The debate between parties was on how a constructive and inclusive environment, a.k.a. safe space, could be provided for the MWP discussions: some advocated a push to ramp up ambitions, while others wanted to limit their scope. Developing countries emphasised that many of them have already set ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets but lack the financial and technical support to implement them.

The LMDCs, including India, and the African and Arab Groups, warned against the MWP being used to impose new commitments and urged that it remain a facilitative, non-punitive process. The Philippines called for the MWP to facilitate, promote, and enhance international cooperation.

Further, a proposal was made to develop a digital platform to share mitigation tools and experiences. While Brazil, supported by Egypt, argued that this could help connect fragmented initiatives, the Alliance of Small Island States and the EU cautioned about the duplication of existing platforms, which could take attention away from scaling up ambitions.

L&D, just transition, gender

The review of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage (L&D) made some headway, with proposals emerging on integrating L&D into NDCs and streamlining technical assistance. However, funding gaps and questions about how the Santiago Network – a UN initiative linking vulnerable developing nations with technical support to tackle climate impacts, focusing on loss and damage reduction – would operate continued to cloud consensus.

This year's Bonn conference was marked by delays, deep disagreements, and mounting frustration, especially over procedural priorities and climate finance. As global temperatures continue to break records, the urgency to act was palpable, as was the resistance to revisiting entrenched political differences

In this session, interventions by observers emphasised the need to consider non-economic L&D, scale up finance, and align L&D efforts with human rights obligations. India and other developing countries called for streamlining access to technical support and adequate and scaled-up funding for responding to climate-induced losses.

In discussions under the Just Transition Work Programme, parties emphasised that just transition must be anchored in equity, development rights, and national contexts. Social dialogue, labour rights, and meaningful stakeholder engagement, especially that of Indigenous Peoples, were highlighted as foundational to just transition. parties also flagged the economic impacts of unilateral measures, such as carbon border taxes (tariffs imposed on imported goods based on their carbon footprint) and trade barriers, and the role of critical minerals in energy transition. parties agreed to address these issues through linked agenda items, and this would remain a bone of contention at COP30.

A new dispute emerged at Bonn in connection with the development of a new Gender Action Plan. There were differences of opinion on terminology (gender diversity and intersectionality). Key areas of focus proposed for the Plan included unpaid care work, sexual and reproductive health, and addressing gender-based violence, signalling the need for a framework that responds to evolving realities. In this context, the roles of gender-disaggregated data, traditional knowledge systems, and gender-responsive budgeting were also discussed.



UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell speaks with Adonia Ayebare, SBSTA Chair, and Julia Gardiner, SBI Chair, at the Bonn climate talks. IISD/ENB - KIARA WORTH

Climate finance gridlock

Climate finance loomed large across almost every negotiation track. The issues of how much funding is available, where it is going, where it will go, and how predictable it is remained a recurring theme across discussions on adaptation, mitigation, and L&D.

The presidency-led consultation on the 'Baku to Belem' roadmap aims to operationalise a target to mobilise $1.3 trillion annually in climate finance. But deep disagreements emerged over the structure of finance – grants vs. loans, public v. private, and mitigation v. adaptation – and who should be held responsible for raising the money.

Developing countries pushed for transparent and clear burden-sharing frameworks among developed countries, with the G77 and China calling for tackling systemic barriers to finance. Small Island Developing States, represented by AOSIS, demanded earmarked and fast-disbursing funds tailored to their unique vulnerabilities. The Least Developed Countries sought a tripling of adaptation finance by 2030 compared to 2022 levels and a greater reliance on grants. Several groups, including AILAC, the Environmental Integrity Group, and the Arab Group, also stressed the importance of tracking progress; scaling non-debt instruments; and innovating revenue streams, such as taxes on financial transactions. The EU noted the need for the roadmap to be a transparent platform engaging external stakeholders and building on existing initiatives.

Taken together, these inputs reflect a clear call for an inclusive and accountable roadmap that's responsive to diverse regional needs.

Meanwhile, concerns emerged over the credibility of *ex-ante* finance reporting by developed countries on their planned financial contributions, per Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement. Several developing countries highlighted discrepancies between planned or promised contributions and actual disbursements and called for reforms to improve transparency and accountability.

On the service arrangements of the Adaptation Fund: parties led by AOSIS requested that the World Bank, currently an Interim Trustee of the Fund, be named the Permanent Trustee of the Adaptation Fund.

With COP30 in Belém just months away, the Bonn Climate Conference was both a teaser and a pressure test. On the positive side, parties made incremental progress on technical workstreams like adaptation indicators, transparency frameworks, and Article 6 (on cooperative mechanisms). But the underlying political tensions around equity and finance remain unresolved. Bonn 2025 reaffirmed that while the science is unequivocal, politics will determine the pace of action.

(Indu K. Murthy leads the Climate, Environment, and Sustainability sector at the Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy, a research-based think tank. indukmurthy@cstep.in)



Sanitation workers cleaning a road are enveloped by smog in Gurugram. PTI

Air pollution tied to preterm births, low birth weight in India: study

Geetha Srimathi

Air pollution, a hazard endured everyday by millions across India in varying degrees, has long been associated with a range of respiratory diseases, heart conditions, and a growing list of health issues. Now, a new study reveals the damaging effects of air pollution extend far beyond the lungs and heart, affecting people before they are even born.

Published in *PLoS Global Public Health*, the study was carried out by researchers from institutions in India, Thailand, Ireland, and the UK, with data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) along with satellite data. The team assessed the influence of ambient air quality on birth outcomes, specifically preterm births (PTB) and low birth weight (LBW). The dataset included children aged 0 to 5 years; 52% were female and 48% male.

The results suggest that exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5) during pregnancy significantly increases the likelihood of these adverse outcomes. PM2.5 consists of airborne particles less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter.

According to the study, mothers exposed to increased levels of PM2.5 had a 70% higher chance of delivering prematurely compared to those who weren't exposed. The odds of giving birth to a baby with low birth weight rose by 40% for mothers who faced higher air pollution levels.

Northern states at higher risk

A particularly significant finding in the study is the regional disparity: specifically, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar bear the brunt of the consequences of air pollution. These regions are known for being heavily industrialised with high vehicular emissions and the widespread use of solid fuels for cooking.

Higher PM2.5 during pregnancy increased the likelihood of both LBW and PTB by 1.37x and 1.67x, respectively, with even a slight rise in temperature linked to an increase in LBW cases

This conclusion aligns with previous reports. Another recent study in *The Lancet* reported that the average PM2.5 concentration in Delhi was 13.8-times higher than that in Kerala.

PTB was most prevalent in Himachal Pradesh (39%) and Delhi (17%), while LBW was most common in Punjab (22%) and Delhi (19%). Female children were more likely to be born with LBW (20%) compared to males (17%) – although both conditions were found to be more frequent among children of illiterate and poorer mothers.

Households that used solid fuel to cook also reported higher rates of both LBW and PTB.

Higher levels of PM2.5 during pregnancy significantly increased the likelihood of both LBW and PTB by 1.37x and 1.67x, respectively, with even a slight rise in temperature linked to an increase in LBW cases, though not PTB.

Higher temperatures have previously been linked to maternal dehydration, heat stress, and increased cardiovascular strain, all of which impair placental function and disrupt foetal growth. Conversely, excessive rainfall, especially during the monsoon, raises the risk of waterborne infections, which can further hinder foetal growth, the study suggests.

Flooding and displacement associated with heavy rains can also disrupt healthcare access, leading to delayed medical interventions and increasing the likelihood of pregnancy complications.

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Keep it simple

The ECI's conflicting signals endanger Bihar's voter registration process

The Election Commission of India's (ECI) Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral Rolls in Bihar, while touted as a smooth process with significant form submissions, is riddled with contradictions and poses a serious threat to voter enfranchisement. Despite claims of progress, with over 11% of the estimated electorate submitting forms, conflicting statements from the ECI highlight deep-seated issues. Initially, the CEO, Bihar, through advertisements, suggested a lenient approach towards electors who did not have the stipulated 11 documents. They were told that they could submit enumeration forms to booth-level officers and provide documents later, or even get verified without mandatory documents, with verification through local investigations by Electoral Registration Officers. However, the CEC clarified that earlier orders mandating document submission by July 25, 2025, stand, with a claims and objections period from August 1 to September 1 for those who fail to comply. This shift in stance and reliance on local-level investigations for verification present inherent problems. Leaving verification to the discretion of local electoral officers increases the possibility of misuse and bias. Such an ad hoc approach risks wrongful inclusions or exclusions, undermining the integrity of the electoral roll.

Instead, the ECI should adopt a more pragmatic and robust approach by accepting more universally available identity documents such as Aadhaar, ration cards, and MGNREGA job cards. The ubiquity of Aadhaar, and its mandatory requirement for numerous government services, makes it an ideal proof of identity. Similarly, ration cards and MGNREGA job cards are widely held, particularly among agrarian populations, as they are central to India's welfare initiatives. Bihar's historical challenges in birth registration, school enrolment, and broader documentation mean that a significant number of genuine electors may lack any of the 11 indicative documents. The onus is on the state and its institutions, including the ECI, to facilitate their participation. The current rigid documentary requirements place an undue burden on voters, especially the marginalised and underprivileged, who already face significant hurdles in engaging with bureaucracy, and risks widespread disenfranchisement. The current Bihar exercise seems to be treating every voter as a potential non-citizen unless proven otherwise. To uphold the principle of universal adult franchise and prevent large-scale exclusion, the ECI must urgently reconsider its SIR even as the Supreme Court is due to hear petitions challenging this exercise. The ECI should immediately broaden the acceptable forms of identification, ensuring that all eligible citizens have the opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

Batting for prevention

A One Health programme is essential to prevent zoonotic spillover

With two cases of Nipah virus detected in Kerala – including one fatality owing to the infection – the attention is rightfully, once again, on a preventable infectious disease that could leave havoc in its trail. An adolescent girl from Malappuram succumbed to the virus on July 1, and a 38-year-old woman from Palakkad is battling for life in the hospital. In the big picture, as many as 425 people who are in the contact lists of the two Nipah-infected persons in three districts in Kerala have been identified and are under surveillance. Of these, 228 are from Malappuram district, where Patient Zero was identified this time, 110 in Palakkad and 87 in Kozhikode. In Palakkad, one contact is being treated in isolation, while 12 people are currently undergoing treatment in Malappuram – five of them are in the intensive care unit. One of them tested negative for the infection, and the results for the others are awaited. Over 140 of those on the contact list are said to be health workers. While the health machinery in Kerala is engaged in tracing the original source of the infection, it is also tasked, particularly in the three districts of Malappuram, Palakkad and Kozhikode, to trace contacts, isolate them to prevent further spread, contain infection and treat all those who show symptoms. India has recorded several outbreaks of the virus since 2001, a year when 45 of the 66 people infected died in West Bengal. In 2018, it surged in Kerala, with 17 of the 19 cases with laboratory-confirmed Nipah infection dying without responding to treatment. Kerala continues to report outbreaks regularly since then.

What renders even a single case of significant concern to get the entire health-care machinery in a tizzy? Nipah is a transmissible viral infection with a high mortality rate, ranging between 40% and 75%, which implies that if the infection spreads, then, a number of people are likely to die. Future research might add an effective tool to the armamentarium to effectively treat Nipah infections without mortality, but as of now, the course of action is vested only in prevention and awareness generation. Nipah is transmitted by fruit bats which are the natural reservoirs of the virus. It is suspected that consuming contaminated fruits, bitten or licked by bats, may play a role in spreading the virus. It is also equally important to cast a watchful eye on climate change-related factors, particularly anthropogenic activity that is destroying natural habitats, and initiate a robust One Health programme that will weigh not just Nipah but also other pathogens that are capable of zoonotic spillover, transitioning from animals to humans and causing great harm.

Fostering a commitment to stop maternal deaths



Dr. K.R. Antony

is a Public Health Consultant in Kochi, Kerala, who drafted the first Safe Motherhood module for the Ministry of Health on behalf of UNICEF

In childbirth in India, why should 93 women lose their life while one lakh women have a safe delivery? For the time period 2019-21, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) estimate for India was 93, in other words, the proportion of maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births, reported under the Sample Registration System (SRS). "Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes". But the MMR in India has declined over the years – it was 103 in 2017-19, then 97 in 2018-20 and now 93 in 2019-21.

To understand the maternal mortality situation better, States have been categorised into three: "Empowered Action Group" (EAG) States that comprise Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Assam; "Southern" States which include Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu; and "Other" States that cover the remaining States/Union Territories.

In the group of "Southern" States, Kerala has the lowest MMR (20) and Karnataka the highest (63). The rest of the data is Andhra Pradesh (46) Telangana (45) and Tamil Nadu (49). In the EAG States, Assam has a very high MMR (167); the rest of the data is Jharkhand (51), and Madhya Pradesh (175). Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are in the 100-151 range. In the category of "Other" States. Maharashtra is 38 and Gujarat 53; the rest of the data is Punjab 98, Haryana 106 and West Bengal 109.

We need to have a differential approach in strategy to reduce maternal deaths in the different clusters of States. In this, addressing three issues is fundamental. There are "three delays" that lead to a mother dying, according to Deborah Maine of Columbia University – I had incorporated this in the training module on 'Safe Motherhood in India' in 1992.

Key factors that endanger a life

The first delay is in recognising impending danger and making a decision to rush and seek expert care. The husband and other family members often experience inertia, thinking that all deliveries are a natural process and so the mother-to-be can wait. Or they may not have enough money or other issues at the family level that prevent them from going to a hospital. If the educational level of family members and their financial position are weak, delaying decision making is detrimental. But empowered, neighbourhood mothers and women's self-help-groups have resulted in a remarkable change; no longer is a mother-to-be neglected by lethargic family members. Ever since Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) began networking with Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM) since 2005 (when the National Rural Health Mission (NHRM) was launched), institutional over home deliveries have become the better option. The financial incentives for the mother and ASHA were the turning point.

The Maternal Mortality Ratio for India is on the decline, but there are States that need to focus on basic and systemic issues

The second delay is in transportation. From remote rural hamlets and forest settlements or faraway islands it may take many hours, or an overnight journey for a mother-to-be to reach a health facility with a skilled birth attendant (midwife/staff nurse) or a doctor or an obstetrician. Many women die on the way. However, the 108 ambulance system and other Emergency transport mechanisms under the National Health Mission has made a difference.

Other problems

The third delay, an unpardonable one, is in initiating specialised care at the health facility. The excuses are plenty and difficult to justify – a delay in attending to a woman in the emergency room; a delay in reaching the obstetrician; a delay in getting a blood donor, in laboratory support, the operation theatre not being ready, an anaesthetist not being available is a list that can go on. The concept of the operationalisation of a 'minimum four FRUs [first referral units] per district of two million population, is crucial. The "first level referral unit" with specialists such as an obstetrician, anaesthetist, paediatrician, blood bank and operation theatre was aimed at preventing maternal death at the doorstep of a hospital.

Unfortunately, this has not worked out as expected since 1992. There are problems such as 66% vacancies of specialists in 5,491 community health centres out of which 2,856 are supposed to be FRUs in 714 districts. The lack of blood banks or blood storage units in these designated FRUs was another reason for many mothers not receiving adequate blood transfusion within two hours of the onset of massive bleeding after delivery, leading to fatalities.

The biggest killer is bleeding after delivery. This could be due to inadequate and timely contraction of an overstretched uterus with a baby of three-kilogram weight floating in amniotic fluids. When the placenta is separated after delivery, the raw opened surfaces of the uterine wall will bleed profusely unless it immediately contracts. From a total reserve of five litres of blood, more than half is lost in such a short duration, resulting in the mother going into shock and death. If there is underlying anaemia, which has not been treated with iron folic acid supplements in pregnancy, it will also result in tragedy. Thus, there is a need for immediate blood transfusion and emergency surgical care.

The next emergency is obstructed labour where the contracted bony pelvis of an already stunted young mother (who is also malnourished and has low body mass index) does not allow the normally grown baby to emerge. Prolonged labour can lead to foetal distress and a lethal rupture of the uterus. This can be avoided by a Caesarean section. Thus, there is a need for a well-equipped operation theatre and obstetrician/ surgeon and an anaesthetist on call.

The third medical cause is hypertensive disorders of pregnancy that are not recognised and treated on time. They can result in a dire emergency with convulsions and coma and very little time to medically control high blood pressure. There are some home deliveries by untrained birth attendants which lead to trauma and puerperal infection, resulting in sepsis and death. Antibiotics could have saved their lives, but the patient is admitted to hospital late. A failure of contraceptive devices, resulting in unwanted pregnancies and crude abortion techniques by quacks, also leads to sepsis and death. In EAG States, associated illnesses such as malaria, chronic urinary tract infections and tuberculosis are also high risk factors.

The focus areas for States

The prescription for averting maternal deaths is early registration and routine antenatal care and ensuring institutional delivery. Many of these systemic deficiencies will be highlighted in the mandatory reporting and audit of all maternal deaths under the NHM. While the EAG States have to focus on the implementation of basic tasks, the southern States group and probably Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Gujarat need to fine tune the quality of their emergency and basic obstetric care.

The Kerala model of a Confidential Review of Maternal deaths, initiated by Dr. V.P. Paily, has some analytical leads on how Kerala can further reduce its already low MMR of 20. It is a model other southern States can emulate. The use of uterine artery clamps on the lower segment, application of suction canula to overcome atonicity of the uterus, and a sharp lookout for and energetic management of amniotic fluid embolism, diffused intravascular coagulation, hepatic failure secondary to fatty liver cirrhosis are strategies taught to obstetricians, which even developed countries have yet to practise routinely. They even address antenatal depression and post-partum psychosis as there were a few cases of pregnant mothers ending their life.

Finally, if there is a commitment and a will to stop preventable maternal deaths there is no limit to the varieties of proactive interventions.

The writer acknowledges inputs on the Confidential Review of Maternal Deaths in Kerala from Dr. Smithy Sanel, a Spokesperson of the Kerala Federation of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

Rising seas, shifting lives and a test of democratic values



Bhoomika Choudhury

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The intensifying impacts of climate change are reshaping India's coastline resulting in an environmental phenomenon and also profound social and economic rupture. Across the eastern and western seaboards, communities that are historically dependent on agriculture, fishing, and coastal ecosystems are being displaced by rising seas, saltwater intrusion, and the cumulative effects of unregulated development. This has triggered migration, pushing displaced populations into precarious urban labour markets without legal protection or adequate state support.

In Odisha, once thriving coastal settlements such as Satabhaya have been swallowed by the sea, forcing villagers to relocate to government resettlement colonies that often fail to provide sustainable livelihoods. In Karnataka's Honnavar taluk, traditional fishing communities face dispossession as ports, tourism projects, and mangrove destruction accelerate coastal degradation. Similar patterns are unfolding in Tamil Nadu's Nagapattinam, Gujarat's Kutch region, and the flood-prone lowlands of Kerala.

Projects and environmental degradation

Industrial and infrastructural expansion along coastal zones – from port development under the Sagarmala programme to energy projects and commercial aquaculture – have compounded ecological degradation. Mangrove forests, sand dunes and wetlands that historically buffered coastal communities have been systematically cleared.

Environmental clearances for many projects have overlooked cumulative climate risks, leading to a development model that intensifies ecological and social vulnerabilities. The displaced populations are increasingly getting absorbed into the informal economy as construction workers, brick kiln labourers and domestic workers in urban centres such as Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

These migration patterns often result in systemic labour exploitation, which include debt bondage (displaced families take wage advances to survive, tying them into exploitative labour conditions); lack of legal protections (informal workers have little or no access to rights under India's labour laws, such as the Building and Other Construction Workers' (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996) and gendered exploitation (displaced women entering domestic work face heightened risks of abuse, underpayment, and trafficking).

Climate change is affecting India's coastal communities with a deep social and economic impact

Legal lacunae on climate displacement

The absence of a coherent legal framework on climate-induced migration exacerbates this crisis. While Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees the right to life and dignity, there is no specific legislation that addresses the rights of those displaced by slow-onset climate disasters. Existing frameworks such as the Disaster Management Act, 2005, the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notifications, including the diluted CRZ 2019, are limited either to disaster response or environmental conservation, without adequately factoring in the socio-economic dimensions of displacement.

The National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and State Action Plans recognise vulnerability, but lack targeted strategies for the rehabilitation of displaced populations or integration into labour markets.

The CRZ Notification, 2019, intended to streamline clearances and promote sustainable coastal management, has often been critiqued for prioritising tourism and industrial development over the rights of coastal communities. Across States, the dilution of zoning regulations has led to a surge in commercial projects in fragile coastal belts, displacing traditional fishing communities without their informed consent – a principle enshrined in national law and international environmental standards. Even India's landmark Labour Codes are silent on extending specific protections to climate migrants.

Environmental justice jurisprudence from the Supreme Court of India – in *M.C. Mehta vs Union of India* (1987) and *Indian Council for Enviro-Legal Action vs Union of India* (1996) – has recognised the intrinsic link between the environment and fundamental human rights. Yet, the translation of these principles into robust, community-centric legal frameworks on climate displacement remains lacking.

The story of displacement is also the story of resilience. Coastal communities, particularly fisherfolk unions and indigenous groups, have resisted ecologically destructive projects with remarkable tenacity. The protests against the Adani ports expansion at Ennore Creek, Tamil Nadu, the Pattuvam Mangrove Protection Movement in Kerala, and the Save Satabhaya campaign in Odisha underscore how grass-roots mobilisations have challenged mainstream development narratives.

However, environmental defenders face intimidation, surveillance and criminalisation which are antithetical to India's constitutional commitment to protect the rights to protest and association. New challenges also emerge as climate change is weaponised to justify "managed retreat" without participatory planning or safeguards for the displaced.

Towards a rights-based framework

Recognition of climate migrants within national migration and urban planning policies is essential. There is a need for a rights-based approach that guarantees decent work, housing, education and health care. Labour codes must be revised to explicitly extend protections to climate migrants, especially in sectors such as construction and domestic work where informality is rampant. Similarly, coastal zone management must be revisited to prioritise ecological sustainability and community rights over commercial interests. India's commitment to achieving Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7 – eliminating forced labour and ensuring decent work for all – is contingent upon addressing the new vulnerabilities created by climate displacement.

If climate change is the defining challenge of our era, responding to climate-induced displacement must be at the core of India's adaptation strategy. Protecting the rights, dignity, and livelihoods of those most impacted is not just an environmental necessity. It is a test of India's democratic and constitutional values.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Plight of the poor

Are we a police state? In Tamil Nadu, the brutality unleashed by the police on Ajith Kumar, who was finished off on mere suspicion of being linked to an incident of some jewels missing, defies all imagination. He was just a poor man working as a security guard in a temple. The poor are undoubtedly worse off in this so-called welfare state. The brutal custodial death evokes a deep poignancy of the rights of the poor in India. One is reminded of Bernard Shaw's quote, "The greatest evils and the worst of crimes is poverty...." One also remembers Somnath Chatterjee, a Marxist and a leading lawyer, saying "there is no respite for the poor in India". It is not enough that the Ministers console the family which has been shattered.

N.G.R. Prasad,
Chennai

Musk vs Trump or more?

Elon Musk has caused more than a ripple in American politics. Yet, one must ask whether his political move is a fight for ideals or personal vendetta. We wait to see whether it will reshape politics or fizzle out as a fleeting tempest.

R.K Jain,
Barwani, Madhya Pradesh

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The free fall of moral leadership



Ashwani Kumar

Former Law Minister; Senior Advocate, Supreme Court; and author

In an era of global conflicts and democratic decline, the question of political leadership in the democratic world has acquired a heightened significance. Intensified rivalries in several parts of the world represent a failure of leadership. The unconscionable ambivalence of world leaders in standing up for principle over expediency, and their abject surrender to hegemonic power, speaks for itself. The tragedies of Ukraine, Gaza, and the Israel-Iran conflict show the ravages of war caused by the insolence of power, untamed by humanitarian interdicts.

Justice above raw power

Despite the fragile ceasefire brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump from a position of overarching military superiority, the footprints of these hostilities will remain visible symbols of an oppressive exercise of military power that has taken thousands of innocent lives. Those responsible for the catastrophe have clearly forgotten the abiding lesson of history that people carrying a festering wound in their souls find closure only when injustice is avenged. Lasting peace in West Asia will remain hostage to an indelible sense of injustice and moral outrage.

It is, therefore, imperative to foster leadership that values justice above raw power. In the deeply distressing trans border conflicts that have driven the world perilously close to a global war, the moral and intellectual impoverishment of the principal actors has raised concerns about the failure of contemporary democracies to yield inspiring leadership, answerable to the 'injunctions of conscience'. The pretence of a functional rules-based international order helmed by the United Nations Charter stands demolished yet again, reconfirming the impotence of international law in outlawing the use of force in relations between nations. The illegal invasion of Iraq and parts of Ukraine are no more than footnotes of history.

Lessons to learn

But there are lessons to be learned. The world needs leadership, driven by a search for global consensus and subject to the discipline of international law to address the defining challenges of our times, including the settlement of territorial disputes. This is a particularly important reminder for those who claim to lead the democratic world and propound the necessity of a credible international legal order.

Democratic leadership is about walking alone in defence of principle, where necessary. It is about holding on to the truth against all odds and empowering the weak. It is about uniting people in trying times and advancing human dignity by removing disparities. Inspirational leadership is about an unremitting endeavour to create favourable conditions of social and political existence that can optimise the realisation of human potential in an environment of peace and harmony. And as shown in the tortuous process of securing a fragile truce between Israel and Iran, deceit and two-facedness annul leadership.

Leadership does not emerge out of a vacuum. As Karl Marx reminded us famously, 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please... [they do so] under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.' The French statesman Chateaubriand proclaimed that 'the leader of the nation must be the leader of the times', so that his exertions mirror the aspirations of the people and invest politics with a moral purpose larger than himself. The current global conflicts present an opportunity for democracies to look inwards for correction and to reinforce their appeal.

In defence of justice

Indian democracy, which has survived several vicissitudes and a 'thousand mutinies', has been enriched by the exertions and selflessness of several of its towering leaders. They were led by Mahatma Gandhi, who defined for us the meaning of transformative leadership. The Mahatma's promise of politics, impervious to the trappings of power and rooted instead in the moral imagination of the people yearning for freedom and dignity, enabled him to forge a sustainable non-violent struggle against injustice. He accomplished the 'will of his age', defined it for the people, and personified it.

As a proud inheritor of the Gandhian legacy of morality-driven politics and drawing strength from its civilisational ethos of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbham', India must stand out in defence of justice everywhere. It must flex its moral muscle for shaping a just world order. Its economic heft, nuclear capabilities, and regional power status should enable India to espouse international morality without compromising its strategic autonomy or without alienating key allies.

India's economic heft, nuclear capabilities, and regional power status should enable it to espouse international morality without compromising its strategic autonomy or without alienating key allies

In these defying times, we must summon our tallest leaders to collectively energise Indian democracy. They must establish the exceptionality of their leadership in the service of national goals and global peace. Our leaders must 'reinforce the tone of modesty', introduce dignity at the centre of political processes, revive the spirit of collegiality, be seen as symbols of hope in times of fracture and fear, and re-purpose their politics beyond the pursuit of raw power.

At this juncture of the nation's history, when domestic and external challenges threaten the social accord and disruptive shifts in the power pendulum are testing the societal equilibrium, we need leadership that is strong and compassionate, resolute but conciliatory, and decisive while striving for democratic consensus on critical issues.

A step away from transparency

There are several pressing concerns about the ECI's new rules

STATE OF PLAY

Krishangi Sinha
Sanjay Kumar

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has introduced some new rules and revisions, including a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar before the Assembly polls. This exercise will then take place across the country.

In Bihar, the SIR exercise, aimed at removing duplicate entries in electoral rolls, started on June 25. It uses the 2003 electoral rolls as the base. The process includes door-to-door verification and new documentation requirements. The ECI aims to publish the final voters' list by September 30.

As part of the process, voters listed in the 2003 electoral rolls – the last time that an intensive revision was done in Bihar – do not have to submit documents unless they are asked. However, those who were not on the rolls in 2003 and new applicants will have to provide proof of date and/or proof of place of birth of self if they were born before July 1, 1987; proof of date and/or proof of place of birth of self and of one parent if they were born between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004; and proof of date and/or proof of place of birth of self and both parents if they were born after December 2, 2004.

On the surface, this seems aligned with the ECI's broader goal of cleaning the electoral rolls and eliminating ghost voters from the voters' list and ensuring that only eligible Indian citizens exercise their franchise, which is fundamental to a free and fair democratic process. However, there are several concerns. First, many individuals/families from



poor, Dalit, Muslim, tribal, and migrant communities often lack formal birth certificates. Second, many others will struggle to produce documents for verifying their parents' place of birth, largely due to historical gaps in State documentation.

Third, there may be lack of awareness and clarity around the new requirements. Many voters, especially in rural areas, may not fully understand which documents are needed, how to fill out forms, or where and when to submit them. With limited public outreach, complex paperwork required, and a tight timeline leading up to the final publication of the electoral rolls by September 30, there is a high risk of confusion, errors, and unintentional exclusions, particularly of those already on the margins of the system.

Fourth, the process relies heavily on field-level officials (booth level officers and electoral registration officers), who hold discretionary power. While the framework allows for claims, objections, and appeals, the initial verification and decision-making are in the hands of local officers. This may lead to inconsistencies, delays, or biased judgment, especially in areas with limited oversight.

Fifth, the ECI has neither committed to publishing the list of names being removed from the electoral rolls, nor has it provided a clear, accessible system for applicants to track the status of their submissions. This makes it difficult for citizens, civil society, and the media to monitor the process, identify errors, or challenge wrongful exclusions, raising serious questions about accountability.

The Lokniti-Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) post-poll survey of the National Election Study 2024 revealed a concerning trend. When respondents were asked whether they trust the ECI, 12% said 'not much' and 7% said 'not at all'. In this atmosphere of suspicion, the ECI has now published a circular directing that all photos, videos, CCTV footage, and webcasts from polling stations be deleted within 45 days of the election results, unless an election petition is filed within that period. Earlier, footage and photos were retained for three months to one year, depending on the stage of polling. This new measure not only limits the time to scrutinise the material, but also shuts off avenues for transparency that existed earlier.

While steps such as the EPIC clean up and voter turnout upgrade suggest that the ECI is pushing for efficiency, actions such as deleting polling station footage prematurely, implementing new documentation rules without sufficient public awareness, and failing to disclose names removed from electoral rolls contribute to the prevailing atmosphere of uncertainty and distrust. At a time when public trust in institutions is under great strain, the ECI cannot afford to be so opaque and must take measures to ensure transparency.

Krishangi Sinha is a Researcher with Lokniti-CSDS; Sanjay Kumar is Co-Director of Lokniti, and Professor at CSDS. Views are personal

Women MSMEs still struggle for credit despite schemes

Limited access to formal credit and the widening credit gap continue to prevent women entrepreneurs from achieving their financial goals

DATA POINT

B. Renuka Ramakrishna

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) have become instrumental in shaping India's generating employment, creating revenue, and in global outreach. In 2024, MSMEs contributed nearly 30% to the GDP. The aim is to raise this to 35% in the current year. This vast sector also provides opportunities for many women-led enterprises. The government has implemented several financial schemes specifically designed to promote women's participation.

However, the issues and challenges faced by women-led MSMEs are often inadequately addressed. The problems of limited access to formal credit and the widening credit gap continue to prevent these entrepreneurs from achieving their financial goals. While ensuring adequate credit availability to MSMEs has long been a key policy objective, gaps between banks and beneficiaries often persist at the implementation stage.

Women-owned businesses account for up to 20% of all MSMEs registered in India. This level of female participation remains low despite the handful of schemes aimed at encouraging self-employment and financial independence. What is more striking is that women-led MSMEs contribute only about 10% of the total turnover, while receiving around 11-15% of the total investment in the sector **(Chart 1)**. These numbers highlight the persistent gaps in both financial inclusion and credit accessibility for women in the MSME ecosystem.

According to reports by the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), women face significant discrimination in fund disbursement, with a credit gap of around 35% – meaning that over a third of their financial requirements go unmet – compared to a the 20% credit gap faced by men **(Chart 2)**. The credit gap refers to the difference between the amount of credit requested by the borrower and the amount actually received. These inadequate funds are one of the major challenges for women in the MSME sector, affecting about 26% of them, followed closely by the challenge of high competition.

The Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY), launched nearly a decade ago to support individuals seeking self-employment, has also enabled women to open loan accounts and fund their MSMEs. PMMY offers collateral-free loans to MSMEs operating in the non-farm sector. As of 2024, women owned 42,492,281 loan accounts under PMMY out of a total of 66,777,013 accounts, which is approximately 64%. This shows that women form a significant group seeking financial assistance.

However, the sanctioned amount tells a different story. Of the total ₹5,41,012.86 crore allocated for that year's target, only ₹2,25,887.08 crore (about 41%) was directed towards women-led MSMEs. This disparity points to an economic inefficiency in delivering highly liquid, low-cost, and easily accessible loans to the underserved sections of the sector.

These underperforming schemes are pushing women to rely on informal sources of credit, which are often riskier and unreliable. These challenges are not confined to MSMEs alone; they also affect informal micro-enterprises (IMEs) run by women. Informal businesses are typically excluded from formal credit processes due to the lack of legal documentation and collateral. To address this gap, the government launched the Udyam Assist Portal, which helps such IMEs become eligible for priority sector lending by facilitating their formal recognition.

This year, over 1.86 crore IMEs have been registered through the portal. Notably, 70.5% of these are owned by women. This achievement has significantly boosted employment, with women-led IMEs contributing 70.8% to employment generation within this segment **(Chart 3)**.

However, despite being registered, these businesses continue to face challenges in accessing formal credit. Dr. Ashwin Ram, Professor at RV University, said the main reasons for this are lack of awareness and limited access to formal credit. He said, "A majority of first-generation women entrepreneurs, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas, have low financial literacy and are not well informed about various government schemes and their benefits. There is also little support from traditional commercial banks and local government agencies to educate and assist women entrepreneurs in availing financial subsidies."

Women entrepreneurs are also often perceived as risky borrowers, largely because they lack adequate collateral or property ownership. In India, a significant proportion of women run micro and small businesses predominantly in the informal sector, which further discourages them from seeking finance through formal institutions. According to the International Finance Corporation, it takes a man an average of two visits to a bank to get a loan sanctioned, whereas women typically need to make at least four.

Amid these discriminatory barriers, the Reserve Bank of India has cut the repo rate to 5.50%, the lowest since 2022, and reduced the Cash Reserve Ratio by 100 basis points. This policy is aimed at injecting more liquidity into the economy, leaving commercial banks with greater funds to extend as loans to the public. Both banks and women entrepreneurs are in a favourable position, with increased liquidity at their disposal.

The government's schemes have been launched with a strong intent, but their implementation has often fallen short due to administrative inefficiencies.



Chart 1: The share of women-led MSMEs, share of women employed in MSMEs, share of investment attracted by women-led MSMEs and share of turnover of women-led MSMEs

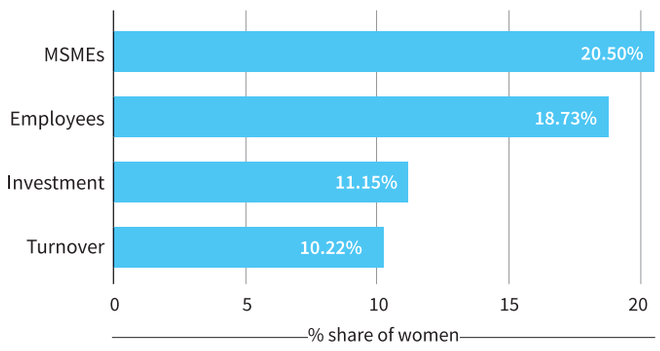


Chart 2: The credit gap across genders. Credit gap refers to the difference between the amount of credit requested by the borrower and the amount actually received

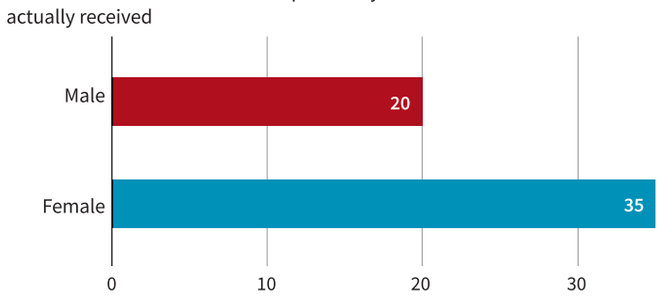
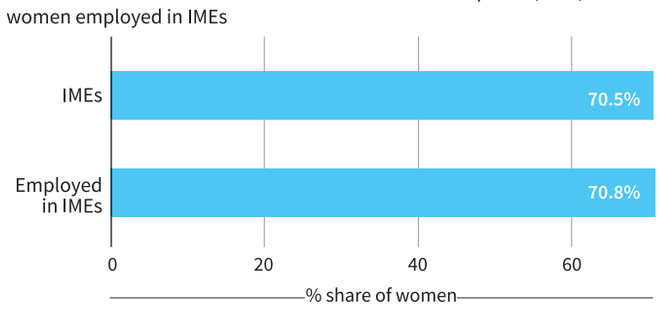


Chart 3: The share of women-led informal micro-enterprises (IMEs) and share of women employed in IMEs



B Renuka Ramakrishna is interning with The Hindu Data Team

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 8, 1975

U.S. and Russia getting ready for space rendezvous

Cape Canaveral, Florida, July 7: Five years ago, it was considered impossible, a dream. But on July 15, American astronauts and Russian cosmonauts are to rocket into orbit to start an historic joint space flight, appropriately labelled a mission of "high-flying detente".

Much symbolism and prestige will be involved on this first international flight of the world's leading spacefaring nations, once keen rivals in space exploration until U.S. astronauts landed on the moon. Neither wants to fail in the global spotlight that will follow every moment.

It won't be just a "handshake in the sky", say the astronauts and cosmonauts, but a mission that hopefully will lead to future co-operative flights in large space stations and perhaps to the planets.

The flight is scheduled to start at 8:20 a.m. (17-50 IST) with the launching of the two cosmonauts in a Soyuz spacecraft from the Soviet Union.

If there are no problems, three Apollo astronauts will ride an Apollo spacecraft away from Cape Canaveral 7.5 hours later.

With the more sophisticated Apollo performing all the critical manoeuvres, the astronauts will pursue the Soyuz through the skies for two days, moving in for a link-up at 12:15 p.m. (22:45 IST) on Thursday July 17, 224 km above West Germany.

Three hours later, both ends of an airlock tunnel connecting the vehicles will be opened and the American Commander, Air Force Brig. Gen. Thomas Stafford, and the Russian Commander, Air Force Col. Alexei Leonov, will shake hands.

It will be a moment of high emotion, not only for its symbolism, but because these two men have become fast friends during two years of training. Both believe that through flights like this, high in space, their two nations can achieve detente on earth.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 8, 1925

The G.I.P. Railway

Bombay, July 8: The G.I.P. Railway are introducing a travelling Cinema Car, the idea being that the car will travel up and down the line, imparting knowledge to the staff, by means of films showing exactly how their work should be done.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

The dip in Tesla stocks amid concerns over the company's future

7 In per cent. Tesla's shares took a dip in pre-market trading on Monday following Elon Musk's launch of his new U.S. political party, as it raised concerns over his future involvement in the electric vehicle maker business. The new party, called the "America Party," was unveiled on Saturday. REUTERS

Number of asylum seekers rescued near Crete, Greece

230 Greece's coastguard on Monday said it had rescued around 230 asylum seekers near the island of Crete, after hundreds more landed over the weekend. An EU border agency spotted the migrants inside two inflatable boats off Gavdos, an island southwest of Crete. AFP

The fine imposed on Apple by the European Union

500 million euros. The European Commission slapped Apple with a fine for preventing developers from steering customers outside its App Store to access cheaper deals in breach of the bloc's competition rules. Apple filed an appeal against the fine imposed by EU. AFP

The farmer suicides in Marathwada from January to June

520 Eight districts of Maharashtra's Marathwada region experienced a 20% increase in reported farmer suicides from last year, according to revenue department reports. Beed district, where 126 farmers committed suicide during the period, topped the list. PTI

Children who died in Maharashtra between April and February

12,438 More than 12,000 children died in Maharashtra between April last year and February 2025, state Public Health and Family Welfare Minister Prakash Abitkar said on Monday. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Remaking the nuclear order in West Asia

While both the U.S. and Israel agree that Iran cannot be allowed to have a bomb, Mr. Netanyahu goes one step forward to deny Iran any nuclear capabilities. However, for Iran, nuclear deterrence assumes a greater importance now, even if there is a change of regime

WORLD INSIGHT

Rakesh Sood

There is hardly any political leader who understands the laws of political survival better than Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Realising that he is in a morass with respect to Gaza, as Hamas has not yet been dismantled even though its leaders have been killed, and all hostages have not been brought home resulting in growing domestic pressure, Mr. Netanyahu employed an old tactic – distract attention from an ongoing crisis by creating another one.

Israel's surprise strikes on Iran, launched on June 13, created a new and larger crisis. The military action has been successful, with the U.S. finally coming on board. For the moment, PM Netanyahu is firmly back in the driver's seat. But this has also opened a Pandora's box of what next.

Israel's calculations

Mr. Netanyahu wants to keep Israel as the only nuclear power in the region. He is convinced that the Libyan model, where the nuclear programme was completely dismantled, is the only acceptable option, preferably with a change of regime. In 2015, he opposed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) primarily because it conceded a limited uranium enrichment right to Iran.

Since mid-April, five rounds of talks took place between U.S. Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Aragchi, with a sixth round due on June 15 in Muscat. After stumbling over the issue of Iran insisting on its right to enrichment as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), some progress was registered on the idea of a regional nuclear fuel consortium to provide fuel for the reactors in the region. Its location remained under discussion, making Mr. Netanyahu nervous.

On June 11, Mr. Netanyahu barely survived a motion in the Knesset tabled by the opposition seeking to dissolve parliament, leading to early elections that are currently due in October 2026. PM Netanyahu has been facing domestic opposition since early 2023 due to his attempts at pushing though controversial judicial reforms that were widely seen as curbing judicial independence. The Hamas attack on October 7 had provided him a reprieve that has lasted nearly two years. Given Mr. Netanyahu's multiple domestic legal challenges, a continuing war is his "get-out-of-jail" card.

During the 20-month war, the leadership of Hamas and Hezbollah has been decapitated, and a change of regime in Damascus last December has doused Iran's "ring of fire." On two occasions in 2024, Israel directly engaged with Iran and, in the process, knocked out its air defences around Tehran and other critical installations.

Having buried the two-state-solution, and with Iran at its weakest, Mr. Netanyahu must have felt that this was the ideal time to neutralise Iranian nuclear and missile threats. The Iranians are known for their frustratingly convoluted negotiating style and given U.S. President Donald Trump's impatience, Mr. Netanyahu was able to convince him that a little military pressure would make them more accommodating.

Iran's miscalculations

As recently as March 26, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard in her annual intelligence threat assessment to Congress stated, "the Intelligence Community continues to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme Leader Khamenei has not authorised the nuclear weapons programme that he suspended in 2003". This gave Iran's leadership a misplaced confidence that as long as the negotiations continued on the idea of a regional enrichment facility, the U.S. would block any military strike by Israel.

However, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report in May criticising "Iran's general lack of cooperation" and the near doubling of its stockpile of 60% enriched uranium to over 400 kgs since February proved to be more damaging that Iran anticipated. This heightened Iranian concerns about the threat of a sanctions-snapback by the UN Security Council, which was waived in 2015 following the adoption of the JCPOA.

Iran knew that given its ageing air force, it was dependent on its stocks of drones and missiles. Despite the debacles with Hamas and Hezbollah leaderships, Iran underestimated the extent of Mossad's penetration of its systems, evidenced by the targeted assassinations of its key military leaders as well as nuclear and missile scientists.

The entry of the U.S.

When the U.S. began to withdraw non-essential staff from its embassies in the region in early June, it was anticipating Israel's likely military action. In the past, U.S. reluctance to get involved had prevented Israel from military strikes but this time, Mr Netanyahu took a gamble and it paid off. Impressed with the success of Israel's military actions, Mr. Trump ordered supportive strikes on June 22, with B-2 bombers dropping GBU-57 'bunker-busters' on Fordow and Natanz, and Tomahawk cruise missiles on Isfahan. Following the token retaliation by Iran the following day, Mr. Trump declared an end to the "12-day-war".

Israel thus claimed victory, Mr. Trump declared the underground sites "obliterated," the Gulf states heaved a sigh of relief, and for Iran's Supreme Leader, regime survival was a victory. Iran suffered over 600 casualties, and all its air defences and half its stock of missile launchers, were destroyed. It failed to take down a single Israeli aircraft though it did bring down some drones. Of the 500 missiles that Iran fired, over 30 were able to get through causing 30 casualties.

While Mr. Netanyahu's suggestion that sustained military pressure may bring about a regime change in Tehran has some support from Iran-hawks in Washington, it is anathema to Mr. Trump's MAGA support base, who are wary of entanglements abroad. The U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively, were messy and costly, leaving behind a legacy of instability. Iran is three times larger, and Iranians are a people with a deep sense of nationalism based on their civilisational history. The current theocratic regime may be weak and its replacement may be less religious, but not less nationalist, and it would therefore push ahead with the nuclear deterrent.

Mr. Netanyahu may not be averse to a forced regime change but the U.S. and the Gulf Arabs would not want to open this Pandora's box.

Iran's nuclear capability

Iran has had an ambitious civilian nuclear programme going back to the 1950s. It joined the NPT in 1970. Initially, the Islamic regime was uninterested in the nuclear programme, seeing it as a part of Western influence. This changed after the Iran-Iraq war and in the 1990s, it began developing a clandestine enrichment capability. The 2002 disclosures by a group of Iranian exiles, followed by the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, led the Supreme Leader to shift direction and aim for threshold status rather than develop a full-fledged nuclear weapon. The centrifuges and higher levels of enrichment also provided for bargaining space as Iran could negotiate for sanctions relief with the U.S.

Today, the situation has changed. Iran's proxies (except for the Houthis) have been decimated and its missile and drone capabilities found wanting. The threshold state is no longer a safe place. Therefore, a nuclear deterrent assumes greater importance, even if there is a change of regime.

Questions remain about the extent of damage to the underground centrifuge sites as well as the fate of the 400 kg of the 60% enriched uranium stockpile. While the scale of the attacks makes resumption of Iran-U.S. talks tricky, Iran has raised the stakes by terminating the IAEA inspector's access to its nuclear sites. Mr. Trump would like to conclude a deal with Iran to build on his success with the ceasefire. He would do well to remember the U.S. scholar Thomas Schelling's advice that successful coercion requires both a credible threat as well as credible reassurance, if Iran is to be 'persuaded' during any future talks.

There has always been a difference between the U.S. and Israeli positions. While both agree that Iran cannot be allowed to have a bomb, Mr. Netanyahu goes one step forward to deny Iran any nuclear capabilities. However, since Mr. Trump has obliged him with the June 22 strikes, he may find it difficult to deny Mr. Trump his Iran deal provided the Iranians play the game.

Rakesh Sood is a former diplomat and is Distinguished Fellow at the Council For Strategic and Defence Research.



Cost of war: Workers repair the main entrance of Evin Prison after it was hit by an Israeli airstrike on June 23, on July 1, in Tehran, Iran. GETTY IMAGES

THE GIST

Mr. Netanyahu wants to keep Israel as the only nuclear power in the region. He is convinced that the Libyan model, where the nuclear programme was completely dismantled, is the only acceptable option, preferably with a change of regime.

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CACHE



Space war: U.S. President Donald Trump makes an announcement regarding the Golden Dome, next to U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, in the White House in Washington, D.C., U.S., on May 20. REUTERS

On the Golden Dome: how Trump's missile shield tests space law

Such a shield would involve deploying a constellation of satellite interceptors, potentially armed with kinetic or directed-energy weapons, to form a protective layer over the U.S. This has left India, a key U.S. partner in space situational awareness, tactically aligned but normatively conflicted

Shrawani Shagun

From golden citadels to divine shields, rulers across time have dreamt of impregnable security. But in every age, these ambitions have either collapsed under their own weight or have provoked greater instability. In 2025, this ancient dream went to orbit.

In May, U.S. President Donald Trump unveiled a bold new national defence initiative called the "Golden Dome", a $175-billion space-based missile shield designed to fend off ballistic, hypersonic, and orbital threats. The plan involves deploying a constellation of satellite interceptors, potentially armed with kinetic or directed-energy weapons, to form a protective layer over the U.S.

Framed as a defence move, the project has sparked concerns worldwide for its geopolitical ramifications as well as for its implications under international space law. In particular, the Golden Dome challenges the Outer Space Treaty's limits, raises constitutional concerns within the U.S., and puts pressure on key strategic partners such as India.

Loophole or legal red line?

At the heart of the legal debate is Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty (OST), 1967. It prohibits placing "nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction" in orbit or stationing them "in outer space in any other manner". It further mandates that celestial bodies shall be used "exclusively for peaceful purposes".

The language of Article IV, particularly its explicit focus on Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), has created a loophole for conventional weapons in space. The term "peaceful purposes" has been subject to various interpretations, with some nations claiming that it permits all non-aggressive military use, while others insist it implies complete demilitarisation.

The treaty further states: "The establishment of military bases, installations and fortifications, the testing of any type of weapons and the conduct of military manoeuvres on celestial bodies shall be forbidden." The use of military personnel for scientific research or any other peaceful purposes isn't prohibited, however. The use of any equipment or facility necessary to peacefully explore the moon and other celestial bodies is also not prohibited (Article IV).

Because the Golden Dome's interceptors are not classified as WMDs, they don't violate the letter of Article IV per se. There are a few concerns nonetheless. In arms control, the practical outcome must always take precedence over the technical details or official classifications of a weapon. This means what a weapon is called matters far less than its actual strategic effect.

For instance, if kinetic interceptors are used to disable or destroy missiles or satellites, their impact could fundamentally alter the balance of power in space. This capability could create a dangerous first-strike advantage for one nation, thereby eroding the principle of mutual deterrence, which relies on the threat of retaliation to prevent an attack. Such a development would undermine the core goal of arms control treaties, which is to foster stability through restraint, and could trigger a significant and destabilising shift in the dynamics of power in outer space.

UN General Assembly resolutions under the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) Treaty, while lacking legal enforceability, have successfully established an interpretive norm against the militarisation of space. The deployment of space-based interceptors, therefore, directly threatens this norm and could trigger a cascade of similar actions by other nations.

These systems are plagued by dual-use ambiguity. A kinetic interceptor, ostensibly for missile defence, possesses the inherent capability to be instantly repurposed to neutralise an adversary's vital communication or surveillance satellites. This inherent uncertainty risks inflaming suspicion and driving miscalculation, especially during heightened crises involving major space powers like China and Russia, both of which have already explicitly condemned the proposed deployment.

Partners in crossfire

India, a rising space power and a key U.S. partner in satellite tracking and space situational awareness, now finds itself tactically aligned but normatively conflicted. Quiet cooperation in areas like debris monitoring could tacitly link India to the Golden Dome's strategic ecosystem. However, India is also a vocal champion of peaceful space use. It has consistently supported PAROS resolutions and has positioned itself as a leader of the Global South in advocating for equitable and demilitarised space governance.

Supporting or even appearing to tolerate the Golden Dome could undermine that credibility, damaging India's image as a responsible spacefaring nation and a potential norm-setter in future treaty negotiations. Conversely, non-cooperation might strain its growing strategic ties with Washington. This dilemma becomes even more consequential in the context of India's pending Space Activities Bill, which will shape how the country defines and regulates dual-use platforms, private-sector participation, and treaty compliance.

The Golden Dome is thus more than a U.S. policy issue: it's a litmus test for India's own legal and diplomatic posture and could significantly influence the direction and content of the Space Activities Bill.

Less than golden precedent

The broader concern is that the Golden Dome will normalise the weaponisation of outer space. If the U.S. crosses this threshold without facing legal repercussions, China, Russia, and other actors are likely to follow suit. This could trigger a destabilising cycle of orbital arms races, forcing smaller nations to resort to asymmetric capabilities, such as cyberattacks, jamming or even the deliberate generation of debris in orbit.

Such developments would not only weaken the OST's authority but could also unravel the fragile consensus that has governed space for over half a century. In the absence of updated and enforceable treaties, outer space risks becoming a legal grey zone or, worse, a battlefield governed by force rather than law.

Thus, the Golden Dome is more than a military gamble or a political spectacle. It's a legal inflection point for space governance in the 21st century. It exposes loopholes in a 58-year-old treaty, reveals structural weaknesses in domestic oversight, and underscores the urgent and immediate need for modern legal instruments that can keep pace with technological realities.

Strategic partners, such as India, along with like-minded spacefaring nations, should notably push to clarify and modernise the OST, especially the parts pertaining to dual-use and conventional space-based weapons. Advocacy for legally binding instruments on the non-deployment of weapons in space is of paramount importance. This pursuit of international agreements, which play a crucial role, should be complemented by establishing comprehensive transparency mechanisms for military space projects to reduce ambiguity and mistrust.

It's also crucial that national laws, such as India's Space Activities Bill, include clear guidelines for defence cooperation in space, fostering responsible practices both domestically and globally.

Shrawani Shagun is pursuing a PhD at National Law University, Delhi, focusing on environmental sustainability and space governance.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

With South African captain Wiaan Mulder scoring an unbeaten 367 on Monday, a quiz on triple centurions in Test cricket

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
As of July 7, 2025, 29 batters have notched up 33 triple centuries. Who was the first to achieve the feat?

QUESTION 2
Apart from Don Bradman and Virender Sehwag, which other batters have scored two triple tons in Tests?

QUESTION 3
Like Mulder, name the two Asian stars who were also helming their team while getting a triple hundred?

QUESTION 4
In a rare occurrence, the teams that played in the first two England-India Tests in the current series had a batter who had scored a 300+ for his team. Name both.

QUESTION 5
What connects Headingley in Leeds and Antigua Recreation Ground in St. John's?

QUESTION 6
What is common to the triple tons scored by Graham Gooch, Sanath Jayasuriya, Michael Clarke and Brendon McCullum?



Visual question:
This image is from the 319 notched up by Virender Sehwag in 2008. What is special about the knock? V. GANESAN

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This revolutionary group in Bengal served as a militant wing of the Anushilan Samiti. **Ans: Jugantar**
2. This revolutionary died fighting British forces on the banks of the Buribalam river in Odisha in 1915. **Ans: Bagha Jatin (Jatindranath Mukherjee)**
3. The Chittagong Armoury Raid of 1930 was led by which this revolutionary. **Ans: Surya Sen**
4. This revolutionary was hanged for the Writers' Building attack in 1931. **Ans: Dinesh Gupta**
5. This person founded the Communist Consolidation, a political group formed by inmates of the Cellular Jail in 1935. **Ans: Hare Krishna Konar**
6. Acharya's dissatisfaction with Congress politics led him to write for this leftist publication. **Ans:** *Freedom* **(an anarchist periodical)**
7. The legal charge against the defendants in the Meerut Conspiracy Case under the Indian Penal Code. **Ans: Section 121A – Conspiracy to wage war against the King**
Visual: Identify this man. **Ans: Asaf Ali**
Early Birds: Nobody got all the correct answers



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know Your English

K. Subrahmanian
S. Upendran

"Last week you talked about the expression 'throw someone for a loop'."

"Yes, that's right."

"Well, Sujatha says it's wrong. She says that the expression is 'in the loop'."

" 'In the loop' and 'throw someone for a loop' have two different meanings. When you throw someone for a loop, you..."

"...you surprise or confuse someone. I know that."

"I'm glad you remember. When you say that someone is 'in the loop', it means that the person is 'part of a group of people who make decisions about important subjects'."

"So, if a person is 'in the loop', he/she is part of an inner circle. Is that what you are saying?"

"Exactly! For example, I can say, if you want to know what's happening, ask Rajagopal. As the chairman of the Board, he is in the loop."

"Our local MLA hasn't a clue as to what the Chief Minister is up to. I don't think he is in the loop."

"Good example. Do you know what the opposite of 'in the loop' is?"

"Is it 'off the loop'?"

"No, it's 'out of the loop'. You could have said our local MLA is out of the loop on policy decisions."

"Everyone at school knows that the Vice-Principal is out of the loop."

"The Finance Minister claims that he was out of the loop and doesn't know who gave the order to increase the price of petrol."

"If the Finance Minister was out of the loop, who was in the loop, then?"

"Good question. Anyway, that was just an example. I hope that the present Finance Minister is in the loop, not out of it."

"So does everyone else in the country. By the way, did you look at the photographs that my father took last week?"

"I saw them. I didn't really look at them. Why do you...?"

"...wait a minute! You mean to tell me there is a difference between 'look at' and 'see'?"

"Yes, there is. When you 'look at' something, you pay attention to what you are seeing."

"In other words, you concentrate."

"Exactly. Whatever you do, you do so deliberately. For example, I looked at the painting for half an hour."

"I looked at the little girl crossing the street – in this case, it would mean that I paid particular attention to her?"

"That's right. If on the other hand, you say 'I saw the young girl cross the street', it could mean that you accidentally saw the girl."

"What do you mean accidentally?"

"It means that you weren't paying any particular attention to her. She just happened to come in your line of vision, so you ended up seeing her."

"But tell me, is there a difference between 'look at' and 'watch'? I mean, can I say..."

"...yes, there is a difference between 'watch' and 'look at'. But we'll talk about it next time."

Published in The Hindu on March 4, 1997.

Word of the day

Desultory:
marked by lack of a definite plan or regularity or purpose; jumping from one thing to another

Usage: *A few people were dancing in a desultory fashion.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/desultorypro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈdɛs.əl.t(ə).ɹi/, /ˈdɛz.əl.t(ə).ɹi/

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

INBRIEF



Kalyan Jewellers reports 31% revenue growth in Q1 FY26

Kalyan Jewellers on Monday reported a 31% year-on-year increase in consolidated revenue for Q1 of the FY 2025-26, despite multiple pauses in demand, majorly due to volatility in gold prices and geopolitical tensions. The company had reported a consolidated net revenue of ₹5,557.63 crore in the first quarter of the 2024-25 fiscal. India operations saw 31% revenue growth during Q1 of the FY 2025-26 compared with Q1 of the previous year, the company said in a filing. PTI

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC mobilises ₹700 cr. via AIF

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC on Monday said it has raised ₹700 crore through the first closure of its Structured Opportunities Fund - Series II, a Category II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF). The fund aims to raise ₹1,250 crore with a greenshoe option of an additional ₹1,250 crore, aiming for a total mobilisation of ₹2,500 crore. The fund focuses on credit opportunities, offering capital solutions across growth, strategic, and opportunistic requirements. PTI

JioBlackRock MF raises over ₹17,800 cr. via maiden NFO

JioBlackRock Asset Management Pvt. Ltd., a 50:50 joint venture between Jio Financial Services Limited (JFSL) and BlackRock, on Monday announced closure of its maiden New Fund Offer (NFO), recording a total investment of ₹17,800 crore (-USD 2.1 billion). The fund was mobilised from three cash/debt mutual fund schemes – JioBlackRock Overnight Fund, JioBlackRock Liquid Fund and JioBlackRock Money Market Fund. PTI

'Capgemini's $3.3-bn WNS deal leaves the Big Four in big shock'

Transaction may kick off a round of industry consolidation as the large strategics prepare for massive changes AI begins to bring: Everest Group

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU



Great expectations: Both firms could deliver end-to-end services the Big 4 cannot, and at lower price points, say observers. REUTERS

Capgemini, the Paris-based technology and digital transformation major, made the Big 4 - Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG - sit up globally on Monday with its announcement of buying the India-grown business process management firm WNS for a total cash consideration of $3.3 billion, said global analysts.

The French tech major said it would acquire U.S.-listed WNS for a cash consideration of $76.50 per share, which represents a premium of 28% to the last 90-day average share price, of 27% to the last 30-day average share price and a premium of 17% to the last closing share price on July 3, 2025.

"This acquisition will give Capgemini a new positioning in the global tech market against the Big 4 comprising Deloitte, PwC, EY, and KPMG, which have traditionally dominated the consulting and technology services," Phil Fersht, CEO, HFS Research, a Cambridge-based analyst firm told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Fersht said, from a competitive perspective, a potential big win for Capgemini was its new positioning against the Big 4, which have traditionally dominated consulting and technology services.

"With Capgemini's global scale and depth of technical capabilities, the addition of WNS could create an ideal incubation business to develop leading-edge Services-as-Software solutions to attack this huge $1.5 trillion emerging marketing opportunity," Mr. Fersht said.

"The long-rumoured acquisition of WNS is finally here. Capgemini is returning to its acquisition lead growth model and acting as a major force in industry consolidation.," said Peter Bendor-Samuel, founder and executive chairman of Dallas-based Everest Group.

According to the Everest Group's chief, Capgemini is betting that the WNS book of business will provide a fertile ground for AI-driven transformation and allow it to develop new transformative AI-powered platforms. "The potential is clearly there, but the journey will require significant additional investment and a resolute leadership team," Mr. Bendor-Samuel cautioned.

He said BPM as a space has held up well in a world rocked by AI, which has yet to have a significant impact on the space. "However, this deal could be the start of a significant industry consolidation," he opined. "This may well kick off another round of industry consolidation as the large strategics look to grow inorganically and prepare for the massive changes that AI is starting to bring," he forecast.

Tech industry observers said Capgemini, with WNS's operational expertise integrated into its offerings, could deliver end-to-end transformation services that the Big 4 cannot, and at lower price points.

SEBI mulls expanding AMC businesses with safeguards

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in its paper that it had received a representation from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) and other industry participants saying that broad-based funds – at least 20 investors; and no single investor accounting for more than 25% of the corpus of the fund – were barriers to do business as they did not provide a level-playing field with non-broad based funds.

"In view of the same, it was decided to review and consider relaxing the broad basing requirement and permitting asset management companies (AMCs) to serve pooled non-broad based funds as well, subject to strong governance and regulatory controls that would address any concerns related to conflicts of interest situations," SEBI said.

The regulator proposes that in case the two different services are to be conducted under the same company, they could be separated by "Chinese Walls" or through "operational segregation."

The paper also delineated the conflicts that could arise, like diversion of resources from mutual funds to more exclusive investment management services. To solve this, SEBI proposed to introduce caps on the difference between the fee charged for non-broad based services and the mutual fund business. The regulator also flagged the risk of AMCs indulging in insider trading or even transfer low quality assets from non-broad based funds to mutual funds, violating the principle of fair treatment. SEBI. however. proposed not to allow this transfer and that all the regulation would come under the ambit of Prevention of Insider Trading regulations.



The regulator also flagged the risk of AMCs indulging in insider trading. REUTERS

Apart from these, SEBI also proposed that subsidiaries of AMCs registered as a pension fund manager may be allowed to be point of presence (POP) for pension funds and collecting commissions or fees from the investor as permitted by PFRDA , all while protecting the interest of mutual fund investor. SEBI also proposed that AMCs can distribute their funds globally, but shall limit themselves to direct funds. The regulator has given time till July 28 for stakeholders to give their suggestions.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	83,442	0.01
US Dollar	85.94	-0.63
Gold	98,570	-0.55
Brent oil	69.18	—

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	2576.10	-23.00
Adani Ports	1435.60	11.20
Apollo Hosp	7616.00	62.50
Asian Paints	2442.80	18.60
Axis Bank	1175.10	-2.50
Bajaj Auto	8463.50	30.50
Bajaj Finserv	2006.40	12.00
Bajaj Finance	924.65	-0.65
Bharat Elec	417.10	-10.45
Bharti Airtel	2033.90	16.70
Cipla	1510.50	-2.80
Coal India	384.25	-1.85
Dr Reddys Lab	1310.50	3.10
Eicher Motors	5682.50	53.50
Eternal Ltd.	258.55	-2.85
Grasim Ind	2779.10	-26.80
HCL Tech	1710.40	-15.50
HDFC Bank	1987.40	-1.90
HDFC Life	789.45	4.35
Hero MotoCorp	4307.00	-38.00
Hindalco	692.10	-7.35
Hind Unilever	2410.40	71.10
ICICI Bank	1435.70	-7.10
IndusInd Bank	854.45	-1.80
Infosys	1627.00	-13.70
ITC	416.15	3.60
Jio Financial Servic-es Ltd.	328.05	3.10
JSW Steel	1042.60	1.20
Kotak Bank	2149.80	20.00
L&T	3581.40	-13.20
M&M	3160.20	-2.30
Maruti Suzuki	12520.00	-126.00
NestleIndia	2422.10	29.30
NTPC	337.45	1.95
ONGC	241.52	-3.72
PowerGrid Corp	295.90	1.90
Reliance Ind	1541.50	14.20
SBI Life	1808.30	8.60
State Bank	806.85	-5.00
Shriram Finance Ltd.	671.30	-4.85
Sun Pharma	1679.90	3.60
TataConsumerPro-duct	1101.90	12.20
Tata Motors	688.85	-0.20
Tata Steel	162.40	-0.61
TCS	3411.70	-8.10
Tech Mahindra	1623.90	-31.30
Titan	3666.10	-20.80
Trent Ltd.	5499.00	43.00
UltraTech Cement	12345.00	-161.00
Wipro	267.75	-2.30

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 07

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	85.65	85.97
Euro	100.46	100.84
British Pound	116.63	117.07
Japanese Yen (100)	58.87	59.09
Chinese Yuan	11.94	11.99
Swiss Franc	107.40	107.82
Singapore Dollar	66.98	67.24
Canadian Dollar	62.71	62.95
Malaysian Ringitt	20.19	20.32
Australian Dollar	56.67	55.88

Source:Indian Bank

Implementation of QCO for cotton bales postponed to 2026

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has postponed the implementation of Quality Control Order (QCO) on cotton bales to August 2026 from August this year. The Cotton Bales (Quality Control) Order, 2023 has been amended for implementation from August 27, 2026.

Industry sources said the textile industry, the main cotton consumer, welcomed the move.

However, the sources said the Centre should withdraw the QCO as the BIS specifications for cotton bales do not have norms for contamination levels permitted for cotton.

The contamination levels are high in Indian cotton and the industry imports high-quality cotton that is contamination free. Cotton growers in other countries will not go in for BIS stamp.



The textile industry welcomed the Centre's move.

Further, overseas garment brands are nominating raw material suppliers now and the Indian textile industry sources substantial quantity of cotton or yarn from the nominated suppliers.

They will miss the orders as these suppliers will not have BIS registration.

Since there are several practical challenges in implementing the order, the government should withdraw it, they said.

June auto retail sales rose 5% backed by all segments: FADA

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Automobile retail sales in June grew 4.84% year on year (YoY) backed by growth in all segments of the industry.

Two-wheelers (2W) rose at 4.73%, three-wheelers (3W) grew 6.68%, passenger vehicles (PV) inched 2.45%, tractor sales surged 8.68%, and commercial vehicles (CV) rose by 6.6%, according to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) on Monday.

In 2Ws, while festival and marriage-season demand provided a boost, financing constraints and intermittent variant shortages moderated sales, FADA president C.S. Vigneshwar said.

"Early monsoon rains and rising electric vehicle (EV) penetration also shaped buying patterns. Several dealers cited compulsory billing and forced stock lifts – often via auto-debit wholesales – leading to mandated high days of inventory aligned with festival-season targets. Overall, June demonstrated a resilient two-wheeler performance amid mixed market signals," he said.

PV retails slipped 1.49% month on month (MoM) and heavy rains and tight market liquidity weighed on footfall and conversion, even as elevated incentive schemes and fresh bookings lent selective support.

"Some dealers indicated certain PV OEMs introduced compulsory billing procedures such as automatic wholesale debits to meet volume targets; inventory consequently stands at around 55 days. June thus painted a picture of modest but steadfast PV performance amid varied market cues," he said.

Tariff trodden



Berthed and burdened: Containers are seen at the International Container Terminal in Surabaya on Monday. While U.S. President Donald Trump imposed a 10% tariff on most U.S. trading partners in April, the rate is set to rise for dozens of economies, including the EU and Japan come July 9. Indonesia, which counts the United States among its top trading partners, is facing an extra 32% tariff on top of a base 10%. AFP

Rising cost of living setting off a chase for adequate paycheck in key cities

Aishwarya Kumar
BENGALURU

For 53% of Indian professionals, salary is the top deciding factor when applying for a job

Rising rent and childcare and lifestyle costs are pushing employees to look for better wages.

According to the latest India Talent Trends 2024 report by ACCA, 65% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with current compensation and nearly half believe the only way to improve salary is to leave current organisation.

This is especially true in cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi, where cost of living has soared.

"Candidates today evaluate offers not just against market benchmarks, but also about real-world expenses such as rent, childcare, and education," says Anshuman Das, CEO and co-founder of Careernet.

Making matters worse, the technology sector has seen wage stagnation following the hiring boom of 2021-22.

In banking and financial services, professionals are shifting to fintech firms and global capability centres offering better pay for same skillsets, Mr. Das said.

As per Prakhar Tripathi, partner, Deloitte India, 35-40% of exit interviews show cost-of-living pressures, often coupled with stagnant pay, limited city allowances, or lack of relocation support, are driving attrition. The impact is even more pronounced among blue- and grey-collar workers in metros, where rent increases have far outpaced wage growth.

This financial stress is influencing hiring patterns, too. Over the past three years, the share of job postings on 'Indeed' that include salary information has nearly doubled, from 26 % in March 2022 to 50 % in early 2025, according to its PayMap survey.

LinkedIn's job outlook for 2025 echoes the sentiment. For 53% of Indian professionals, salary is the top deciding factor when applying for a job, and 1 in 3 are willing to switch jobs for better pay.

"As job security becomes a priority, professionals are becoming more vocal about their needs and aren't afraid to take the plunge," says Nirajita Banerjee, LinkedIn Career Expert and India Senior Managing Editor.

"The salary dynamics are shifting," notes Sashi Kumar, Head of Sales, Indeed India.

In response, firms are slowly evolving compensation frameworks. While many IT firms earlier ignored cost-of-living adjustments, some are building these into pay structures.

"The inclusion of cost-of-living adjustment clauses allows companies to better respond to inflationary pressures," Mr. Tripathi adds.

Looking ahead, the average salary increment in India is projected at 8.8% in 2025, with about 75 % of companies maintaining increases at 2024 levels, according to Deloitte.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Škoda Auto Volkswagen to import, sell Bentley

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Škoda Auto Volkswagen India Private Ltd. (SAVWIPL) has announced the addition of Bentley as the sixth brand under the group's umbrella.

From July 1, 2025, the company said it will exclusively import, distribute and service Bentley vehicles across the country.

All marketing, sales and after-sales operations will be conducted under a newly established entity, Bentley India, a group company of SAVWIPL, which will oversee the British brand's India strategy and retail network.



India avatar: All marketing, sales and after-sales operations will be conducted under a newly established India entity. BY ARRANGEMENT

Abbey Thomas has been appointed as the Brand Director of Bentley India and will lead the brand in the Indian market.

Bentley India will have three new dealers across key cities, starting with Bengaluru and Mumbai, followed by New Delhi.

Piyush Arora, Managing Director and CEO of Škoda Auto Volkswagen India, said, "India's appetite for uncompromising luxury is growing rapidly."

"Additionally, Abbey's deep understanding of the Indian market makes him the ideal leader to steer Bentley India toward new milestones," Mr. Arora added.

Carrier becomes latest global firm to sue India over electronic waste rules



Recycling woes: India is the third-biggest generator of electronic waste behind China and the U.S. REUTERS

Reuters
NEW DELHI

The Indian unit of U.S. air conditioning giant Carrier has become the latest major firm to sue Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government over electronic waste rules that have hiked the fees manufacturers must pay to recyclers.

South Korea's Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics as well as Japan's Daikin and Tata's Voltas have also brought suits, which are set to be heard by the High Court of Delhi on Tuesday.

All of the companies are seeking to have the rules quashed.

Huge waste generation

India is the third-biggest generator of electronic waste behind China and the U.S., but the government says only 43% of the country's e-waste last year was recycled.

The Modi government, in September, fixed a floor price that electronics makers must pay recyclers, which manufacturers argue is roughly three to four times higher than what they paid earlier.

In a 380-page court filing dated June 3, which has not been disclosed publicly, Carrier said recyclers were willing to continue their work at the older prices and the government should not interfere in private dealings between companies and recyclers.

'Unfair and arbitrary'

"The burden of the benefit being given to the recyclers has been put on the producers, which is unfair and arbitrary," said submissions by Carrier Airconditioning & Refrigeration which were reviewed by *Reuters*.

The submissions added that the rules will impose a "huge financial burden" on the company.

Carrier did not respond to a *Reuters* request for comment.

India's Ministry of Environment also did not respond to *Reuters* queries. It has previously argued in court that the pricing rules are needed to ensure proper waste disposal and were a "reasonable" intervention.

The new rules mandate a minimum payment of ₹22 per kilogram to recycle consumer electronics. Such rates are still lower than levels in the U.S. where they are up to five times higher, according to research firm Redseer.

Carrier reported sales of $248 million in India last year, its highest level since at least the financial year ending March 2020.

Its filing said it installed India's first-ever air conditioning system in Jaipur city in 1936.

China's rare earth export controls are good for Beijing, bad for business

Magnet makers squeezed by export curbs and weak Chinese economy; exports made up as much as 50% for some major magnet makers' sales in 2024; recovery from export slump may be slow, even with deal to ease curbs ; restrictions led to a 75% drop in exports in two months of imposition

NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters

China's export restrictions on rare earths brought parts of the global auto supply chain to a halt and U.S. President Donald Trump to the negotiating table. But at home, they're a big headache for companies already struggling with a slow economy.

Beijing curbed rare earth and magnet exports in April in retaliation against U.S. tariffs, driving down magnet makers' offshore sales at the same time as they face pressure from a weak economy and tough times in one of their key markets - EVs.

The pain for magnet makers is unlikely to ease soon, even after the U.S. announced a deal with China on June 27 to get rare earths flowing again.

Any pact would take time to implement, said Baotou Rare Earth Products Exchange, a state-backed trading platform, noting inventory was piling up in warehouses, in a post on WeChat 12 hours after the deal was announced.

The export curbs led to a 75% drop in magnet exports in the two months after the restrictions were imposed and forced several global auto makers to pause some production.



Few options: Being highly customised, it is hard to resell cargoes domestically. REUTERS

The restrictions caused a "crisis" for some local magnet makers, the Baotou exchange, based in Inner Mongolia, one of China's rare earths hubs, said in May.

While China produces 90% of the rare earth magnets used worldwide and consumes most of them, exports ranged from 18% to 50% of total revenue in 2024 among the 11 largest publicly listed magnet producers by capacity, public filings show.

"Their sales are now being squeezed from both ends - disrupted exports and flagging domestic demand," said Ellie Saklatvala, head of metal pricing at commodities information provider Argus.

"They have temporarily lost an important part of their customer base, with no certainty about when they will regain it."

> Pain for magnet makers is unlikely to ease soon, even after the U.S. announced a deal with China on June 27 to get rare earths flowing again

Politically sensitive

Rare earths are politically sensitive in China and few major listed rare earth companies have commented directly about how the controls will affect their business.

However, two rare earth magnet producers told *Reuters* revenue is expected to fall this year, speaking on condition of anonymity given the issue's sensitivity. "It will have a huge impact on export business, although it's hard to tell exactly how much of a loss we will suffer for now," said one of the rare earth magnet producers, requesting anonymity due to sensitivity of the matter.

Small- and medium-sized producers cut production by about 15% in April and May, according to another source with knowledge of the matter, who declined to be named.

Much like U.S. chipmaker Nvidia, China's rare earth magnet makers are victims of their own importance. Caught in the geopolitical crossfire of Washington's tariffs and China's retaliation, share prices of listed magnet makers slumped in April after the curbs were announced. However, they have climbed off their lows over the past three months.

The rebound does not appear to be based on any reasonable forecast of the industry's future, said Cory Combs, head of critical mineral research at consultancy Trivium China.

"I can see various market outlooks, more or less negative depending on the assumptions, but none of them yield a sustainable rise in share price like we're seeing," he said. Many magnet makers are also private, so share prices only tell a limited story.

Price war

Many producers already faced weaker conditions at home, including a price war among electric vehicle makers, a key customer segment, that has seen manufacturers demand discounts from suppliers.

In addition, the highly customised nature of many magnet products makes it hard to resell cargoes domestically, forcing magnet makers to store them during the wait for licenses, four sources said, also speaking anonymously.

Listed magnet maker Baotou Tianhe Magnetics Technology Co. noted the export curbs in its annual report released in late April, and said its export revenue could decline if the international situation deteriorated.

Yantai Zhenghai Magnetics said last week it received export licences and production was normal. It referred investors to its upcoming financial filings for specific operating results.

However, a quick return to the previous status quo is unlikely if the rare earth controls are implemented in a manner similar to those on other critical minerals including germanium and antimony, according to Argus' Saklatvala.

China imposed export controls on germanium and antimony over the course of 2023 and 2024. Despite being used mostly by civilian industries, which in theory should face few issues getting licenses, exports have still not recovered fully, customs data shows.

Europe is receiving only a tiny fraction of the antimony it imported from China before export controls were imposed last September. The shortages are already causing major problems for lead-acid battery makers, commonly found in gasoline engines.

"Looking at China's recent export controls on other critical minerals - such as antimony - it is clear it can sometimes take longer than expected for exports to resume and normalise," said Mr. Saklatvala.

'China households must drive economic growth'

Reuters
BEIJING

Chinese government advisers are stepping up calls to make the household sector's contribution to broader economic growth a top priority at Beijing's upcoming five-year policy plan, as trade tensions and deflation threaten the outlook.

Leaders are gathering proposals for their 15th five-year plan, a voluminous document that lays out priorities up to 2030. The plan is expected to be endorsed at a December Communist Party conference and approved by parliament in March.

Policy advisers told *Reuters* while they expect the document will elevate household consumption to a top goal in principle, it is likely to stop short of laying out an explicit target.



New template: Worries on industrial overcapacity, factory deflation, job stress heightened calls for a shift in strategy. REUTERS

Household consumption now accounts for 40% of gross domestic product - some advisers propose China must aim at 50% over two five-year cycles.

Economists have long urged Beijing to switch to a consumption-led economic model and rely less on debt-fuelled investment and exports for growth.

While China has so far largely withstood pressures from higher U.S. tariffs, fresh worries about industrial overcapacity, factory deflation and the resulting stress on jobs and incomes have heightened calls for a shift in long-term strategy. "Relying on external demand makes us vulnerable to global shocks," a policy adviser said on condition of anonymity due to the topic's sensitivity.

"We should strengthen domestic consumption as a key driver of growth and economic transformation," said the source, echoing calls from two other advisers *Reuters* spoke with.

A fourth adviser said his proposals would not include this recommendation as "this is not something that can be easily achieved without the correct policies and reforms."

New urgency

Calls for a more robust consumer sector are not new. While Beijing has pledged structural changes for more than a decade, its household consumption share of GDP is roughly where it was in 2005 and far below the OECD average of 54%.

The difficulty, analysts say, is China has to shift resources from the business and government sectors to households in ways that could slow growth. Japan entered its decades-long stagnation period with a household share of GDP of 50% in 1991. That only grew to 58% by 2013, before dipping back to 55%.

A 14th five-year plan progress report from 2023 lamented "insufficient mechanisms" to boost consumption. The policy proposals for the 15th plan are largely the same ones Beijing had promised before, the advisers said.

These include bolstering welfare, relaxing an internal passport system blamed for deep urban-rural inequality, and other measures – including tax changes – to redistribute income towards those who have less and are more likely to spend it.

New proposals include using State-owned assets to shore up pension funds and propping up the wobbly stock market and the crisis-hit property sector to increase households' investment earnings.

"We have to increase household incomes, we have to boost transfers to low-income groups, but we've seen wage cuts," said a second adviser.

He added household demand has taken on more importance at upcoming five-year plan with discussions focusing on whether China should set a specific consumption target.

U.S. SEC's guidance is first step for rules governing crypto ETFs

Reuters

New U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission guidance on disclosure requirements for exchange-traded products tied to cryptocurrencies marked the first step toward approval of dozens of applications for ETFs linked to everything from Solana and XRP to President Donald Trump's eponymous meme coin.

The guidance, issued last Tuesday, signaled a dramatic shift by Republican leadership in how the top U.S. markets regulator deals with the crypto sector. The SEC has launched a task force to draft new regulations, refocused its crypto enforcement team and paused or altogether walked away from high-profile enforcement cases that many thought the agency was winning.

The 12-page document is the first part of the new landscape for crypto funds that SEC staff members are designing. Asset managers also anticipate guidance from the SEC's division of trading and markets on ways to streamline the application process, said people familiar with the discussions. This should accelerate the pace for new product debuts.



New era: The document is the first part of the new landscape for crypto funds that SEC staff members are designing. REUTERS

Creating framework

"The SEC is moving forward on creating a framework for how they'd like to see all these crypto assets included in investment funds" to address the "explosion" in the number of ETFs now awaiting a regulatory verdict, said Sui Chung, CEO of crypto index provider CF Benchmarks. Industry participants said they saw few surprises so far.

"The most interesting and important thing about this guidance is it exists," said Matt Hougan, chief investment officer of Bitwise Asset Management, which has more than half a dozen crypto ETFs awaiting SEC approval.

"It suggests that the SEC acknowledges that crypto ETPs are becoming part of the mainstream and so it's trying to lay down rules of the road to save both issuers and SEC staff time and hassle."

The SEC guidance spells out that in order to be approved, issuers must clearly address, in "plain English", all factors that make crypto-based ETFs distinctive, such as custody arrangements and risks of the hyper-competitive landscape. The next document, however, is likely to prove more significant.

According to several people familiar with the ongoing discussions, who could not speak publicly due to the confidentiality of those proceedings, the SEC staff is seeking to create a new listing template to replace the current need for exchanges to submit a special form each time they want to list a new crypto product.

That form, known as a 19(b)4, asks for an exemption from current listing rules for the specific ETF. Eliminating that from the process could cut the time between filing and launch dates from as much as 240 days to only 75 days.

"The SEC is looking for a general rule it can apply to all listings, and currently is going back and forth on precise wording with the exchanges," said a senior executive at one issuer, who added he expected that exchanges will submit that kind of general filing within "days or weeks." Officials at the Nasdaq Stock Market and Cboe declined to comment on these talks; the New York Stock Exchange did not respond to requests for comment.

A spokesperson for the SEC also declined comment on the discussions. While ETFs tied to the spot prices of everything from coins like XRP, Polkadot, Dogecoin and the Trump meme coin await an SEC verdict, issuers expect the next batch of crypto products will be tied to Solana, the world's sixth-largest cryptocurrency.

That likely will not happen until after the SEC has rolled out the second part of its guidance, pushing the launch date into early autumn, issuers said.

Some asset managers are not waiting. Last week, REX Financial and Osprey Funds used a more indirect and complex approach to launch the first U.S. ETF to give investors exposure to Solana, the REX-Osprey Sol + Staking ETF . In contrast to the half-dozen spot Solana ETFs awaiting approval, it invests in a separate entity that in turn will own both Solana and a non-U.S. Solana fund. That structure means REX can bypass the rules governing those commodity funds and leapfrog other issuers, as well as offering investors access to yield via the cryptocurrency "staking" mechanism.

In staking, cryptocurrency holders volunteer to take part in validating transactions on the blockchain, checking that the ledger all adds up. In return, validators either receive a share of the transaction fee or newly-created cryptocurrencies.

DUBAI

Yemen's Houthis launch missiles in response to Israel's air strikes



REUTERS

Israel's military launched air strikes early on Monday targeting ports and facilities held by Yemen's Houthi rebels, who responded with missile fire targeting Israel. The strikes came after an attack on Sunday targeting a Liberian-flagged ship in the Red Sea that caught fire and took on water, later forcing its crew to abandon it. AFP

MORRISTOWN

Trump slams former ally Elon Musk's political party as 'ridiculous'



REUTERS

U.S. President Donald Trump slammed former ally Elon Musk's launching of a new political party as "ridiculous", after the tech billionaire said he wanted to challenge the United States' "one-party system." "Third parties have never worked. So he can have fun with it, but I think it's ridiculous," Mr. Trump said. AFP

SLUBICE

Poland reinstates border controls with Germany and Lithuania



AFP

Poland reinstated border controls with Germany and Lithuania, following similar German restrictions imposed earlier this year aimed at discouraging asylum-seekers. Pressure has been mounting after far-right groups alleged that Germany was transporting migrants into Polish territory after they reached Western Europe. AP

WASHINGTON

U.S. revokes 'foreign terrorist group' designation for Syria's HTS



AP

The U.S. said it was revoking its designation as a "foreign terrorist organisation" of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a group once linked to al-Qaeda that took control of Syria in December. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio made the announcement in a memo, with the move to formally take effect on Tuesday. AFP

At least 10 killed, 38 injured as Russia launches over 100 drones at Ukraine

Kremlin dismisses its transportation chief after a weekend of travel chaos; Moscow captures its first village in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region; Kyiv signs deals with European allies and a U.S. defence company to step up drone production

Associated Press
KYIV

Russia fired more than 100 drones at civilian areas of Ukraine overnight, authorities said on Monday, as the Kremlin dismissed its transportation chief after a weekend of travel chaos when airports grounded hundreds of flights during the busy vacation season due to the threat of attacks from Kyiv.

At least 10 civilians were killed and 38 injured, including three children, in Russian attacks over the previous 24 hours, Ukrainian officials said.

Russia said it captured its first village in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region after grinding towards the border for months, dealing a psychological blow for Kyiv as its worries mount.



Smouldering house: A building hit by Russian drone strike in Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine on Monday. REUTERS

The Russian Defence Ministry said its forces captured the village of Dachne in the Dnipropetrovsk region, an important industrial mining territory that has also come under mounting Russian air attacks.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday that Ukraine had signed deals with European allies and a leading U.S. defence company to step up drone production, ensuring Kyiv receives "hundreds of thousands" more this year.

"Air defence is the main thing for protecting life," Mr. Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram on Monday. That includes developing and manufacturing interceptor drones that can stop Russia's long-range Shahed drones, he said.

Extensive use of drones has also helped Ukraine compensate for its troop shortages on the front line.

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed Transport Minister Roman Starovoyt on Monday, who later killed himself. His body was found in the Moscow suburb of Odintsovo. Mr. Putin named Mr. Starovoyt's deputy, Andrey Nikitin, as Acting Transport Minister. Nikitkin was the governor of Russia's Novgorod region until February.

Over the weekend, hundreds of flights were canceled or delayed at Moscow's Sheremetyevo and St. Petersburg's Pulkovo airports, and thousands of travelers faced long waits. Other airports in western and central Russia also faced disruptions because of Ukrainian drone attacks.

Iran President is still open to talks with U.S., accuses Israel of assassination attempt

Reuters
WASHINGTON

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said he believes Iran can resolve its differences with the United States through dialogue, but trust would be an issue after U.S. and Israeli attacks on his country, according to an interview released on Monday.

"I am of the belief that we could very much easily resolve our differences and conflicts with the U.S. through talks," Mr. Pezeshkian told conservative U.S. podcaster Tucker Carlson in an interview conducted on Saturday.

The Iranian leader urged U.S. President Donald Trump not to be drawn into war with Iran by Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu, who is visiting Washington on Monday for talks at the White House.



Masoud Pezeshkian

"The United States' President, Mr. Trump, he is capable enough to guide the region towards peace and a brighter future and put Israel in its place. Or get into a pit, an endless pit, or a swamp," Mr. Pezeshkian said. "So it is up to the United States President to choose which path," he added.

'Blame on Israel'

He blamed Israel, Iran's arch-enemy, for the collapse of talks that were in place when Israel began its strikes on Iran on June 13, starting a 12-day air war with Israel in which top Iranian commanders and nuclear scientists were killed. "How are we going to trust the U.S. again?" Mr. Pezeshkian said. "How can we know for sure that in the middle of the talks the Israeli regime will not be given the permission again to attack us?"

Mr. Pezeshkian also said that Israel tried to assassinate him. "They did try, yes," he said. "They acted accordingly, but they failed."

Bangladesh lawyers seek to quash ex-PM Hasina's murder trial

Agence France-Presse
DHAKA

State-appointed defence lawyers sought on Monday to throw out the charges against Bangladesh's convicted former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her crimes against humanity trial.

Up to 1,400 people were killed between July and August last year, according to the United Nations, when Ms. Hasina's government ordered a crackdown on protesters in a failed bid to cling to power.

Ms. Hasina, 77, fled to India at the culmination of the student-led uprising in August and has defied orders to return to Dhaka, where her trial in absentia opened on June 1.

"I sought discharge from all the allegations... as they appear false, fabricated and politically motivated," Md Amir Hossain said. He added that he had not been able to speak to Ms. Hasina directly.

Prosecutors say that Ms. Hasina held overall command responsibility for the violence. Prosecutors have filed five charges against her – including failure to prevent mass murder – which amount to crimes against humanity under Bangladeshi law. The trial resumes on July 10.

Ms. Hasina was already convicted of contempt of court in a separate case on July 2, receiving a six-month sentence.

Nairobi unrest



A protester sits on the road during the Saba Saba Day demonstrations on the outskirts of Nairobi on Monday. Ten persons were killed in clashes with the police during demonstrations commemorating the 1990 pro-democracy protests. . GETTY IMAGES

Trump slaps allies Japan and South Korea with 25% tariffs

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

President to sign an order delaying the deadline for steeper tariffs to take effect from August 1

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday he was slapping 25% tariffs on Japan and South Korea, in his first letters to trading partners ahead of a deadline to reach a deal with Washington.

Mr. Trump had said at the weekend that starting from Monday he would send a first batch of up to 15 letters to countries informing them that he would reimpose harsh levies that he had postponed in April.

In near-identically worded letters to the Japanese and South Korean leaders, Trump said the tariffs would apply from August 1 because their trading relationships with Washington were "unfortunately, far from Reciprocal."

Mr. Trump warned the countries, both key U.S. allies in Asia, of an escalation if they responded to the new U.S. tariffs.

But he also said he was ready to modify levies "downwards" if Japan and South Korea changed their trade policies.

Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said on Sunday that he "won't easily compromise" in trade talks with Washington.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters on Monday that Mr. Trump would sign an order later in the day to delay his July 9 deadline for steeper tariffs to take effect – postponing their imposition to August 1.

She added that besides Japan and South Korea, there would be approximately 12 other partners receiving letters from Mr. Trump soon.

With the deadline extension, Ms. Leavitt said Mr. Trump would be setting out the "reciprocal tariff rate" for economies in the coming month as negotiations continue.

Mr. Trump originally announced sweeping tariffs on world economies on what he called "Liberation Day" on April 2, claiming the United States was being "ripped off."

Amid market turmoil, Mr. Trump then suspended the initial tariffs for 90 days, a deadline that expires on Wednesday.

But the Trump administration has said that the duties will not "boomerang" back until August 1, apparently extending the deadline despite denials from officials.

While the Trump administration has signalled hopes of striking dozens of deals by early July – at one point boasting of "90 deals in 90 days" – there have been limited results so far.

Washington has unveiled pacts with only Britain and Vietnam, while the United States and China agreed to temporarily lower tariff levels on each other's products that earlier reached three-digits.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said there would be a number of deals coming up.

"We are going to have several announcements in the next 48 hours," Mr. Bessent told *CNBC*.

Macron due in U.K., as London tries to balance ties with Europe, U.S.

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

French President Emmanuel Macron and First Lady Brigitte Macron are due to arrive in London on Tuesday for a state visit, hosted by Britain's monarch Charles III and the Queen, Camilla.

This is the first European head of state to be hosted by King Charles on a State visit, and an indication that the ties between London and Paris, which were under strain due to Britain's departure from the EU, have thawed.

The King and Queen were last hosted by the Macrons in Paris in September 2023.

While business is transacted during State visits, the ceremonial aspects and State dinner are instruments of the host country's soft power and used to bolster culture ties between the countries.

Three-day visit

The three-day visit will culminate in a summit level meeting led by Mr. Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Thursday.

The visit comes at a time when the U.K. is trying to balance its ties with the EU and the U.S., as President Donald Trump has overseen a downgrading of ties between the U.S. and the EU.

Anglo-French security and defence ties, which are governed by the Lancaster House treaties of 2010, will be updated during the summit, as per a statement by French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot in France's National Assembly.



The visit will end in a summit level meeting led by Emmanuel Macron and Keir Starmer on Thursday. FILE PHOTO

Mr. Barrot cited London and Paris cooperating on Ukraine's defence (by leading a group of mostly European countries called the 'Coalition of the Willing').

Mr. Barrot also mentioned the two countries coordinating their responses on Iran along with Germany, which, according to him, paved the way for negotiations (i.e., the June 20 negotiations in Geneva).

Mr. Barrot also highlighted cooperation on the crisis in Sudan.

The visit will also see politically sensitive issues discussed – such as fishing and migration.

The U.K. and the EU recently concluded an agreement allowing reciprocal access to fishing waters until 2038.

First programmes

On Tuesday, the French first couple will be welcomed on arrival by Prince William and Catherine Middleton, the Prince and Princess of Wales, before being taken to Windsor Castle, just outside London, where they will be hosted by the King and the Queen.

The visit will include a carriage ride through the town of Windsor and a state dinner. Mr. Macron is scheduled to address the U.K. parliament on Wednesday.

Trump invite

Mr. Trump, who has expressed a fondness for the British Royal Family, has also been invited to the U.K. on a state visit, his second such visit, since 2019, when he was hosted by Queen Elizabeth.

The Republican leader's second visit to France is expected in September, though no dates have been announced.



A soldier questions a man on a motorcycle near the Malian border in the Kedougou region. AFP

Ambushes, mines, kidnappings: the Sahel's roads of fear

Agence France-Presse
ABIDJAN

In the Sahel, a region plagued by jihadist violence, there are roads people steer clear of and others they travel on with their heart in their mouth.

Such was the case for Moussa, when in March he had to take his mother's body to another village for burial, forcing him onto National route 15 in central Mali. While on it, he witnessed a terrifying scene – jihadists on motorcycles, armed with military-grade weapons, their heads wrapped in turbans, kidnapping passengers from a bus.

Africa's turbulent Sahel region, sometimes referred to as the global epicentre of terrorism, has been plagued by violence from jihadist groups linked to al-Qaeda or the Islamic State for more than a decade.

According to a recent OECD report, "70% of violent events and 65% of fatalities in North and West Africa occur within just one kilometre of a road". In the central Sahel – as well as the Lake Chad basin and western Cameroon – some roads "have become epicentres of violence", the report said, disrupting financial trade and governance.

"Transport routes have become a prime target for attacks against government forces, particularly military convoys, and a means to pressure rural communities," said Olivier Walther, a co-author of the study, adding that jihadists regularly set up roadblocks around towns.

Road insecurity "is directly linked to the spread of jihadist insurgencies" in the region, Mr. Walther, an associate professor at the University of Florida, said.

With 433 recorded incidents since 2012, he said Mali's National route 16 connecting Mopti in central Mali to Gao in the north, is "by far" the most dangerous transport axis.

Brazil's carbon credit project turns into profit source for illegal loggers

Of 36 conservation projects in the Amazon offering voluntary carbon offsets on the global market's biggest registries, at least 24 involved landowners, developers or forestry firms that have been punished by Brazil's environmental agency Ibama for their roles in illegal deforestation

Reuters
PORTO VELHO



An aerial view shows cattle grazing on land cleared of forest near Porto Velho, Brazil. Over the past 50 years, the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, has lost about a fifth of its tree cover. REUTERS

Companies around the world have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into conservation projects in Brazil designed to protect the Amazon rainforest in return for carbon credits offsetting their emissions.

Reuters found that many of those projects are profiting people and businesses fined by Brazilian authorities for destroying the rainforest.

Reporters analysed 36 conservation projects in the Brazilian Amazon offering voluntary carbon offsets on the global market's biggest registries. At least 24 of those involved landowners, developers or forestry firms that have been punished by Brazil's environmental agency Ibama for their roles in illegal deforestation.

The offences ranged from clear-cutting the rainforest without authorisation to transporting felled trees without valid permits and entering false information in a government timber tracking system. Government officials and experts said these infractions reflected the range of roles in the illicit timber trade devouring the rainforest.

'Failure of idea'

In 20 of the conservation projects Ibama had fined key players for deforestation before they were listed with a carbon credit registry.

"It's a failure of the whole idea," said Raoni Rajao, who ran the Brazilian Environment Ministry's programme combating deforestation until December. By paying people with a track record of violating environmental law, he said, the carbon market may be funding groups engaged in illegal deforestation. "They might be reducing deforestation in one place, but increasing emissions somewhere else with those same resources," said Rajao.

Brazil levies fines to enforce laws putting strict limits on deforestation since 2008 in the Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, which has lost about a fifth of its original tree cover over the past half century. Scientists warn further deforestation could release catastrophic quantities of planet-warming carbon dioxide. That has made the Amazon an important part of the voluntary carbon market.

In this market, projects that show they are reducing greenhouse emissions – for example, by avoiding deforestation in parts of the rainforest – can generate carbon credits, each one equivalent to a tonne of carbon dioxide saved. Polluters can then voluntarily buy the carbon credits to compensate for their own emissions.

The referees setting the standards in that global market are accrediting firms such as non-profit Verra, the world's largest carbon credit registry, and its Colombian rival Cercarbono. They run systems certifying whether a project is reducing emissions as promised.

Buyers of credits from the projects include multinationals such as U.S. planemaker Boeing, Spanish telecom Telefonica and Colombian oil producer Ecopetrol. Buyers typically rely on accrediting firms for quality control.

Boeing said it had acquired carbon offsets that met widely recognised science-based standards. Telefonica said it is part of a corporate working group that aims to strengthen the integrity of the voluntary carbon credit market. Ecopetrol declined to comment. Brazil's Environment Ministry, which oversees Ibama, said the agency's enforcement database offers a reliable public record of environmental infractions, which "can and should" be used to verify the effectiveness of conservation projects selling carbon credits.

Doctor turned logger

One of the biggest names in the Brazilian carbon credit market over the past five years was Ricardo Stoppe Junior. He was arrested in June 2024, as part of a federal police probe called "Operation Greenwashing," accused of leading a vast illegal logging scheme.

Stoppe billed himself for years as the world's leading carbon credit entrepreneur - a Brazilian doctor who said he put aside saving lives to help save 10,000 sq km of the Amazon rainforest. Since 2020, he has sold an estimated $15 million worth of credits, according to AlliedOffsets.

Stoppe's success in the carbon market came despite public records showing Ibama fines against him and his partners since 2014 for deforestation-related offenses.

A confidential 302-page report documents how authorities concluded he used his carbon projects to fund a criminal scheme that bribed public officials to forge land titles and launder more than a million cubic meters of illegally felled rainforest timber.

A federal judge ordered the preventative arrest of Stoppe and four associates last year for their alleged roles in a criminal organisation responsible for illegal logging and land grabs.

Lawyers disputed federal police accusations and denied wrongdoing by their clients. They have since been released to house arrest.

In his first interview after five months in jail, Stoppe denied taking part in a criminal venture.

He attributed the allegations against him to failed oversight by business partners and bad faith by investigators.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is working to position Brazil as a global leader in "green" development, which will be in the spotlight when the country hosts the United Nations climate summit in November.

Seeking to meet its commitments under the 2016 Paris Agreement on climate change, Brazil passed a law last year to create a government-regulated carbon market in the country, like those in Europe, China and California. As it takes effect in coming years, the law will require Brazilian industry to reduce greenhouse emissions or pay to offset them in a regulated market, which will include conservation projects selling carbon credits.

The government is also encouraging carbon credit projects that actively restore damaged biomes rather than pay landowners for avoided deforestation.

Pakistan start-up ships prosthetics to child war survivors in Gaza

Reuters
KARACHI



A technician checks a prosthetic limb at Bioniks Private Limited, which provides prosthetics to Gaza conflict victims. REUTERS

As soon as eight-year-old Sidra Al Bordeeni returned from the clinic with her prosthetic arm, she jumped on a bicycle in the Jordanian refugee camp where she lives, riding for the first time since a missile strike in Gaza took her arm a year ago.

Sidra was injured while sheltering at Nuseirat School, one of several Gaza schools converted into makeshift refuges from Israeli strikes. Her mother, Sabreen Al Bordeeni, said Gaza's collapsed health services and the family's inability to leave at the time made it impossible to save her hand.

"She's out playing, and all her friends and siblings are fascinated by her arm," Al Bordeeni said.

The arm was built over 4,000 km away in Karachi by Bioniks, a Pakistani company that uses a smartphone app to take pictures from different angles and create a 3D model for custom prosthetics.

CEO Anas Niaz said the social enterprise startup had fit more than 1,000 custom-designed arms inside Pakistan since 2021 – funded through a mix of patient payments, corporate sponsorship, and donations – but this was its first time providing prosthetics to those impacted in conflict.

Sidra and three-year-old Habebat Allah, who lost both her arms and a leg in Gaza, went through days of remote consultations and virtual fittings.

Sidra's device was funded by Mafaz Clinic in Amman, while donations from Pakistanis paid for Habebat's.

Niaz said each prosthetic arm costs about $2,500, significantly less than the $10,000 to $20,000 for alternatives made in the United States.

Globally, most advanced prosthetics are designed for adults and rarely reach children in war zones, who need lighter limbs and replacements every 12-18 months as they grow.

Sidra is still adjusting to her new hand.

"What I'm looking forward to most is using both my arms to finally hug my father when I see him," she said.

Ocean's voices



An inflatable octopus set up by Greenpeace activists is seen in Berlin on Monday. The installation protesting deep-sea mining coincided with the International Seabed Authority meeting in Jamaica. Activists urged the German government to adopt a moratorium. AFP

'Executions in Saudi Arabia reach a record high mostly over drug cases'

Associated Press
DUBAI

Executions in Saudi Arabia surged last year to a record high, Amnesty International said on Monday, as activists increasingly warn about the kingdom's use of the death penalty in nonviolent drug cases.

Saudi Arabia executed 345 people last year, the highest number ever recorded by Amnesty in over three decades of reporting. In the first six months of this year alone, 180 people have been put to death, the group said, signalling that the record likely will again be broken.

This year, about two-thirds of those executed were convicted on nonlethal drug charges, the activist group Reprieve said separately. Amnesty also has raised similar concerns about executions in drug cases.

Saudi Arabia has not offered any comment on why it increasingly employs the death penalty in the kingdom. Saudi officials did not respond to detailed questions from *The Associated Press* about the executions and why it is using the death penalty for nonviolent drug cases.

However, it conflicts with comments from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's day-to-day ruler, who in 2022 highlighted he limited its use to just homicide cases.

"Well about the death penalty, we got rid of all of it, except for one category, and this one is written in the Quran, and we cannot do anything about it, even if we wished to do something, because it is clear teaching in the Quran," the Prince told *The Atlantic*.

Foreigners executed

Saudi Arabia is one of several countries in the West Asia, including Iran, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates, that can levy the death penalty on drug-related charges. But the kingdom remains one of the world's top executioners behind only China and Iran – and its use of executions in drug cases appears to be fuelling that.



Saudi Arabia is one of several countries in West Asia that can levy the death penalty on drug-related charges. ISTOCKPHOTO

Amnesty documented the cases of 25 foreign nationals who are currently on death row, or were recently executed, for drug-related offences. In those cases, Amnesty said the inmates on death row were not familiar with the legal system nor their rights, and had limited to no legal representation. Foreign nationals faced additional challenges when trying to secure a fair trial, Amnesty said. More than half of those executed this year in the kingdom were foreign nationals, according to Reprieve.

One such national, Egyptian Essam Ahmed, disappeared in 2021 while working on a fishing boat in Sinai. A month later, his family received word he had been detained in Saudi Arabia and sentenced to death for drug trafficking. Ahmed claims he was forced by the boat's owner to carry a package for him at gunpoint.

"We're living in terror, we're scared every morning," said a family member of Ahmed's.

The family member added: "We don't have feelings. We're dead. Death would be easier. ... They didn't even give me a chance to defend him and I don't know what to do."

Human rights groups for years have been critical of Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

There also have been rapid societal changes in Saudi Arabia under King Salman and the crown prince. While pushing for women to drive, the kingdom has overseen the arrest of women's rights activists. While calling for foreign investment, Saudi Arabia also has imprisoned businessmen, royals and others in a crackdown on corruption that soon resembled a shakedown of the kingdom's most powerful people.

In 2021, as part of the crown prince's criminal justice overhaul, Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission announced a moratorium on drug-related executions. The moratorium, however, remained in place for just under three years, before it was scrapped without an explanation.

The executions also come as the kingdom continues to undertake bold reforms to diversify its economy as part of its "Vision 2030" initiative.

BACK IN THE MIX

England adds speedster Atkinson to the squad for Lord's Test



GETTY IMAGES

England on Sunday added pacer Gus Atkinson to its squad for the third Test against India. **The squad:** Ben Stokes (Capt.), Jofra Archer, Gus Atkinson, Shoaib Bashir, Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook, Brydon Carse, Sam Cook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Jamie Overton, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Jamie Smith, Josh Tongue and Chris Woakes.

SPEED FACTOR

Hugely exciting to have Archer in the team, says coach McCullum



AP

England coach Brendon McCullum says Jofra Archer is "ready to go" for the third Test against India. "It's hugely exciting, he's buzzing as well," said McCullum, adding that he wants "a pitch with a bit more pace, a bit more bounce, and maybe a little bit of sideways movement" from MCC head groundsman Karl McDermott at Lord's.

GOOD DAY

Vantika, Padmini and Nandhidhaa advance at Women's World Cup



FILE PHOTO

India's Vantika Agrawal, *in pic.*, Padmini Rout and P.V. Nandhidhaa entered the round of 64 at the FIDE Women's World Cup on Monday. **Indian results (round one):** Yuxin (Chn) bt Kiran Manisha Mohanty 1.5-0.5; Shohradova (Tkm) lost to Vantika 0.5-1.5; Padmini bt Zhang (Chn) 2-0; Ortiz Verdezoto (Ecu) lost to Nandhidhaa 0-2.

LIGHTNING FAST

Belgian Merlier wins crash-marred Tour de France stage three



AFP

Belgian Tim Merlier pipped Italian Jonathan Milan right at the line to win stage three of the Tour de France at Dunkirk on Monday, as Mathieu van der Poel retained the lead. The stage was marred by a series of falls, but T. Pogacar and J. Vingegaard finished second and third overall behind Van der Poel.

Siraj, Akash make the ball talk on a lifeless Edgbaston pitch

The two destroy England by claiming 17 of the 20 wickets in lead pacer Bumrah's absence as India pulls level in the series; the fast-bowling pair's ability to strike under constricting circumstances and small windows speak volumes about their skill

INDIA IN ENGLAND

N. Sudarshan
BIRMINGHAM

The mark of a top sportsperson is to excel when faced with severe limitations. In the just-concluded second Test that India won by 336 runs against England, Mohammed Siraj and Akash Deep proved that they were of that variety.

On a mostly lifeless Edgbaston pitch, the fast-bowling pair destroyed England by claiming 17 of the 20 wickets.

Siraj secured a match haul of seven for 127 while Akash a career-best 10 for 187.

Near-zero swing

The conditions were nowhere close to what one expects in the Old Blighty. There was little seam movement and near-zero swing, and the Dukes ball appeared to lose shape after 20-odd overs.

To strike under constricted circumstances and small windows spoke volumes of their skill. In football terms, it was like having an Expected Goals metric of 1, which means you score a goal with every chance you create.

Until the start of the Birmingham Test, only Jasprit Bumrah was said to possess this quality. Leeds, where India lost the opening Test by five wickets, bore testament to this. And when India chose to rest the 31-year-old for the second tie to manage his workload better, it seemed like a costly gamble.



Breathing fire: Siraj and Akash combined to wreck England in the second Test. GETTY IMAGES

Brand new cherry

It was to Siraj's and Akash's credit that it paid off as India maximised its opportunities while bowling with a brand new cherry.

In the first innings, the duo left England reeling at 25 for three (7.1 overs) and then 84 for five (21.4) before taking the second new ball at 80.2 overs and gobbling up the last five batters for just 20 runs (89.3). In the second essay, it was 50 for three (10.2) and 83 for five (21.3).

If one needed a stamping-of-the-authority moment, it was Akash's dismissal of talisman Joe Root late on Saturday, the wicket captain Shubman Gill said was the turning point. The ball straightened after being delivered from slightly wide and rattled the off-stump to leave Root nearly floored. Akash then gestured with his hand that he was here to stay.

Pleasing sign

"It is a pleasing sign from a growing bowling attack," India bowling coach Morne Morkel said on that day.

"Akash is an attacking bowler who asks questions by bowling at the stumps a lot. That's one of the golden rules here in England – to ask questions in the [line of the] stumps. Coming back from his [back] injury and running in with high pace... it's a nice sign for us."

Tireless operator

For Siraj, the five-wicket performance in the first innings (six for 70) would have brought great relief.

A tireless operator who played all five Tests in Australia in the most recent Border-Gavaskar Trophy, he has often lacked luck.

The 31-year-old took 20 wickets Down Under but not one five-wicket haul. The Edgbaston effort was his first five-for in 15 Tests since the six for 15 against South Africa in Cape Town in January 2024.

"He will always push his body to the limit," Morkel said of Siraj. "Sometimes the guilty part of him is trying too hard. It's about managing the aggression and intensity because he really bowls with his heart on his sleeve.

"In a match where he's the leader of the attack, he got the wickets. But in terms of effort and energy, and with a sore body, he will always put his hand up. I don't think we give him enough credit for that," the South African added.



Mammoth knock: Skipper Mulder's unbeaten 367 is the fifth-highest score in Tests.

Mulder declares 33 short of Lara's 400!

SA IN ZIMBABWE

Associated Press
BULAWAYO

Wiaan Mulder sacrificed a shot at one of cricket's most hallowed records to start mopping up Zimbabwe in the second Test at Queens Sports Club on Monday.

The South Africa captain was on 367, just 33 runs away from tying the highest individual Test score, Brian Lara's 400 not out 21 years ago, when he stopped his epic innings and declared at lunch with South Africa on 626 for five.

He then chipped in with two wickets in consecutive overs and a catch to bowl out Zimbabwe for 170, enforced the follow-on, and had Zimbabwe 51 for one in the second innings at stumps.

Already 1-0 up in the short series, South Africa was 405 runs ahead and gearing toward wrapping up another three-day win on Tuesday.

Mulder finished with the fifth-highest score in Tests, and the highest by a South African. Mulder's 334-ball knock (49x4, 4x6) came in just under seven hours.

> Firstly, I thought we had enough and we needed to bowl. Secondly, Brian Lara is a legend. For someone of that stature to keep that record is deserved
> MULDER

"Firstly, I thought we had enough and we needed to bowl.

"Secondly, Brian Lara is a legend. For someone of that stature to keep that record is deserved," Mulder said after stumps.

"If I get the chance to do it again, I'd do it exactly the same way. I spoke to Shuks (Shukri Conrad), and he felt the same way. Brian Lara is a legend, and he deserves to keep that record."

Lara remains the only batter to score 400 in a Test innings, which he achieved against England at Antigua in 2004.

The scores:
South Africa 626/5 decl. in 114 overs (Mulder 367 n.o.) vs Zimbabwe 170 in 43 overs (Williams 83 n.o., Subrayen 4/42) & 51/1 in 16 overs.

SNAPSHOTS

World Boxing extends BFI's interim committee till August 31

NEW DELHI: World Boxing, impressed by the steps taken to ensure transparency and stability in the Indian boxing administration, has extended the tenure of the Boxing Federation of India's (BFI) interim committee till August 31.

The interim committee, headed by Ajay Singh, was appointed in April this year to manage the day-to-day affairs of boxing in India.

Since its appointment, the committee has conducted structured National championships, followed by international tournaments across all age groups (under-15, under-17 and elite), adopting an 'athletes first' approach during its initial 90-day term.

In a letter addressed to Ajay on Monday, World Boxing president Boris van der Vorst congratulated the interim committee for their 'athletes first' approach that has ensured continuous participation of Indian boxers in major international events with podium finishes.

Consolation win for England under-19

WORCESTER: England u-19 defeated India u-19 by seven wickets in the fifth and final one-dayer on Monday.

India clinched the series 3-2.

The scores:
India u-19 210/9 in 50 overs (Suryavanshi 33, Ambrish 66 n.o.) lost to England u-19 211/3 in 31.1 overs (Dawkins 66, Mayes 82 n.o., Rew 49 n.o.).
Toss: India.

Djokovic and Alcaraz battle their way ahead

WIMBLEDON

Agencies
LONDON

Novak Djokovic overcame a sluggish start against Alex de Minaur to reach his 16th Wimbledon quarterfinal under the gaze of eight-time winner Roger Federer on Monday.

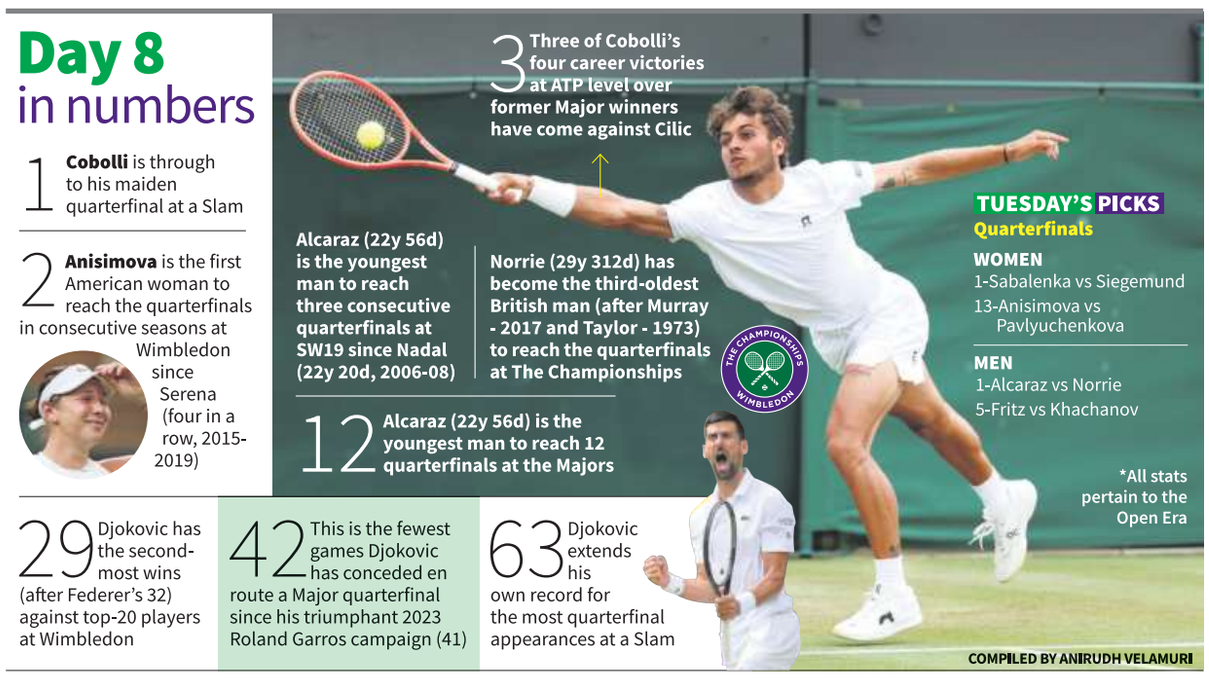
The Serb was lethargic and unusually tentative in the early stages of his last 16 match against the Australian 11th seed on Centre Court but eventually found his rhythm to win 1-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

Djokovic will play 22nd seed Flavio Cobolli in the last eight. Cobolli held off a fightback from the 2017 runner-up Marin Cilic to win 6-4, 6-4, 6-7(4), 7-6(3).

Later, American 10th seed Ben Shelton reached the quarterfinals for the first time with a 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (1), 7-5 victory over Italian Lorenzo Sonego.

In the women's section, the 18-year-old Mirra Andreeva powered her way into her first Wimbledon quarterfinal with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Emma Navarro and became the youngest player in the last eight of women's singles since 2005. Russian 19th seed Liudmila Samsonova also booked her first-ever Grand Slam quarterfinal berth, beating Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 7-5, 7-5.

On Sunday, Carlos Alcaraz found his best form after a shaky start to beat Andrey Rublev 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 and set up a last eight meeting with Cameron Norrie. Meanwhile, Yuki Bhambri's campaign ended on Monday after he lost his doubles third round match. The Indian had crashed out of the mixed doubles on Sunday.



THE RESULTS

Men: Fourth round: 10-Shelton (USA) bt Sonego (Ita) 3-6, 6-1, 7-6(1), 7-5; 6-Djokovic (Srb) bt 11-de Minaur (Aus) 1-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4; 22-Cobolli (Ita) bt Cilic (Cro) 6-4, 6-4, 6-7(4), 7-6 (3); 2-Alcaraz (Esp) bt 14-Rublev (Rus) 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Doubles: Third round: 4-Granollers (Esp) & Zeballos (Arg) bt 16-Yuki (Ind) & Galloway (USA) 6-4, 3-6, 7-6(4).
Women: Fourth round: 7-Andreeva (Rus) bt 10-Navarro (USA) 6-2, 6-3; 19-Samsonova (Rus) bt Bouzas (Esp) 7-5, 7-5; Bencic (Sui) bt 18-Alexandrova (Rus) 7-6(4), 6-4; 13-Anisimova (USA) bt 30-Noskova (Cze) 6-2, 5-7, 6-4.
Mixed doubles: Third round: 2-Zhang (Chn) & Arevalo-Gonzalez (ESA) bt Yuki (Ind) & Xinyu (Chn) 7-6(6), 6-3.

Amritraj enthused by Sinner-Alcaraz rivalry

C. Shyam Sundar

Tennis legend Vijay Amritraj says he believes that the rivalry between World No. 1 Jannik Sinner and No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz has the potential to reach great heights.

"I think the Sinner-Alcaraz rivalry has developed into a good one as the last six Grand Slams have been won between them," said Amritraj, a JioStar Wimbledon expert, at a virtual media interaction.



Close contests: The Sinner-Alcaraz matches have been a treat to watch for the fans. AP

Who will it be?

Asked if Sinner and Alcaraz had the best chance to win at The Championships this year, he felt that Novak Djokovic's presence had to be taken into consideration.

According to him, the Serb's potential semifinal clash against Sinner, if both make the grade, would be an exciting encounter.

"Djokovic is clearly in the mix at this point, hanging on, especially on grass. So it's going to be interesting to see how the rest of the week progresses. If Djokovic reaches the semifinal and so does Sinner, that would be the match to watch," Amritraj said.

On who (Sinner or Alcaraz) would go on to become a 'bigger' player, Amritraj opined: "It depends so much on injuries, physical capabilities, desire and work ethic. I think both of them have shown beyond reasonable doubt that they have the talent and work ethic at this point.

"It's also a question of remaining physically well and strong," he added.

Amritraj lamented the fact that India did not have any representation in the singles event at this year's Wimbledon. He hoped that the country's top player Sumit Nagal would bounce back from his slump.

Tough, but...

"It can be tough, but it is possible," said Amritraj about Nagal, who has slipped to 296 in the ATP rankings (as of June 30).

INBRIEF



Former Croatia midfielder Rakitic retires aged 37

Former Croatia international Ivan Rakitic, who spent much of his career with Barcelona and Sevilla, announced his retirement from football on Monday aged 37. "Football, you gave me more than I ever dreamed of. You gave me friends, emotions, joy and tears," Rakitic posted on social media. "Now it's time to say goodbye. Thank you, football. For everything." Rakitic, who began his career with Basel and later moved to Schalke, played 106 times for Croatia and started his country's World Cup final loss to France in 2018.



Chennai Bulls wins Equestrian Champions League

Chennai Bulls tallied 109 points for the top spot in the inaugural edition of the Equestrian Champions League, organised by Equine Sports India Federation and Indigenous Horse Society, Tamil Nadu, in Coimbatore on Sunday. Bulls performed well right through and were richer by ₹15 lakh. Pegasus Sports (₹10 lakh) and Golconda Chargers (₹5 lakh) followed in that order.

Final standings: 1. Chennai Bulls 109 pts, 2. Pegasus Sports 97, 3. Golconda Chargers 73, 4. Quantum Reins 66, 5. Bangalore Knights 62, 6. Elite Equestrian 53.

Prithvi Shaw formally joins Maharashtra

Prithvi Shaw, the dashing opener whose fortunes have not been good for sometime, has formally joined Maharashtra in a bid to revive his career. Shaw, who was dropped from Mumbai's team midway through the last season, had obtained the No Objection Certificate from the Mumbai Cricket Association last week. On Monday, the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA) welcomed him aboard. "At this stage of my career, I believe joining the Maharashtra team will help me grow further as a cricketer," Shaw said in a statement.



Sai Kishore to play two matches for Surrey

India left-arm spinner R. Sai Kishore has signed for English county side Surrey for two championship fixtures later this month. He will play for Surrey against Yorkshire (July 22-25) and Durham (July 29-August 1).

Ganemat Sekhon eyes final berth at Shotgun World Cup

Ganemat Sekhon put herself close to the top with the third best score of 96 after four rounds of women's skeet at the Shotgun World Cup in Lonato, Italy, on Monday. Maheshwari Chauhan and Raiza Dhillon had identical score of 93 and found themselves in the 30th and 31st spots respectively. In men's skeet, Bhavtegh Singh Gill shot 98 following rounds of 23, 25, 25 and 25. Asian Games silver medallist Anantjeet Singh Naruka had 95. Mairaj Ahmad Khan had completed three rounds with 73 out of 75.

Brian Campbell clinches John Deere Classic

Brian Campbell won for the second time this year on the PGA Tour, both in a playoff, when he closed with a 4-under 67 and beat Emiliano Grillo with a par on the first extra hole in the John Deere Classic at Silvis (USA). It extended the win-or-bust season for Campbell, who won the Mexico Open in a playoff in late February. He has finished out of the top-30 every tournament except for his two victories.

Silva's Fluminense faces vibrant Chelsea for a place in the final

The Brazilian side comes into the semifinal after an impressive run; the Premier League team gets its first taste of MetLife Stadium

CLUB WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
EAST RUTHERFORD

Chelsea's young side is targeting a place in the final of the Club World Cup when it takes on Fluminense in the last four on Tuesday, with the Brazilian team marshalled by former Blues defender Thiago Silva.

Silva was already a veteran when he signed for Chelsea in 2020 before going on to have an impressive four-year stint at Stamford Bridge.

An impressive run in the tournament has seen Fluminense hold Borussia Dortmund in the group stage, eliminate Inter Milan in the last 16 and get the better of Saudi powerhouse Al Hilal in the quarterfinals. "If you had asked me beforehand if we would have got this far, I would have said we were a long way away from doing so," Silva said after the victory over Al Hilal.

Chelsea now gets its first taste of the MetLife Stadium, the hulking 82,500-capacity venue in East Rutherford, New Jersey, just outside New York City.

Many of coach Enzo Maresca's players may not have been sure what to make of FIFA's new tournament which came at the end of a campaign in which it finished fourth in the Premier League and won the UEFA Conference League.

But suddenly the side stands one game from the final, in which it would face either Real Madrid or PSG. With Silva gone, Maresca has been working with a young squad at Chelsea, and the average age of his starting line-up against Palmeiras last Friday was just 24.

There are more young players coming in too, with 23-year-old Brazilian forward Joao Pedro, formerly of Fluminense, making his debut in the quarterfinals.

Brazil prodigy Estevao Willian, 18, will join from Palmeiras ahead of next season and 20-year-old winger Jamie Gittens has just signed from Borussia Dortmund.

Moises Caicedo, the midfield linchpin who is still only 23, will return to the midfield against Fluminense after suspension.

Match starts at 00.30 hrs IST (Wednesday), live on DAZN.



Familiar foe: Silva will have a point to prove against his old club Chelsea. AFP

Mexico wins CONCACAF Gold Cup for record-extending 10th time

Agence France Presse
HOUSTON

Mexico defeated USA 2-1 to retain the CONCACAF Gold Cup and lift the title for a record-extending 10th time on Sunday.

An Edson Alvarez header 13 minutes from time completed a come-from-behind victory for Mexico after a typically hard-fought tussle between the North American arch-rivals.

The win was no less than Mexico deserved after dominating for long periods against Mauricio Pochettino's inexperienced USA side, which went into the tournament missing several first-choice regulars. Jimenez celebrated by producing a shirt bearing the name and number 20 of late former Wolverhampton Wanderers teammate Diogo Jota, the Liverpool and Portugal star who died in a car crash in Spain last week.



Cup of joy: Mexico proved the better side in the title clash. AFP

In the second-half, Mexico looked the more threatening side as USA struggled to create anything at the other end.

The breakthrough finally came though in the 77th minute when Johan Vazquez's flick-on from a free-kick was met by Alvarez who powered a header into the net past Freese.

The result: Final: USA 1 (Chris Richards 4) lost to Mexico 2 (Raul Jimenez 27, Edson Alvarez 77).

Sanjog Gupta named new CEO of ICC

CRICKET

Press Trust of India
DUBAI

Indian media mogul Sanjog Gupta was on Monday named the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Jay Shah-led International Cricket Council (ICC), replacing Australian Geoff Allardice, who stepped down before the Champions Trophy earlier this year citing personal reasons.

Gupta, who was serving as the CEO (Sports & Live Experiences) at JioStar, will be taking charge of his new role with immediate effect. He will be the seventh CEO of the ICC, which said it received more than 2,500 applications from 25 countries from which 12 candidates were shortlisted.



Sanjog Gupta.

The names were forwarded to the Nominations Committee comprising ICC deputy chairman Imran Khwaja, ECB chairman Richard Thompson, SLC president Shammi Silva and BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia.

They recommended Gupta for the role which was approved by ICC chairman Jay Shah.

Mehuli, Kiran and Esha make teams for Asians and World Cup

SHOOTING

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mehuli Ghosh, Kiran Jadhav and Esha Singh are the three shooters common in both the Indian squad for the Asian Championship in Kazakhstan and the World Cup in China.

In the teams announced by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) on Monday, Mehuli makes the Asian team in air rifle, and the World Cup team in rifle 3-position event.

Similarly, Kiran has made the air rifle team for Asian event and the rifle 3-position event for the World Cup.

Suruchi Phogat will compete in the Asian Championship along with Asian Games champion Palak Gulia and double Olympic medallist Manu Bhaker.

Manu will shoot sports pistol as well and will have Esha and Simranpreet Kaur Brar in the team.

Esha will compete in air pistol in the World Cup along with Rhythm Sangwan and Surbhi Rao. The last World Cup in rifle and pistol will be staged in Ningbo, China, from September 7 to 15.

The Asian Championship will be hosted in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, from August 16 to 30.

The teams: Men: World Cup:
Air rifle: Umamahesh Maddineni, Divyansh Singh Panwar, Niraj Kumar.
50m rifle 3-position: Swapnil Kusale, Babu Singh Panwar, Kiran Jadhav.
Air pistol: Amit Sharma, Nishant Rawat, Samrat Rana.
Rapid fire pistol: Bhavesh Shekhawat, Pradeep Shekhawat, Mandeep Singh.
Asian Championship: Air rifle: Rudrankksh Patil, Arjun Babuta, Kiran Jadhav.
50m rifle 3-position: Chain Singh, Akhil Sheoran, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar.
Air pistol: Saurabh Chaudhary, Aditya Malra, Anmol Jain.
Rapid fire pistol: Anish Bhanwala, Neeraj Kumar, Adarsh Singh.
Trap: Lakshay Sheoran, Kynan Chenai, Bhowneesh Mendiratta.
Skeet: Abhay Singh Sekhon, Bhavtegh Singh Gill, Anantjeet Singh Naruka.
Women: World Cup: Air rifle: Ramita Jindal, Meghana Sajjanar, Kashika Pradhan.
50m rifle 3-position: Mehuli Ghosh, Surabhi Bhardwaj, Manini Kaushik. **Air pistol:** Surbhi Rao, Rhythm Sangwan, Esha Singh.
Sports pistol: Rahi Sarnobat, Abhidnya Patil, T.S. Divya.
Asian Championship: Air rifle: Mehuli Ghosh, Elavenil Valarivan, Ananya Naidu.
50m rifle 3-position: Sift Kaur Samra, Ashi Chouksey, Anjum Moudgil.
Air pistol: Suruchi Phogat, Palak Gulia, Manu Bhaker.
Sports pistol: Manu Bhaker, Simranpreet Kaur Brar, Esha Singh.
Trap: Neeru, Aashima Ahlawat, Preeti Rajak.
Skeet: Ganemat Sekhon, Raiza Dhillon, Maheshwari Chauhan.

Durand Cup from July 23 sans some ISL sides

Sports Bureau
KOLKATA

Emami East Bengal FC will take on Bengaluru-based South United FC in the opening fixture of the 134th edition of Durand Cup football tournament which gets underway at the Salt Lake Stadium on July 23.

Positioned as the season-opener of Indian football ever since it moved out of Delhi, the Durand Cup this year will be held across five cities in the East and North Eastern States during group league stage.

The group league stage comprises six groups of four teams each, with every group having six matches. The group winners and two best second-placed teams will progress to the quarterfinals, set for August 16 and 17.

The semifinals are scheduled for August 19 and 20 and the grand finale on August 23. The venues for the knockout rounds are yet to be identified.

Uncertainty

What seems to be taking the sheen out of this year's edition is the absence of many Indian Super League teams, which have been participating in full strength for the last few years. This may have happened due to the uncertainty over the future of the Indian Super League, which has seen many of the franchises holding back the start of their preseason preparations.

Among the ISL teams taking part are the three Kolkata sides – Mohun Bagan Super Giant, Emami East Bengal and Mohammedan Sporting FC - along with Jamshedpur FC, NorthEast United FC and Punjab FC. The other participants include a few sides from the I-League and different services teams.

Coaches see room for improvement after creditable show in World Boxing Cup

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

With the selection for the World championships approaching fast, the Indian boxers' performance in the second World Boxing Cup in Astana, Kazakhstan, has helped the coaches assess the situation well.

Following the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decision to recognise a new international federation (World Boxing) in February and retain boxing in the 2028 Olympics, the newly formed body has scheduled its first World championships in Liverpool from September 4 to 14.

Building up for the elite competition, notwithstanding the fact that Boxing Federation of India is run by an interim committee due to issues over its pending elections, the country's boxers gave their best in Astana and would hope to gain crucial ranking points.

While two-time World youth champion Sakshi Choudhary (54kg), Olympian Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and multiple National champion Nupur Sheoran (80+kg) secured gold, Meenakshi (48kg) and Olympian Pooja Rani (80kg), who returned to action in the National championships, took silver and Sanju (60kg) claimed a bronze.

Among men, Abinash Jamwal (65kg), Hitesh Gulia (70kg) and Jugnoo (85kg) won silver, while Nikhil Dubey (75kg) and Narender Berwal (90+kg) got bronze.

Right track

While praising the boxers' performance in quality fields, featuring Olympians and professional boxers from top nations, women's head coach D. Chandralal said: "We focused on discipline, endurance and strength. Initially, the girls found it difficult but got adjusted to it. We are on the right track, but we have a long way to go.

"Nikhat Zareen, Preeti Pawar have joined the camp, Lovlina (Borgohain) will join. Parveen Hooda will complete her doping ban and will join."

Men's head coach Dharmendra Yadav expressed satisfaction over some boxers' showing. "We tried to instil a positive attitude and self-belief in our boxers and focused on endurance. We need to work on a few areas," said Yadav.

Yadav informed that Worlds medallists Amit Panghal and Deepak Bhoria might not make it to the selection evaluation for the Worlds because of their recent performances.

Of two other Worlds medallists, Mohammed Hussamuddin is on the path of recovery while Nishant Dev, who turned professional in the USA, may return to the National fold later.

Washington — the unsung hero in India's breach of Fortress Edgbaston

The all-rounder's consistent show in the longest format of the game has been a big blessing for the team; his contribution in the second Test, with the willow as well as the red cherry, leaves the management with a happy headache for the third match and beyond

R. Kaushik
LONDON



REUTERS

Ben Stokes shook his head in frustration. Maybe even a little disbelief. For an hour and a half, having embraced a stonewalling avatar, England's captain had kept India's wicket-hungry bowlers at bay when, in the last over before lunch, he was dismissed leg before, by Washington Sundar.

Washington was the last of the five bowlers Shubman Gill pressed into operation on Sunday, the final day of the second Test at Edgbaston. Akash Deep had given India two crucial successes after play began 100 minutes late owing to the weather, but Stokes and Jamie Smith were then defiant. Deep and Prasidh Krishna, Mohammed Siraj and Ravindra Jadeja, were negated with application and focus. India weren't beginning to get itchy, but a blow before lunch... That would be quite something, wouldn't it?

And so, with a little over five minutes to the interval, Gill brought on Washington. It made sense for so many reasons, not least because he would be bowling to a left-hander, with a bit of rough outside the off-stump to play with.

Washington had bowled 14 overs in England's first innings, without any numerical success. This one over before lunch was seen more as an exploratory exercise, to get him into the action more than anything else. That first over was tidy, no more. Then, Jadeja continued his spell from the Birmingham End, ostensibly the last over before lunch was to be taken at 2.30 pm.

Flying under the radar

Cricket is a game of partnerships. The most obvious one pertains to batting and Jadeja was involved in two huge partnerships with Gill - 203 for the sixth wicket in the first innings, 175 for the fifth wicket in the second. But the bowling partnership doesn't get as much credit as its batting counterpart, or as much as it should. In normal course, his six deliveries should have been the last six before the break. But Jadeja bowls in overdrive. In a little over a minute, he had whirled through his over and therefore allowed Washington one more crack at England's embattled skipper.

It hasn't been a summer of batting plenty for the left-hander, whose four preceding scores in Test cricket since late May read 9, 20, 33 and 0 (in the first innings in Birmingham, when he was caught behind off a Siraj lifter, first all). Maybe he had mentally switched off, maybe he was so sure Jadeja's would be the last over before lunch that he allowed his intensity to slacken. Or maybe we are doing Washington a disservice simply because it *appears* as if he doesn't put a great deal of work on the ball and yet often comes up with grand results.

Of the spinners on view in Birmingham, including England's Shoaib Bashir and better-than-part-timer Joe Root, Washington was the one who got the most drift. Perhaps that also worked in the deep recesses of Stokes' mind. To the third delivery of what would certainly be the final over before temporary respite for the hosts, Stokes thrust his right foot forward, the bat trailing in its wake. Delivered from round the stumps, the ball drifted in and held its line on pitching. It's possible Stokes played for non-existent turn but whatever the reason, he met the ball, with his pad, on the move.

It takes a lot to get Washington excited. Such as pinging Ben Stokes in front on the final day of a Test during a push for victory.

The usually controlled young man couldn't hide his delight, whirling towards umpire Saikat, his appeal full of belief and conviction. The Bangladeshi's index finger went up and after a brief consultation with Smith, Stokes chose to review the decision. In hope. In desperate hope. He was *willing* the ball to go on with the arm and miss leg, but in vain. As the three reds flashed on the giant screen, Washington was mobbed by his teammates for a second time in 30 seconds, the game all but in India's bag as England lost their sixth wicket, their captain, and their final recognised pair was dislodged.

Huge moment

To say that that was the turning point of the chase will be neither accurate nor warranted, but it was a huge moment nevertheless in the context of the game. Deep's twin strikes had settled whatever early nerves there might have been, but India might have started to second-guess themselves had Stokes and Smith, who smashed an otherworldly unbeaten 184 in the first essay, been unseparated at stumps. The dressing room might have been a slightly tense place despite more than 50 overs available to them to winkle out the last five wickets. There might have been a few 'what-ifs' thrown in. With that one ball, which was only possible due to Jadeja's manically swift over, Washington had lifted the mood, made sure that the team had a happy lunch, that grumpy faces and furrowed brows were replaced by broad smiles and a sunny outlook.

It wasn't Washington's only contribution in a match that heralded his umpteenth comeback to the Test XI. His inclusion itself had sparked healthy, sometimes heated, debate.

Popular opinion

Popular opinion demanded the inclusion of Kuldeep Yadav, the left-arm wrist-spinner, to offset the unavailability of Jasprit Bumrah, rested to manage his body and space out his workload. Washington wasn't even thought to be in the mix until, two days before the game, assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate acknowledged that playing two spinners was a 'definite' option but that who those two spinners would be was the big question. That was the first indication - to the outside world - that the Tamil Nadu lad was seriously being considered. The team sheet at the toss confirmed the same, the all-rounder's inclusion as much to do with the depth in batting he provided at No. 8 as his incisiveness with the ball.

The wisdom of packing the batting line-up when the need was for wicket-taking options was discussed threadbare outside the dressing room. Inside it, its occupants were convinced the right call had been made, a conviction that grew following the Gill-Washington alliance in the first essay. Almost everyone knows by now that even though India haven't used him in that capacity, Washington was a specialist, top-order batter until a few years back until successive teams started to view him as an off-spinner who could bat.

If Washington felt his batting wasn't getting the credit it deserved, there was nothing he could do other than keep stacking up the big runs that would, hopefully, eventually, alter misconceptions.

It was on the back of his second highest first-class score, a fluent 152 against Delhi in the Ranji Trophy in October last year when he put on 232 for the second wicket with opener Sai Sudharsan, that the 25-year-old was recalled to the Test XI for the first time in three and a half years. Ironically enough, as an off-spinner who could bat. In his first Test since March 2021, he batted at No. 9 and No. 6 respectively against New Zealand in Pune, and at No. 9 and No. 8 in the next Test in Mumbai. 18*, 21, 38* and 12 as the rest of the batting imploded against Mitchell Santner and Ajaz Patel weren't shabby, but also in those two Tests, the off-spinner in Washington shone through as he comfortably outbowled 500-wicket man and Tamil Nadu senior R. Ashwin.



GETTY IMAGES

With 16 wickets in the two Tests, his status as 'bowling all-rounder' - we love these tags, don't we, taking some kind of perverse pleasure in pigeonholing people? - was solidified, never mind if his Test average with the bat is in the 40s. But Washington couldn't care less. He wanted to play Test cricket - batter, bowler, all-rounder, whatever, just pick me please, he might well have said - and when he got his chance at Edgbaston, he was ready.

Gill produced some of the most spectacular shot-making of the Test, as you would expect of someone who smashed 430 runs across two innings, with 43 fours and 11 sixes, but the two strokes that remain fresh in memory came off Washington's willow.

In the first innings, as India looked to pile on the runs, Washington was given a tough time before lunch by Josh Tongue, the tall right-hander who had caught Jadeja by surprise with extra bounce and adopted the same approach against the taller left-hander.

After the break, Washington looked more at home. As Tongue bounced him once too many times, he walked inside the line of the ball and played the most glorious of pulls that kept going and going deep into the stands behind fine-leg. It took one back to the Gabba and January 2021 when, in a tense run-chase, debutant Washington had played an eerily similar stroke off the bowling of Pat Cummins, his left leg raised and parallel to the ground, the right leg swivelling with grace and balance.

In the second innings, with India pushing for quick runs and the declaration imminent, Washington came very late to the party but played the most stunning stroke, staying low while reaching out to Root's off-spin, breaking his wrists and effortlessly driving the ball over cover.

Gill had caressed numerous cover-driven fours, but this one was laced with the left-hander's added elegance. The apologetic dismissal of the ball sent it flying over the boundary ropes for a sumptuous, delightful six. Oh, the magic, the melody.

From a fringe candidate, Washington has emerged as a serious contender for the three remaining Tests. Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir aren't averse to shaking up the established order, inasmuch as any such thing exists currently in this young Test collection, but they will have to think twice, and then some more, before opting to look beyond Washington at Lord's and thereafter.

After all, this 'bowling all-rounder' boasts a batting average of 43.50 and a corresponding bowling counterpart of 28.53 from ten Tests. Capital from Washington, did ya say?

THE GIST

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- The 'bowling all-rounder' boasts a batting average of 43.50 and a corresponding bowling counterpart of 28.53 from 10 Tests
- From a fringe candidate, Washington has emerged as a serious contender for the three remaining Tests