



{Sunday} Hindustan Times

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Nationwide drill as 2,279,000 set to take NEET retest today



Police personnel conduct an inspection at the NEET re-examination centre at Magadh Mahila College on the eve of the exam in Patna on Saturday.

The re-examination will be held from 2 to 5.15 pm across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad

Press Trust of India
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NEW DELHI: A nationwide drill was underway across the country on Saturday ahead of the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination as part of the efforts to ensure smooth, secure and transparent conduct of the medical entrance test, officials said.

Security was also been tightened at the National Testing Agency (NTA)'s Delhi office. More than 2,279,000 medical aspirants will appear for the re-examination on Sunday, nearly seven weeks after the original test was cancelled following allegations of a paper leak that triggered nationwide outrage, political sparring and legal challenges.

The re-examination will be held from 2 to 5.15 pm across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad. Candidates with disabilities (PwD/PwBD) eligible for compensatory time will be allowed to write the examination till 6.20 pm. Candidates have been asked to report to their examination centres between 11 am and 1.30 pm. "Entry gates will close sharp

Bihar Police keep watch on 135 exam paper leak accused

Avinash Kumar
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PATNA: The Economic Offences Unit (EOU) of the Bihar Police has prepared a list of 135 accused of paper leaks, examination frauds or have been part of cheating rackets in order to keep check on elements that might mar today's NEET retest in the state, officers said. Officers added that a special cell has been constituted for the task and the list includes son of renowned exam-rigger Sanjeev Mukhia.

According to EOU officials, the name, address, photograph and complete information of the accused have been shared with DMs and SPs and instructions have been given to keep them an eye on the suspects. Most of the accused in the list are out of jail on bail. In such a situation, instructions have been given to monitor the activities of these accused from the police station level. Apart from this, the EOU is also collecting intelligence about the new gang members. The officials of the social media monitoring cell are also keeping an eye on digital patrolling. The EOU has also issued an advisory regarding NEET examination. In the advisory the EOU suspected that anti-social elements and cyber frauds are cheating by spreading confusion and rumours about other things related to the exam, including question paper leaks. In case of receiving or getting to know of any such information, the EOU has asked the candidates or parents to register a complaint on the helpline number 1930 of the NCRP portal or the mobile and WhatsApp number of the EOU: 9031820067.

BIHAR CM VOWS STRONGER FARM MARKETS AS KISAN NIDHI ALLOCATED TO 7.3MN FARMERS

Subhash Pathak
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PATNA: Chief minister Samrat Choudhary on Saturday reaffirmed the state government's focus on improving the lives of farmers, promising better market access so that growers can earn more from their hard work. Speaking at an event to mark the release of the 23rd installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, Choudhary said the happiness on farmers' faces would open the door to Bihar's prosperity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually transferred over ₹18,880 crore to more than 94.4 million farmers nationwide from Tarakeswar in West Bengal. In Bihar, ₹1,463 crore reached the bank accounts of over 7.3 million farmer families through direct benefit transfer. Choudhary joined the programme from the auditorium of the Bihar Agricultural Management Extension Training Institute (BAMETI) in Patna via video conferencing. Agriculture Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha participated from Bhagalpur, also through video link. A senior official noted that the Bameti event, organised by the agriculture department, was scheduled after Sinha's Bhagalpur programme was finalised. The CM highlighted several steps the government is taking to support agriculture. Farmers in the state receive electricity for farming at a highly subsidised rate of just 64 paise per unit. Work is progressing quickly on solar pump storage systems under the PM KUSUM scheme, which is proving beneficial for cultivators.

{PEACE DEAL IN PERIL}

Iran shuts Hormuz over Israeli attacks and US 'bad faith'

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DUBAI: Iran dealt two quick blows to the interim agreement with the United States on Saturday, angered by Israel's continued attacks in Lebanon, saying it had closed the Strait of Hormuz again and announcing that while its negotiators are going to Switzerland for talks, not much is likely to happen there. First, Iran's joint military command warned that the strait had been closed, citing Israeli attacks and US "bad faith" and "its clear breach of its commitments" by failing to end the war. The statement on state television warned that "if the aggression continues, subsequent steps have been planned." Minutes later, the state broadcaster said the country's negotiating team was heading to Switzerland, a trip that was originally planned for Friday but was cancelled. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, Baghaei, however, signalled that little might happen until Iran feels the US is living up to the deal. "This trip is therefore about demanding that the other side fulfill its obligations," he said, adding that negotiations toward a final agreement will begin only once key commitments, including an end to fighting in Lebanon, are upheld. "If any part of these understandings, any part of these commitments, is not implemented, then the memorandum of understanding as a whole will be jeopardised," Baghaei said. Ships had begun transiting the strait after the interim U.S.-Iran agreement was signed

Pak says peace talks today as scheduled; US team already in

ISLAMABAD: Key mediator Pakistan says technical-level talks between Iran and the United States on their interim deal will begin on Sunday in Birmensdorf, Switzerland, with Qatari mediators also participating. In Washington, Vice President JD Vance confirmed on Saturday that the top US negotiators—Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff—were already in Switzerland and have been working through technical details of the negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. Iran's state broadcaster also announced on Saturday that Iran's negotiating team was heading to Switzerland "in the coming minutes," a trip that was originally planned for Friday. Foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei, however, signalled that little might happen until Iran feels the US is living up to the deal.

earlier in the week. Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday killed at least 16 people, including two children, hours after reports

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MY INDIA

Muslim representation and political parties in India

By Nishant Ranjan and Roshan Kishore

The first part of this series looked at the overall share and regional distribution of India's Muslim MLAs and MPs. It showed that Muslim representation is disproportionately skewed in pockets with a higher population share of Muslims. What about the relation between politics and Muslim representation though?

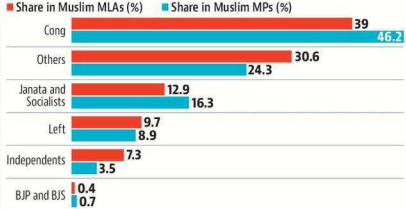


Read Part 1: A database of India's Muslim MLAs and MPs

1 Congress has the highest share of Muslim MLAs and MPs; BJP has the lowest

Forty-six percent of India's Muslim Lok Sabha MPs and 39% of Muslim MLAs have been elected from the Congress. Less than one percent of them have been elected from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or its predecessor, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. The fact that the BJP has had only 19 Muslim MLAs and four MPs despite having 15% of all MLAs and 20% of all MPs in India means that every other political group has a higher relative share among Muslim MLAs and MPs in India.

Partywise share in Muslim MLAs and Lok Sabha MPs (%)



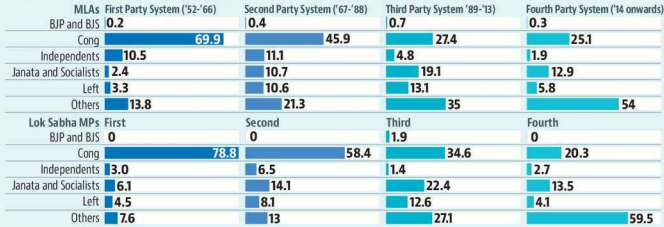
Different factions of the Congress like INC, INC (I), INC (L), INC (U) etc have been merged together as INC. Parties tracing their origins to the Socialist Party, Samyukt Socialist Party, Janata Party, Janata Party (Dal), Bharatiya Lok/Kranti Dal have been categorised as Janata and Socialists. BJP and its predecessor Jana Sangh is BJP here. All Communist parties have been categorised as Left and rest into Others. Source: HT Muslim Representatives Database

2 More interesting is the temporal churn in Muslim representation across parties

The fact that overall representation of Muslim MLAs and MPs is broadly stable across time in India does not mean that the relation between Muslims and politics has been stagnant. This is best seen in the party-wise composition of India's Muslim MLAs and MPs across different phases of politics in India. The most commonly used classification of political epochs in post-independence India is the party-system categorisation, which is inspired by the concept of the Congress system by political scientist Rajni Kothari. Indian politics, as of now, can be divided into Four Party Systems. The first (1952-66) captures the era of absolute dominance of the Congress. The second (1967-88) captures Congress still being strong in the Centre but getting weakened in the

states. The third (1989-2013) captures the era of coalition politics even at the Centre. The fourth (2014 onwards) is the era where the BJP has emerged as the dominant national party. The Congress's share in India's Muslim MLAs and MPs was the highest in the first party system and has been falling steadily since. The Socialists and Communists saw their shares peak under the Third Party System. The Fourth Party System has seen a majority of Muslim MLA/MPs come from other parties, which apart from the BJP also exclude the Congress, Socialists and Communists. The top three parties in this category are the Trinamool Congress, the Indian Union Muslim League and the National Congress.

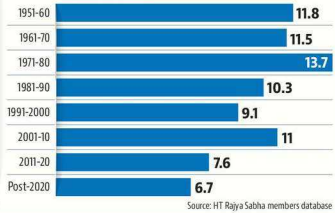
Party-wise share of Muslim MLAs and MPs across Party Systems (%)



3 What is unambiguous is the falling share of Muslims in the Rajya Sabha...

Rajya Sabha is the House of the states in India whose members are elected by MLAs in India's legislative assemblies. Because the results are mostly pre-ordained on the basis of the existing strength of different political parties in respective legislative assemblies, the share of Muslims is more a reflection of parties nominating Muslims as candidates to these elections. Here, the share of Muslims shows a consistent and large fall across decades, from 11.8% in the 1950s to just 6.7% in the 2020s. To be sure, Muslims have a higher share in Rajya Sabha than Lok Sabha.

Share of Muslims in Rajya Sabha MPs across different periods (%)



Source: HT Rajya Sabha members database

4 Which is driving the lower representation?

The BJP has not offered representation to Muslims in the Rajya Sabha. And the Congress, socialists and communists have not seen much change in their share of Muslim MPs in Rajya Sabha. But these

parties have seen a decline in their overall representation in the Rajya Sabha in the more recent past. Herein lies the reason for the falling share of Muslims in the Upper House.

Partywise share of total MPs and Muslim MPs in Rajya Sabha across decades (%)



Source: HT Rajya Sabha members database

This is the second of a two-part series based on an HT database of all-Muslim MPs and MLAs in India. The first part looked at the representation of Muslims across states and over time.

Prez Murmu's birthday



President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during their visit to the former's native Pahadpur village in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Saturday. PM planted a sapling on the occasion of the President's birthday.

p71

Murmu, Modi inaugurate ₹47k-cr projects in Odisha

Press Trust of India

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RAIRANGPUR: President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi jointly unveiled development projects worth more than ₹47,600 crore in Odisha on Saturday, officials said.

The projects, spanning across sectors such as energy, industrial infrastructure, roads, drinking water, health, education, tourism and irrigation, were unveiled on the second anniversary of the BJP in Odisha.

According to an official statement, the initiatives are aimed at strengthening infrastructure, improving connectivity, enhancing energy security and creating employment opportunities across the state.

Among the major projects for which foundation stones were laid are the 600-MW Upper Indravati pumped storage project and the Stage-II expansion of the IB Thermal Power Station, comprising two 660-MW units.

The foundation stone for the Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals Limited (BCGCL) project at Lakhanpur in Jharsuguda district was also laid.

Other projects include a 300-tonne-per-day municipal solid waste-based compressed biogas plant in Bhubaneswar, a bridge over the Kathajodi river connect-



President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Odisha.

ing Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, widening and strengthening of the Dhaulpur-Harbianga road in Boudh district, four-laning of the Nuapada-Ghatipada section of NH-353, the Kusumdhil mega lift irrigation project, an IGNOU regional centre and an indoor badminton complex at Rairangpur.

Two railway multi-tracking projects worth more than ₹732 crore were also dedicated to the nation.

The 19-km Jakhapura-Jajpur Keonjhar Road-Baitarani Road multi-tracking project, built for ₹323 crore as part of the Bhadrak-Nergundi multi-tracking project, is expected to ease congestion on the heavily loaded Howrah-Chennai main line and improve passenger and freight movement.

PM: Bengal broke free of shackles, return of state's glory has begun

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TARAKESWAR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said West Bengal had "broken free from its shackles" and embarked on a new journey of development, asserting that the change brought about by a single electoral verdict was visible across the state.

Addressing a programme to mark the 'Paschim Banga Dives' after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for multiple development projects here, Modi said a "new freshness" was now palpable in Bengal's air.

"Today, after the elections and the swearing-in, I have the good fortune for the first time to come among you. There is now a new freshness in the air of Bengal. It feels as if Bengal has now broken free from its shackles, and the return of Bengal's glory has begun," he asserted.

Referring to the BJP's victory in the assembly elections, Modi said the transformation under-

way in the state demonstrated the power of the democratic process.

"There is a glow on the faces of Bengal's people, and a sentiment of joy and trust in villages... It is clearly visible in Bengal how your one vote can bring about a change," he said.

Modi also highlighted the state government's efforts to accelerate border fencing along the India-Bangladesh frontier, alleging that the previous dispensation had obstructed the process.

"You must have seen how the previous government had halted the transfer of land for border fencing. That process has started under the present regime," the PM said.

Modi also said action was being taken against corruption and those accused of siphoning off public funds in the state. Paying tributes to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Modi said he had played a decisive role in ensuring that a part of Bengal remained within India during Partition.

NTA: Abu Dhabi centre chosen through candidate's own login

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Responding to the issue of allotment of a centre in Abu Dhabi to a candidate from Nagpur, the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Saturday said the city change request was made through the candidate's own registered login during the open correction window and it had later acted on his request to change the centre.

Following the rescheduling of NEET (UG) 2026 to June 21, the examination-city correction window was reopened to assist candidates, the agency said.

"Around 3.2 lakh candidates used the correction window, and NTA allotted the preferred examination city to over 99.5 per cent of them," it said in a post on X. On the "Abu Dhabi" query, the NTA said its web-activity records indicate that the city change in the case was made through the candidate's own registered login during the open correction window, with a consistent single-user access pattern.

The agency said that despite the Abu Dhabi centre being chosen by the candidate, it received an informal request on the evening of June 19, just 48 hours before the exam, to change the centre to Nagpur.

"NTA personnel immediately initiated the change and contacted the candidate's father on June 19 evening itself to help them complete the formal process," it said.

"NTA has observed that on 3 occasions, one - the centre was changed to Abu Dhabi using

candidate's credentials and twice it was previewed that the centre is Abu Dhabi, the agency said.

"Despite that NTA has accorded to aspirant's request and the change of centre was actioned," it said.

Calling it a "student-first" approach, the agency said its priority is that no candidate misses the examination over an administrative doubt. Abdullah Talib from Nagpur in Maharashtra was allotted an examination centre in Abu Dhabi, prompting his parents to raise the issue with the NTA and seek a correction.

Talib had given preference to Nagpur, Wardha, and Bhandara centres for the examination.

However, when he received his examination card issued by the NTA, he was shocked to find that he was allotted an examination centre in Abu Dhabi, his father, Dr Mohammed Talib, told a news channel.

The mix-up came to light on a day when a nationwide mock drill was underway across the country on Saturday ahead of the NEET-UG 2026 re-examina-

tion as part of the efforts to ensure smooth, secure and transparent conduct of the medical entrance test.

The re-examination will be conducted on June 21 from 2 pm to 5.15 pm in the pen-and-paper mode across 551 cities and India and 14 cities abroad for over 22.79 lakh candidates.

Make sure no glitches this time: Rahul to govt

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday urged the government to ensure there are no "glitches" and "irregularities" this time, saying the students have been "through enough stress and cannot afford to go through it again".

Gandhi posted a video on X in which he wished everyone taking the re-NEET exam on Sunday. "I hope you have a wonderful, excellent exam and you all do really, really well. Remember, we are with you, we want to look after you, protect you and make sure that you have a brilliant year. Love all of you," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

"To the Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) and to the government, I would like to say, please, please, ensure that there are no glitches this time. The students have been through enough stress and they are really cannot afford to go through it again," Gandhi said.

In his post accompanying the video, Gandhi extended his best wishes to all the students appearing for the re-NEET exam. "Take the exam with full confidence. Come what may, I am

always with you and will ensure smooth conduct. You. It is expected that the government will ensure the NEET exam is conducted without any irregularities this time," he said.

Students have already endured a great deal of stress; no student's hopes should be shattered now, Gandhi said.

A nationwide mock drill was underway across the country on Saturday ahead of the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination as part of the efforts to ensure smooth, secure and transparent conduct of the medical entrance test, officials said.

Security has also been tightened at the National Testing Agency (NTA) office in the national capital. More than 22.79 lakh medical aspirants will appear for the re-examination on Sunday, nearly seven weeks after the original test was cancelled following allegations of a paper leak that triggered nationwide outrage, political sparring and legal challenges.

The re-examination will be held from 2 to 5.15 pm across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad. Candidates with disabilities (PwD/PwBD) eligible for compensatory time will be allowed to write the examination till 6.20 pm.

Candidates have been asked to report to their examination centres between 11 am and 1.30 pm. Entry gates will close sharp at 1.30 pm and no candidate will be permitted entry thereafter under any circumstance, the agency said.



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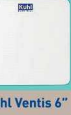
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REFLECTIONS

THE BIG PICTURE

Price of misalignment in the West Asia conflict

India's strategic partners started a war that worsened its regional security environment, torpedoed its economy, cost Indian lives, empowered Pakistan, and cemented China's big power status. And New Delhi didn't — or couldn't — shape the war's outcome

It's signed ... this was not easy,' US President Donald Trump said after signing a 14-point 'memorandum of understanding' to end America and Israel's war against Iran. Primarily mediated by Pakistan along with Qatar, the crux of this agreement is that Iran will not build or procure nuclear weapons in return for *status quo ante* at the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran will get 'at least \$300 billion' for its 'reconstruction and development', the US will lift 'all types of sanctions', and Israel will halt military operations in Lebanon.

The final deal is yet to be signed, and the agreement's endurance is questionable. But there is no mistaking that Iran has won the war and the US, along with Israel and its Gulf partners, has lost it.

The termination of military operations is good for India's economic and strategic stability. But it raises a question: Was New Delhi's partiality towards the losing side worth it? This question is not about the false worship of concepts like strategic auton-

omy, nor about singularly burdening India with the weight of international norms that other States are unwilling to uphold even though common sense dictates they should. It is neither a debate about India's ability, desirability, or suitability to mediate. There is a deeper issue: India's strategic partners started a war that worsened its regional security environment, torpedoed its economy, cost Indian lives, empowered Pakistan, and cemented China's big power status. And New Delhi didn't — or couldn't — shape the war's outcome. There are five lessons for India here.

The first is simple: India must not base its foreign-policy decisions on optical illusions. There is no doubting the earnestness with which India invested in the UAE. It attempts to improve ties with Saudi Arabia, its participation in the IZU (India, Israel, UAE, US) grouping, or its ambition to build maritime connectivity to Europe via West Asia. These moves occurred in tandem with a dovetail in ties with an insular, hardline, and ungiving Iran. But these peacetime initiatives collapsed during the war. The problem is not what India built with Israel, the US, and the UAE. But what it lost in the process — Iran.

To lose Iran was neither India's active choice nor truly a *fait accompli*; the US coerced and co-opted India into doing so over the years. To be sure, Iran's nuclear programme, proxy wars across West Asia, criticism of India on Kashmir, and dispensability as an energy supplier made it easy for New Delhi to look the other way. This war has undone all that. Iran is now setting the terms and the price of peace for the US and

its allies. Such is the depth of its win that even American vice-president JD Vance is now castigating Israel for its reckless, violent excesses. In just over three months, Iran wrecked the Saudi-UAE partnership and the US-Israel alliance. Therein lies the second lesson: India must not confuse military dominance with strategic effects. Israel is unquestionably the most powerful military actor in West Asia today. But it is also more insecure, isolated, and traumatised than ever before, and it has failed to attain Iran beyond its nuclear programme. If anything, this war has laid bare the horrors and limitations of Israel's unchecked military power. India must undertake a dispassionate analysis of Tel Aviv's shrunken positionality in West Asia, and what a post-Benjamin Netanyahu Israel would look like, however important a security partner it might be for New Delhi.

Much has been said about Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's ill-timed visit to Israel days before the war. That the two countries' security partnership has been lubricated by an ideological crossover between Zionism and Hindutva is now a mainstream view. Though valid, this view risks undervaluing counter-currents such as New Delhi's fast-evaporating patience for Israel's penchant for war. Even the Rashtriya Swamysamithi Sangh (RSS) has internally been more nuanced about how India should have handled this war and its ties with Iran, despite its affinity for Israel. All this is to say that India retains the capability to re-establish its long-held position of a natural balancing force in West Asia if it so wishes.

The third lesson is: Don't let emotions



The final deal is yet to be signed, and the agreement's endurance is questionable. But there is no mistaking that Iran has won the war and the US, along with Israel and its Gulf partners, has lost it.

cloud the mind. India's apprehension about Pakistan exploiting this war to resurrect its global image and punch above its weight is understandable. For the US and Europe, Pakistan's double-game during the Afghanistan war is no longer a limiting factor in rebuilding ties with Islamabad. Such sense of hurt ended with the Joe Biden administration. That Islamabad will use its newfound confidence to reshape global opinion on Kashmir is obvious. It is already improving its defence capabilities in terms of pace, scale, and quality with China's support.

But the Pakistani establishment's current thinking suggests that as it fights fires elsewhere, it is not keen to spend this hard-earned diplomatic and military capital, and even a modicum of economic stability, on hostilities with India.

This brings us to the fourth lesson: This war dislocated the structure of India's equities and leverage, from Iran through Afghanistan to Pakistan. New Delhi's

engagement with the Taliban in Kabul, though tactically sound, is of limited strategic value thanks to Pakistan's campaign of airstrikes and drone attacks that occurred in parallel to the US-Israel-Iran war.

India's initial failure to condole the death of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei cost it much. Led by Khamenei's son, Mojtaba, Tehran is unlikely to forget this insult; just as it will not forget the debt of gratitude it owes to Pakistan for mediating its win. With Pakistan itself, stonewalling a diplomatic dialogue worked for a while for India, but such stonewalling is now way past its due date and will bring diminishing returns for India moving forward.

Then, has siding with the US and Israel in West Asia been worth it? In fairness, India cannot suddenly tilt towards the Iran-Russia-China axis. But it has ended up paying a steep price for siding tacitly with the losers. That's the fifth lesson. India boxed itself into

false binaries, even though alternative pathways were available. For instance, if the PM could not have avoided the Israel visit, he could have tried using his leverage to restrain a friend. And India could have criticised the Iranian regime's mass killing of civilians in January, while urging external powers not to escalate their interference. With the US, it could have taken a firmer stand when IRIS Dena, the Iranian warship, was torpedoed by the US off Sri Lanka in February. With Pakistan, it could have opted for silence over using uncharitable terms for a country whose actions served India's interests. If India wants to be respected as a big power and credibly protect its interests, it will need to step up to the responsibilities that come with it.

Avinash Palwal teaches at SOAS University of London and is a non-resident scholar in the Carnegie South Asia Program, Washington D.C. The views expressed are personal

SUNDAY SENTIMENTS

Karan Thapar



To drink or not, is the question of choice

I won't deny I enjoy a little tipple. In fact, on an evening, I often look forward to it. In Cambridge, Saturdays were Fridays to me. Drinking is not a crime. But nor should it be compulsory. That's the point, believe it or not, I want to make today.

The good people of Ladaakh want less opportunities to drink and less availability of alcohol. Not more. It's not what I would have expected, but it's the truth.

The Lieutenant Governor's administration decided in May to announce a new excise policy increasing retail outlets selling alcohol from two to 20. In the process, the sale of alcohol would be extended to remote parts of the Union Territory such as Nubra, Changthang, Sham, and Zaskar. This has upset the local population.

"Our stand is clear," the Ladaakh Buddhist Association said in a statement. "We do not support the opening of 20 new wine shops or the unrestricted sale of alcohol in hotels, guest houses and hostels." The Kargil Democratic Alliance, a sister body, echoed this sentiment. "If liquor is banned in Bihar and Gujarat, why introduce it in Ladaakh?"

This posed a perplexing dilemma for me. I believe alcohol should not be banned. In fact, it should be freely available for all adults who wish to imbibe. But what happens when they don't? When they actually

want it restricted? When they want to be teetotalers? What then?

I would say they have as much of a right to have their way as drinkers have to lawfully quaff. But it does pose a peculiar problem for the Union Territory's administration. They are not being asked to increase opportunities to buy alcohol but to limit and restrict them. If I understand correctly, neither the Ladaakh Buddhist Association nor the Kargil Democratic Alliance want a complete ban. That's not what they are calling for. They just don't want the excise policy expanded and liberalised. I presume they are happy with the situation that prevails today.

Now, you and I may find this position rather odd and peculiar. But there it is. And the question arises: Don't they have a right to be heard and adhered to? If people don't want more booze shops, why should these be forced upon them? Just as some have a right to drink and buy it easily, others have a right to have it difficult for themselves and less accessible. After all, the only people affected are the people of Kargil and Ladaakh.

In writing this, I'm presuming that the LBA and the KDA as well as Ladaakh's MP, Haji Hanifa, actually represent the majority opinion of the Union Territory. The accounts I have seen in newspapers, headlined 'Civil society groups up in arms over new Ladaakh liquor policy', suggest they are speaking for the vast majority. If that is the case, I guess the Union territory has a right

I'M NOT A SUPPORTER OF THE TEETOTALISM FORCIBLY IMPOSED ON GUJARAT AND BIHAR. AND IF YOU TELL ME THAT MANY OF THE DENIZENS OF THESE STATES ARE ALSO OPPOSED TO IT, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED

to ensure that alcohol remains difficult to access and only available in certain parts.

You could say it's a strange world. But in a democracy the majority have a right to get their way as long as their wishes are lawful and don't cause injury or disadvantage to others. In this instance they do, of course, make it difficult for those who want to drink. But I guess that has to be accepted. At least, Kargil and Ladaakh are not asking for a complete ban on alcohol.

Meanwhile, I look forward to a drink tonight. Also, I'm in absolutely no hurry to visit Kargil and Ladaakh. I'll patiently wait till the liquor policy is liberalised!

Karan Thapar is the author of *Devil's Advocate: The Untold Story*. The views expressed are personal

ANOTHER DAY

Namita Bhandare



Nation builders? No, just unpaid women workers

Sorry, your lordships. Women who labour at home to wash, clean, cook, bring up children, take parents to the doctor, go to the market, and do the countless other tasks of physical and emotional labour that keep their families happy — are not 'nation-builders'.

Call them homemakers. Call them unpaid domestic workers. Call them the scaffolding on which busy important men build their Busy Important careers. But, it's time to strip away the notion that the business of running a home is some sublime task suitable only for one gender.

The Supreme Court was dealing with an old question of how to financially compensate for a life lost in an accident. Compensation for men can be computed on their income. But what is the value of a woman who makes no monetary contribution to a family but nonetheless provides it with free labour?

Apart from the irony that the worth of a woman's life should arise only after her death, there is the old patriarchal trick of whitewashing work nobody really wants to do with a coat of saintliness. So, cooking is not only a woman's job, it acquires an added touch of nobility when only a woman does it — *maa ke haath ka khana* (the food cooked by a mother's hand).

When the Supreme Court observes that a 'homemaker would now acquire the acronym of 'nation builder', it's on us to reject the idea for what it is — one designed to keep us confined to the house, where we spend an average of 299 minutes a day to the 97 put in by men, according to the 2024 Time Use Survey.

Nation-building notwithstanding, the observations are a continuation of case law that has since 2010 recognised the economic value of women's unpaid work. In previous cases, says Prabha Kotiswaran, professor of law and social justice at

King's College, London, the court tended to award the bare minimum. Now, for the first time it has set a minimum of ₹30,000 a month as the notional value of housework. Compensation for accidents will then begin at that valuation.

This generosity, alas, does not extend to family courts where judges have been known to view a wife's failure to make tea and look after a husband's relatives as cruelty and, therefore, grounds for divorce. Judges are also known to lecture educated women for daring to seek maintenance and alimony instead of employment after a marriage collapses.

But, for now, putting a notional salary on unpaid housework makes this labour visible and also takes it into account. A 2018 report by the International Labour Organization (ILO) claimed that 16.4 billion hours are spent globally on unpaid care work every day.

This, says Kotiswaran, in her upcoming book *Wages for Housework*, is the equivalent of two billion people working eight hours a day with no remuneration. Over 80% of this work is done by women and girls above the age of six, and signs of change are slow: Between 1997 and 2012, the gender gap in time spent on unpaid care declined by a mere seven minutes. At this rate, it will take another 210 years to bridge the gap.

The challenge of getting more women into paid work is to even out the unpaid labour they perform at home. And to do that we need more than platitudes and pats on our backs. Women are not born with some inherent skill to do the laundry. But, yes, nation building via cooking and cleaning and bringing up upright citizens is everybody's job, women as well as men.

Namita Bhandare writes on gender. The views expressed are personal

Street food as theatre stages its own reality

As the sun goes down, behind the tall glass buildings of Noida, the white-collared workforce swipes out and spills onto the streets. Most of them are still less costly than a tokenised AI subscription, so they can choose to walk out early — at 5:30 pm sharp — dangling their lunchboxes, waiting to be plucked by a shared auto-rickshaw and be deposited to the nearest metro station.

And under these metro-stops in North India, a street-food festival is hosted every evening. The cuisine is, of course, dominated by the states which historically failed to provide jobs to their youth. The hawkers just cater to the dominant demand. The hawkers they hear a *Melai* arriving overhead — the hawkers start working their kerosene stoves.

Commercial LPG has been 'Hormuzed'; hence, as it gets darker, the hiss of the blue flames becomes the background music of such festivals. Street food is not just food, it's theatre. Each hawker is an artist, a choreographer, who has developed the muscle memory to pick up all the ingredients sequentially and mix them in the right proportion, in the shortest possible time. It's a dance. Just check how the *bhel puri* wala tosses chutneys in his tumbler, creates a mini tornado, then he deposits the greasy *bhel* on your quarter plate.

But there is no better show than what happens at the Chinese stall. The making

of the legendary Indian *chowmein*. Based on the empirical evidence collected by this author, the chow tastes the best when you are actually present, standing within a three-foot radius of the hawker, watching the violence first-hand. Imagine you are hungry. Whatever you had for lunch felt like a product of socialism aimed at removing some sort of societal inequality. Once you walk out in the evening, you see a Chinese stall. You are suspicious of the quality, but then you spot a cluster of decent-looking people, perhaps young professionals wearing full-sleeved shirts with IT company lanyards around their necks. They are polishing off their plates with a focus usually reserved for quarterly reviews.

You approach the wily-looking guy behind the counter. You place an order for a 'half plate.' He barely registers your request, as he is busy murdering a mountain of noodles with hellfire. His forehead glistens with sweat in the flickering, harsh light of a petromax lamp. He never takes his eyes off his wok.

You patiently wait as he fumes of soy sauce, vinegar, and unidentified 'secret' spices waft from the desi iron wok and enter your nostrils. Suddenly, the guy throws a handful of chopped veggies into his massive wok — a *kadhai* that has likely seen more action than most battlefields. The vegetables sizzle as they touch the hot surface.

Then he picks up a bottle, inverts it, and slaps the base to add generous spurts



Street food is not just food, it's theatre. Each hawker is an artist, a choreographer.

SHUTTERSTOCK

of a questionable, neon-red chilli sauce into the *kadhai*. Then, comes the violence. He tosses it all together. Endlessly. You get hungrier with every flick of his wrist. Each time you think, 'Surely, it's done,' he finds another reason to toss it further. It's less of cooking and more of a ticketed performance where you happen to get a complimentary plate of 'whey chowmin'. Nothing elevates the taste of Indian street food more than a type on the menu.

Everyone around the stall watches their 'half/full plates' getting made. Nobody is checking their phone. In a country obsessed with construction, this is arguably the second-most watchable thing on the streets after 'JCB digging'. You spot a couple waiting, company lanyards around their necks, smiling throughout. 'Bhaya, hum dono ko thoda kam spicy,' says the girl; the *chowmein* guy acknowledges nothing, just like the last time. A budding office romance, baptised by chowmein.

Finally, it's done. Half plates emerge from a tub, being manned by a teenage aide who likely arrived from the same village as the master chef last week. Then, magically, the *chowmein*-wallah distrib-

utes the *kadhai*-full of noodles equally into all the waiting plates with a precision that would baffle a card-carrying Communist. Then someone throws a garnish of freshly-cut raw onion and your order is served with a thin plastic fork planted firmly in the centre. Those onions, against this spice bomb below, taste like sweet apples. It is a transformation of the mundane into the extraordinary.

In a world that is increasingly becoming sanitised — delivered at your door in cardboard boxes through apps — the street food stall remains a bastion of reality. Street food dies after travelling 50 meters from its origin, what gets delivered home is just the corpse. Street food must be had on the street. It's the one place where the CEO and the delivery boy stand on the same uneven pavement, breathing in the same spice-laden air, waiting for a wily man, the master percussionist, to finish his masterpiece. The type in the menu is not a bug, it's a feature.

Abhishhek Asthana is a tech and media entrepreneur, and tweets as @gabbbarshing. The views expressed are personal



Abhishek Asthana

SUNDAY LETTERS

Medical opinions in the age of internet

This is with reference to 'A worrying trend amidst UP women's health gains' by Lalita Panicker (June 14).

With women using the internet for information about maternity, it is necessary to spread awareness about the benefits of normal delivery and the side-effects of C-section among women for their reproductive health.

Abhilaasha Gupta

Loyalty to people before power

This is with reference to 'TMC split: The morality of lawmakers is a rarity' by Karan Thapar (June 14). When politicians seek votes under a party banner and a leader's image, they enter into a moral contract with the electorate. Switching loyalties post-election for political convenience undermines this moral contract.

Sanjay Chopra

If the rebel lawmakers had an inkling that there is corruption in the party, they should have done their best to reform the party. Their actions are selfish and unethical.

Jayashree Kundu

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Howwknrd

A PART OF YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE

Ian Douglas Jim membership

Since he was a child, conservationist Ian Douglas has been a fan of Jim Corbett – his novels, his life, his eventual message. His new book on the hunter-turned-wildlife protector offers fresh insight into the man, his kindness, his worries about our impact on ecosystems

Gowri S

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Ian Douglas was 10 when he first encountered Jim Corbett.

The 1948 classic *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudrapur* "struck me as slightly scary, but I guess it was a scary leopard," he says, chuckling.

Growing up in cold, coastal Northumberland in England, Corbett's jungle adventures hardly seemed real. And yet they were! Thrilled, a young Douglas decided to go scouting in the woods near his home, in imitation of his hero.

"I wasn't going to find leopards or tigers, but I could track deer," he laughs. "I could trace where they had been feeding and find their droppings."

Douglas, now 67, would go on to study environmental sciences, and has spent 40 years working in wetland conservation. "A lot of the credit goes to Jim," he says.

By his late-20s, Douglas had begun following in the author's actual footsteps too, revisiting trails on frequent visits to India and Nepal. Those side quests have now led to an adventure he hadn't anticipated. Based on 40 years of research, Douglas has just published a book, titled *Undiscovered Corbett* (Merlin Unwin UK), containing rare photographs of Jim Corbett, and letters and notes he left behind. Together with anecdotes and a wealth of biographical detail, they offer an unusually intimate view of the man behind the legend.

Yes, the hunter-turned-conservationist was the driving force behind India's first national park (established in 1936 in Uttarakhand; first called the Hailey and renamed the Jim Corbett National Park two years after his death, in 1957). But he was also kind and unselfish, Douglas says, refusing government rewards, for instance, because he preferred to feel like he was offering a valiant service than profiting from a death.

He loved nature. In a letter to a friend, he wrote: "One sees the most lovely birds and butterflies in the jungles when one's not seeing tiger." He worried about our impact on ecosystems. In letters to his sister Margaret Corbett (or Maggie), he wonders whether changes to their environment were causing changes in the apex predators.

What would he have made of where we are today?

Excerpts from an interview.

Was it hard to find new information on someone who wrote about himself, and has been written about a fair deal?

Well, I chased down contacts from names in his books.

There was no magic to it but I followed up on the characters as far as I could. I came across one man who had a lot of old hunting journals from Bihar (where Corbett lived and worked with the railways for years). They were a gold mine.



We've had birds move back into wetland sites, perching on the diggers that were still working there. The wildlife will come. We need to develop the will to let it.

Jim's UK publishers, Oxford University Press, have quite a Corbett archive. His sister Maggie's letters proved invaluable too.

There were dead ends as well. One family, for instance, destroyed some really interesting expedition records thinking nobody would be interested in them anymore. They were from a little-known trip Corbett took to Kashmir. Then at some point a source asked: "What will become of all this research?" That was the moment it first occurred to me that I should write a book.

To be worried about the ecology back then was quite unusual, wasn't it?

From his early writings to Maggie, it seems like he was aware of the impact people were having on wildlife from before World War I. Born in 1875, he was shooting for food before the turn of the 19th century, and by the end of the 19th century he came to an understanding that the lives of God's creatures were not to be taken lightly.

He moved away from shooting man-eaters to photographing wildlife. We can now read books about conservation and pay attention to the discourse on the internet, but Corbett had to find out a lot of that for himself.

What do you think we, living in the Anthropocene or the Capitalocene, can draw from the duty of his life?

That's the dilemma, isn't it? He was a skilled hunter, yet he became a protector of wildlife. Rather than resolve that tension perhaps his life forces us to face up to it.

I think we're pushed today into almost this binary view of growth or environment, wildlife or people, technology or nature... Corbett's life suggests that taking responsibility means admitting that the reality is messier than that. It may involve the holding of two opposing truths.

How does one move forward, holding two opposing truths like that?

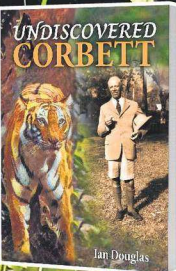
I suppose top of the list would be a renewed relationship between people and wildlife.

I think our increasingly urban society has become quite detached, in a sense, from that nature, which actually sustains it. We need greater support for local communities living alongside wildlife. We need to build the will to move in the right direction, with longer-term goals in place of our short-term ones.

Do you think we can realistically turn this around?

We can be optimistic. Species have recovered from the brink of extinction. Forests have regenerated. Rivers have been restored. Communities can transform landscapes within a generation.

The results of some of the work that I and others like me have done has shown extremely quick results. We've had birds move back into wetland sites, perching on the diggers that were still working there. The wildlife will come. We need to develop the will to let it.



1 Ian Douglas, 67, has spent 40 years working in wetland conservation, inspired by the life of hunter-turned-wildlife campaigner Jim Corbett. His book, *Undiscovered Corbett*, contains rare photographs, letters and anecdotes that offer an unusually intimate view of the man behind the legend.

2 Douglas was 10 when he first read a Corbett book. Growing up in cold, coastal Northumberland in England, the man's jungle adventures in India hardly seemed real, he says. Nonetheless, he went scouting in the woods near his home, like his hero.

3 He started out tracking deer as a boy, went on to study environmental sciences. He has made numerous trips to India and Nepal, to walk in his idol's footsteps. "I never stopped re-reading his books either. I just finished re-reading *Man-Eaters of Kumaon*," he says.



READ an excerpt from *Undiscovered Corbett*

inside

LIFESTYLE

Can you imagine... What happens when algorithms decide what we notice – and create much of what we see? Kashyap Kompella writes on creativity in the age of AI

CULTURE

Rafa around the edges

A new Netflix documentary traces the pain behind the perfection of tennis legend Rafael Nadal

MIND

Wicked little letters



An ongoing exhibition brings together typos and corrections that read like poetry, signal rebellion and even, in one case, turned a holy commandment into a scandalous exhortation: Thou shalt commit adultery?

wknd lifestyle

Can you imagine...

Name two classical European paintings. Was at least one the Mona Lisa or Girl with the Pearl Earring? That is the power of recommendation. So what happens when algorithms decide what we notice – and create much of what we see? The danger is not that AI output will be bad, but that it will be passable. And we will forget what it once felt like to dream big, draft and redraft, step into another person's mind. Kashyap Kompella writes on what it will take to fight back

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There is a painting at the Louvre that few visitors notice.

The Wedding Feast at Cana by Paolo Veronese is the largest canvas in the museum, nearly 22 ft tall and 33 ft wide. In it, 132 figures crowd a scene of such joy that it feels like an artistic miracle. In theory, it is unignorable, hung floor to ceiling in the museum's most-visited gallery.

In practice, most visitors simply rush past it, because a few metres away, in the same room, hangs the Mona Lisa.

This is not about which painting is better. It's about the power of recommendation. Reading about AI reminds me, time and again, of that room at the Louvre, and The Wedding Feast at Cana, a masterpiece, rendered invisible in plain sight.

Artificial intelligence is set to crowd every room we care about, to a greater degree than we can estimate. Cana vs Mona Lisa feels, to me, like a preview of what AI will bring about in the fields of writing, music, film, advertising... and every other creative endeavour.

What might this world look like?

There is a 1975 film called *The Irony of Fate*, broadcast on Russian TV every New Year's holiday, whose humour is rooted in the dreary uniformity of state-mandated urban architecture.

In the Soviet Union, apartment blocks were so standardised, street names so interchangeable, that a man, drunk and confused, could board the wrong plane in Moscow, arrive in Leningrad, hail a taxi to what he thought was his address, use his key, find that it worked, and even fall asleep in someone else's home, without noticing, because even the furniture was the same.

In the creative world, thanks to AI, the *Irony of Fate* problem has arrived.

On the music-streaming platform Deezer, about 44% of all daily uploads are AI-generated tracks.

A blind test found that 97% of surveyed listeners could not reliably distinguish them from human-made recordings.

In film, *Dreams of Violets*, an AI-generated docudrama set in Iran and screened at this year's Tribeca Festival, turned out to have been produced for \$2,000, without actors, sets or crew. Last year, the auction house Christie's hosted an Augmented Intelligence auction dedicated to AI art.

In the world of online marketing, major brands have announced that they are using AI to shrink content production cycles from several days to a few hours.

WHAT WE STAND TO LOSE IS THE KIND OF ART MF HUSAIN CREATED WHEN HE ARRIVED FOR A TALK AT MY ALMA MATER, INDIAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, YEARS AGO, AND DECIDED NOT TO SPEAK BUT TO PAINT



Call it average-garde. Not avant-garde, the experimental, difficult and strange that worked to reorganise one's thinking after at first baffling the viewer.

Average-garde is technically fluent, aesthetic — and culturally indistinguishable. The technology that promised to democratise creativity may instead be McDonaldising it.

There is growing evidence of this flattening McCulture effect.

Researchers at University College London and University of Exeter, in a study published in 2024, found that when writers use AI assistance, individual stories improved — were rated more creative, better-written and more enjoyable — for those who were less skilled to begin with.

Meanwhile, the stories became more similar.

A meta-study by University of Munich researchers found that, among writers, human-AI collaboration improves individual performance but produces a large negative effect on collective idea diversity.

Gone are the chaotic range of ideas, raw emotion, and strange but interesting turns of phrase. All output begins to chime in the same note, bear the same texture, and the same flat but polished confidence.

In an added blow to creative range, researchers have found that AI writing suggestions pushed non-Western participants' prose toward a generic, Westernised norm, and flattened cultural nuance. A study of music-generation datasets found that these AI models had been trained, overwhelmingly, on music from the global North.

In other words, the machine produces a specific, historically dominant kind of sameness. An average, with an accent that is not yours.

Travel writer Pico Iyer, in his 2001 book *Global Soul*, observed that all airports have become one airport, endlessly reproduced: the same duty-free perfume counter, the same business lounge, the same news screens.

Going somewhere new had acquired the uneasy texture of going nowhere in partic-

ular. Again, I am reminded of artificial intelligence algorithms, and their articles, songs and images.

The degradation is not of the obvious kind. This is not a world of spam, misfiring bots or garbled translation. The problem is of a competent adequacy that accretes, without adding up to anything.

Most people already feel this, though we don't have a name for this verbose emptiness yet ("nullouquence", anyone?).

There is something in the cadence of AI writing, the slightly formal warmth, the rhetorical questions, the conclusion that wraps too neatly around a thesis announced too early, that triggers recognition. Ironically, content platforms run by the same tech giants investing heavily in AI recognise this too. Meta and Google algorithms actively down-rank AI-generated content in recommendations.

We buy their product, but they don't want it back.

The comparison with earlier disruptions deserves fair hearing.

Photography, it was said, would kill painting. The printing press would destroy the authority of the written word.

Each time, the old form reinvented rather than died.

Photography liberated painting from the duty of likeness and drove it toward Impressionism, abstraction, Cubism; forms that could only exist after a machine took on the task of generating likeness.

Should we worry less? I don't believe we should.

The camera made images cheaper. It did not train itself on a wealth of existing images and begin to churn out art of all kinds. The printing press reproduced text; it did not absorb texts already written and emit new ones within seconds.

Previous technologies replaced one function of creativity.

AI feeds on entire art forms — novels, scripts, music scores, films, images — to encourage us to ask rather than create.

What we stand to lose in all this is human specificity: the particular dis-

sonance, perspective, distortion, fear, misunderstanding or obsession that feeds each artist's art.

What we stand to lose is the kind of art MF Husain created when he arrived for a talk at my alma mater Indian School of Business, years ago, and decided not to speak but to paint.

No brushes were available; no one had planned for this. So, he dipped his fingers in acrylic pigments and painted on a flip chart. The work still hangs near the entrance of the Hyderabad institute.

What it records is irreducible: a particular afternoon, an artist yielding to impulse and adapting to constraint, a mind so unusually talented, and a talent so shaped by decades of practice, that it could fold the absence of its tools into the art itself.

Sure, we can have slickness and fluency with AI. But I believe it will erode, minimise or at best marginalise novelty and genius. It has no use for them.

AI is useful across many domains. This deserves to be said plainly, without the hedging that usually follows.

Take language alone. For user manuals, rapid research synthesis, accessibility tools, medical translation, and the thousands of other forms of functional writing that the world needs in vast quantities, it is extraordinary. It is efficient, clear and consistent. These are real virtues.

But creativity with lasting resonance has historically been what we make when we take efficiency out of the equation.

The sweetest songs are about the saddest thoughts. The most remarkable novels are by people who had to live decades to assimilate what they were seeing and feeling.

What threatens creativity most is not AI output that is obviously bad, but AI output that is fine enough to pass, to fill the space.

The Wedding Feast at Cana sits in the same room, magnificent and ignored, while crowds cluster around the thing the algorithm "created", and then pre-decided they should see.

(Kashyap Kompella is a tech industry analyst and author of three books on AI)

{ YES, NO, MAYBE? } TAKING THE CONTROLS

We are all now editors, curators, critics

Kashyap Kompella

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Every day, in newspaper offices around the world, editors sit down to an improbable task.

The day has yielded thousands of news events: births, deaths, political slugfests, tales from conflict and war, scientific findings, boardroom decisions, small acts of bravery, large betrayals, tales of bureaucratic action and inertia.

The editor's job is to reduce this to perhaps 100 stories that will appear across the daily newspaper.

One question drives it all: what, of all that has happened, most deserves to be on these pages?

That question has always belonged to editors. Now it belongs to everyone: the musician choosing between 50 AI-generated chord progressions, the brand team deciding which of a dozen copy variants goes live, the filmmaker selecting from multiple AI-generated scene treatments, the researcher determining which of the machine's myriad hypotheses is worth following up.

Every creative and cognitive role, in every field, now involves this upstream act. Not of creating from scratch, but of choosing from tsunamis of abundance.

The Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges first imagined this in 1941.

He wrote of a Library of Babel, an infinite trove containing every possible book; every permutation of every letter in every sequence, producing every text that could ever exist, and every text that never could.

The catch is ruinous. Every answer is present, but no answer can be found. Every truth exists within the library, but no truth is locatable.

The librarians spend their lives wandering, descending into madness. Some begin to believe in the existence of a single book that holds the key. Others attempt to compile the catalogue of all catalogues, find the perfect arrangement. None of it works.

Infinite possibility has destroyed the idea of relevance. The Borges library is the horror of abundance, made absolute.

What Borges imagined as metaphysics has parallels in what generative AI is manifesting.

Artificial intelligence tools dramatically accelerate the ideation phase, producing in seconds more directions than a team once

IN THE AI AGE, IDEAS WILL BE ABUNDANT. THE DECISIVE HUMAN CONTRIBUTION WILL BE THE "NO, NOT GOOD ENOUGH"; THE EVALUATION, AND ABILITY TO WREST MORE FROM THE MACHINE

generated in days. And the question the librarians faced, of how to find what matters, is now the central creative and commercial challenge of our era.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez once said that a writer is known more by what he does not publish than by what he does.

This will be the scarce resource, in the age of AI: discretion, elevated to a creative act. Creative ideas will be infectiously abundant.

The decisive human contribution will be the "No, not good enough"; the evaluation, and the ability to wrest more from the machine and elevate its output.

This is where the human element endures. Taste and discernment are formed over years of exposure, failure, revision, and the quiet accumulation of reasons for preferring one thing over another (reasons that are often entirely valid, but almost impossible to express or fully explain).

Design and curation are the two disciplines that give this capacity practical form. Design reaches far deeper than the surface. Think of it as an iceberg: what an audience or customer encounters, a coherent pattern, a navigable user interface, a curated set of clear choices, is the visible tip. The design intelligence that produced it is the mass below the waterline.

Curation operates at a different level: not how things are experienced, but what deserves to be seen at all.

In the age of AI, we need more curation and better curation simultaneously. More, because of the sheer volume. Better, because human curators are under mounting pressure from algorithmic recommendation systems that select not for quality but for engagement.

Algorithms have no embarrassment. Platforms that curate through engagement optimisation select relentlessly based on what people will unwittingly click rather than what they would thank you for having shown them. Hence the growing prevalence of AI slop.

Culture, over time, narrows toward what

ever has already performed well.

The accountable curator is the corrective. Not because they're always right, but because human curators have skin in the game. A critic who champions a terrible book or movie is diminished by it. A publisher who releases a fraudulent memoir answers for it publicly, and over time. A label that staked its reputation on an artist carries the result.

The machines already have a reputation for creating slop. A lot of humans do not.

Each of us will have a role to play too, in choosing wisely, furthering scepticism and aiding curation.

A Pew Research survey conducted last year found that 66% of adults under 30 would like a painting less if they found out AI made it. The market has long recognised and rewarded this distinction of human provenance.

By every rational measure of function, Apple Watch does more than any Audemars Piguet. Yet the Royal Oak, assembled by hand, carrying the accumulated meaning of craft and human presence unavailable to any algorithm, thrives far and outstrips it (in value, and in prestige).

The dominant narrative is that AI is becoming a creator.

The more consequential shift is that humans are becoming editors.

As generative systems take over execution — writing drafts, composing music, generating visuals — the human role can move upstream from production to judgment.

The act of creation, then, becomes less about making something from nothing and more about deciding what should exist at all.

The Borges librarians went mad because they had infinite options and no principle of refusal: no way to discard the gibberish, dismiss the false, or tell slop from meaning. Taste, design, curation, command: the principle of refusal is what turns that library into something viable.

As Picasso put it: Art is the elimination of the unnecessary.

In the age of AI, that is both an aesthetic instruction and a survival strategy.



No brushes were available; no one had planned for this. So, MF Husain dipped his fingers in acrylic pigments and painted on a flip chart. The work still hangs near the entrance of ISB, Hyderabad. IMAGES: GETTY; KASHYAP KOMPILLA

(Above left) Room 711 at the Louvre hosts masterpieces on every wall. Seen here is Wedding Feast at Cana, among others. Most go unnoticed, as crowds rush to the canvases they've been told to prioritise: the Mona Lisa (which isn't pictured here, but then you've known what she looks like since you were about six).

culture

Rafa around the edges

A new Netflix documentary traces the pain behind the perfection of tennis legend Nadal



How did a man in so much pain win 14 French Open titles between 2005 and 2022? That will be one of the enduring mysteries of Nadal.

Kunal Pradhan



When Rafael Nadal was seven years old, he believed his uncle Toni could do anything — even make it rain.

A young Rafa was playing his first tournament against an 11-year-old opponent who was much bigger and stronger than him. Toni told him not to be scared, and assured him that if he was losing badly, the rain would magically come down.

Rafa didn't start well, but then he started to claw his way back into the match. That's when the rain started falling. While they were waiting for the skies to clear, Rafa frantically sought out Toni. "Stop the rain," he said. "I think I can beat him."

Fifteen years later, in 2008, Rafa — ranked No 2 in the world and already a four-time French Open champion — was playing his third straight Wimbledon final against Roger Federer. He had lost to Federer the previous two years and had just blown a two-set lead when a thunderous downpour disrupted the match. Toni went to find Rafa in the locker room to try and cheer him up but couldn't think of anything meaningful to say.

After a few minutes of silence, Rafa looked up at him and grinned. "You can stop the rain, Toni. I'm not going to lose today." (And he didn't.)

The Nadal way

There are many ways to be a champion. Some sporting icons build their legend on pure grit and technical perfection. Nadal's great rival Federer was one of those.

There are others whose hunger propels them to solve any problem thrown at them. Nadal's biggest hurdle in his later years, Novak Djokovic, was one of those. He would somehow find a way to neutralise his opponent's advantage.

And then there are those like Nadal who are all heart. For whom there is no pain threshold, no mental block, no emotional barrier. One may injure them, crush them or hurt their pride, but they'll still come roaring back, because they can push themselves further than most others can. If they fall short, they blame themselves for not doing enough. When they triumph, they believe they could have done better.

A new Netflix documentary, Rafa, captures the life, times and mindset of sport's most resilient champion. Nadal won 22 Grand Slams, two more than Federer and two less than Djokovic, is now sitting on. He is the only player to be ranked No 1 in the world in three different decades: he first climbed the pinnacle in 2008 and last occupied the summit on February 2, 2020.

His crowning achievement was winning 14 French Open titles between 2005 and 2022 for a 112-4 (95.6%) win-loss record at the

most gruelling of Grand Slams. There has been no greater combination in any sport ever than Rafael Nadal and the red clay of Roland Garros.

But the documentary goes beyond the numbers to demystify Nadal as a champion for whom the struggle was paramount. Unlike those who may revel in victories or achievements, his solace came from pushing himself to gain every extra millimetre.

"People thought I was a winner," Nadal says. "I'm not a winner, I'm a competitor."

Beautiful, brilliant, breaking

Nadal was seen as a specimen of the perfect sporting physique through most of his career. The pirate pants ended just above bulging calves. The cut-off T-shirts enhanced beefy biceps. The hybrid headband-bandana allowed cave-man tresses to frame his forehead. It was a bohemian persona that went perfectly with his gladiatorial style of play.

But beautiful and brilliant as he may be, beneath the veneer, Nadal was breaking.

He suffered from Muller-Weiss syndrome, a rare degenerative condition that impacts the navicular bone and leads to debilitating pain in the mid- and hindfoot. Nadal discovered it in 2005, as an incidental finding after he broke his left foot at the Madrid Masters.

He'd won just one French Open title at the time, and had to contend with the idea of surgery that could mean he would never play competitive tennis again. Determined to find another way, he treated the condition with a specialised insole that took some stress away, paired with pre-match nerve block injections that reduced the pain.

Still, he hurt in each of his 1,308 matches, a rare over the countless hours of practice, until he retired in 2024 as a 38-year-old.

Wearing the insole for 19 years impacted other parts of his body. Tendinitis in his knee was the most agonising direct consequence. There were also abdominal tears, back pain and hip flexor injuries. The constant use of painkillers, meanwhile, caused small perforations in his intestines. But his passion was always stronger than the suffering.

What Nadal got in return for not giving up was showcasing to the world what only he could: the heavy forehead topsin that sent the ball back at over 3,000 rpm, the wide kick-serve that opened up the court, the relentless targeting of his opponent's backhand (even if the backhand belonged to Federer), and the ability to chase anything down (even if it was one of Djokovic's sliding open-stance cross-courts).

Most of all, for a person who always felt he could have done harder, he wanted to leave the sport with his head held high. For, Grand Slams titles and win-loss records aside, Rafa knew that he'd always given it his all. That he'd never saved anything for the swim back. That, Uncle Toni's magical powers notwithstanding, he never really needed the rain.

(The views expressed are personal)

{ DEE FOR DRAMA }

Deepanjana Pal



Listen to the voice of Hind Rajab

A 5-year-old begs for help as her car comes under fire in Gaza. A stunning work of docu-fiction is finally in theatres. Don't miss it

At a pivotal moment in Schindler's List (1993), director Steven Spielberg introduces colour to his black-and-white film.

As Nazi troops storm the Krakow ghetto, Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) notices a little girl in a red coat. It isn't the bright red of Nazi symbols. Nor is it the colour of blood. It is a shade that speaks of life, innocence.

There are many stories told of little girls in red coats during the Holocaust. Some, like Roma Ligocka, survived. (Her biography is titled Girl in the Red Coat). Many didn't. By showing a red coat in a later scene, on a cart heaped with dead bodies, Spielberg chooses to make the victims the beating heart of Schindler's List.



In a different film set in a different era, another little girl serves as a symbol of slaughterhouse innocence. She isn't a skillfully placed motif in a larger narrative. Five-year-old Hind Rajab and her final hours are the entire story.

Tunisian filmmaker Kaouthar Ben Hania's The Voice of Hind Rajab (2025), out in theatres this week, recreates in excruciating detail what unfolded after the humanitarian organisation Palestine Red Crescent Society got a call from her on their helpline.

The first responder, Omar (played by Motaz Malhees), worked out her location. An ambulance was eight minutes away. But distance and time in a war zone are measured in loops of bureaucracy. Minutes turned to hours, punctuated by more calls from the terrified child.

The Voice of Hind Rajab is a work of docufiction in that the fictionalised sections are set in the Red Crescent office (below). The recordings of Hind's voice are real.

"My family, they're all dead," she says. She talks about how she is scared of the dark. Over and over, she begs for help.

She is trapped in a car and still under fire. The relatives who were taking her along as they fled Gaza have died. It is January 2024.

The fictionalised sections are grounded in the realities of Gaza. The absurd tragedy of an ambulance stalled for hours, the targeting of children and medical personnel (two paramedics were killed while trying to rescue Rajab), the helplessness of humanitarian workers, are all lived experiences.

Ben Hania blurs the boundaries between fact and fiction to remind us that we are watching a re-enactment, not a figment of someone's imagination.

The phone in Hind Rajab's hand eventually went silent. The aid workers lost contact with the ambulance crew. The bodies were recovered 12 days later. A five-year-old girl, her three cousins, an uncle, an aunt, and the two men who tried to rescue her.

(Write to Deepanjana Pal @dpjanana on Instagram. The views expressed are personal)

HT ILLUSTRATION:
RAHUL PAKARATHI

wknd mind

Wicked little letters

An ongoing exhibition has brought together typos and corrections that read like poetry, misrepresented the world, signalled rebellion in the face of censorship and even, in one case, turned a holy commandment into a scandalous exhortation: Thou shalt commit adultery?

Anesha George

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Million-dollar lawsuits have been lost because of a missing comma, so we know how expensive a typo can be.

A missing Oxford comma, in a 2017 suit against Oakhurst Dairy in Maine, caused enough ambiguity about overtime pay to result in a \$5 million settlement in favour of delivery drivers, and that isn't the only such case.

People have gone to prison over a typo. In 1631, the English printers Robert Barker and Martin Lucas omitted a three-letter word from a book. It cost them their licence and a £300 fine, a sum so crippling that Barker spent his life in a debtor's prison. The book was a version of the Bible commissioned by King Charles I. It was nicknamed Wicked Bible after the printing error left out the word "not", turning the seventh commandment into a scandalous exhortation: "Thou shalt commit adultery."

The mistake was discovered after the first print run had been distributed. Copies were subsequently tracked down and burned. A few survive and are rare collectors' items. This, of course, was an extreme example. Errors caught after a print run were usually simply acknowledged, in errata lists. And not all errors were seen as flaws.

The first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922)

includes a seven-page such list of over 200 mistakes, including dropped words, line breaks and mismatched punctuation. Joyce famously rejected some of these, saying, "These are not misprints but beauties of my style hitherto undreamt of."

That elegant phrase, *Beauties of My Style*, is now the title of an exhibition at Yale University's Sterling Memorial Library (until November 29), that celebrates the idiosyncrasies, stories and even poetry of errata lists.

The show is curated by art historian Rachel Churner, a professor of visual studies at The New School in New York, and Geoff Kaplan, a graphic designer and professor of design at Yale School of Art. Featured are mistakes from novels, poems, religious texts, court documents and maps.

In the first English translation of the Dutch nautical atlas *The Mariners Mirror* (1588), for instance, cartographer Lucas Waghenar blames the seas' shifting nature for inaccuracies and begs the reader "not to carp" on such flaws.

"It was fascinating to learn what authors, printers, and readers at a given time deemed necessary to correct," says Churner. "I love the dismissal of responsibility: sometimes the author wasn't available and so, somehow, these mistakes 'happened'... as if they were meteorological events."

Error apparent

In what is expected to be a big draw, the show features a copy of the Wicked Bible, drawn from Yale's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. A shaky "not" has been added by hand, in a tiny, hurried scrawl.

Also on display are instances in which errata were used as weapons of revolt. Through the 16th and 17th centuries, amid the growing strictures of the Puritan

and Protestant movements, authors used errata to sneak statements of dissent past censors and dodge laws on crimes such as obscenity and treason.

In 1795, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge did this in his pamphlet titled *Addresses to the People*, which condemned England's invasion of France. His mock-erratum reads "Page 61, for MURDER read fight for the King and Country."

Even in Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus's *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, printed in 1543, an anonymous preface inserted by the publisher reframed his revolutionary heliocentric argument as mere "hypothesis", in an attempt to appease censors and the church. And the tactic sort of worked. Despite its dramatic challenge to theology, the book wasn't officially banned by the Roman Catholic Church until 1916 (after which it stayed on the Index of Forbidden Books for nearly 150 years, until 1758).

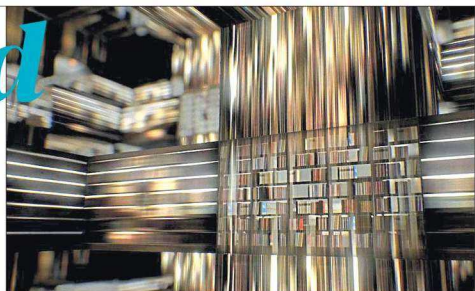
"We didn't anticipate quite how much personally, because its delightful fables have journeyed, over about 1,500 years, from the original Sanskrit into dozens of Indian languages (and an array of foreign ones)."

And yet... so much remains hidden. Translations exist, but not in enough languages. Treasures exist, but in libraries and archives invisible to the mainstream.

Now, an effort led by Ashoka University's Ashoka Centre for Translation, in collaboration with the literature and research-centric New India Foundation, is working to spotlight as many of those treasures as possible on a single platform.

Bhashavaad (bhashavaad.in; Hindi for Discussions on Language) is India's first non-profit, open-access, crowdsourced databases of Indian translations. Now in its third year, it has gathered data on 34,000 titles.

"We often assume translation happens only when there are grants, prizes, royalties, publishers and institutional support. While translators absolutely deserve recognition, the history of translation in India tells a different story. Long before any of these structures existed, people were translating across languages in astonishing numbers," says Rita Kothari, co-director of the Ashoka Centre for Translation and a professor of English at the university. "The Bhashavaad database is an attempt to uncover that vast, messy, vibrant ecosystem."



A still from *Interstellar* (2014). Translation too is a kind of time travel, each work a gift pieced together and transmitted to generations of the present and future.

{ FINE PRINT } | THE ASHOKA DATABASE OF INDIAN TRANSLATIONS

What's another word for...

Sukanya Datta

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There are certain things that feel distinctly Indian.

The way we weave through traffic as pedestrians. Not our heads and jog our shoulders to indicate yes, no and who knows? Leap effortlessly from one language to another and another, often in a single day, sometimes in a single sentence.

Within our spectacular diversity, these are the kinds of things that unite us. Let's say with that last one. A land of this many tongues (about 19,000, including dialects), could have been given by the variations. Instead, we learnt long ago to share.

Most of us have, at some point, read at least a bit of Sant Tukaram and Maithilisharan Gupta, Premchand and Anurita Prasad, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Perumal Murugan.

We have at some point been read the Panchatantra, which makes for a great example, because its delightful fables have journeyed, over about 1,500 years, from the original Sanskrit into dozens of Indian languages (and an array of foreign ones).

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Cross talk

It all began, Kothari says, when she and

her co-director at the centre, fellow translator Arunava Sinha, decided to try to find data on which Indian-language titles had been translated.

"One of our primary duties at the centre is to identify books that need to be translated and find publishers for them. A major roadblock here is the lack of this information in a structured format," says Sinha, who is a professor of creative writing at the university. Catalogues from publishers helped them get started. Then the hunt began, with Kothari, Sinha and their team scouring libraries, private collections, archives and literary institutions for clues.

The unearthed, among other things, translations of books on Zoroastrian culture going back over 100 years; several versions of the 12th century Tamil epic *Kamba Ramayanam*, in Bengali, English, Malayalam and Kannada; essays and jokes, treatises on medicine, science, religion and spirituality.

The eventual aim, Sinha says, is to attempt to map what is and isn't being translated, which languages are most widely represented, what the most translated language pairs are, and where focus might most urgently be needed on languages.

Some of this data is already taking shape. So far, for instance, the Indian languages most translated are Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, Urdu, Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit and Odia. The Indian languages most translated to are Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Bengali and Telugu.

Another trend the data points to is the uneven flow of translations between languages. Bengali, for instance, appears more often as a source language than a recipient. So, while Bengali literature travels widely across India, there isn't a corresponding influx of translations from other languages.

The position of English as a dominant medium means that many works are often first translated into this lingua franca and then into another Indian language. With a lot often lost in the process.

Researchers can now mine the website for more such patterns, and explore unanswered questions about the ongoing evolution of Indian literature as a whole.

What we have now is just the tip of the iceberg, Sinha says. There are plans to add more titles, as well as works of oral history, songs and folklore. The vaster and more varied the archive can be, he and Kothari agree, the better.

Translation is, after all, the glue that binds us together, Sinha says. "Without it, we'd be islands with no bridges."

{ CAPITAL LETTERS } | EAGLES, SWALLOWS, HOW TURKEY GOT ITS NAME

On wings and a prayer

Adam Jacot de Boind



It took us millions of years to figure out how to fly, and we still can't do it quite like they do.

A hop, a flap, and they're airborne... so it's no surprise that this ability, in the minds of ancient humans, gave birds the air of something magical or divine.

Among the Hopi people of North America, it was said they could carry messages between humans and the gods. The mighty eagle was considered particularly powerful in this respect, able to carry prayers far into the heavens.

Among the Yakut of Siberia, birds of prey were associated with travel between worlds. For this reason, small wooden bird effigies were placed in funerary settings.

As people attempted to make sense of all the unexpected and unexplained that these creatures represented, the same bird, interestingly, could end up signifying very different things, in different parts of the world.

Owls are one of the clearest examples of this duality. In parts of India, they are considered a bad omen. If one screeches on or near a home at night, it is said to mean that death, illness or financial troubles may soon follow. It is thought that the owl's blank stare, its habit of hunting surreptitiously at night and its eerie screeches earned it this superstition.

In Ancient Greece, meanwhile, the owl served as sacred companion to Athena, goddess of wisdom and strategy. The influence of this early belief persists in modern Western culture, where fairy tales cast the owl as a wise elder of the forest.

The simple rooster, because it so often crows at dawn, acquired powerful symbolism. Among the Pueblo peoples of North America, it is seen as a symbol of renewal. In China, it is considered quite an honourable bird, with a comb that resembles the head-

gear of a mandarin, and a propensity to protect weaker birds from a hawk perched on the door and the sun will soon shine on it, it is said.

Not so among Tibetan Buddhists. This tradition regards the rooster as highly inauspicious. With its incessant cawing and pecking at the ground, it has come to represent insatiable desire. It even appears at the centre of the Wheel of Life, alongside the pig and snake, as one of the Three Poisons: attachment, ignorance (sally, the pig) and hatred/aversion (represented, rather unfairly, by the beautiful snake).

Swallows carry layered meanings across cultures. In parts of Africa, they symbolise purity, because they appear to never soil their feet by walking on the ground. In China, the symmetry of two swallows flying together represents marital harmony.

Europe is full of lore about magpies. Because they tend to mate for life, seeing a single one, or an odd number, was viewed as a sign that bad luck was on its way. A well-known rhyme reflects this: "One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a funeral, four for a birth," it goes, ending with "Thirteen beware it's the devil himself!"

Perhaps my favourite avian muddle, though, has less to do with superstition and more to do with language, and geography. The bird known as the turkey got its name because European traders confused it with the similar-looking African guinea fowl, which was imported in large numbers via Turkey (Land of the Turks). The guinea fowl was nicknamed "turkey fowl" and then "turkeys". (And, incidentally, many wonder why the country is "named after the bird".)

Meanwhile, in Turkey, the bird is called Hindi, meaning "from India", for reasons that have roots in what remains the world's biggest geographical mess.

The turkey, you see, is native to North America. When Columbus made his big mistake in 1492-93, and announced to the world that he had arrived in India, it would be years before anyone realised his error. Meanwhile, traders began to use his route to export this delicious species (among other things) to major markets, advertising them as products from India. And so this creature, found nowhere but America, came to be named "Hindi" or other versions of "from India", in certain importing countries, such as Turkey.

The really haunting detail: Columbus died, in 1506, still adamant that he had reached Asia. Compelling evidence of a "new continent" would come via a revolutionary map. But that would happen only in 1507.

(Adam Jacot de Boind is author of *The Meaning of Tingo*. The views expressed are personal)

(Above) In the first English translation of the Dutch nautical atlas *The Mariners Mirror* (1588), cartographer Lucas Waghenar blames the seas' shifting nature for inaccuracies and begs the reader "not to carp" on such flaws. BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY



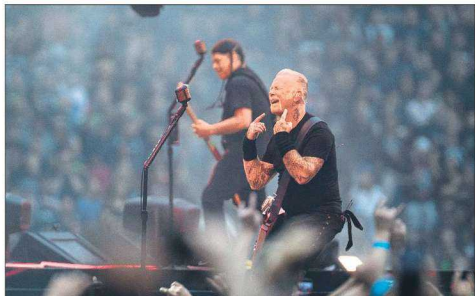
READ: That's going to leave a mark: How the world of punctuation is changing

{ LIFE HACKS }

Charles Assisi

Maturity leave

It's strange to think of the rebels that make up Guns N' Roses and Metallica as seniors grappling with age. Is there a way to do that, without giving up entirely on who you were?



Metallica offers hope, via reinvention. Band members don't live like they're still in their 20s. They have treated aging somewhat like elite athletes do, following strict health regimens and travelling with physical therapists and trainers.

I can't explain the grief I felt as he spoke. It was like something had withered and died, in seconds, right before me.

When our heroes — whether they be rock stars, friends or mentors — begin to age, we cannot help but feel a deep sense of loss. As long as they feel young, intact and invincible, they act as a buffer between us and the passage of time. They hold up the sky.

When they begin to slow down, hit a flat note, become bitter, or fade, that buffer vanishes. The myth shatters.

If the heroes of our lives are dwindling, it can only mean that we're next. Some people and some bands — Guns N' Roses is among them — build their brand on raw, chaotic, unsustainable energy. It has to run out. Is there another way?

Metallica offers hope, via reinvention. They don't live like they're still in their 20s. They treated aging somewhat like elite athletes do, reportedly following strict health regimens as they grew older. They travel with physical therapists and trainers. They shifted from raw, unguided energy to struc-

tured, deliberate mastery and, in doing so, preserved the myth.

In Berlin, as Ricky put it, one didn't pity Metallica. One felt awe at their sustained power. It struck me then that those of us who laugh at our own efforts to contend with aging — suddenly eating healthier, exercising differently, worrying about creaks and aches — ought perhaps to take it more seriously.

We are all fading. Why not prepare for it? Why not make room for it in others too; stop taking their strength and energy for granted, and stop demanding they be the towering monuments they used to be?

Every kind of relationship — all love — must evolve. I lead the way for my superstar uncles, while chatting about the superstars they've been. It helps temper the grief of watching them change.

Aging is mandatory. How we decay contains elements of choice.

(Charles Assisi is co-founder of Founding Fuel. He can be reached on assisi@foundingfuel.com. The views expressed are personal)

Is the owl a sign of wisdom, or of bad luck headed your way? The answer depends on where, geographically, you are standing. WIKIMEDIA



NEET RETEST

Over 200,000 personnel, including police and district administration officials, have been mobilised to ensure the smooth and fair conduct of the re-examination, the NTA said.

In a first, the Indian Air Force is being engaged to transport the question papers as part of enhanced security measures. Meanwhile, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan has chaired a series of high-level review meetings with senior officials to assess preparedness and oversee arrangements for the re-examination. The government also temporarily restricted access to the Telegram, with the NTA saying it was aimed at tackling cheating rackets.

The NTA has launched a verified WhatsApp communication channel to provide authentic updates directly to candidates and has cautioned students against trusting social media rumours about "leaked" question papers, answer keys or paid services.

Several states have also announced support measures for candidates, including free transportation facilities through state-run bus services to reduce travel-related stress and ensure timely access to examination centres.

The National Medical Commission has directed all medical colleges and institutions under its purview not to grant leave to students on June 20 and 21, except in exceptional circumstances. The move comes in the backdrop of some instances when students of medical colleges were found to be involved in activities that could compromise the sanctity and integrity of the examination process.

To ensure a fair and transparent examination, the NTA has put in place a multi-layered security framework, including end-to-end secure handling of confidential materials under sealed protocols, GPS-enabled vehicles with police escorts for movement of examination materials, CCTV surveillance at all examination centres linked to centralised control rooms, and Aadhaar-based biometric authentication to prevent impersonation," the NTA said.

It said it had a range of candidate-centric arrangements at all examination centres in view of the large number of candidates and prevailing summer conditions. These include reliable power backup, adequate electricity, lighting and fans,

wall clocks in examination rooms, drinking water, sanitation facilities and on-site medical support.

Candidates will be allowed to carry a transparent water bottle, while diabetic candidates may bring sugar tablets and fruits such as bananas, apples and oranges along with a transparent water bottle, in accordance with NTA guidelines, it said. The NTA said additional biometric machines and trained personnel have been deployed to expedite verification, while travel and weather advisories have been issued in advance, urging candidates to plan their travel early and verify centre addresses.

The agency advised candidates wearing customary or religious attire, as well as those wishing for full-sleeved clothing or woollens, to report early to allow time for thorough frisking.

IRAN SHUTS HORMUZ
emerged of a ceasefire agreement. The persistent fighting threatened an interim agreement between the United States and Iran to end the war in the Middle East.

Seven people remained trapped under the rubble after the strikes hit the southern town of Nabatiyeh and nearby villages, Lebanon's National News Agency said.

Mediators were scrambling to halt the fighting between Israel and the militant Lebanese Hezbollah group, after a heavy exchange on Friday killed at least 47 people in Lebanon and four Israeli soldiers.

An Israeli military official said Hezbollah had fired more than 50 projectiles at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon overnight, prompting the military to start targeting the militant group there. The official spoke anonymously in line with regulations.

The army said it struck dozens of Hezbollah targets and militants in southern Lebanon, including rocket-launching positions and Hezbollah command centres.

On Friday, Israeli ambassador to Washington, Yechiel Leter, said on X that Israel "remains firmly committed to an immediate ceasefire" if Hezbollah honours the agreement and ceases hostilities.

On Saturday, Hezbollah said it had committed to the ceasefire but blamed Israel for violating it several times on Friday night. A statement issued by the group's military wing said it would abide by the ceasefire but would also retaliate against Israeli troops.

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

Hezbollah and Israel went to war just days after the US and Israel launched strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, with Hezbollah firing rockets and drones at northern Israel and Israel seizing large swaths of southern Lebanon.

The interim US-Iran agreement signed this week has almost reopened the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed as the war unfolded — cutting off the global economy from significant supplies of oil and natural gas. The deal also envisages the relaunch of talks on Iran's nuclear program, a core issue in the war. Neither Israel nor Hezbollah are signatories to the deal, which calls for a halt to military operations in Lebanon and for the country's sovereignty to be respected. With the fighting continuing, the accord is under threat and U.S.-Iran talks in Switzerland, planned to start Friday, have been delayed, with no new date announced.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to keep Israeli forces in southern Lebanon until any threat to Israel is eliminated. Hezbollah has refused to halt its attacks unless Israel commits to withdrawing from Lebanon, which Iran says is also a condition of the deal. A new round of US-backed talks between the Lebanese government and Israel is expected to take place in Washington next week.

A strike on the village of Barish killed four members of a family, parents and two children. In Arab Salin village, a body was pulled from a destroyed house, and in the village of Doueir and Kfar Rumman, drone strikes killed a person on a motorcycle and a Lebanese soldier. Nine people were killed in strikes in the villages of Qanaria, Sohmer and Shehour.

Plumes of smoke rose into the sky over southern Lebanon and Israeli jets flew low over the coastal city of Tyre on Saturday. Residents there told The Associated Press they were relieved that Tyre had been spared in recent days but the sounds of Israeli planes reminded them the war is not over.

Many doubted a ceasefire — even if agreed on — would hold. "Our entire lives would change if there's a ceasefire," said Hussein Khoshman, a Tyre resident.

Netanyahu's office did not immediately comment on the ceasefire efforts. On Friday, Netanyahu posted on X that, on his orders, the Israeli army had

"struck powerfully" 150 Hezbollah targets, killing dozens of militants. Military spokesman Brig. Gen. Elie Dufrenoy said the Israeli forces were operating in a "forward defense zone" and would continue doing so.

After Iran said its officials did not travel as planned to Switzerland, insisting that the fighting in Lebanon must stop before the talks can take place, U.S. Vice President JD Vance also postponed his trip.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told the semi-official ISNA news agency on Saturday that Pakistan's interior minister will arrive in Iran as part of continued negotiations.

BIHAR CM

"So far, around 5.5 million farmers have received their farmer IDs. This will help identify land clearly and organise the farming community better," Choudhary said. He also mentioned that 800 Jivika Didis have been trained as Agri Sakhis to promote natural farming and spread awareness about its benefits among villagers.

The CM pointed out that irrigated land in Bihar has doubled in the last two decades, rising from 22,000 hectares to 44,000 hectares. "We are fully committed to doubling farmers' income, modernising agriculture, and strengthening the rural economy," he added.

Choudhary stressed the need to move beyond traditional farming. "For the economic prosperity of farmers, we must promote integrated farming instead of conventional methods. The government is working in this direction with focus on horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries and organic cultivation," he said.

He spoke about efforts to connect farmers directly to markets. Arrangements are being made to provide market access for produce from Bihar's 45,000 villages so that farmers get fair prices. Special emphasis is being placed on linking them to international markets as well.

Choudhary also touched upon the Sahyog Shilpi programme, under which more than 275,000 out of 325,000 applications have been disposed of. Notices have been issued to officials in cases of delays, and a review mechanism involving block, subdivision, district and divisional levels has been put in place to ensure justice for the people.

On the women's front, he mentioned the Lakhpati Didi initiative. Bihar already has 48 lakh such women, and the target is to take this number to one crore in the next two years. Under the CM Women's Employment Scheme, each woman is to receive ₹2.10 lakh in assistance, with the first instalment of ₹10,000 already given and the second one to follow soon. A Jivika Nidhi Bank has been created to help self-help group women access loans easily.

Choudhary noted that Bihar buys expensive power but supplies it to consumers at some of the lowest rates in the country, offering the highest subsidy of about ₹23,000 crore. All domestic consumers get up to 125 units of free electricity. He directed that farmer credit cards be issued during Sahyog Shilpi to further empower cultivators.

Development commissioner Mihir Kumar Singh and principal secretary of the agriculture department Narmadeshwar Lal also addressed the gathering.

राजिंद्री सं. जी. एल. - 33004/99

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EXTRAORDINARY
भाग II-खण्ड 3-उप-खण्ड (ii)
PART II-Section 3-Sub-section (ii)
प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

सं. 3054] नई दिल्ली, मंगलवार, जून 16, 2026/ज्येष्ठ 26, 1948

नं. 3054] NEW DELHI, TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2026/JYAISTHA 26, 1948

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, the 16 June 2026

S.O. 3176(E).- In exercise of powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highways Act, 1956 (48 of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government, after being satisfied that for the public purpose, the land, the brief description of which is given in the Schedule below, is required for building (widening) two lane with paved shoulder/four laneing etc.), maintenance, management and operation of Greenfield Expressway in the stretch of land from Km. 246.0 to Km. 337.4 in the village(s) namely- Bajuband, Baruar, Kharagpur, Kudibani, Laxmipur, Mahadeomath, Mahthaur Got, Mansapur, Narahi, Narindarpur, Rajarampatti, Sakhuia Taluk-Laukahi and in the village(s) namely- Dokahar, Madhapur, Bhatgawan, Bikram Sher, Dhamaura, Ghonghaur, Jasrajpur, Kulharia, Math khadarkhala, Misrauliya, Parsa, Rahikpur, Sarara, Satdhara, Sonpatahi Taluk-Babubarni and in the village(s) namely- Harpur, Kevta, Kormauli, Meran, Rasidpur Taluk-Khajauli and in the village(s) namely- Dokahar, Madhapur, Shubhankarpur Taluk-Kaluaahi and in the village(s) namely- Akuli, Arer, Atrauli, Barri, Benipatti, Betsuna, Bijalpura, Bishunpur, Chandpur Patti, Chandpura, Channpura, Depura, Dhagjari, Dhanushi, Jagat, Jhonhi, Karhara, Kusmaul, Ladaut, Madhopur, Murethi, Nagdah Valain, Sohraul, Uchaith Taluk-Benipatti and in the village(s) namely- Ekma, Karhia, Palikhurd, Patpara Taluk-Rajnagar in the district of MADHUBANI in the state of BIHAR hereby declares its intention to acquire such land.

Any person interested in the said land may, within twenty-one days from the date of publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, object to the use of such land for the aforesaid purpose under sub-section (1) of section 3C of the said Act.

Every such objection shall be made to the Competent Authority, namely, District Land Acquisition Officer in writing and shall set out the grounds thereof and the Competent Authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the Competent Authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections.

Any order made by the Competent Authority under sub-section (2) of section 3C of the said Act shall be final.

The land plans and other details of the land to be acquired under their notification are available and can be inspected by the interested person at the aforesaid office of the Competent Authority.

SCHEDULE

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures falling Greenfield Expressway in the stretch of land from Km. 246.0 to Km. 337.4 in the village(s) namely- Bajuband, Baruar, Kharagpur, Kudibani, Laxmipur, Mahadeomath, Mahthaur Got, Mansapur, Narahi, Narindarpur, Rajarampatti, Sakhuia Taluk-Laukahi and in the village(s) namely- Dahapatti, Gohuma Bairi, Jhakharahi, Kala Patti, Mahathaur Taluk-Phulparas and in the village(s) namely- Bhatgawan, Bikram Sher, Dhamaura, Ghonghaur, Jasrajpur, Kulharia, Math khadarkhala, Misrauliya, Parsa, Rahikpur, Sarara, Satdhara, Sonpatahi Taluk-Babubarni and in the village(s) namely- Harpur, Kevta, Kormauli, Meran, Rasidpur Taluk-Khajauli and in the village(s) namely- Dokahar, Madhapur, Shubhankarpur Taluk-Kaluaahi and in the village(s) namely- Akuli, Arer, Atrauli, Barri, Benipatti, Betsuna, Bijalpura, Bishunpur, Chandpur Patti, Chandpura, Channpura, Depura, Dhagjari, Dhanushi, Jagat, Jhonhi, Karhara, Kusmaul, Ladaut, Madhopur, Murethi, Nagdah Valain, Sohraul, Uchaith Taluk-Benipatti and in the village(s) namely- Ekma, Karhia, Palikhurd, Patpara Taluk-Rajnagar in the district of MADHUBANI in the state of BIHAR.



[F. No. NHA/PIU-Supaul/LA/12/2025/3A]
Shaikh Amin Khan , Director

District: MADHUBANI
https://egazette.gov.in
Publication Date: 16 June 2026
https://bhoomirashigov.in
Note : The physical copy of this notification is also available at the office of CALA/PIU/PMU/RO/ED and Landowners may also see the notification there.

KIDNAPPING BID
IN NAME OF
MAOISTS FOILED, 6
RESCUED, 2 HELD

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

CHATRA: A kidnapping bid for ransom by unidentified miscreants in the name of Maoists was foiled and six people, including two women, were rescued from their clutches in Jharkhand's Chatra district, police said on Saturday.

Police arrested two persons and detained three others in this connection after a brief exchange of fire in the Hadgadi forest area under Simaria police station limits on Friday night.

According to the police, a tip-off was received that some unidentified miscreants had abducted six people from Teliyadi village under the Tandva police station area in the name of Maoists. The victims were held hostage at gunpoint in the Hadgadi forest, and a ransom of ₹1 lakh was demanded.

Following the tip-off, a police team conducted a search operation in the area and rescued all six, including two women, after a brief exchange of fire. We also arrested two persons and detained three others in this connection. The two arrested accused have been identified as Ramesh Kumar Ganju (24) and Satish Kumar Ganju (19), Simaria Sub-Divisional Police Officer Nagargoje Shubham Bhasuahe told reporters.

The police recovered three country-made firearms, one pistol-shaped lighter, one knife, and three mobile phones looted from the victims from the possession of the accused, the SDPO said.

The criminals fired two to three rounds, and the police also opened fire in retaliation. However, no one from either side sustained any bullet injuries, Simaria police station in-charge Surya Pratap Singh said.

Of the six victims, five, including one woman, hail from Teliyadi village, while the second woman is a resident of Gobda village in Hazaribag district, he said.

An FIR in this regard was registered against the accused under the BNS, and further investigation is underway.

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WORLD

I killed in Munich accident



Two cars of a freight train derailed after a collision and fell off a bridge in Munich, Germany, June 20. One person was killed. The cause of the incident is under investigation.

Seven killed in twin blasts in Pakistan

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

PESHAWAR: At least seven people were killed and three others injured on Saturday in twin roadside blasts in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said.

No group has claimed responsibility for it yet.

The explosions occurred in Marka Bera area of the Bannu district.

According to Bannu District Police Officer (DPO) Yasir Afridi, the first explosion occurred when an improvised explosive device (IED) planted along a roadside detonated, striking a passenger van and killing five people on the spot.

He said a second blast occurred shortly afterwards at the same location, targeting people involved in rescue efforts.

Two people were killed in the second explosion, while a vehicle was also damaged.

Those injured and the bodies

of the deceased were shifted to a nearby hospital, and an investigation into the incident has been launched, the DPO added.

Officials said the passenger van was travelling from Hathi Khel village to Bannu city when it was hit by the explosion.

Security forces and law enforcement agencies have cordoned off the area and begun collecting evidence from the blast site.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi strongly condemned the incident and directed police authorities to submit a detailed report on it. He also ordered a thorough investigation into the circumstances surrounding the blasts.

Calling it "highly tragic" and "heartbreaking", he extended sympathies to the bereaved families, assuring them that the provincial government would provide all possible support during this difficult time. He also instructed authorities to ensure medical treatment to injured.

INDIAN JAILED FOR FIVE YEARS IN UK-FRANCE PEOPLE SMUGGLING CASE

LONDON: An Indian man who admitted smuggling migrants from the UK to France in the back of trucks has been jailed for more than five years by a court in south-east England.

Jaskirat Singh, 25, was prosecuted by the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) over his role in facilitating the illegal movement of non-British nationals between December 2024 and March 2026.

Earlier this month, he pleaded guilty to conspiring to facilitate illegal immigration.

Singh, who was sentenced by the Canterbury Crown Court on Thursday, is believed to have earned around 185,000 pounds through the illegal operations.

The plot was exposed when Indian nationals were found hiding in the trailer of a lorry stopped at Dover in December 2024.

Four other Indians were found in a separate lorry travelling to France in January 2025, the CPS said. **PTI**

US eyes working with Qatar to free up Iranian funds

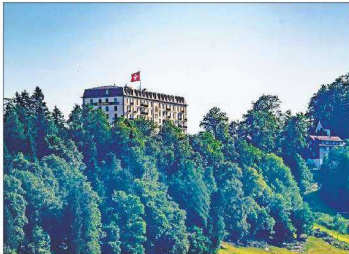
Asian News International
letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: The United States is eyeing working with Qatar so as to chart a plan for releasing billions of dollars in frozen funds aimed at humanitarian spending in Iran, the Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter.

While the plan is not complete yet, the Wall Street Journal reported that it is aimed at giving Iran access to spend and utilise some of its estimated USD 100 billion in cash frozen worldwide—with the access being to the USD 6 billion held in Qatar.

Under the deal, it was informed that Qatar would purchase humanitarian goods such as food and medicines ordered by Iran's central bank by utilising the money drawn from Tehran's frozen assets that includes cash from oil sales that have been locked up overseas by sanctions.

This comes as Qatar has reiterated its support for launching negotiations between the United States and Iran to address outstanding issues through dialogue and peaceful means as the first round of technical talks, scheduled to take place in Switzerland, got cancelled following the signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two sides in order to end the



The US-Iran talks are taking place at the Burgenstock luxury hotel complex above Lake Lucerne in Switzerland.

hostilities in West Asia.

According to a statement issued by Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this came during the discussion between Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassem Al Thani and Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis that took place at Burgenstock Resort in Switzerland on Friday.

On Thursday, the Swiss Foreign Ministry confirmed that the planned talks between the US and Iran have been postponed.

Responding to an email from ANI, the Swiss Foreign Ministry said it remains ready to facilitate the talks.

"The planned talks between the US, Iran, Qatar and Pakistan have been postponed. Switzerland remains ready to facilitate these talks. The relevant preparatory work at Burgenstock is continuing. No fur-

ther information can be provided at present," it said.

The 14-point MoU between the US and Iran includes an immediate and permanent cessation of military operations, including in Lebanon, and a pledge to conclude negotiations on a final deal within 60 days, extendable by mutual consent.

Under the memorandum, the US will begin removing its naval blockade and related restrictions, while Iran will facilitate the safe passage of commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz free of charge for an initial 60-day period, during which technical talks will also take place on Iran's nuclear programme.

The document also outlines plans for the phased lifting of sanctions, the release of frozen Iranian assets, US Treasury waivers for Iranian oil exports, and a US-backed reconstruction and economic development programme for Iran.

Ukrainian officials return Polish awards after Nazi row

KYIV: Top Ukrainian officials said on Saturday they were returning Polish awards after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was stripped of Warsaw's top order, in a row between the allies over WW2 massacres. Zelenskyy infuriated Poland by naming a military unit after the nationalist UPA that took part in massacres against Poles in WW2. On Friday, Poland stripped Zelenskyy of its highest honour. On Saturday, Zelenskyy's top aide, Ukraine's ambassador to Warsaw and the foreign minister said they were relinquishing awards bestowed by Poland. **AFP**

Bedford, a town 90km north of London, involved two London-bound trains on the same track.

"Tragically, one person was pronounced dead at the scene. He is the driver of one of the trains involved," transport police said in a statement. **AFP**

Court bans Spanish PM's wife from leaving country

MADRID: A Spanish court has ordered the wife of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Begona Gomez, to stand trial by jury for corruption and banned her from leaving the country, according to a court order released Saturday. The case is one of several corruption affairs that have embroiled the Socialist leader's family and former allies, threatening to topple his minority coalition government. Judge Juan Carlos Peinado ordered Gomez to hand in her passport and to appear before the court twice a month until a verdict is reached in the case. No also left 11 people seriously injured. The crash near **AFP**

Driver killed in UK train collision, 11 seriously injured

LONDON: British Transport Police said on Saturday a train driver had died when two trains collided north of London, in an accident the previous afternoon. The crash also left 11 people seriously injured. The crash near **AFP**



The fire at the resort in Bayahibe on Friday.

Italian tourist killed, 1,700 others evacuated after fire totally destroys Caribbean resort

SANTO DOMINGO: A large fire almost completely destroyed a luxury resort in the Dominican Republic on Friday, forcing the evacuation of almost 1,700 tourists, authorities said. Local media reported an Italian tourist died in the fire and several other tourists required medical assistance. The Viva Dominicus Beach by Wyndham resort is located in Bayahibe, a popular destination for U.S. and international tourists on the Dominican Republic's coast. **AP**

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Hindustan Times

बैंक ऑफ बरोडा
Bank of Baroda

Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties, Appendix IV-A [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & (6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s), Mortgagor(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged / charged to the Secured Creditor, Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower(s), Mortgagor(s) / Guarantor(s) Secured Asset/s/Dues/ Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below:-

Sl. No.	Name & Address of Borrower/s / Guarantor/ Mortgagors	Details of Secured Assets / Mortgaged Property	Total Dues / Date of E-Auction / Start Time to End Time	Reserve Price / EMD Deposit / Bid Increase Amount	Status of Possession (Constructive / Physical)
1.	Mr. A. Shrinivas Rao S/o. A. Maheshwar Rao Flat No. 4/1, 4th Floor, Rethy Garment Endaves, Phase-3, Halubandi Shiv Mandir Road, Sidhu Kanhoo Chowk, Jamshedpur, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand-831002	Equitable mortgage of residential flat measuring area 670 Sq.ft. (Super Built Up Area) and undivided portion of land 150 Sq.ft. bearing Flat No. G/1 in the Ground Floor building known as "MAA DURGA APARTMENT" Phase III, consisting of two Bed Rooms, One Dining Cum Drawing, One Kitchen, One Toilet, with right of use and enjoyment of common passages, spaces, stairs etc. standing on a total piece of land measuring 8 (Eight) Decimals of Present Plot Nos. 1091 & 1092, recorded under present Khata No. 659, situated in Mouza - Halubandi, Thana No. 1165, PS. Paraudih, Dist. Sub-Registry Office, Block and Town Jamshedpur, Dist. Singhbhum East, within the state of Jharkhand, Vide Sale Deed No. 2022/JSR/36 BK/1398 dated 22.07.2022 standing in the name of Mr. A. Shrinivas Rao which is bounded as follows: Boundaries of Flat No. G/1: North-Corridor, Entrance, Parking, South - Boundary Wall, East- Stair & Parking, West- Stair & Parking.	Rs. 15,69,916.00 (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty and Paise Only) - Unpaid Interest and charges 22.07.2026 from 02:00 PM to 05:00 PM	Rs. 21,62,000.00 Rs. 2,16,200.00 Rs. 21,620.00	Symbolic Possession Property Inspection Date & Time On 17.07.2026 from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer / visit to the website link <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction> and online auction portal <https://banknet.com>. Also prospective bidders may contact the Authorised Officer Tel. No.: 0657-2249700 and Mobile No.: 9165226557.

Date: 19.06.2026
Place: Jamshedpur

Sd/- Authorised Officer
Bank of Baroda

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Bank of India

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE/MOVABLE PROPERTIES

Zonal office, 2nd Floor, Yamuna Complex, Mithanpura Chowk, Muzaffarpur (Bihar)-842002

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable/movable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable/ movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized officer of Bank of India (Secured creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder:-

Name of the Borrower & Guarantors	
01. Branch: Station Road Hajipur Branch, Name of Borrower & Guarantor: MR. JYOTI KUMAR (SINCE DECEASED) ALL ITS KNOWN LEGAL HEIRS at MAUZA-BISHNUPUR BALAKHARI VILLAGE, BALAKHARI, P.O. DIGHI KALAP.S. HAJIPUR DISTRICT VAISHALI PIN-844101	Outstanding Amount: Rs. 16.26 Lakh with interest + other Expenses
Date of Demand Notice Section 13(2): 16.07.2024. Date of Possession Notice Section 13(4): 19.10.2024	
Description of the property: EOM of Land and Building in the name of Mrs. Suman Kumari, W/o. Jyoti Kumar (Co-Borrower), Mauza: Bishnupur Balakhari of Balwa, Thana: Hajipur Sadar, Thana no.: 110, Halka no.: 8, Anchal office: Hajipur DPO: Hajipur District Vaishali, Khata no.: 75, Kheta no.: 554, Area - 02/2 dec equivalent to 10 dhur, Boundary North: Gramin Sadak, South: Sangita Devi, East: Niz 8th Wide Rasta, West: Ram Prasad Singh	
Reserve Price: Rs. 14.98 Lakh, Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 1.58 Lakh	

TERMS & CONDITIONS:-

1. Date, Time of E-auction: 09.07.2026, 11.00AM to 5.00 PM. Followed by three extensions of 10 minutes
2. Last date & time of submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD): 08.07.2026 till 5.00 P.M.,
3. Inspection Date & Time of the property: 08.07.2026 till 5.00 PM
4. Please Contact for more information - Zonal Office, Muzaffarpur, Mob. - 7980162782
5. 15 days sale notice to Borrowers/Guarantors has already been sent to be signed by Regd. Post at their last known address. In case they do not receive the said notice then this E-auction sale Notice may be treated as substituted mode of Service.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Bank of India, Secured creditor website i.e. <https://banknet.com>

Place: Muzaffarpur
Date: 20.06.2026

Authorized Officer
Bank of India

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THE WEEK THAT WAS
A quiz on the week's development.

Hindustan Times

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Notification No. 101/2026

Important Notice for the New Weekly Super Fast Express Train

In continuation to this official notification no. 99/2026 dated 16.06.2026 it is notified to provide facility to general public that regular running of train no. 12527/12528 Chhapra-Anand Vihar (T)-Chhapra weekly Super Fast Express will start from 28.06.2026 Ex. Chhapra and from 29.06.2026 Ex. Anand Vihar (T) are as under:-

Train No. 12527/12528 Chhapra-Anand Vihar (T)-Chhapra				
Train No. 12527: Ex.CPR on Weekly: 28.06.2026 (Sunday)		Train No. 12528: Ex.ANVNT on Weekly: 29.06.2026 (Monday)		
Train No. 12527 (CPR - ANVT)		Train No. 12528 (ANVT - CPR)		
Arrival	Departure	STATION	Arrival	Departure
22.00	22.05	Chhapra	08.20	08.25
23.05	23.10	Mau	07.10	07.15
23.50	23.55	Azamgarh	06.30	06.35
01.15	01.20	Shahganj	04.50	04.55
01.53	01.55	Jaunpur	03.28	03.30
03.28	03.30	Sultanpur	01.38	01.40
06.20	06.30	Lucknow (NR)	23.00	23.10
08.15	08.20	Kanpur Central	21.35	21.40
11.48	11.50	Aligarh	18.08	18.10
13.18	13.20	Ghazipur	16.56	16.58
14.00		Anand Vihar (T)	16.25	

Rake Composition: AC First Class cum AC 2-Tier-01, Generator Car/Luggage-cum-Stuff Coach-04, Second Class Chair Car (Non-AC)-05, AC 3-Tier Economy-02, AC 3-Tier-06, AC 2-Tier-02, First AC-01, Seating-cum-Luggage/Guard/Disabled-01, LSRD-1 = Total 22

CPROT-23 Chief Passenger Traffic Manager, Gorakhpur

DON'T TRAVEL WITH INFLAMMABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN

BANK OF INDIA, ASSET RECOVERY DEPARTMENT

Hazaribagh Zone, 1st Floor, Bank of India Building, Near Wales Ground, Saketpuri, Hazaribagh (Jharkhand) Phone – 06546-272185

Email – Hazaribagh.art@bankofindia.co.in

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AUCTION OF PLEDGED GOLD JEWELLERY/ORNAMENTS/COINS

It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, persons engaged in business of gold jewellery/ornaments/coins and general public that in spite of repeated reminders/notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank.

Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including up-to-date interest and all costs charges/expenses) by 23-07-2026, then from 11.00 AM 23-07-2026 their pledged gold jewellery/ornaments/coins will be put up for public auction. The borrower had failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and in public in general that the undermentioned will conduct auction in the branch premises (Padma Branch) of the gold ornaments strictly on "As is What is Basis" & "Whatever there is Basis" & "Without recourse Basis". The auction will be conducted in branch premises (Padma Branch) on 24-07-2026 from 3:00 pm to 05:00 pm. For this, Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard.

Persons interested to take part in the bidding should deposit earnest money with the Branch Manager by 23-07-2026 towards. Persons having taken part in final bidding must be able to deposit full amount to the Bank within 48 hours, failing which their earnest money, deposited with the Bank will be forfeited. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reasons in case, the bidding price so arrived at, is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if need be, Bank reserves the right to change the date, time or place of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon.

Sl.No	Account Name, Number & Branch	Sanction Amount	Present O/S	Carat	Gross Weight & Net Weight (in gms.)	Reserve price & EMDs Incremental Bid amount	EMD account details & contact detail
1	Shyam Kumar Yadav 48322521000002 Padma	110000	106389.87 +int	18	15.48 & 14.50	300000/- & 1000 & 1000	48322000000033 IFSC- BKID0004832 Padma Branch - Mr -Mithlesh Kumar 7004588600
				20	11.08 & 11.00		

Branch Premises Detail: Padma, district – Hazaribagh -825411

3% GST will be applied on the Bid price

Earnest Money Must Be Deposited latest by 23-07-2026 till 05:00 pm for participation in Gold Auction

Inspection date & time of the Gold: 23-07-2026 12:00PM to 02:00 PM (contact Branch Officer)

For More Details, RD, Zonal Office: 0651-2331932, VIVEK KUMAR (Chief Manager RD): 9934952811, Priya Lakshmi (Manager RD): 9534044995

Date: 20.06.2026, Place: Hazaribagh

Ref No: ZOH-ZBZRDV/K/2026-2721 Date: 20-06-2026

Chief Manager & Authorised Officer

SPORT



Vinicius Jr celebrates scoring Brazil's third goal during the FIFA World Cup Group C match against Haiti at the Philadelphia Stadium.

GETTYIMAGESP

Vinicius Junior's spark vs Haiti gets Brazil on track

Vinicius' breakout performance brought Brazil back in the wake of a 1-1 draw against Morocco

Associated Press
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

PHILADELPHIA: Vinicius Júnior showed why he's the most valuable player for five-time World Cup champion Brazil, scoring one goal and helping to create two others in a 3-0 victory over Haiti on Friday night.

The soon-to-be 26-year-old left winger scored at the end of the first half on a breakaway, casually flicking the ball past Haitian goalkeeper Johnny Placide. He also assisted on one goal by Matheus Cunha and set up a rebound that led to another.

Vinicius' breakout performance brought Brazil back in the

wake of a 1-1 draw against Morocco last week that left coach Carlo Ancelotti apologizing to fans. After applying steady pressure against Haiti in the opening minutes, Brazil broke through with an offensive torrent.

"Everyone was feeling lighter today and the field was also in a better condition, so we were able to do our soccer," Vinicius said. "We hope to continue in this form and continue evolving and improving in the competition, which is what's most important."

Vinicius took a bending shot that rebounded off Placide's gloves and set up Cunha for the put-away that made it 1-0. Thirteen minutes later, he set Cunha up with a long feed that Cunha drove into the net.

In the third minute of injury time, it was Vinicius who corralled a long pass and easily won the 1-on-1 matchup with the diving goalkeeper.

He nearly had another assist halfway through the second half with a one-touch pass to open Gabriel Martinelli, who launched the ball off the post.

Vinicius partly credited his breakthrough to Ancelotti's decision to move him between the forwards, a different position than he's used to.

"I don't play much there, but whenever the coach asks me to play there, I score, so I have to listen to him more," he said.

Before the game, the player nicknamed "Viní" had said he thought he had more to show in the tournament — even after scoring the goal that brought Brazil even with Morocco.

He now believes Brazil is hitting its stride.

This was a very important game for us," he said. "We were able to do our game. It gave us tranquility and superiority inside the field, where we were able to do many plays and score the goals."

Coming off scoring 16 goals in 36 games with Real Madrid, he made an effort to help the defense on several occasions against Haiti and created numerous scoring chances.

Brazil and Morocco are tied atop Group C with four points, followed by Scotland with three. The Brazilians are ranked sixth in the world. Haiti is 85th and became the first team eliminated from the tournament.

Neymar to return
Neymar is expected to return to the top of the tournament for Brazil in its final World Cup group match, coach Carlo Ancelotti said. Neymar missed Brazil's first two games of the tournament, including Friday's 3-0 win over Haiti.

Ancelotti said Neymar would go through individual training on Saturday, train with the team on Monday and "will be available" for Brazil when it closes Group C play against Scotland

on Wednesday in Miami Gardens, Florida.

Neymar is Brazil's career scoring leader with 79 goals in 129 international appearances.

The 34-year-old midfielder has yet to practice in full sessions with the team since reporting to Brazil's squad while nursing the calf injury.

Looking to play in his fourth World Cup, Neymar had tests on his calf last Monday to determine the progress of the injury that he sustained while playing for Brazilian club Santos on May 17.

There was widespread debate in Brazil over whether Neymar, whose first World Cup was on home soil in 2014, should have been called up for the tournament. He has struggled since returning from tearing the ACL in his left knee in October 2023 in a World Cup qualifier.

Neymar has four goals and two assists in eight matches for Santos this year.

Hosts USA enter knockout, Morocco defeat Scotland

Agencies

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LOS ANGELES: The United States marched into the last 32 of the World Cup on Friday with a 2-0 victory over Australia as Brazil rediscovered their scoring touch to eliminate Haiti.

A day after Mexico sealed their place in the knockout rounds, the USA emulated their fellow World Cup co-hosts with a clinical Group D win over Australia in Seattle.

A Cameron Burgess own goal in the 11th minute and a headed effort from Alex Freeman two minutes before half-time sealed a comfortable win for Mauricio Pochettino's side, who have advanced to the second phase of the tournament with a game to spare.

After an unconvincing build-up to the World Cup, the Americans have made a dream start to the tournament with Friday's victory following a stylish 4-1 demolition of Paraguay in their opening game last week.

A day of celebration for the co-hosts got even better later Friday after Paraguay's 1-0 victory over Turkey confirmed that the US would clinch top spot in Group D, ensuring a theoretically easier draw in the last 32.

"It was a fantastic game again, very good first half," Pochettino said. "I think we dominated the game against a very tough team. When the draw happened in December I thought it was going to be a really difficult, a really tough game."

Paraguay meanwhile remain alive in the tournament after their gritty 1-0 victory in Santa Clara that eliminated Turkey.

Matias Galarza's strike after just 63 seconds secured all three points for Paraguay in a game that saw the South Americans' Miguel Almiron become the first player ever to be sent off for covering his mouth while confronting an opponent under new FIFA rules.

Former Newcastle player Almiron was shown his red card in the first half stoppage order after covering his mouth while he appeared to direct a



USA celebrate against Australia.

AFP

comment at Turkey's Mert Muldur.

FIFA announced in April that players who cover their mouths in confrontations with opponents will be given a red card, part of an initiative designed to tackle racism.

In other games on Friday, Brazil took control of their destiny in Group C with a 3-0 victory over Haiti that ended the Caribbean nation's chances of reaching the last 32. The result ensured Haiti will finish bottom of Group C and are the first team to be eliminated.

Brazil's victory though was marred by an apparent injury to star forward Raphinha, who left the game in the 40th minute after an innocuous-looking tussle with Haiti defender Martin Exter.

Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti was unable to provide an update on Raphinha's injury afterwards. However, Neymar could return for the next match against Scotland, he hinted.

Brazil are now level on four points with Morocco in Group C, but lead the North Africans on goal difference.

Morocco secured their first win of the tournament on Friday with a 1-0 defeat of Scotland at Foxborough, Massachusetts.

Ismael Saibari scored the game's only goal, lashing home a thunderous angled strike in the second minute to leave the Scots reeling.

Morocco will face Haiti in their final Group C match, while Brazil take on the Scots in Miami.

"Tonight we showed we can compete with top teams in the world. Brazil will be a different game."

"They play with less structure but they have quality that can hurt you at any point," Scotland's John McGinn said.

Kohli recovering well, Hardik out

Press Trust of India

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NEW DELHI: Star batter Virat Kohli is progressing well in his recovery from the right hamstring injury sustained during the IPL and will report to the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE) on June 22 for re-evaluation and further planning.

It has been learnt that a member of the CoE sports science team visited the United Kingdom to assess Kohli's fitness status before handing him a rehabilitation programme. Kohli resides in London with his family.

He had sustained a hamstring niggle during the IPL final against Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad.

"Virat Kohli is progressing well following right hamstring injury sustained in the IPL. He was assessed by the CoE team in London and handed over the program to continue in the initial phase of rehab and he will report to the CoE on 22nd June 2026 for re-evaluation, further planning and subsequent clearance," the fitness update from

COE's sports science team sent to the selection committee and team management stated.

"Virat will get the fitness clearance after a fitness test on Monday in Bengaluru. Before that he is doing a promotional event in Delhi on Sunday," a BCCI source aware of developments told PTI.

Incidentally in 2025, when Indian Test squad was in London, the support staff members had been back then already announced his retirement from red ball format.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Hardik Pandya hasn't recovered from the quadcramps strain sustained before the Afghanistan ODI series. He is not in a position to bowl his full quota of overs and has been ruled out of the England ODI series.

Pandya will more time before returning to full fitness.

"Hardik Pandya has not been able to attain requisite amount of bowling volume and conditioning required for an ODI format and will require more time to regain complete fitness for an ODI," said a source.

ASHMITA CHALHA LOSES IN SEMI-FINALS, INDIA'S MACAU OPEN CAMPAIGN ENDS



Ashmita Chalhali BADMINTONPHOTO

Press Trust of India

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MACAU: India's campaign at the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament came to an end after Ashmita Chalhali suffered a straight-game defeat to South Korea's Park Ga Eun in the women's singles semifinals here on Saturday.

The World No. 63 Indian went down 17-21, 9-21 to World No. 61 Park in a contest lasting 38 minutes.

Ashmita looked on course to take the opening game when she built a 15-11 lead.

The Korean, however, staged a strong comeback by winning six consecutive points to move ahead 16-15.

The Indian responded well to India's campaign in the tournament to raise her game once again and pocket the next four points to seal the first game 21-17.

The momentum stayed with the South Korean in the second game as Ashmita struggled to find her rhythm.

After the scores were tied at 3-3, Park gradually pulled away, opening up a 9-5 advantage before extending her lead further with a series of attacking winners and tight net play.

Ashmita was unable to halt the Korean's surge as Park maintained complete control of the rallies and comfortably closed out the game to secure her place in the final.

The defeat brought an end to India's campaign in the tournament, as eighth seeded Indian Anmol Kharb had earlier made a quarterfinal exit by going down to Han Qian Xi.

Neeraj back with Doha D/L fourth, gets CWG mark

Press Trust of India

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

DOHA: Forced to delay the start of his season due to an injury, Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra finished a creditable fourth in the Doha Diamond League event here.

The 28-year-old Chopra produced a best of 85.69m in his third attempt, which placed him fourth in the end in his season-opening event on Friday night.

He breached the 82.6m qualifying distance set by the Athletics Federation of India for the upcoming Commonwealth Games. He was earlier named in the 32-member Indian team for the Glasgow CWG (July 23 to August 2).

Chopra has been hampered by a back injury which he sustained before the World Championships in Tokyo in September 2025.

He was competing here for the first time after finishing eighth in the World Championships. He has been training in Switzerland since May 25 after a rehabilitation stint in Turkey.

Rising Sri Lankan star and world leader Ramesh Tharanga Pathiranga won the title in the star-studded field with a throw of 88.68m.

Meanwhile, two-time world champion Andersen Peters of Grenada was second with 86.38. American Curtis Thompson, who won a bronze in the Tokyo World Championships, was third with 85.99m.

This was the first time Chopra has not finished in top-two in a Diamond League event in the



Neeraj Chopra.

AFP

last four years. He has been in top two in all the DL meetings he had participated since finishing second in Stockholm in June 2022 with a throw of 89.94m.

His first DL win came in Lausanne in August the same year. In Doha, he won the title in 2023, before finishing second in 2024 and 2025.

Chopra began with a foul and was placed fourth after his second round throw of 82.77m, which sealed his 2026 Commonwealth Games berth.

He did even better in his third attempt, sending his spear to 85.69m, and jumping up one place to third.

But once the 23-year-old Pathiranga took the lead with his fourth round throw of 88.68m, Chopra was pushed down to fourth place.

India defeat Chile, set up Women's Nations Cup final against New Zealand

Press Trust of India

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

AUCKLAND: Navneet Kaur and Deepika struck a brace each in India's dominant 6-0 win over Chile that propelled the side to the final of the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup here on Saturday.

Navneet Kaur (6th, 13th) and Deepika (14th, 18th) struck two goals apiece, while Neha (32nd) and Rutuja Dadasa Pisal (39th) also found the target as India notched up their fourth successive win in the tournament.

Captain Salima Tete, who was named player of the match, had a key role in India's emphatic

win with her all-round display. India will face hosts New Zealand in the title clash on Sunday after the hosts defeated United States 4-1 in shoot-out following a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation time. India controlled possession from the start and took the lead through Navneet, who converted the team's first penalty corner with a crisp strike into the corner.

The lead doubled after Salima made a surging run down the left flank before sending in a precise cross for an unmarked Navneet to deflect home in front of goal. India struck again almost immediately as drag-flicker Deepika converted a pen-

alty corner to make it 3-0, before adding another from a set-piece in the 18th minute to put the contest firmly beyond Chile's reach.

Deepika's brace also took her to the top of the tournament's scoring chart with six goals.

Leading 4-0 at half-time, India continued to dominate after the break. Neha made it 5-0 with another successful penalty corner conversion, underlining India's efficiency from set-pieces.

Rutuja then joined the score-sheet, sounding the board with a reverse hit from open play as India stretched the margin to six.

Almiron handed red card for covering mouth

Associated Press

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com



Paraguay's Miguel Almiron (L) leaves the field after red card for comments with mouth covered in the game vs Turkey. GETTYIMAGES

SANTA CLARA: Paraguay midfielder Miguel Almiron became the first player issued with a red card at the World Cup for covering his mouth, getting sent off during a confrontation late in the first half against Turkey.

The infraction came during first-half stoppage time in the Group D match on Friday night when Almiron and Mert Mutlu exchanged words following a foul near midfield.

Almiron covered his mouth while saying something to Muldur, who immediately issued the red card. Barton went to video review and quickly ruled that Almiron would be given a red card and ejected under a new rule put in place for this year's

World Cup. "According to the law, if you cover your mouth you're sent off. Red card," coach Gustavo Alfaro said.

"There's nothing I can do about that. Unfortunately, we can't issue a new opinion on this."

Paraguay led 1-0 at the time and held on for the win despite playing a man down for the entire second half. Alfaro said he tried to cheer Almiron up after the game, telling him his absence brought out the "fighting spirit" of the team.

"He apologised to the players for his mistake," Alfaro said. "He knew about the situation he had left his teammates in with his actions... It happened and it happened."

FIFA president Gianni Infantino pushed for the new rule after Benfica's Gylanluca Prestianni tried to hide verbal

insults toward Real Madrid's Vinicius Junior in a Champions League game.

Alfaro said the team was well aware of the rule even if it might be too harsh.

"I fear we are too strict and football loses its essence," Alfaro said. "In football, there's fights, frictions, clashes."

The red card means Almiron will miss the final group stage match against Australia with second place in Group D on the line. FIFA could choose to lengthen a suspension to sideline Almiron for a knockout round match. "I hope the penalty is as light as possible," Alfaro said.

"He was very sorry and he was heavily affected. This is the second time in two games at the World Cup that Almiron was carded under a new rule in place this year."



12th INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF
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21st JUNE 2026 | WEST BENGAL

Yoga For Healthy Ageing



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HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER

CELEBRATE
**HOMECOMING
OF YOGA**
WITH
HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER



SHRI SUVENDU ADHIKARI
HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER OF WEST BENGAL

21ST JUNE

**MASS YOGA
DEMONSTRATION**

5:00 AM

RED ROAD, KOLKATA

ADDRESS BY HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER
SHRI NARENDRA MODI

YOGA DEMONSTRATION ON **500 BOATS**

