



Hindustan Times

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PM urges youth to take vow against substance abuse

Press Trust of India
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NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asked the country's youth to take a pledge against substance abuse, saying drugs can give them a "high" for some time, but would make their entire career and personal life "low".

Launching the 'Nasha Mukti Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan', Modi said the country's youth must be mentally and physically fit, for which it is necessary for them to stay away from all kinds of substance abuse.

He also said that enemy countries use the supply of drugs as part of their terror plans because they know that "youth are the future of our country".

"Drugs can give you a high for some time, but it makes your entire career and personal life low," he said. Questioning the taboo around drug addicts, Modi said those who come out of drug addiction are fighters and should be honoured by society. "Society should respect them, embrace them and give them a second chance," he said.

The prime minister launched the campaign virtually in the presence of a large number of youth, who described themselves as representatives of Gen-Z, days after large-scale



PM Narendra Modi speaks during the virtual launch of 'Nasha Mukti Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' on Sunday. PMO

Brahmakumaris in Bihar to join de-addiction drive

Subhash Pathak
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PATNA: The Bihar government will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Brahmakumaris (Brahma Kumaris Vishwa Vidyalaya) to spearhead a comprehensive de-addiction and awareness campaign across the state, chief minister Samrat Choudhary announced on Sunday during the launch of 'Nasha Mukti Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Choudhary and Bihar governor Syed Ata Hasnain participated virtually from Lok Bhawan in Patna in the event, which was organised by the Union ministry

of youth affairs and sports through the MY Bharat platform. Choudhary said Bihar will remain a dry state and build a healthy, prosperous state. He emphasised that a strong resolve against addiction and wide public participation are essential for a developed Bihar.

He announced that the state will partner with the Brahmakumaris to strengthen and expand the de-addiction campaign, ensuring coordination with all institutions working in this field to make the effort more effective and far-reaching.

He also referred to ongoing efforts under the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan, including programmes focused on villages, schools, colleges and youth. **HT**

Driver kills municipal officer over 'denial of leaves' in Aurangabad

Prasun K Mishra
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AURANGABAD: An Executive Officer (EO) of the Dehri-Dalmianagar Nagar Parishad (Municipal Council) in Rohtas district, Vimal Kumar, was on Sunday sensationally murdered under the Barun police station area in Aurangabad district on Saturday night by his driver while the officer was on his way from Dehri to his residence in Danapur, said police, adding that the driver was arrested.

Police said that the driver Mithlesh Kumar committed the crime in a fit of rage after an altercation over urination stoppage. "The driver has said in the initial investigation that he was incensed over repeated denial of leave and being overworked by the EO. On Saturday night, while both were returning to Danapur, the driver wanted to stop for urination that the EO refused and a scuffle broke out between the two. Out of his



Dehri-Dalmianagar Nagar Parishad's Executive Officer Vimal Kumar

rage, the driver pulled an iron pipe from the back seat and killed the EO by repeatedly hitting him," said Inspector General (IG) of police, Magadh Zone, Vikas Vaibhav.

He added that the police had fished out the crime weapon -- an iron lever pipe -- from a canal near the crime scene.

The police said that the driver had earlier called the police after the crime and said that he and EO were ambushed by a gang of criminals who

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Man throws slipper at Pappu Yadav for skit on temple theft

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: Member of Parliament from Bihar's Purnea, Pappu Yadav, was targeted inside his house in New Delhi's Pandara Road where he was holding a press conference as a man hurled a shoe at him. Yadav alleged that another person also tried to attack him with a knife.

A scuffle broke out between Yadav's supporters and two men who had attempted to attack Yadav.

Yadav on Friday had dressed in saffron as a "saint" and protested against the theft of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya by enacting the theft at the Parliament. Opposition MPs including Rahul Gandhi joined him in the "skit", demanding a discussion in the House. On Saturday, BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj and others went to DCP (New Delhi) Sachin Sharma's office with a complaint against Yadav for hurting "sanatan culture" and mocking saints.

On Sunday, Yadav was hold-



MP Pappu Yadav addresses the media in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

ing a press conference about the Ram temple donation theft matter when a man came in the crowd where supporters and media persons were standing. Police said he hurled a shoe towards Yadav.

Police said the accused, Sumit, a resident of UP's Bulandshahr, was overpowered and hit by Yadav's supporters while another accused, Happy Sharma, was also held. Police said Yadav's supporters gave a knife and said it was recovered

from Sumit's pocket. Police are verifying all allegations.

Yadav told media "That man had come to kill me with a knife. There is a conspiracy to kill me. Every day, some religious figures are threatening me and saying 'Burn him, we will give ₹51 lakh.'"

In a video, Yadav is seen talking when the accused interrupts him and later huris a shoe which hit Yadav in the leg. Yadav's media convener, Jaid Khan, who was present at the

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US will hold off on strikes against Iran: Trump

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WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump says he will order American forces to hold off on new strikes against Iran, claiming Mideast allies have reached the parameters of a deal to end the 5-month old war.

The emerging deal "would include the Immediate, Complete, and Total OPENING OF THE HORMUZ STRAIT, and an end to Iran's nuclear threat," Trump wrote in a Saturday even-

ing social media post.

"Based on this request, I have agreed, for the future benefit of the WORLD and, likewise, the survival of a successful and prosperous Iran, to cancel the attack subject to being able to rapidly make a DEAL," Trump said.

Trump has announced halts to strikes in Iran on several occasions since the US and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, only for things to unravel and fighting to resume again.

Iran's defense minister said on X that the country was "nei-



Donald Trump

ther surprised nor passive" following Trump's announcement and said Iran continues to remain alert in the face of concrete threats from the US

A regional official says the proposal announced by Trump over the weekend calls for the US and Iran to return to negotiations and continue working out many of the issues that have stymied prior progress on the deal.

The official, who is involved in the mediation efforts, said the proposal calls for reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and halting attacks across the region, including by Iranian-backed militias in Iraq on the Arab Gulf countries and Jordan.

The US, in exchange, will end

its naval blockade on Iran and allow Tehran to export its oil as stated in the tentative ceasefire deal, he said.

No deal has been reached yet, but mediation efforts are underway, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to the media.

Trump said that Israel is joining his commitment to end the war by implementing the ceasefire deal. Israel did not publicly comment on the announcement.

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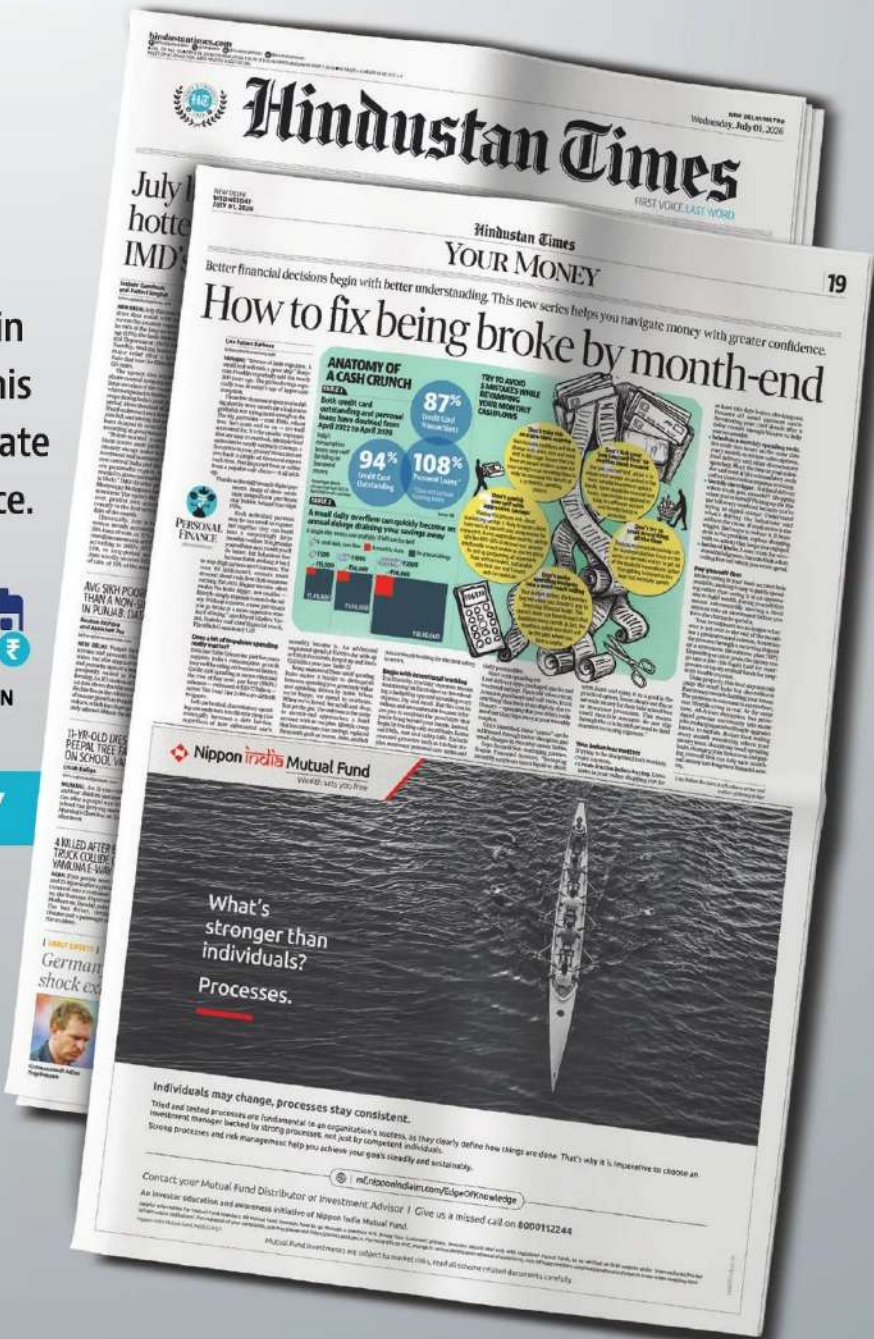


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Govt, Brahmakumaris to sign MoU for de-addiction drive: CM

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PATNA: The state government will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Brahmakumaris (Brahma Kumaris Vishwa Vidyalaya) to spearhead a comprehensive de-addiction and awareness campaign across the state, chief minister Samrat Choudhary announced on Sunday during the launch of 'Nasha Mukti Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Choudhary and Bihar governor Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd) participated virtually from Lok Bhawan in Patna at the event, which was organised by the Union ministry of youth affairs and sports through the MY Bharat platform.

The programme seeks to inspire the youth to remain free from substance abuse. It also marks the beginning of a 100-week nationwide Jan Bhagidari campaign, with activities being organised every Sunday to spread awareness and mobilise society for this cause.

Choudhary said Bihar will



Bihar Governor Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain (Retd) with chief minister Samrat Choudhary and others take an oath during Nasha Mukti Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan at Lok Bhawan in Patna on Sunday.

remain a dry state and build a healthy, prosperous state. He emphasised that a strong resolve against addiction and wide public participation are essential for a developed Bihar. He announced that the state will partner with the Brahmakumaris to strengthen and expand the de-addiction campaign, ensuring coordination with all institutions working in this field to make the effort more effective and far-reaching.

The CM highlighted the state's pioneering prohibition policy introduced in 2016, which he said has delivered significant benefits, particularly to women and families. He described Bihar as a densely populated state with a large consumer base that has reaped substantial advantages after the goods and services tax (GST) regime, while underscoring the need for simultaneous economic growth and social improvement.

Choudhary noted that Bihar's land has historically been

regarded as India's 'Swarn Bhoomi' (golden land) due to its contributions in knowledge, culture and social consciousness. Today, he said, the youth of Bihar must channel their energy and potential to build a developed and prosperous state.

He called upon the people of the state, especially the young generation, not to fall prey to drugs and to actively contribute to nation-building under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi with the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Recalling the state's educational initiatives, he pointed out that Bihar has established 221 degree colleges in the last few years to expand higher education opportunities.

He also referred to ongoing efforts under the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan to amplify local efforts in prevention, awareness and rehabilitation support.

Choudhary reiterated that drug-free, healthy and aware youth form the strongest foundation for both a Viksit Bharat and a Samridh Bharat, urging collective action involving society, educational institutions and voluntary organisations to achieve lasting results.

DRI SEIZES 3KG METHAQUALONE FROM NIGERIAN NATIONAL IN PATLIPUTRA

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PATNA: Officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) intercepted a Nigerian national at Patliputra railway station on Saturday and seized approximately 2,949 kilograms of methaqualone, a banned synthetic drug commonly known as Quaaludes or Mandrax, a press release of the DRI stated on Sunday.

Acting on specific intelligence about a female foreign national allegedly carrying narcotics while travelling from Guwahati to New Delhi, DRI teams identified and intercepted the passenger in the HI coach of the Northeast Express (Train No. 12505) at Patliputra railway station on August 1.

A thorough examination of her black-coloured trolley bag led to the recovery of two polythene packets containing a white powdery substance carefully concealed inside the luggage. Field testing confirmed the substance as methaqualone. The total quantity seized stands at 2,949 grams.

The accused, a Nigerian woman, was arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985. She was produced before the special NDPS court in Patna, which remanded her to 14 days of judicial custody.

Authorities said further investigation is underway to identify other members of the drug syndicate believed to be involved.

Methaqualone is a schedule-I controlled substance under Indian law. Once widely prescribed as a sedative-hypnotic in the mid-20th century, it was banned in many countries, including India, due to high abuse potential, dependence risk, and association with recreational drug use and organised trafficking networks. Large consignments of the drug are often linked to international smuggling routes.

The seizure forms part of DRI's intensified efforts against narcotics trafficking in Bihar. Since January 2026, the agency has seized a range of drugs across six cases in the state, including 241 kg of ganja, 31.1 kg of charas, 8,144 kg of methaqualone and 6.2kg of methaqualone (in addition to the latest haul), with an estimated value of approximately ₹36 crore. Ten persons have been arrested in connection with these cases under the NDPS Act.

Kishor alleges police trying to 'influence' Bankipur bypoll result

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PATNA: A day ahead of the counting of votes for the Bankipur assembly by-election, Jan Suraj Party (JSP) founder Prashant Kishor on Sunday levelled serious allegations against the Patna administration, accusing the police of acting in a partisan manner to influence the election. He claimed that the Patna senior superintendent of police (SSP) had ordered the detention of Jan Suraj's local leaders and workers at the behest of the BJP and questioned the selective action against his party.

Addressing a press conference at the party office, Kishor said the party had submitted evidence to Bihar's chief electoral officer (CEO) regarding alleged police excesses during polling and also placed the documents before the media. Referring to a police statement that those detained were 'outsiders' whose presence could disturb the election, he alleged that most of the over 50 people detained were local residents picked up from their homes despite there being no violation of prohibitory orders.

Kishor claimed police entered houses late at night and detained people who were asleep, releasing some of them only shortly before the close of polling after allowing them to vote. He asked how 54 Jan Suraj workers had been detained while questioning how many BJP workers had faced similar action. He also targeted chief minister Samrat Choudhary, saying that even during Nitish Kumar's 20-year tenure, the administration had not been misused in such a manner to influence elections, said the JSP press release.

Several local residents shared their accounts at the press conference. Ward 26 Mandirī resident Nawal Kishore Gupta alleged he was taken from his home late at night, kept at Rajiv Nagar police station for several hours and allowed to vote only around 5 pm before being released. Ward 22 resident Nibba Bhushan alleged police personnel entered her home after she had accompanied elderly voters to a polling station, while ward 38 resident Sunil Chandravanshi claimed police attempted to detain him on multiple occasions.

Kishor said the Election Commission had assured the party that the Patna SSP would not be present at the centre during the counting process on Monday. He also released a list of 18 local residents whom he alleged had been wrongfully detained.

Counting to begin from 8am

Counting of votes for the Bankipur assembly bypoll will begin at Patna's Anugrah Narayan College with postal ballots from 8am on Monday and continue till it is over.

EVM (electronic voting machine) counting will begin at 8.30am, even if postal ballot counting is still in progress.

Postal ballots are counted separately by the returning officer (RO) or an assistant returning officer (ARO) at designated counting tables in the presence of candidates or their counting agents.

To improve transparency, the Election Commission of India (ECI) amended the counting procedure in September 2025. Under the revised rule, while EVM counting may commence at 8.30am, the penultimate (second-last) round of EVM/voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) counting cannot begin until the counting of all postal ballots at that counting centre has been completed.

The district administration has put in place elaborate traffic arrangements for counting of votes at AN College on Monday.

SMACK WORTH ₹3-CR SEIZED IN PURNEA, THREE SMUGGLERS HELD

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PURNEA: In a major crackdown on drug smugglers, Bihar's Purne police busted a smack-smuggling racket and arrested three drug smugglers and seized drugs worth ₹3 crore seized from their possession. The arrested smugglers hailing from West Bengal were nabbed at Dalkhola on Saturday evening.

Police said that the gang was regularly smuggling smack to different areas of Seemanchal and Kosi besides parts in Bihar. The smugglers were caught while they were carrying the consignment in a three-wheeler at Dalkhola. The police team no sooner stopped the three-wheeler than all three began to escape," police said adding "After a chase, they were caught and when the vehicle was searched for the drug measuring over one kg was seized."

The arrested persons Aftab Alam (55), Firoz Ansari (40) and Danish Alam (20) are residents of North Dinajpur in West Bengal. The consignment was on its way to Bihar via Seemanchal.

SSP said, "Police have seized around 1,340 kg of smack from their possession and a three-wheeler and a motorcycle were seized."

Lauded by PM, project may be in limbo after officer's transfer

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PATNA: The fate of an innovative 'waste to wealth' project in Sitamarhi district, which was lauded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his recent episode of Mann Ki Baat, now hangs in the balance after the officer behind the initiative was shuffled out of his position.

During his stint as the Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) of Sitamarhi, Sandeep Kumar, a 48-batch Bihar Administrative Service (BAS) officer, piloted the idea of collecting plastic waste from panchayats and processing it into useful materials to reduce government's expenses in improving civic amenities in rural areas.

However, just as his idea started bearing fruit, Kumar was transferred from the post of Sitamarhi DDC on July 16 and asked to report to the general administration department (GAD). He has been kept waiting for posting and is yet to receive a new assignment. Officers in such waiting periods do not draw a salary until they are formally posted.

Secretary, GAD, Md Sohail, declined repeated calls and

it into colourful benches and desks.

In February this year, he tied up with a Buxar-based plastic processing firm founded by IITian Sanjeev Rai to facilitate the effort. The drive has so far resulted in the collection of around 11,000 kg of single-use plastic waste at the district headquarters, out of which approximately 4,500 kg was used to manufacture nearly 100 sets of bench-desks.

Sitamarhi district magistrate Richie Pandey and DDC Sweta Bharti could not be reached for comment despite repeated calls and messages.

A senior officer with the LSBA, wishing anonymity, claimed that plastic waste management is not yet a priority for the district administration, as they are busy with administrative work. "As the PM has referred to the waste to wealth project, I hope that the concerned officers would pay attention to it," said a senior deputy collector rank officer.

According to an officer associated with the project, around 40 kg of plastic — including polythene, packaging wrappers and bottles — goes into making one set of benches and desks. "The broader idea was to diversify the use of single-use plastic by producing other usable items such as paver blocks and water tanks for villages. This approach not only aims to mitigate the harmful effects of plastic waste on human health and the environment but also helps save government expenditure on rural infrastructure," he said.

In the Mann Ki Baat programme broadcast and telecast on July 26, Modi had praised the Sitamarhi district administration's efforts to reduce, recycle and reuse single-use plastic, describing the initiative as worth emulating in other parts of the country.

A video clip showcasing benches and desks made from processed plastic waste was also featured in the episode. "A wonderful example of 'waste to wealth' has emerged in Sitamarhi. Here, waste is being recycled to create attractive benches. Approximately 40 kg of single-use plastic is used to make one bench. These benches are strong, durable, comfortable and eco-friendly. They are installed in government schools, parks and public spaces. This is also raising awareness about environmental conservation," he said.



BAS officer Sandeep Kumar

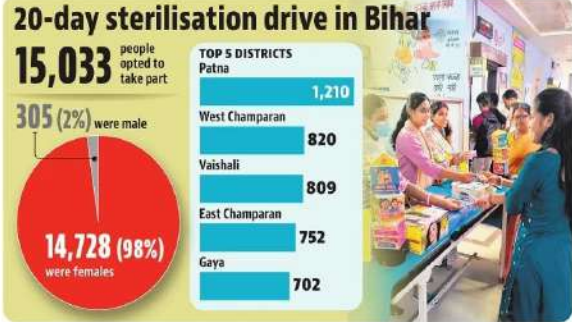
98% women, only 2% men take part in 20-day-long sterilisation drive in Bihar

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PATNA: A sterilisation drive across Bihar from July 11 to July 31 as part of the family planning initiative in the wake of the World Population Day (July 11), saw only 2% men among 15,033 participants, state health officials said on Sunday. This highlights that women continue to share the larger onus for permanent family planning despite male sterilisation (vasectomy) being a simpler, safer and less invasive procedure.

Of the total procedures during the campaign, 14,728 were female sterilisations, while only 305 were male sterilisations, meaning men accounted for just around 2% of all sterilisations carried out. Women continued to shoulder nearly 98% of the burden of permanent contraception, according to government data. Bihar has historically been among lowest-performing states in India in male sterilisation, with vasectomies accounting for only a tiny fraction of total sterilisation procedures, even as the state continues to record one of the country's highest fertility rates among all Indian states, despite the gradual decline from 3.4 in NFHS (National Family Health Survey)-4 (2015-16) to 3.0 in NFHS-5 (2019-21).

Bihar continues to record the country's highest fertility rate, with the latest Sample Registra-



Health officials said the campaign's overall performance was encouraging but emphasised that sustained awareness drives, myth-busting campaigns, better counselling and stronger community engagement would be essential to increase acceptance of male sterilisation and promote shared responsibility for family planning among couples.

"Deep-rooted social stigma, misconceptions linking vasectomy with loss of masculinity or physical strength, limited awareness, gender norms that place the burden of contraception on women, and inadequate counselling continue to discourage men from opting for sterilisation, particularly in rural areas," said Prof Gyanendra Yadav of the department of sociology, College of Commerce, Arts & Science, Patliputra University, Patna.

He said that the higher participation of women in sterilisation also reflected growing awareness, empowerment and a greater role in household decision-making. "Women bear the primary responsibility of childbirth and childcare, and having more children increases their physical, mental and economic burden. As awareness and decision-making ability have improved, more women are choosing sterilisation despite the government offering a higher monetary incentive for male sterilisation," Prof Yadav added.

रत्ना बिहार
RERA BIHAR

नगर आयुक्त (सभी नगर निगम), मुख्य कार्यकारी पदाधिकारी (सभी आयोजना क्षेत्र) एवं कार्यपालक पदाधिकारी (सभी नगर परिषद्/नगर पंचायत) हेतु आवश्यक सूचना

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4 held for rape, murder of teen in Assam: Police

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SILCHAR: Four people have been detained in connection with a rape and murder of a 15-year-old girl who was found dead at her home near National Highway-6 in Assam's Hailakandi district on Saturday night, police said.

Senior superintendent of police (SSP), Hailakandi, Amitab Sinha, said Hailakandi police registered a case, however denied from sharing any details and detained four persons for interrogation. Sexual assault accusations are yet to be medically ascertained, police said.

"The family members are claiming it [rape], but we are waiting for the post-mortem report to draw any conclusions. We are investigating the matter thoroughly, and four persons are currently being questioned," Sinha said.

The incident took place in the Aloichora area under Katlichora police station at Ilipm on Saturday. The victim's family said they were attending a feast at a nearby relative's house at the time.

"It's a neighbourhood where many members of the same extended family live together, and her family members were not far away when the incident happened," SSP said.

"She was there at the feast too, but after an argument with a cousin, she left for home at 10.30pm. We thought we'd bring some food for her later, but when we reached home around an hour later, it was a horrible scene," her mother said.

She said her body was found lying on the floor, almost unrecognisable. "It was horrible; how can a human treat another human, a little girl, in such a brutal manner," she said, while demanding capital punishment for the accused.

The victim's sister alleged that the attackers used utensils and other objects to mutilate the body after the assault.

"Her face was smashed, her head was bludgeoned with a

THE INCIDENT HAPPENED WHEN THE VICTIM'S FAMILY WAS AT A RELATIVE'S HOUSE. WHEN THEY RETURNED, THEY SAID THE BODY WAS ALMOST UNRECOGNISABLE

heavy object, and some rod-like object was inserted into her private parts," she said. "They are not humans, even calling them animals would be wrong. They don't deserve to live. I appeal to the police to shoot them, or they should be hanged," she said.

Police said they received the information around 12.30am, and recovered the body on Sunday morning following protests by family members and neighbours. Locals in Aloichora blocked NH-6 on Sunday morning in protest against the alleged rape and murder, initially refusing to hand over the body to the police.

The blockade on the highway, which serves as a vital link between Assam and Mizoram, resulted in a massive traffic jam, leaving hundreds of vehicles stranded for several hours.

"If a 15-16-year-old girl is not safe in her own house, what kind of society have we become? There must be exemplary punishment so that nobody dares repeat such heinous acts," one of the protesters said.

Local MLA Milon Das later intervened, helping police transport the body to SMCH for the post-mortem. Das met with the family members and assured them that the culprits would be arrested immediately.

"The body has been sent to Silchar Medical College and Hospital (SMCH) for a post-mortem, and we are investigating the matter further," confirmed the additional superintendent of police (Crime), Hailakandi, Shamiradap Baruah.

Monsoon fury: Toll at 8 in Kerala; 178k hit in Assam



People carry their belongings as they wade through floodwater in Alappuzha; a Lok Janshakti Party (Ramvilas) worker carries food supplies on a for in Assam's Sivasagar on Sunday



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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/GUWAHATI/BHUBANESHWAR/JAMMU: Eight people have died, eight others remain missing and thirteen people have sustained injuries in rain-related incidents in Kerala, while 5,792 people have been shifted to 209 relief camps across the state.

An official release said that Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan continues to remain in touch with the ministers in charge of various districts and district administrations regarding the rain-related situation in the state. Rainfall has reduced compared to the previous day, bringing some relief. Cleaning and sanitation operations have begun in flood-affected areas, and political workers and voluntary organisations have been urged to participate in the cleaning drives.

The government said it would extend all necessary support. According to the latest figures, eight deaths have been confirmed, while eight people remain missing. Thirteen people have sustained injuries.

A total of 5,792 people have been shifted to 209 relief camps across the state. Twenty-seven houses have been completely destroyed while 196 houses have suffered partial damage. The government said assistance would be provided to the families of those who lost

their lives as well as to those who have lost their homes and livelihoods.

Meanwhile, the flood situation in Assam improved slightly, with the number of affected people coming down to 178,000 even though the count of districts hit by the deluge increased to seven, officials said on Sunday.

The toll remained unchanged at 82 as no fresh fatalities were reported in the state in the last 24 hours, they said. Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma will be visiting the worst-hit areas from Sunday, even as the Centre sanctioned over Rs 370 crore under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), the officials said.

A total of 349 villages in Golaighat, Sivasagar, Charaideo, Bajali, Dharmaj, Sonitpur and Jorhat districts remained affected by the deluge. Charaideo was the worst-hit, with 75,199 people affected, followed by 58,824 in Sivasagar.

A total of five districts and 1.92 lakh people were affected on Friday. Forty-four relief camps were operational in the state, providing shelter to around 15,000 displaced people. Another 17 relief distribution centres were also working, catering to 5,569 people.

A crop area of 15,060 hectares remained submerged, while 1,543 animals were washed away and another 6,765 were affected. In Chhatisgarh, more than 50 houses were damaged, and two girls lost their lives after heavy

rains triggered severe floods, wreaking havoc in the Narayanpur district on Saturday.

According to the state's forest and climate change minister Kedar Kashyap, the entire region received rainfall on July 28, 29, and 30, and the precipitation was manifold higher than the average rainfall.

"The entire region received rainfall on the 28th, 29th, and 30th. The precipitation was manifold higher than the average rainfall. Conditions resembling a cloudburst developed, leading to a flood situation," Kashyap told ANI.

Due to the floods, many people were displaced from their homes, and local infrastructure also suffered extensive damage in the area. Flood-affected residents Sonaru Ram highlighted that around 16 houses were washed away in the incident, adding that a situation like this never arose before in the area.

Ten Odisha districts in the downstream of the Mahanadi have been put on high alert as the Hirakud Dam kept discharging water into the river through 22 gates, with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday saying the floods have impacted eight lakh people.

Majhi said the flood situation in northern Odisha was showing signs of improvement, the administration was focused on the "highly vulnerable" Cuttack, Puri, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada districts in the Mahanadi delta area amid sus-

tained water release from the Hirakud Dam.

The chief minister undertook an aerial survey of Bhadrak, Jajpur, Balasore, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts in the northern parts of the state along with Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari and Special Relief Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil.

In Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, at least two residential houses and as many shops were damaged, while two cars were swept away after a cloudburst triggered flash floods early Saturday, officials said.

Persistent rain has also disrupted normal life across the Chenab valley, prompting authorities to close schools in Kishtwar, Doda and Ramban districts. Officials said the schools have been instructed to conduct online classes.

Union home minister Amit Shah has approved the advance release of ₹2,117.85 crore from the Central share of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to support the States affected by floods during the ongoing southwest monsoon of 2026. The Ministry of Home Affairs said on Saturday. A 38-year-old woman died after being swept away in a rain-swollen seasonal stream in Uttarakhand's Rudrapur district on Sunday, an official said.

Due to continuous heavy rainfall in Uttarakhand's Rudrapur district, the risk of landslides has increased at several locations of the region.

Anti-conversion law takes effect in Maharashtra

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MUMBAI: Maharashtra became the 13th Indian state to notify an anti-conversion law, with the controversial Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Act taking effect after the state government published the legislation in its official gazette on July 30.

The gazette was published after the legislation was approved by President Droupadi Murmu on July 17, paving the way for its implementation in the state.

The law criminalises religious conversions carried out through force, allurement, fraud, inducement or marriage by making it a cognisable offence. This includes interfaith marriages where conversion is alleged to have taken place through such means, particularly if objections are raised by the families of either party.

The law makes unlawful religious conversion a cognisable and non-bailable offence punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years.

Among its most controversial provisions is the requirement that a person intending to convert must give 60 days' notice to the designated authority.

The act also places the burden of proof that the religious conversion was voluntary on the person accused of carrying out the conversion and on anyone assisting it.

The legislation has been widely opposed by civil rights groups as a violation of an individual's right to freedom and personal privacy. It is seen as an attempt to curb interfaith marriages, particularly instances involving a Hindu woman marrying a non-Hindu man, where conversion to the latter's faith may take place. Civil liberties groups believe the legislation could be misused in various ways, especially to harass interfaith couples.

The Bill was passed by both houses of the Maharashtra legislature earlier this year, with governor Jishnu Dev Varma giving his assent on April 6. It was published in the state's official gazette on July 30 after it received presidential assent.

"Legal action may now be initiated in cases involving unlawful religious conversions in the state, strictly in accordance with the provisions of the new act," said a senior official from the state home department.

Provisions of law
The legislation is expected to make interfaith marriages difficult. Once an individual provides

Freedom of Religion Act: Highlights

- Prohibits religious conversions, including in interfaith marriages, carried out through force, allurement, fraud or inducement, particularly if objections are raised by the families of either party.
- Unlawful religious conversions are now a cognisable and non-bailable offence punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years.
- Individuals intending to convert must give 60 days' notice to the designated authority.
- The act places the burden of proof that the religious conversion was voluntary on the person accused of carrying out the conversion and on anyone assisting it.
- In interfaith marriages, children will belong to the religion of the mother before the marriage.
- Children of interfaith marriages will have succession rights over the property of both parents in accordance with the applicable laws.

notice, the designated authority is required to make it public and invite objections within 30 days. They must then conduct a police inquiry into the intention, purpose and circumstances of the proposed conversion. If the inquiry concludes that the conversion is unlawful, criminal proceedings may be initiated.

Under the act, any religious conversion carried out through allurement, coercion, force, misrepresentation, fraud, deceit or other unlawful means is illegal. It also treats as unlawful any religious conversion carried out through the solemnization of a marriage or a relationship on the promise of marriage if such means are used.

The legislation further mandates that the individual or institution conducting the conversion must submit a declaration to the designated authority within 21 days of the ceremony. Failure to do so will render the conversion null and void.

Antilia explosives case: Court frames charges against 10, including 4 ex-cops

Ex-cop Sachin Waze masterminded the conspiracy, according to NIA; trial set to begin on August 3

Vikrant Jha
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MUMBAI: A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court on Saturday framed charges against ten accused in the Antilia explosives case, including former police officers Sachin Waze and Pradeep Sharma, paving the way for the trial to begin.

Among the others against whom charges were framed are former assistant police inspector Rayazuddin Kazi, Waze's colleague at the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU); former Crime Branch police inspector Sunil Mane, and former constable Vinayak Shinde.

The case relates to the discovery of an abandoned green Mahindra Scorpio near billion-dollar industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence, Antilia, on Carmichael Road in South Mumbai. The SUV, discovered at the location on February 25, 2021, contained 20 loose gelatin sticks and a threatening note.

The case is linked to the murder of Thane-based trader Mansukh Hiran, owner of the green Mahindra Scorpio. Hiran's body was found in the Thane creek on March 5.

At the centre of the case is dismissed former assistant police inspector Sachin Waze, who headed the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai crime branch at the time. He was dismissed from service and is currently in judicial custody.

The five private individuals who face charges are cricket bookie Nareish Gor, who allegedly provided SIM cards to Waze and Sharma's alleged henchmen; Santosh Shelar, Anand Jadhav, Satish Mothukuri and Mani Soni.

Antilia Case: Timeline

Feb 25, 2021 Abandoned Mahindra Scorpio found near the Ambani residence, Antilia. It contained 20 gelatin sticks and a threatening note.



Feb 25 Maharashtra ATS traces the SUV's owner, Thane-based Mansukh Hiran, a car accessories dealer.

March 7 Waze visits the ATS office and claims he had nothing to do with Hiran's murder, that he did not know Hiran, and that he had not used the SUV.

Feb 26, 27, 28 CIU headed by assistant police inspector Sachin Waze questions Hiran.

March 8 NIA takes over probe.

March 4 Hiran leaves home allegedly to meet a police officer after receiving a phone call at around 8.30pm. His phone becomes unreachable after 11.00pm.

March 9 NIA seizes Waze's official vehicle, an Innova seen in a CCTV grab tailing the explosives-laden SUV on Carmichael Road late at night on Feb 24.

March 5 Hiran's family lodges a missing complaint and his body is found dumped in a creek at Reti Bunder near Mumbai.

March 13 NIA arrests Waze.

March 7 ATS registers a murder case on the basis of a statement given by Hiran's wife Vimala. She claims her husband had lent Waze the SUV over three months ago.

March 17 Hemant Nagrale replaces Param Bir Singh as Mumbai police commissioner.

March 20 Hiran murder case transferred to NIA as it is suspected to be linked to the Antilia case.

March 28 NIA recovers from Mithi river two CPUs, 2 DVDs, a router, a laptop, a printer and two number plates of a Eco car stolen from Aurangabad.

April 11 NIA arrests assistant police inspector Riyazuddin Kazi.

April 23 NIA arrests police inspector Sunil Mane.

March 20 Param Bir Singh claims that home minister Anil Deshmukh has instructed Mumbai police officials to collect large sums from various establishments in the city.

June 11 NIA arrests two more persons - police inspector Pradeep Sharma's informer Santosh Shelar and a certain Anand Jadhav.

June 17 NIA arrests police inspector Pradeep Sharma and two others - Satish Mothukuri and Manish Soni.

March 21 Within hours of Singh's claim, ATS arrests former police constable Vinayak Shinde and cricket bookie Nareish Gor in connection with the Hiran murder case.

Sept 3 NIA files charge-sheet against 10 accused.

Nov 20 Special NIA court grants bail to Nareish Gor.

Aug 23, 2023 Supreme Court grants bail to Pradeep Sharma.

Aug 1, 2026: NIA court frames charges against ten accused.

Aug 1, 2026: NIA court frames charges against ten accused.

The accused

5 FORMER POLICE PERSONNEL

- Sachin Waze - headed the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) of the Mumbai police crime branch
- Pradeep Sharma - retired encounter specialist
- Sunil Mane - headed the Kandivli unit of the crime branch
- Rayazuddin Kazi - Waze's colleague at CIU
- Vinayak Shinde - former constable

5 CIVILIANS

- Nareish Gor - allegedly provided SIM cards to Waze
- Santosh Shelar
- Anand Jadhav
- Satish Mothukuri
- Mani Soni - Pradeep Sharma's alleged henchmen

THE CHARGES

Criminal conspiracy, abduction, murder under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and terrorist acts

Conspiracy to commit a terrorist act under relevant sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1969

Charges under the Explosive Substances Act

Accused plead not guilty
Seven of the ten accused were present before special NIA Judge Chakor S Bawiskar on Saturday. All of them, including the others through their lawyers, pleaded "not guilty". They have been charged with criminal conspiracy, abduction, murder under relevant sections of the Indian

Penal Code and terrorist acts and conspiracy to commit a terrorist act under relevant sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1969, as well as charges under the Explosive Substances Act.

The court has posted the matter for August 3, for pre-trial formalities required to be completed before the court starts recording evidence. According to the NIA, Waze

masterminded the conspiracy apparently to "regain" the status of a "super-cop". He allegedly got Hiran killed after he refused to take responsibility for planting the explosives-laden vehicle outside Antilia, and fearing he could expose the plot.

According to the prosecution, Waze knew Hiran and had borrowed his SUV for personal use. On February 18, 2021, Waze

declared the vehicle stolen and got an FIR registered at the Vikroli police station. Later, the NIA claimed, Waze placed 20 loose gelatin sticks and a note threatening the Ambani family in a backpack, which he planted inside the vehicle and parked it outside Antilia.

On February 25, 2021, security personnel at Antilia noticed the SUV and police found the gelatin

sticks and note inside it. The investigation was entrusted to the crime branch. Interestingly, Waze himself was the initial investigating officer and even "questioned" Hiran.

The NIA claims Waze tried to persuade Hiran to take the blame for parking the explosives-laden vehicle outside Antilia and decided to get him killed when he refused.



The accident happened near the Nallampalli Junction on the Pollachi-Palani National Highway, in Coimbatore on Sunday.

TN: 5 dead as speeding car rams into truck

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POLLACHI: Five people were killed on the spot after their speeding car rammed into a stationary water tanker lorry on the Udumalaipettai - Pollachi National Highway near here on Sunday, police said.

The accident occurred near Nallampalli junction when the car, proceeding towards Pollachi from Udumalai, crashed into the rear of the stationary lorry. Police said the lorry had been halted along the median on the highway to water roadside plants.

Due to the impact of the high-speed collision, the car was completely crushed, resulting in the immediate death of all five occupants - two men and three women.

Four of the deceased have been identified as members of a

single family from Gurubampalayam near Madukkarai in Coimbatore district. They were identified as Kanagaraj, his wife Narmada, and their two daughters, Aarthi and Poorani.

The identity of the fifth victim is yet to be ascertained, and investigators are verifying whether the deceased individual was the driver of the vehicle or another occupant.

Personnel from the Gomangalam police station and rescue teams rushed to the spot, retrieved the bodies from the mangled remains of the car, and sent them to the Pollachi Government Hospital for post-mortem examinations.

NTA seeks new security contractors

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NEW DELHI: The National Testing Agency (NTA) has floated a ₹7.5 crore tender to hire a professional security agency for round-the-clock security services at its headquarters on Delhi's Minto Road, regional offices in Odisha and other notified locations, as the examination body undergoes a major overhaul following the NEET-UG 2025 controversy.

According to the request for proposal (RFP) document, seen by HT, the selected agency will provide "comprehensive security services" to safeguard NTA personnel, visitors, assets, premises, confidential examination material, server rooms, strong rooms, warehouses, record rooms and other critical infrastructure housing sensitive examination records. The contract will initially be for two years and can be extended by two additional one-year terms based on performance. The tender was issued on July 25 and bids can be submitted until 3 pm on August 17.

THE AGENCY HAS BEGUN PROCESS TO SEEK BIDS FOR A 2-YEAR CONTRACT TO PROVIDE 24-HR SECURITY TO ITS HEADQUARTERS AND OFFICES AT OTHER LOCATIONS

Technical bids will be opened the same day. The RFP requires bidders to have at least five years of experience in professional security services, an average annual turnover of at least ₹10 crore over the past three financial years and prior experience in securing central government organisations, examination agencies, universities, airports, hospitals, metro systems or other high-security establishments. According to the document, the estimated value of the contract is ₹7.5 crore, excluding GST, though NTA has reserved the

right to increase or reduce deployment requirements and split the work if necessary. Bidders will also have to furnish an earnest money deposit of ₹15 lakh and a performance security equivalent to 5% of the contract value. Unlike conventional government procurement based solely on the lowest financial bid, NTA has opted for a Quality-and-Cost Based Selection (QCBS) model, saying that "the sensitive nature of NTA's examination ecosystem and confidentiality requirements" makes quality of service paramount. Under the evaluation process, technical quality will carry a weightage of 70% and financial bids 30%. Only agencies securing at least 70 out of 100 marks in the technical evaluation will qualify for the financial round, the document says. The technical assessment will evaluate bidders on their experience in high-security environments, workforce strength, financial capacity, ISO certifications and a presentation on deployment strategy. Agencies will also be

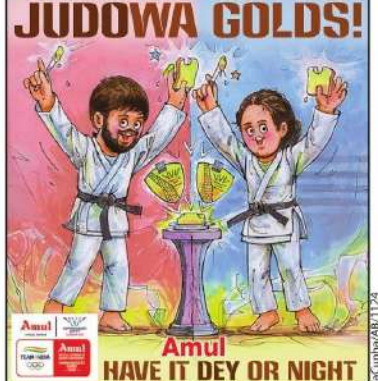
assessed on their proposed use of technology, including GPS patrols, biometric attendance systems and incident-reporting mechanisms. The selected agency will be responsible for regulating entry and exit, ensuring that "only authorized persons enter restricted areas", preventing unauthorised access, maintaining visitor records and deploying hand-held and door-frame metal detectors at entrances and confidential locations. Security personnel will also be tasked with protecting examination material, IT infrastructure, server rooms and storage facilities. The document does not specify what security arrangements existed earlier or whether the facilities were guarded by an outsourced agency or in-house personnel. Queries sent to HT to the NTA and the Union Education Ministry remained unanswered till the time of print. The move comes days after the CBI filed a charge sheet against 13 arrested accused in the alleged NEET-UG 2025 paper leak case.

BJP to form govt in Punjab, procure all crops at MSP: Saini

CHANDIGARH: Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Sunday said the BJP will come to power in Punjab after next year's Assembly polls and procure all crops from the farmers at minimum support price (MSP).

Saini was addressing an event in Punjab's Kotkapura as part of the nationwide 'Nasha Mukta Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday. Exuding confidence that the BJP will form the government in Punjab after the Assembly polls early next year, Saini said, "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the BJP will work in Punjab just like in Haryana to make our farmers strong and prosperous." "Before the 2024 Haryana elections, the BJP had promised to procure all crops from farmers at MSP, which it fulfilled after retaining power in the state, Saini said. "When we form our government here (in Punjab), we assure that we will procure all crops from farmers at MSP," he said, adding that the BJP will also replicate the Bhavantar Bhargya Yojana in the state. Under the scheme operational in Haryana since 2018, protected prices have been fixed for 21 horticultural crops. Taking a dig at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab, Saini said it had promised to eradicate the drug

menace, but the problem has only increased. Asking the youth to stay away from drugs, he said substance abuse not only affects individuals and their families, but also weakens society. Young people not just in Haryana and Punjab but across the country should be kept away from drugs to realise the dream of a Viksit Bharat, he said. Saini said that while the Haryana government, with strong determination, is successfully moving towards achieving this goal by regularly engaging youngsters through Raahgiri, Cyclothon and marathon events, the Punjab government has neither been able to curb drug abuse nor succeeded in providing employment to the youth. Unemployment has adversely affected the youth of Punjab, and the younger generation is increasingly getting trapped in drug abuse, he said. The Haryana chief minister said the current AAP government and the previous Congress governments in Punjab made tall promises for the youth and farmers, but after coming to power, they never showed any interest in fulfilling them. Saini said the country can become a developed nation only when every young person understands the harmful effects of drugs and not only stays away from addiction himself but also motivates others to remain drug-free. PTI



Society must ensure dignified life for all, says Birla at an event

KOTA: Lok Sabha Speaker and Kota-Bundi MP Om Birla on Sunday said that society has a collective responsibility to ensure a dignified life for every individual and called for utilising the experience of retired officers to prepare long-term plans for community welfare. Addressing an event organised here by the Retired Officers Association to felicitate him on completing seven years as the Lok Sabha Speaker, Birla lauded the association's social initiatives and said the expertise of retired officers should be utilised for community welfare. During the event, the members of the association welcomed him with a traditional Rajasthani turban and floral garlands in recognition of his service. The programme, during which umbrellas were distributed among the needy, was attended by retired government officers, among others. "It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every individual in society leads a dignified life. Given your vast experience across various sectors, we



must work together to create comprehensive, long-term plans so that the benefits reach the last person in society," Birla said. Speaking to the media after the event, Birla congratulated Kota-born boxer Anuradhi Choudhary for clinching gold in the women's 70kg category at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow on Saturday, lauding her hard work and dedication. He also said that state-of-the-art sports facilities would be established in Kota to help youngsters compete at national and international events, including world championships and the Olympic Games. PTI

SC: Vehicle link must be proven for MVA claim

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NEW DELHI: Can the family of a motor victim claim compensation under the Motor Vehicles Act (MVA) merely because the crime took place inside a motor vehicle? The Supreme Court has answered that question by drawing a fine but significant distinction between the commission of a crime inside a vehicle and an accident "arising out of the use of a motor vehicle", holding that the mere presence of a vehicle in the chain of events is insufficient to attract liability under the Act. A bench of justices Sanjay Karol and Augustine George Masih held that a claimant seeking compensation under the MVA must establish a causal nexus between the use of the motor vehicle and the death or injury. Where that link is missing, compensation cannot be awarded merely because the offence was committed in, or

A COMPENSATION SOUGHT UNDER THE MVA MUST ILLUSTRATE A CAUSAL NEXUS BETWEEN THE USE OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE AND THE DEATH OR INJURY. THE COURT RULED



Supreme Court. HT PHOTO

involved a vehicle. The ruling came in a case where Anand, the deceased, had left in a car driven by a person known to him, Dilip, and was found dead three days later. The deceased's family alleged that Anand was murdered while travelling in the vehicle and sought compensation under the MVA. While the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal and the high court accepted the claim, the Supreme Court overturned both decisions, finding no evidence to

establish that the death had arisen out of the use of the vehicle. The bench noted that the criminal prosecution itself had failed to establish the "last seen" theory against the accused and that there was no forensic material connecting the car to the murder. There was no evidence of blood stains, hair, skin cells or any indication that the vehicle had been involved in a collision or any other event resulting in the fatal injuries. "Simply because there was a

car somehow involved in a chain of circumstances that led to his death, the provisions of the MVA would apply. Some link whatsoever between the car, and the death has to be established," the bench held in its July 22 judgment. The judgment revisits an important line of precedent beginning with Ritu Devi Vs New India Assurance Co Ltd (2000), where the Supreme Court had evolved the concept of an "accidental murder". In that case, the court held that where murder is committed in furtherance of another felonious act, such as theft of a vehicle, it may still qualify as an accident under the MVA because the dominant intention was not to kill but to facilitate the theft. Explaining that distinction, the bench quoted the 2000 verdict, which held that if the "dominant intention" is to kill a particular person, the offence is a murder simpliciter.

Man found hanging in Ara

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ARA: A 42-year-old man was found hanging from a tree in Bhojpur district on Sunday, police said. The body was found hanging from a tree near a canal on the

Bahro-Piyania road under the Ara Nawada police station limits. Passers-by spotted the body and informed the police as well as the victim's family members. The deceased had been married, but his wife had left him and returned to her parental home soon after the marriage.

EIGHT DEAD, 13 INJURED IN KERALA RAINS, SAYS SATHEESAN

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan on Sunday said eight people had died, eight remained missing, and 13 were injured after heavy rain triggered landslides, flooding and widespread damage across the state on Saturday. In a statement issued by his office, Satheesan said 27 houses had been destroyed, 156 partially damaged, and 5,792 people shifted to 209 relief camps across the state. He said the government would ensure assistance to the families of those who died and to people who had lost their homes and livelihoods. The CM urged people to remain vigilant, particularly in hilly areas, despite a reduction in rainfall since Saturday. He said people's representatives and volunteers were actively engaged in relief operations. Satheesan said he was in constant touch with Revenue Minister A P Anilkumar, other ministers assigned to various districts and local authorities to monitor the relief efforts. He further said that cleaning operations had begun in flood-affected and waterlogged areas. PTI

'Pahari community's empowerment marks India's democracy'

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said that the empowerment of the Pahari community, along with other marginalised groups, marked a turning point in India's democratic journey. Sinha attended the launch of a book "Shards to Sansad" authored by A H Shah. He congratulated Shah for his scholarly contribution and described the book as a meaningful dialogue between heritage and hope, between the wisdom of the past and the democratic aspirations of the present. Highlighting the historical background of the Pahari community, their glorious culture, and their resilience in preserving traditions across centuries, he noted that their empowerment, along with other marginalised groups, marked a turning point in India's democratic journey. "Future generations will remember this transformation well," he said. He emphasised that the book offers a fresh perspective on the continuity of the ancient civilisation of Sharda Peeth and the vitality of modern India's

PM MODI BROUGHT HISTORIC CHANGE AFTER SCRAPPING ARTICLE 370. SINHA OBSERVED

democratic institutions. "Books related to history, civilisation, and culture often serve as bridges between generations. Through 'Shards to Sansad', Shah has built such a bridge, reminding us that history and culture never truly pass away. They remain alive within us," Sinha said. He drew a powerful parallel between Sharda Peeth, the ancient seat of learning, and Parliament, the symbol of collective consciousness in modern India. "If Sharda nurtured the wisdom of society, Parliament has worked to fulfil the aspirations of the nation," he said. Sinha observed the historic transformation brought about under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after the abrogation of Article 370, which connected Jammu and Kashmir's aspirations with those of the nation. PTI



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NOTICE TO EQUITY SHAREHOLDERS

Transfer of Equity Shares of the Company to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF).

This Notice is published pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, read with Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016, as amended ("the Rules") notified by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). The Rules, inter-alia, provide that all unclaimed dividend and shares in respect of which dividend has not been claimed or paid for seven consecutive years or more shall be transferred to Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Suspense Account.

Final Dividend 2018-19 declared by the Company is due for transfer to the Fund as detailed below:

Dividend (Year)	Date of Declaration of Dividend	Transfer of Shares to IEPF Suspense Account
Final (2018-19)	30.06.2019	After 05.10.2026

The Company, has sent individual communication(s) to the concerned shareholders whose dividend has remained unpaid or unclaimed for seven consecutive years, at their latest available address with the Depository Participant (RITA). The Company has uploaded the details of such Shareholders and Shares due for transfer to IEPF Suspense Account on its website at www.saill.co.in. Shareholders are requested to refer to the "Investor Relations" heading on the above website to verify the details of the shares liable to be transferred to IEPF Suspense Account.

Shareholders are advised to claim their unclaimed dividend. Shareholders can contact the Company, at the Registered Office (or email at investor.relation@saill.in) or its Registrar and Share Transfer Agent (Address: MCS Share Transfer Agent Limited, Unit: Steel Authority of India Limited, 179-180, DSICD Shed, 3rd Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-1, New Delhi-110020, Tel: 91 11 41406149) or email at admin@mcsregistrars.com for further details, and lodge a valid claim for the unclaimed dividend lying with the Company, within 15 days of notice. If no reply is received within the due date, the Company shall, with a view to comply with the requirement of the Rules, transfer the relevant Shares to IEPF Suspense Account without any further notice by following the due process.

However, the Shareholders can claim both the dividend and the corresponding Shares including all benefits accruing on such Shares, if any, from IEPF Authority in accordance with the Rules and on submission of such documents as prescribed therein. Shareholders can also refer to the details available on www.iepf.gov.in in this regard.

No claim shall lie against the Company in respect of unclaimed dividend amount and the Shares transferred to IEPF pursuant to the said Rules.

For Steel Authority of India Limited
(M.B. Balakrishnan)
Company Secretary

Place: New Delhi
Date: 1st August, 2026



पंजाब नेशनल बैंक
पंजाब नेशनल बैंक
पंजाब नेशनल बैंक

BRANCH OFFICE: CO-SAM Circle Office Gaya
(R J Palace, Rai Kashi Nath More, Gaya) | E mail: cogayamsd@pnb.co.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (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 property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

Lot No.	A. Name of the branch B. Name of the account C. Name & addresses of the borrower/Guarantors account	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies))	A. Date of Demand Notice u/s 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act 2002 B. Outstanding Amount as on C. Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002 D. Nature of possession Symbolic/Physical	A. Reserve Price (Rs. in Lacs) B. EMD C. Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrance s known to the secured creditors
1	A. Branch: Tankuppa, Gaya. B. Shri UPENDRA KUMAR S/o Shri Devlal Mahto C. Shri Upendra Kumar S/o Shri Devlal Mahto, Shri Devlal Mahto S/o Late Chhithu Mahto Add: AT-Vij-Akropur, P.O.-Tankuppa, Dist.-Patna, Dist.-Gaya-824232	Property covered under Registered Sale deed no-2633 Dated:05/02/2016, Khata no-84, Plot no-94, Thana No-509, Area-1.812 Dismil in the name of Shri Devlal Prasad S/o Late Chhithu Mahto Situated at Gram-Akropur, P.S.-Wazirpur, P.O.-Tankuppa, Dist.-Gaya, Bounded by N:-Sundari Devi, S:-Chhithu Choudhary and Vasan Kumar, E:-Sukhdeo Yadav, W:-Ramswarup Yadav	A. 06.02.2024 B. Due Amount: Rs. 9,12,18,86/- (Rs. Nine lakh ninety one thousand two hundred eighteen and paise eighty six only) as on 31.01.2024, plus further interest w.e.f 01.02.2024 and other expenses, until payment in full. C. 10.05.2024 D. Symbolic Possession	1. Rs. 8,60,000/- 2. Rs. 86,000/- 3. 10,000/-	24.08.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL
2	A. Branch: Rai Kashi Nath More, Gaya. B. Smt. Suman Kumari W/o Shri Rajesh Kumar. C. Smt. Suman Kumari W/o Shri Rajesh Kumar. Co-Borrower: Shri Rajesh Kumar S/o Shri Devi Saw Add: Add-Sahoda Moulanagar Atri, Dist.-Gaya, Bihar-823311	Property in the name of Mrs. Suman Kumari W/o Shri Rajesh Kumar, Add: Sahoda Moulanagar Atri, Dist. - Gaya and the mortgaged IP is Situated at Amawan, P.S. - Bodhgaya Dist. - Gaya in Khata No.-140 (New), Plot No.-402 (New), Block No.-04, Thana No.-355, Area-680 sq. ft. or 1.56 dismil, vide Sale Deed No.-3917 of 18.03.2015. Boundary: East-Raj Kumar Singh, West-Prabhat Rastha 14 ft., North-Aj Kharedaar Kiran Devi, South-Naj Seller.	A. 27.03.2023 B. Due Amount: Rs. 9,95,47,26/- (Rupees Nine lakh Ninety Five Thousand Four Hundred Seventy Eight and Paise Twenty Six Only) as on 27.03.2023 plus further interest w.e.f 28.03.2023 and other expenses with until payment in full. C. 25.07.2023 D. Symbolic Possession	1. Rs. 7,30,000/- 2. Rs. 73,000/- 3. Rs. 10,000/-	24.08.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL
3	A. Branch: RAI KASHI NATH MORE, Gaya. B. Md Jawed Raja Siddiki S/O Md Jamaluddin Siddiki C. Md Jawed Raja Siddiki S/O Md Jamaluddin Siddiki Add: AT-Mohalla-Photo Moon Light Raja Bazar P.O.-V. College, Thana-Shastri Nagar Dist.-patna-800014 Add-R/o 186 Islamnagar, Masjid Gali Katari Hill, High Tension Tower Dist.-Gaya-823001 Add-AT-Shop No-17, A.M College, Katari Hill Road, Gaya Dist.-Gaya-823001 Shabana Khatoun W/o Md Jawed Raja Siddiki Add-R/o 186 Islam Nagar, Masjid Gali Katari Hill, High Tension Tower Dist.-Gaya-823001.	Property covered under Registered Sale deed no-21318 dt:29/11/2013, Khata no-106(d), 186 (new), Plot no-369 (old), 517 (new), Thana no-182, Ward no-28, Area-767.19 Sq feet or 1.761 Dismil in the name of Md Jawed Raja Siddiki S/o Md Jamaluddin Siddiki, situated at Mauza-Islamnagar, Thana-Chandiail, Dist.-Gaya Bounded by: N:-Road, S:-Yashmin Khanam, E:-Plot no 514, W:-Feku.	A. 19.01.2024 B. Due Amount: Rs. 33,95,819.48 /- (Rs. Thirty Three Lakh Ninety Five Thousand Eight Hundred Nineteen and paise Forty Eight Only) as on 31.12.2024 + int. w.e.f 01.01.2025 and other expenses until Payment in full. C. 04.04.2024 D. Symbolic Possession	1. Rs. 30,74,000/- 2. Rs. 3,07,400/- 3. 10,000/-	24.08.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL
4	A. Branch: DOBHI, Gaya B. Mrs. Janta Beej Bhandar, Proprietor: Sh. Shankar Yadav S/o Late Kauleshwar Yadav. C. Mrs. Janta Beej Bhandar, Proprietor: Sh. Shankar Yadav S/o Late Kauleshwar Yadav. Add: AT-Vij-Fatehpur, P.O.-Pidasin, P.S. Dobhi, Dist.-Gaya-824201 Add: AT-Vij-Ghonghara, Anchal/Thana- Dobhi Pin-824201 Dist.-Gaya. Shri. Shankar Yadav S/o Late Kauleshwar Yadav Add: AT-Vij-Fatehpur, P.O.-Pidasin, P.S. Dobhi, Dist.-Gaya. Add: AT-Vij-Ghonghara, Anchal/Thana- Dobhi Pin-824201, Dist.-Gaya. Add: AT-Vij-Ghonghara, Anchal/Thana- Dobhi Pin-824201 Dist.-Gaya. Add: AT-Vij-Fatehpur, P.O.-Pidasin, P.S. Dobhi, Dist.-Gaya.	Property covered under Registered sale deed no.-7501 dated 28/12/2020, Plot No.950 (New), Khata No.-55, Area-10 decimal, Thana no.-804 located at Vill-Mauza-Dharampur, PS-Dobhi, Dist.-Gaya in the name of Sh. Shankar Yadav s/o Late Kauleshwar Yadav. Boundary: N-Rastha, S-Panit Yadav, E-Village Road, W-Kujan Yadav	A. 29.01.2025 B. Due Amount: Rs. Rs. 20,54,756.31 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Fifty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Six and Paise Thirty One only) as on 31.12.2024 + int. w.e.f 01.01.2025 and other Expenses until Payment in Full. C. 28.04.2025 D. Symbolic Possession	1. Rs. 20,45,700/- 2. Rs. 2,04,570/- 3. 10,000/-	24.08.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions:

- The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS".
- The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule herein above have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
- The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://banknet.com> on 24.08.2026 at 11 AM TO 4 PM and on 24.09.2026 at 11 AM TO 4 PM. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://banknet.com> and www.pnbindia.in.

Date: 02.08.2026
Place: GAYA

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

BIDYANAND MISHRA
Authorized Officer
Punjab National Bank
Secured Creditor
Mob: 9051446655



OPINION

The
Hindustan Times
ESTABLISHED IN 1924

{ OUR TAKE }

Collegium for consistency

The collegium system needs uniform norms on disclosure and legitimate confidentiality

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan's remarks questioning the Supreme Court collegium's recent retreat from recording reasons for judicial appointments have revived an uncomfortable but necessary debate. Nearly a decade after the collegium began publishing its resolutions in the interests of transparency, the institution appears to have made a U-turn, with recent recommendations once again reduced to bare announcements. The concern is not merely about disclosure; it is about consistency.

The collegium has always struggled to balance two competing values. Greater transparency enhances public confidence and allows scrutiny of whether appointments are based on objective criteria. At the same time, disclosure can unfairly damage the reputation of candidates, particularly sitting judges, whose names are in the zone of consideration but ultimately dropped or deferred. Publicising adverse comments or comparative assessments may cast lasting doubts over judges who continue to serve, even when no finding of impropriety exists. These concerns cannot be lightly dismissed. Yet the answer cannot be to swing between detailed disclosures under one collegium, comprising the Chief Justice of India and the four most senior judges, and complete opacity under another. Such fluctuations only reinforce the perception that transparency depends on the personal philosophy of the collegium of the day rather than on an institutional commitment. The Supreme Court itself, while striking down the National Judicial Appointments Commission in 2015, acknowledged the collegium's shortcomings in transparency and accountability and accepted the need for reform.

What is missing is a settled, principled framework. The collegium should evolve uniform norms specifying what must invariably be disclosed, what may legitimately remain confidential, and how reasons are to be recorded. The objective need not be publication of every internal discussion or dissent. It may well suffice to place in the public domain the broad criteria that informed a recommendation while protecting confidential material that could unjustifiably smear unsuccessful candidates.

Equally important is the process through which such norms are framed. Questions affecting the institutional credibility of judicial appointments should not depend on the views of the five-member collegium alone. They merit deliberation by the full court so that the Supreme Court speaks with one institutional voice. A framework endorsed collectively would ensure continuity across successive collegiums and prevent repeated reversals in policy.

The debate, therefore, is not one of transparency versus confidentiality. It is about replacing ad hoc discretion with predictable institutional standards. For an institution whose legitimacy rests on reasoned decision-making, consistency in its own appointment process is indispensable.

Looking for offshore oil to beef up supply

The Indian economy has done better than what most people expected in the wake of the oil shock from the ongoing Iran war. However, the roots of this resilience lie in the country's fiscal prowess, which allowed it to procure supplies at higher prices. This, while welcome, cannot be a strategy. India must reduce its energy import dependence on a long-term basis. Renewables will be an integral part of the plan, but it must also include securing fossil fuel supplies.

It is in this regard that the Cabinet decision to sanction ₹84,000 crore for offshore oil and gas exploration over the next five years is welcome. The decision aims to boost India's domestic oil and gas offshore production by working on all levers: collect high quality seismic data, subsidise exploration activities and expand the industrial infrastructure to increase petroleum processing. The decision should be seen as one of the pillars to secure India's energy requirements. Exploration, even when successful, does not always translate into commercially viable scaling of operations. Also, it is unlikely that India's oil and gas production will ever have a share to reckon with in the country's overall energy needs.

So, energy security must work on other fronts too, including building large strategic reserves and technology to substitute between imported and domestically available fossil fuels (coal-based fertiliser production, for instance). The announcement of the Samudra Manthan project to aggressively pursue offshore oil and gas production should, hopefully, be the first of policy measures to boost energy security.

Data centres must pay their true costs

A bargain that subsidises electricity and scarce water, and absorbs the heat with no guarantees on enduring AI capability is not development

After New York's recent moratorium on large artificial intelligence (AI) data centres, American senator Kirsten Gillibrand issued a statement saying, "New Yorkers aren't convinced these massive facilities benefit them. Before we move forward, our communities need ironclad guarantees that their energy bills won't spike, their water will be protected, and their air will remain clean."

Do Indians deserve similar guarantees?

Around the world, protests are erupting against AI and its data centres. Young people feel especially disadvantaged; looking at the layoffs and tepid hiring across white-collar industries, it's hard not to sympathise. Setting aside questions about the future of humanity, AI's feet of clay — its data centres — exact a tangible, if more mundane, costs across electricity, heat and water. Against this backdrop, the key question for India is not whether it should host these centres, but what it gets for doing so.

Let's start with power. A 100MW site can draw more than two million

units a day. The International Energy Agency puts data-centre electricity consumption at 45 TWh in 2024 — enough to meet the annual needs of 353 million Indian households. In India alone, one projection sees data centre demand climbing from 10 TWh in 2025 to 191 TWh by 2040. Remember, this is near-constant loading, with periodic spikes that the grid must cope with. Hyperscalers report buying vast quantities of renewables, but that does not give the full picture: Wind is seasonal and the sun sets. Something must do the balancing, and someone must pay for it. As states dangle incentives for data centres, the factories in other sectors already employing millions may fairly ask: Why them, not us?

What water is provided, predictably, does not even appear in the listed benefits. Depending on the cooling system deployed and the local climate, a 100MW centre can consume almost no onsite water — or more than two million litres a day. Globally, the electricity and cooling needs of data centres had an estimated water footprint of some 4.5 trillion litres in 2023.

India's centres will cluster where the undersea cables terminate: mainly Mumbai and Chennai. Neither city is known for water resilience. Where will this water come from?

Heat, spoken about the least, may matter the most. Almost all the electricity a server draws becomes heat,

which must be pushed out.

A recent preprint of a research study tracking two decades of temperatures across thousands of data centres, found temperatures in the vicinity of a data centre rose by about 2°C once it began operating. Temperatures stayed about 1°C higher up to 4.5km away and remained detectably higher at 10km — potentially exposing over 340 million people globally to the added heat.

In India's sweltering cities, that deserves far more attention than it is getting. And what is India actually getting?

"Jobs" is often the first response. True, construction brings hundreds, perhaps thousands of jobs briefly, but most of those flow to migrants rather than the locals: once built, a 100MW centre may employ just 30 to 60 people onsite. The highly paid engineers who run it often work from remote locations, while the local roles — facilities, power, cooling, security — are low-skilled.

Then, is India making the chips, servers, storage and memory, or building the AI models — or merely bolting together the racks and servers? Are we the librarian looking in the glory of books other people wrote? India should not conflate hosting the data centres with owning the AI economy. The former is subsidised real estate, the latter represents geostrategic power.

Back to those costs. The hyperscal-



Mridula Ramesh



An industry that treats innovation as both virtue and God should not need cheap water, unpriiced heat and unquestioned grid support. REUTERS

ers are socialising a private cost — your prompt is cheap because someone else pays for the water and power. In America, where both are priced, a \$30 water bill can become \$250, sparking protests. In India, unpriiced water sits in invisible aquifers; no one knows how much is drawn until they run dry.

The irony is that the innovation to mitigate some part of the data centres' environmental impact already exists. Renewable energy and storage have made great strides in the last decade. Water efficiency has improved as centres adopt closed-loop cooling and dispense with cooling towers; what little water they need, can be drawn from treated sewage.

Heat can be tamed too. In Denmark, Meta's wind-powered centre pipes its waste heat into the city's district heating network. In India, waste heat emerges at 25-40°C, which a heat pump can lift it to 90-120°C. But without a nearby industrial user or a centralised grid, what becomes of it?

Subsidies and opacity blunt the need to innovate while transpar-

ency and constraints supply it. The alternative is not to turn away data centres but to make them earn their welcome.

Singapore's PUB helped unleash water innovation. Indian cities could do the same: Roll out the welcome mat for data centres on the condition that they transparently disclose and pay a fair price for the resources they consume, even fund a hub for cooling, heat recovery, water reuse, and grid management.

An industry that treats innovation as both virtue and God should not need cheap water, unpriiced heat and unquestioned grid support.

A bargain that subsidises electricity and scarce water, and absorbs the heat with no guarantees on enduring AI capability beyond data centres is not development. It is subsidising somebody else's intelligence.

Mridula Ramesh is a climate-tech investor and author of *The Climate Solution and Watershed*. The views expressed are personal

{ GRAND STRATEGY }

Happymon Jacob



Simultaneous balancing & engagement with China

China-India relations appear to be on the mend. Take a look at the last ten days of July. On July 22, external affairs minister S Jaishankar met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Manila, on the margins of the East Asia Summit. Five days later, foreign secretary Vikram Misri was in Beijing, meeting vice-minister Hua Chunying, where both sides said the customary things about peace and tranquillity along the border. On July 30, our Mandarin-speaking ambassador in Beijing called on a Chinese vice-minister to discuss trade and market access, with Indian pharmaceuticals reportedly on the table. That is a lot in 10 days for two countries that are known to move slowly. Are we warming up to the Chinese too fast? Have we forgotten the winter of Galwan? There are two schools of thought in New Delhi.

One says, in criticism of course, that India is "drifting" fast into accommodation with China; that Galwan has been written off and that we are trading our way back into a dependence vis-à-vis China. The second set of arguments holds that Quad is ending, the rupture with the US is permanent, our Indo-Pacific commitments were always thinner than we admitted, and so the reset with China is the real story. Both sides assume that India must eventually settle into one clear posture: Balance China or trade with China. Both have been predicting such a clear decision, one way or another, for two years. But a closer look would suggest that the policy has been more complicated and, I think, in the right direction. Mostly.

I think there is a vocabulary problem in our assessment of our relationship with China. Multi-alignment, currently in fashion in New Delhi, describes a choice among partners, while strategic autonomy, also in fashion, describes freedom from other countries' choices. But neither of them describes a single relationship that runs in two opposite directions at the same time. Multi-alignment describes India's behaviour across its partnerships, but says nothing about what happens where a single country is a partner and adversary at the same time. In my upcoming book (*India After Nonalignment*), I call that political simultaneity. Hypocrisy is when you claim to take a position, but actually have more than one position; simultaneity is when you openly take two positions and face the consequences.

It is possible for a country to take two competing positions at the same time, both incurring costs in different ways. China is perhaps the best case in the Indian context, because the balancing and the engagement of China is as much by the same government since China is a security challenge, a trade partner and a next door neighbour, and a lot more, all at once.

India's ongoing balancing of China is taking place in Ladakh, where roads, bridges, tunnels and logistics hubs have gone up. The Shyok Tunnel among them, with the Aruna-

chal Frontier Highway and the Nyoma airfield behind it. None of it has been paused or slowed, for or because of the reset, even if I personally think we have to do lot more of balancing.

And the (re)engagement of China is taking place in the FDI regime. In March this year, the Union Cabinet amended Press Note 3, notified as Press Note 2 of the 2026 series and operationalised from the first of May. Investors carrying up to 10% of Chinese beneficial ownership may now use the automatic route, and proposals in capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon, and large-water manufacturing are to be cleared in 60 days, so long as Indian residents keep majority ownership and control. Direct Chinese investment still needs prior approval.

So, the larger question then is whether the diplomatic activity we witnessed in July, the activity before that, and the activity that is likely to follow means that New Delhi is finally giving up on balancing China? I hope not. It doesn't need to, because New Delhi can balance and engage Beijing at the same time. The national security pundits who argue that China must be balanced are right; so is Indian industry that urges New Delhi to continue with trade. There is no contradiction.

In fact, New Delhi is not the only capital that does it. US secretary of state Marco Rubio came to the Quad ministerial meet in Delhi on May 26, 10 days after his President had made a warm State visit to Beijing, almost looking for a G2 with Beijing even though he got nothing in return. Washington works with China using the same two commitments, of balancing and engaging, and calls it statecraft. When we do it, we are accused of "drifting" one way or another.

But why does simultaneity with China matter? Here's why. China holds our territory and is undoubtedly India's primary challenge; but it also supplies a great deal of our manufacturing, electronic components, and pharmaceuticals. Cut the economic link with China, and our economy is bound to slow down. India cannot afford that. But if we accept the territorial aggression and nibbling, we end up giving up the deterrence we have spent six years and a lot of money putting back together. This is the predicament of a country large enough to have serious interests on both sides of the balance sheet. Great powers can, perhaps, afford clean choices because they can make up the loss elsewhere. We cannot; not yet.

But will simultaneity with China last? It will last only as long as the two commitments can be held in balance, and the ball is as much in India's court as it is in China's court. A serious crisis on the LAC would end it, as has happened in the past. The investment opening and the security posture cannot both survive a shooting incident in Ladakh; one of them is bound to disappear.

So, India should balance China and trade with China for as long as both can be done without sacrificing the other. The failure would be having to make that choice in the middle of a crisis, having never thought about it before and planned for it.

Happymon Jacob is founder and director, Council for Strategic and Defense Research, and editor, INDIA'S WORLD magazine. The views expressed are personal

{ DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US }

I have agreed, for the future benefit of the world ... to cancel the attack (on Iran), subject to being able to rapidly make a deal

Post on his Truth Social platform



{ STRAIGHTFORWARD }

Shashi Shekhar



Ending digital addiction to safeguard children's future

It's a slightly old story. A 16-year-old boy was sitting in a police station in Uttar Pradesh. He had been detained for threatening to kill Prime Minister Narendra Modi, chief minister Yogi Adityanath, and then Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar.

The boy, from a rural background, wanted overnight fame and hence resorted to the online stunt. As it involved VIPs, the police zeroed in on him in no time. Later, the court took a lenient view considering his age and granted him bail. But this is no isolated case. There are thousands of such incidents where children or young adults perform such acts, compelled by their online addiction.

Online addiction has started affecting children in many diverse places. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges (AMRC) has categorised online addiction as a public health emergency. AMRC rates the addiction on a par with smoking.

The doctors participating in the survey confirmed that they receive at least one young patient every day who has been suffering mental or physical ailments due to excessive online engagement. The doctors warned that tech companies design their apps in a manner that turns people into addicts. We are well aware of insomnia, irritation, violent outbursts and other problems that online addiction causes.

It's no surprise that on June 15, the UK banned all forms of social media for children below 16 years of age.

Even the Norwegian government is going to take revolutionary new steps from August 1. Norway was the first country in the world to digitalise even the primary classes. The government of Norway and the country's society are now reversing the initiative. Norwegian education minister Karl Nesa Nordtun says that excessive use of screens in the school is affecting the core cognitive abilities of children. It's adversely impacting their physical and mental health. As a result many children are turning to cyber bullying. The Norwegian government is terming the initiative as "back to basics".

The government in Oslo dedicated a budget of millions of kroner two years ago to bring back textbooks in classrooms. The results are visible. From August 1, the use of screens for students of class 1 to 4 was completely stopped. A zero-screen law is already in place for children under two years of age. The government has tripled the grant for school libraries. This move will definitely be

a milestone in preserving human mind and cognition.

China too has restricted screen time for children below eight to 40 minutes in 24 hours. At 10 in the night, 'internet curfew' is imposed which lasts till six in the morning. Beijing has restricted all those services that can make children AI addicts.

Even South Korean classrooms became out of bounds for mobile phones last month. The government has also established internet rescue schools. Here minors are kept in the lap of nature without any electronic gadget so they can revert to their natural human self.

Similarly, Australia has completely banned social media for children below 16 years of age, with hefty fines for companies found breaking the law. France is planning similar curbs. The head of the EU has urged European nations to make laws that decide the age at which children can access social media and also detox from algorithm-driven addiction.

Where does India stand on such an important issue? We have put some curbs under Online Gaming Regulations Act 2025 but we still have a long way to go.

The academic world is dealing with another issue — how can a golden mean be achieved in the era of AI? PISA (International Student Assessment Programme) and OECD (Organisation of Economically Developed Nations) studies enlighten us about the issue. They say that the AI tools are indeed a force multiplier for increasing human productivity but people will have to make a distinction between addition and use.

Researchers found that when students with digital addiction restricted use of devices to three out of 24 hours, their results were way better. However, digital addicts whose screen time was not restricted failed maths tests despite access to their digital equipment. Close to 59% of students were found distracted by the laptops and smartphones of the others; 45% of students using smartphones for three to seven hours become fidgety if they lose access to it. The verdict is clear: Smartphones and laptops don't make students sharp. They need to develop discipline and focus. The beautiful balance between the power of AI and human wisdom is the only way to create a meaningful world.

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, *Hindustan*. The views expressed are personal

WORLD

Iran to strike Gulf, Israeli energy sites if Trump attacks

Asian News International
letters@hindustantimes.com

TEHRAN: Iran has issued a threat of retaliation following reports indicating that US President Donald Trump is considering launching attacks against Iranian energy infrastructure, according to Iran's state-affiliated Tasnim News Agency.

The news agency reported that Tehran has devised a comprehensive blueprint to target crucial energy facilities across the Middle East should the United States or Israel carry out fresh strikes.

The warning comes as a US official told Axios that Trump is seriously contemplating strikes on Iranian energy targets, though no final decision has been taken.

As per Tasnim News, the Iranian plan is designed to disrupt the oil and gas infrastructure of the Middle East if new attacks are carried out by the US or Israel.

The reported target list features Saudi Arabia's Ghawar oil field, which accounts for over 5 per cent of global oil supply, alongside the Abqaiq and Khurais facilities, which produce more than 7 million barrels of oil per day.

In the United Arab Emirates, the facilities named in the report include the Zakum oil field and the Ruways refinery, which has a processing capacity of over one million barrels per day.

Iran's reported list also encompasses Qatar's North Field and Ras Laffan, which together account for approximately 20 per cent of global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade.

Other sites cited in the report include Kuwait's Burgan oil field, which produces roughly two million barrels per day, Bahrain's Sitrah refinery and Al-Mi-



Donald Trump with Saudi prince Mohammed bin Salman. AP

hah, as well as Israel's Leviathan and Tamar gas fields.

A senior Iranian security official, quoted by Tasnim News, said, "We have prepared a comprehensive plan to respond to any potential American recklessness."

The official additionally cited the 40-day war, claiming that Iran had bombed Qatar's most vital gas refinery and asserting that Trump later apologised on Truth Social.

The latest warning from Tehran follows reports that President Trump is weighing military action against Iranian energy infrastructure.

A US official told Axios that Trump is seriously considering launching strikes against Iranian energy and infrastructure facilities over the coming days, though final orders have not yet been issued.

According to the report, the proposed bombing campaign aims to pressure Tehran into accepting American terms in ongoing ceasefire negotiations.

The report further stated that the strikes could involve the Israeli military for the first time in several weeks, an escalation expected to trigger Iranian mis-

sile attacks on Israel.

The recent developments are taking place against the backdrop of heightened tensions between Iran, the United States and Israel.

Iran calls every threat to country real, significant

Iran's Acting Minister of Defence and Armed Forces Support, Brigadier General Seyyed Majid Ibn al-Reza, has said that Tehran will treat every threat from its "adversaries" seriously and use such threats to increase military preparedness and strengthen its deterrence capabilities.

According to Iran's ISNA news agency, Ibn al-Reza made the remarks in a post on his official X handle.

He said that while Iran considers recent statements by its adversaries [US] to be part of psychological and information warfare, Tehran will not dismiss them and will instead treat every threat as "real and significant."

"Although the enemy's recent statements are made in the context of psychological operations and computational warfare, from our point of view, every threat is a real and significant threat," he said.

5 dead, 41 missing in Indonesia ferry fire

Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

SURABAYA: An Indonesian ferry carrying 271 people caught fire in waters off the main island of Java on Sunday, leaving at least five people dead and dozens missing as rescuers and passing vessels evacuated hundreds from the burning ship, officials said, AP reported.

A total of 225 people on the vessel were rescued while 41 remain missing, AFP reported.

The Mutiara Sentosa 2 ferry was traveling from Indonesia's second-largest city of Surabaya in East Java to the city of Makassar in South Sulawesi, with 232 passengers and 39 crew members, when the fire broke out between 6am and 7am in waters off Sumenep regency, according to Indonesia's National Search and Rescue Agency, or Basarnas.

The ferry operator, PT Atosim Lampung Pelayaran, reported the incident to the Surabaya search and rescue office about an hour later, Basarnas said in a statement.

It said the company received information from the ferry's captain that the vessel was on fire



Smoke rises from the Mutiara Sentosa 2 ferry in East Java on Sunday. REUTERS

near the northern tip of Madura island, but contact was later lost.

By 9.45am, authorities determined the ferry was about 19 nautical miles north of Buruan Sapudi island after communicating with the nearby cargo vessel Meratus Project 3, which was unable to approach the burning vessel closely because it was carrying a flammable load.

Footage released by the

National Search and Rescue Agency showed thick black smoke billowing from one side of the ferry and spreading across much of the ship.

In videos circulating on social media platforms and messaging groups, terrified passengers, mostly wearing life jackets, could be seen clustered on the deck and upper sections of the burning vessel awaiting rescue,

some jumping into the sea as orange flames and black smoke billowed from the burning vessel.

The ferry was reported to be nearly engulfed by flames, with passengers gathered on the bridge and bow.

A tugboat and another passing vessel moved in and began evacuating passengers shortly before 10am, the statement said.

By Sunday afternoon, several nearby vessels managed to rescue 225 passengers and crew and recovered five bodies. At least 41 people remained unaccounted for.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known and remained under investigation.

Search and rescue teams dispatched a rescue vessel from Surabaya, although officials estimated it would take about six hours to reach the scene.

A rigid inflatable boat from the Sumenep rescue post was sent toward the location but later returned to shore because of rough seas and high waves. The Indonesian Navy also deployed a warship to assist.

The 160 metres (525 feet) long and 25 metres (82 feet) wide ferry serves the Surabaya-Makassar route, a voyage that typically takes around 40 hours and is primarily used by domestic travelers and cargo transport between Java and Sulawesi.

Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands where ferries are a common method of travel. Disasters occur regularly, with weak safety enforcement often blamed.

Hindu monk gets bail in Bangladesh

Asian News International

letters@hindustantimes.com

DHAKA: A Bangladesh High Court on Sunday granted bail to Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in two cases, a lawyer said.

"The Bangladesh High Court has granted bail to Chinmoy Krishna Das in two of the four cases filed against him. These cases included charges of attempted murder, vandalism, obstruction of government duties, and related offences. A two-judge High Court bench issued the bail order today," Chinmoy's lawyer Apurba Kumar Bhattacharjee said.

A High Court bench comprising Justice KM Zahid Sarwar and Justice Sheikh Abu Taher granted the bail. They also set August 16 as the date for hearing

the bail applications in two other cases.

Das, a former ISKCON leader and spokesperson of the Bangladesh Sammit Sanatani Jagran Jote, was arrested on November 25, 2024, at Dhaka airport. He was accused of insulting the national flag of Bangladesh.

His arrest had sparked protests, culminating in violent clashes between his followers and law enforcement outside the Chattogram Court Building on November 27.

Das has been a vocal advocate for the Hindu (Sanatani) community in Bangladesh, calling for key reforms such as a minority protection law, a tribunal for fast-tracking cases of minority persecution, and the establishment of a dedicated ministry of minority affairs.

Riding a high



Stella (right) and Moxey compete during the World Dog Surfing Championships in Pacifica, California, on Saturday. The event helps local charities raise money by sponsoring a contestant or a team, with a portion of the proceeds going to dog, environmental, and surfing causes. AP

BUSINESS

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India eyes ₹5k cr push for North-East border infra

Dhirendra Kumar

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NEW DELHI: The Centre has drawn up a ₹5,000 crore development plan for India's North-East region for FY27, with a sharp focus on improving connectivity and social infrastructure across border areas, two people familiar with the matter said. The plan envisages constructing about 270 km of roads, providing all-weather connectivity to 225 villages, and building or upgrading around 70 school infrastructure projects across the eight north-eastern states.

The government expects the education projects to benefit about 292,000 students through facilities created with central support, these people said.

The proposal also prioritises healthcare infrastructure. The Centre plans to develop five hospitals of finance and development of north-eastern region, the department of expenditure, and the chief secretaries of all eight north-eastern states remained unanswered till press time.

Border push

The spending plan comes as China continues to expand



Plan envisages 270 km of roads, connectivity to 225 villages, 70 school infrastructure projects across the north-eastern states. HT

first of the two people cited above, the locations of the proposed hospitals have yet to be finalized because consultations with the state governments are still underway.

Queries sent to the ministries of finance and development of north-eastern region, the department of expenditure, and the chief secretaries of all eight north-eastern states remained unanswered till press time.

Border push

The spending plan comes as China continues to expand

roads, villages, airports and other dual-use infrastructure along the frontier facing India's north-eastern states, intensifying New Delhi's efforts to strengthen its own border regions following heightened tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Over the past several years, Beijing has expanded highways, bridges, airports, rail links and so-called "border defence villages" across the Tibetan Plateau. India has responded by accelerating investments in roads, tunnels, telecommunications and

public services on its side of the border. Experts said the strategy reflects a broader shift to treating border infrastructure as both a security imperative and a long-term economic investment. "The region's development must be viewed not merely as a border management priority, but as a long-term economic and strategic investment in India's future," said Nava Baro, founder, Northeast India Public Policy Forum, a Guwahati-based think tank.

India's North-East comprises

public services on its side of the border.

Experts said the strategy reflects a broader shift to treating border infrastructure as both a security imperative and a long-term economic investment. "The region's development must be viewed not merely as a border management priority, but as a long-term economic and strategic investment in India's future," said Nava Baro, founder, Northeast India Public Policy Forum, a Guwahati-based think tank.

India's North-East comprises Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura, and is home to about 45.8 million people, according to the 2011 Census.

The proposed projects will be implemented through the Centre's two flagship programmes for the region—the Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) and the North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (Nesids).

The Department of Expenditure has allocated ₹2,306 crore for PM-DevINE and ₹2,500 crore for Nesids for fiscal year 2027 (FY27).

Petrol, diesel sales soar on weak monsoon rains

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Petrol and diesel sales by India's three state-run fuel retailers rose sharply in July as below-normal monsoon rainfall boosted fuel demand from farmers and motorists, preliminary industry sales data showed.

Petrol sales by Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) climbed 9.7% to 3.45 million tonnes during July, compared with 3.14 million tonnes in the corresponding period a year ago.

The volume was also 15.1% higher than 2.99 million tonnes sold during July 2024 and 12.7% above the July 2023 consumption. On a month-on-month basis, diesel sales declined 9.2% from 7.85 million tonnes in June.

Compared to June, however, petrol sales fell 1.1% from 3.48 million tonnes.

Diesel sales, a key indicator of economic activity in India, rose 0.7% year-on-year to 7.12 million tonnes in July from 6.43 million tonnes a year earlier.

Diesel is India's most widely used fuel, powering freight transport, agricultural machinery and irrigation. Below-normal monsoon rainfall boosted irrigation demand during the



The petrol sales in July, however, fell 1.1% from 3.48 million tonnes in June. mint

peak sowing season.

The volume sold in July was 11.5% higher than in the corresponding period of 2024 and 12.7% above the July 2023 consumption. On a month-on-month basis, diesel sales declined 9.2% from 7.85 million tonnes in June.

Fuel sales typically moderate with the onset of the monsoon, which reduces demand for running agricultural irrigation pumps as well as slows vehicular movement. But this year, the monsoon rains arrived late, which led to farmers using diesel to run pumps to irrigate farms.

Month-on-month, sales in July remain lower because in June holiday travel picks up due

to school and college holidays. Jet fuel (ATF) sales inched up by 2.9% to 659,900 tonnes during July — volumes that were 2.3% more than the consumption of 641,300 tonnes in July 2024 and 16.5% more than 566,600 tonnes of July 2023.

Month-on-month, the consumption fell 4.6% from 691,700 tonnes of June.

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) sales continued to fall, dropping 17.4% to 2.37 million tonnes.

Industry officials said this was largely because some volumes have shifted to piped natural gas since the West Asia crisis.

LPG sales have been declining since the onset of the West Asia crisis disrupted supplies, leading to the imposition of consumption restrictions in sectors like hotels and restaurants.

The curbs were lifted last month, and sales saw an 8.6% rise to 2.18 million tonnes consumed in June but were lower year-on-year as some industrial and commercial users are now using piped natural gas for their needs, they said.

The July LPG consumption was 13.3% lower than 2.73 million tonnes of July 2024 and 1.1% lower than 2.39 million tonnes of July 2023.

NCLAT REJECTS DOT'S 469 CRORE CLAIM APPEAL IN ROLTA INSOLVENCY

Press Trust of India

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NEW DELHI: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has dismissed the appeal filed by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) challenging the resolution plan for debt-ridden Rolta India Ltd, holding that the plan has already been approved and implemented.

The DoT had challenged the resolution plan approved by NCLT while claiming statutory dues of ₹469.09 crore towards unpaid licence fees.

A three-member NCLAT bench upheld the order of the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), which on December 15, 2025, approved the ₹900-crore resolution plan submitted by Ashdan Properties for Rolta India, a multinational technology company.

The tribunal observed that Rolta's resolution plan had already been implemented, with the NCLT closing the company petition on February 2, 2026. Moreover, DoT never raised the issue of categorisation of its claims before the NCLT during hearings.

"The resolution process having attained finality and the plan having been acted upon, interference to the order dated 15.12.2025 at this stage, would be inappropriate, and that the sanctity of an approved and implemented resolution plan is not to be disturbed on claims that were not timelyously submitted," said the bench comprising officiating chairperson Justice Yogesh Khanna along with Members Barun Mitra and Ajai Das Mehrotra. This was challenged by the DoT, an operational creditor, before the appellate tribunal NCLAT, claiming statutory dues of ₹469.09 crore towards unpaid licence fees linked to adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues for FY2006 and FY2007. Department of Telecommunications had granted Rolta Internet Service Provider (ISP) licence.

FPIs reverse 4-month selling trend with ₹20,000 crore inflow in July

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: After four straight months of selling, foreign investors turned net buyers of Indian equities in July, pumping in ₹20,200 crore, aided by attractive valuations, improving corporate earnings and easing global headwinds.

The latest inflow marks a sharp reversal from the preceding months, when Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) with-

drew ₹49,340 crore in June, ₹32,963 crore in May, ₹60,847 crore in April and a massive ₹117 lakh crore in March, according to data from the Central Depository Services (India) Ltd (CDSL).

Prior to the selling spree, FPIs had invested ₹22,615 crore in Indian equities in February. Despite the turnaround in July, foreign investors have pulled out a net ₹2.54 lakh crore from Indian equities so far in 2026, way more than the ₹1.65 lakh crore withdrawn during the

whole of 2025. Market experts attributed the renewed FPI interest to relatively stable domestic markets, reasonable large-cap valuations, improving earnings prospects and a more favourable global environment. V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Investments, said excessive volatility in markets such as South Korea and Taiwan, coupled with concentration risk in the "chip trade", is prompting FPIs to look for relatively stable markets like India.

Global consumer products makers have reported strong consumer demand and market share gains in India in the June quarter, highlighting India's role as a long-term growth engine and have indicated plans to step up investments to strengthen their presence in one of the world's fastest-growing consumer markets.

Global consumer goods majors such as Mondelez International, L'Oréal, Reckitt, Unilever, Nestlé and The Coca-Cola

Global FMCG majors bullish on India

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Global consumer products makers have reported strong consumer demand and market share gains in India in the June quarter, highlighting India's role as a long-term growth engine and have indicated plans to step up investments to strengthen their presence in one of the world's fastest-growing consumer markets.

Global consumer goods majors such as Mondelez International, L'Oréal, Reckitt, Unilever, Nestlé and The Coca-Cola

Company see India as a key growth market and a major driver of future growth.

In their earnings calls, top executives have pointed to resilient consumer demand, accelerating premiumisation, expanding distribution networks, focus on low-price packs, strong performance of digital and e-commerce channels, and rising market share across categories in India. US snacking major Mondelez International, maker of brands such as Oreo, Cadbury Dairy Milk and Toblerone, said demand remained "solid" in India during the second quarter

of 2026 and that it expanded its retail reach by adding another 1,00,000 stores in the country.

"Consumer confidence in the emerging markets, I would say, overall is stable and pretty good. India is very strong," Mondelez chairman & CEO Dirk Van de Put said during the company's earnings call.

French beauty products maker L'Oréal said its India business continued to accelerate in the first half of 2026.

Giving a "Special shout-out" to India, which saw a strong acceleration at over 70% in the June quarter, ahead of the mar-

ket, its CEO Nicolas Hieronimus said: "We have lots of growth opportunities. In India, it's even a bit lower. Clearly it's a focus. The good news is that e-commerce is really doing great, and we are getting better at playing."

British FMCG major Reckitt, which owns brands such as Dettol, Duracell, Harpic and Veet, reported high single-digit growth in India in the June quarter, supported by broad-based gains across categories.

The company attributed the performance to continued sales force automation and wider distribution reach.

French beauty products maker L'Oréal said its India business continued to accelerate in the first half of 2026.

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THE NUMBERS

Hindustan Times

NUMBER THEORY

Everyone has an explanation for the world's biggest events. **Number Theory** tests those explanations against the evidence. Through rigorous analysis, data and fact-based reporting, it uncovers surprising insights, challenges conventional wisdom and reveals the bigger picture behind the issues shaping India and the world.



LOOK FOR NUMBER THEORY IN HINDUSTAN TIMES

NUMBER THEORY

What is the actual economic inequality in India?

By Roshan Kishore and Abhishek Jha

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged Indians to cut down on gold purchases and foreign travel and concerns over India's external balance, he was subtly hinting towards a deeper problem in the Indian economy. There is now a significant cohort of Indians whose lifestyle is at par with the rich in high-income countries and who are way above the ordinary Indians earn and spend. This cohort seems to have become bigger over time, as is seen in India's rising per capita income. This is a good sign for the country, but it also points to a problem. The rich in India are not spending as much as their counterparts in high-income countries. This is a problem for the Indian economy. The rich in India are not spending as much as their counterparts in high-income countries. This is a problem for the Indian economy. The rich in India are not spending as much as their counterparts in high-income countries. This is a problem for the Indian economy.



1 The really-rich have seen the lowest increase in spending after reforms

India's first income survey is in the process of being conducted. Existing estimates of inequality are based on consumption expenditure surveys (CES) conducted by the National Statistical Office (NSO). Comparing the monthly per capita expenditure (MPCIE) of the entire CES, top 10%, top 5% and top 1% between 1993-94 and 2003-04 CES rounds – the earliest and latest after 1991 reforms – shows that top 1% have seen the lowest proportionate increase in their MPCIE. The catch up of the masses vis-à-vis the classes is almost entirely a result of the former's high growth in non-food expenditure.

Consumption growth between 2023-24 & 1993-94

Chart shows ratio of Monthly Per Capita Expenditures between 2023-24 and 1993-94



Source: FL study as of Aug. 2000 data.

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Thanks to the trend described above, India's consumption inequality has fallen in the post-reform period. The Gini coefficient – the most widespread statistical measure of inequality where 0 shows perfect equality and 1 perfect in equality – has fallen from 0.33 in 1993-04 to 0.29 in 2003-04.

What about inequality within the really rich though? It makes sense to ask this question because it is eminently likely that the super-rich (those who own luxury cars, for example) are still a very small part of the rich (say, those who own a car) and only the former has seen incomes rise. Data seems to suggest otherwise once again. Intra-class Gini has seen the sharpest fall among the richest classes between 1993-94 and 2023-24.

Within-class Gini coefficient of MPCE



One coefficient takes values between 0 and 1 where 0 denotes perfect equality and 1 perfect inequality. Source: IIT analysis using AIC data.

3 Is the CES data just counter-intuitive or really not representative?

[illegible]

Domestic air passengers and estimated air travellers

■ Domestic air passengers per million people: DGCA ■ Estimated air ticket buyers per million people: CES/HCES

Source: CES, JCR-02, JULY 2009-JAN 2010
National Commission on Budget Priorities

If the CES is undercounting air travelers, can it be trusted to represent people spending on even higher-value goods and services? And if the super-rich are undercounted, how credible are its estimates of economic inequality? This does not, however, mean the CES is a useless statistical database. Sure, it tends to undercount the rich, but it also gives a treasure trove of information on the economic condition of a vast majority of Indians. The numbers above tell us that one should take the inequality measures from the CES data with some amount of skepticism.

SPORT

CWG medallists receive grand welcome in Delhi

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The first batch of Indian athletes, including ace weightlifter Mirabai Chanu and Lovepreet Singh, returned home to a heroes' welcome after a successful Commonwealth Games campaign with hundreds of fans lining up to receive them at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here on Sunday.

Olympic medallist Mirabai clinched her third successive Commonwealth Games gold medal in the women's 49kg event. "Coming from Manipur, I feel really proud that I have done something good for my country," Mirabai told PTI at the airport.

Lovepreet, who settled for silver in the men's +100kg category after narrowly missing the gold by just one kilogram, said his next target is the Asian Games in Japan. "I would like to thank my Indian Navy staff and captain Vijay Kumar, and all who have come," said the 28-year-old from Punjab, who lifted a total of 388kg, including a Commonwealth Games record of 176kg in the snatch.

"It happens (missing on gold), but I did my hard work and I have got the result for that and when two players fight one has to lose. Up next, I will prepare well for Asian Games. Happy with the warm welcome on their return, Bindyarani Devi Sorokhaibam, who claimed bronze in the women's 58kg category, said she would work even harder ahead of the upcoming competitions. "Everyone has welcomed us like this so it feels great, thank you all for making feel like home," she said. "I'll train even harder than I have so far for the upcoming competitions."



Gold medallist Mirabai Chanu being welcomed on her arrival at Indira Gandhi International Airport.

Rishikanta Singh, who won silver in the men's 60kg category, said he would strive for gold the next time. "Feeling good that I have got a medal for India. I've already spoken about my performance, but I'll come back stronger and perform even better," Rishikanta said.

The Imphal-born Indian Army weightlifter also appealed for peace in his home state, saying it would help produce more sporting talent.

"For me both Navy and Meitei are equal. I would want to say

this that we need peace in Manipur so that Manipur could produce more athletes even better than me," he said.

Indian weightlifters concluded their campaign with eight medals — one gold, six silver and one bronze. Chief coach Vijay Sharma said: "We feel very proud as we have received this reception here. Everybody is very happy. I am really very happy with the performance of my players. There are some areas where we fell short, and we can work on them to change

the colour of our medal from silver to gold. But that happens in sports. Overall, the results are good. We are happy."

He also lavished praise on Mirabai for her third gold. "Mirabai is an exceptional player. With her discipline, she is able to deliver these results. We are preparing for the Asian Games, and I think we will win that medal as well," Sharma said.

Silver medallist Harjinder Kaur, who finished second in the women's 69kg category, said she has already set her sights on

upgrading the medal to gold at the next edition of the Games in Ahmedabad.

"My target is to convert the silver medal into gold at the next Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad," Raja Muthupandi, who bagged a silver medal in the men's 65 kg category, said the podium finish was a reward for years of perseverance after enduring multiple surgeries.

"I was the only one competing in the 2018 Commonwealth Games, but I could not win a medal there."

Tanvi Sharma clinches maiden Super 300 title

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

TAIPEI CITY: Teen Indian sensation Tanvi Sharma clinched her maiden BWF World Tour title after defeating Vietnam's sixth seed Thuy Linh Nguyen in straight games in the women's singles final of the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton tournament here on Sunday.

The 17-year-old from Punjab, who had finished runner-up at last year's US Open Super 300, needed just 36 minutes to outclass world No. 21 Nguyen 21-16 in the summit clash.

"I'm really very happy to win this title here," said Tanvi, who became the youngest champion in Taipei Open history at just 17 years and 222 days old, surpassing the legendary Tai Tzu Ying.

"I didn't expect to win a title, but yeah, I just thought I'll give my best over here. So I was going step by step, match by match. So yeah, every match I played really well here." Coached by PV Sindhu's former mentor Park Tae-sang, Tanvi also became the first Indian to win the women's singles title at the Taipei Open since Saina Nehwal, who had lifted the trophy in 2008.

"I was quite nervous, but I just thought I will play my 100 per cent, what I have in my game. I will play that," said Tanvi, who dropped only one game all week. It was pretty hard for me as well, playing five matches. But yeah, I just needed to be consistent. I have to work harder for playing Super 500 and 750s. So I'll be keeping working hard."

Tanvi had defeated Nguyen en route to the final at US Open. The Indian made a flying start, repeatedly catching Nguyen at the front court with deft drops played with the same action as a smash to open up a 4-1 lead. The Vietnamese struggled to read the Indian's deception and also found it difficult to judge the drift, going wide twice as Tanvi



India's Tanvi Sharma after winning the title.

BADMINTONPHOTO

mixed steep cross-court smashes with her trademark touch to surge to a 10-2 advantage.

The Indian, however, suddenly slipped into a string of errors, struggling to keep the shuttle inside the lines. She eventually produced a timely smash to carry a three-point lead into the mid-game interval, with coach Park Tae-sang urging her to relax.

Tanvi found her rhythm after the break, producing powerful smashes from both flanks to move 15-9 ahead. Though she gifted away a few points with errors at the net and from the backcourt, she regained control, earning five game points before sealing the opening game with a cross-court smash.

After the change of ends, Nguyen opened a 3-0 lead by making Tanvi cover the court

with sharp angles. But the Indian slowly began dictating the rallies, drawing level at 3-3 with a fine net shot before once again pushing her opponent deep and catching her at the net with deft touches.

Nguyen's inconsistency also helped Tanvi build an 8-4 lead before another patch of errors allowed the Vietnamese to close the gap to 7-8, prompting Park to tap his head in frustration. Two exquisite deceptive winners helped Tanvi take an 11-8 lead at the interval.

The Indian gradually stretched the advantage to 15-10 and then 18-12, her deception once again fetching crucial points. At 19-12, Tanvi successfully challenged a line call after being ruled late, but soon earned seven match points with a smash.

Rana, Juyal clinch 1-2 in para shot put

HT Correspondent

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MUMBAI: There's been something about Indian para athletes and double podium finishes at the Commonwealth Games.

Sharmila Dhanraj and Shilpa Shetye began the trend by capturing gold and bronze, respectively, in the women's shot put F57 category. Then, Dilip Gavit and Mohammed Basil produced a memorable 1-2 finish in the men's 100m T47 event.

Soman Rana and Shubham Juyal added to it on the final day of para athletics on Saturday, winning gold and silver in the men's shot put F57 category.

It capped off a fine campaign in Glasgow for India's para athletes, and the para contingent as a whole. It added seven medals to the overall tally, the best ever performance by an Indian para contingent at the CWG. Apart from one bronze from para powerlifting, six of those came from athletics, including three gold. Each of those had another Indian on the podium.

On Friday evening, it was Rana and Juyal with the double act. In the 10-m shot put final that had them head and shoulders above the rest (after Rana's PB of 15.17m and Juyal's 14.86m, the next best was Cameroon's Cedric Azamdzai with 12.70m), the Indian duo living up to their billing.

Rana took gold with an effort of 13.40m off his second attempt, while Juyal was next best at 12.38m from his final attempt. Azamdzai took bronze with 12.57m.



Soman Rana (R) and Shubham Juyal finished 1-2 in Glasgow. GETTY

The triumph adds another chapter to the remarkable journey of 43-year-old Arjuna Rana. His father a farmer and mother a housewife, Rana joined the Gorkha Rifles as a sepoy in 2001, and was part of his unit's boxing team.

Five years later, while serving in the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir, he was badly injured in a mine blast, which resulted in an amputation below the knee. Transferred to the Army's Artificial Limb Centre in Pune, Rana never gave up on his sporting ambitions. He took up para athletics and joined the Army Paralympic Node in 2017.

He won gold at the Indian Open Para Athletics in 2023, and silver at the Asian Para Games held in Hangzhou. The Paralympics have been more testing — he came fourth in Tokyo in 2021 and 5th in Paris in 2024 — but this CWG gold adds a missing medal from his cabinet.

Juyal, the 30-year-old from Roorkhee, too trains at Pune's Army Paralympic Node. His father retires as a Naib Subedar, the son too cleared the written exam for the Army Cadet College entry scheme in 2022. A serious motorcycle accident while heading for his SSB interview, however, turned his life.

Going through rehab in Pune, Juyal was given the option to pursue either a vocational diploma course or para sports. He picked the latter, and hasn't looked back since. After winning gold at the Indian Open Para Athletics Grand Prix earlier this year, this is his first major international medal.



Decathlete Tejaswin Shankar (L) won bronze while Praveen Chithravel claimed silver.

ANURAGREUTERS

How Tejaswin fought pain to rewrite history

Shantanu Srivastava

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NEW DELHI: Four days after he cut a sorry, sobbing figure on being forced out of the high jump final due to an injury flare-up, Tejaswin Shankar was a picture of triumph and resilience at Glasgow's Scotstoun Stadium.

The 27-year-old, the only Indian to cross 8000 points in decathlon, willed himself to a first ever CWG medal for India in the combined discipline with bronze late on Friday night.

Tejaswin logged 7976 points after two days of gruelling competition to finish behind Grenada's Lindon Victor (8096) and Canada's Damian Warner (8036). Victor, the 2024 Paris Olympics bronze medallist, won his third straight CWG gold while Warner, the 2021 Tokyo Olympics champion and multiple Worlds medallist, took silver.

"I have been watching their videos since the day I decided to try decathlon. To share the podium with them feels great," Tejaswin told reporters. "I had a bronze in high jump in the previous edition and now one in decathlon. I don't know how many people have been able to do that."

Paris Olympics following a patellar tendon rupture in his left knee, an injury that put him out of action for over a year and very nearly ended his career. "I was really down the day that injury happened. But the next day, I had a chat with Sree who is coming off a similar injury. He told me to assess it after 100m."

Tejaswin said. The first of the 10 events, 100m is followed by long jump, shot put, high jump and 400m on Day 1. Long jump and high jump put a significant load on the take-off knee, which meant pain tolerance and management became critical. "I was told by (team doctor) Dr. Dinshaw Pardiwalla that there was no chance that I would rupture my tendon. Once I knew that, it all came down to my pain threshold. The knee held up after the 100, so I took it event by event. I was fine after long jump and high jump which put the most stress on the knee. Once I managed that, I knew I'll finish the event."

Strength and conditioning expert Wayne Lombard helped as well. "With these patellar tendonitis or acute flare-ups, you needed quite a bit of time for it to settle down, so the doctor put him on anti-inflammatory drugs. Once I had a quiet knee, then we could see we are making progress," Lombard told HT from Glasgow. "By a quiet knee I mean we needed the pain and the inflammation to settle." Besides anti-inflammatory drugs, Lombard outsourced a

hyperbaric chamber, red light therapy, and Pulsed Electromagnetic Field (PEMF) therapy to expedite recovery.

Then came isometric muscle actions that involved putting gentle pressure on the knee. The process continued on the second day of injury — day before competition — as Lombard got Tejaswin into the actual jump positions, holding the contractions. "That gave him confidence in the take-off position. Once he knew the knee will hold up and he's not going to experience as much discomfort, he was good to go."

Tejaswin ensured the hard work didn't go in vain. A 7.82m long jump and a 2.15m high jump were best in the field as he ended Day 1 second with 4339 points. Day 2 began with him doing 100m hurdles in 14.41secs — second fastest overall — and maintained a consistent tempo to finish with a medal.

Silver for Praveen

In men's triple jump, India had two men on the podium for the second edition in a row with modest efforts. Praveen Chithravel, fourth in 2022 with 16.89m and with a national record of 17.37m, cleared 16.58m for silver. T Selva Prabhu was third with a best of 16.52m. Jamaica's Jordan Scott won with 16.72m.

In women's 10,000m race walk, Priyanka Goswami came fourth clocking 45:53.93. Ravina Gayakwad was disqualified after three red cards for 'running'.

GULVEER WINS 5,000M BRONZE AFTER CLAIMING 10,000M SILVER

Shantanu Srivastava

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NEW DELHI: Gulveer Singh followed up his 10000m silver with a clinical bronze in the 5000m to cap a memorable Commonwealth Games in Glasgow on Saturday. The 28-year-old Arjuna man clocked 13 minutes, 24.95 seconds to become the first Indian to win two athletics medals in a single edition of CWG. The medal also made him the second Indian to win the 5000m race in CWG, after Hari Chand's bronze in Edmonton 1978.

Running a supremely tactical race, Gulveer kept himself in the leading group for much of the race and pushed himself into the medal bracket with a perfectly-timed finishing kick in the final 200m. He was boxed in by the Kenyan duo of Mathew Kipchumba Kipsang and Cornelius Kemboi in the last lap, but broke free in the final straight.

He looked headed for a silver but Australian Ky Robinson (13:24.70), the 10000m winner, surged from fourth to second with a superb acceleration in the last 100m. Kipsang completed a wire-to-wire win in 13:23.61 minutes. Gulveer though pipped Cornelius Kemboi to the line.

Eighth at the end of the opening race, Gulveer began his acceleration in the second to jump to the second spot behind Kipsang. He held firm till the end of the first 1000m. He dropped to fifth after the next 2000m and remained steady for the next kilometre.

Gulveer began to come up the final 1000m, going past Robinson to take the third spot. Unflustered by the mounting pressure, Gulveer kept his position and was in with a chance to claim silver before Robinson came up in the final 100m. "Every race is different, so I don't want to think too much about what has already happened. Winning 10,000m silver is satisfying and gives me confidence, but once I step onto the track for the 5,000m, it's a completely new race. I'll recover well, prepare with my coach, and focus on executing the race the best I can," he had said before the race.

Ronaldo 20th in time trial Ronaldo Singh Laitonjam finished 20th in the men's 1000m time trial while Harshveer Singh Selchon and Dinesh Kumar were eliminated from the men's 40km points race in Heats in India's cycling campaign.

Proud BFI hopeful of similar show at the Asian Games

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NEW DELHI: Boxing Federation of India president Ajay Singh on Sunday lauded the Indian pugilists for their remarkable 10-medal show at the Commonwealth Games and urged them to work even harder to repeat the exceptional performance at the Asian Games in Japan next month.

Indian boxers returned with a record haul of 10 medals from the CWG, including seven gold and three silver, a first in the history of the Games for the country.

"We had an exceptional and historic last two days. Winning seven gold and three silver in boxing is the biggest performance in the last 100 years history of Commonwealth Games," Singh said during an online interaction from Glasgow.

"This is also a preparation for future events, the Asian Games and 2028 Olympics. We can replicate such a performance in Asian Games, we are top 3 in Asia in boxing but for that we need to prepare hard from now and be focussed to produce a strong performance."

The BFI chief said those boxers who have won medals at the CWG have automatically booked their Asian Games berths.

"We had already announced that boxers who are going for CWG and enter medal rounds

will automatically be selected for Asian Games," Singh said. "We are very hungry for a historic performance in Asian Games. But we need to become stronger, better in many weight categories. A lot of work has to be done, this was just a stepping stone."

"We are an athlete-centric federation and our programme is ready till 2028. We want to restart league format or professional format domestically this year to give more exposure to boxers."

"We keep facing political headwinds once in a while but whatever happens politically, as a federation we ensure boxers remain insulated and focussed on their performances."

Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain, who won a silver medal in the middleweight category, dedicated her achievement to the devastating flood victims of her native state, Assam. "The people of Assam are going through a very bad phase and it happens every year. I dedicate my medal to the flood victims of my state," she said. She has set her sights on winning the yellow medal in the upcoming Asian Games.

"Asian Games is very important. I am happy with the silver here but would have been more happy with a gold. The Indian team has done very well, so pretty happy. But I want to better my performance and win a gold in Asian Games."



From left, Indian women gold medallist boxers Sakshi Chaudhary (51kg), Jaismine Lamboria (57kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Priya Ganghas (60kg) after the boxing events at the 23rd Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland.

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