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SIR IN WEST BENGAL

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A dangerous dose of deception

A farmhouse raid in Karnataka leads police to a wider network

GROUND ZERO » PAGE 7

ASIAN GAMES

India crushes Japan, enters the semifinals

SPORT » PAGE 13

IN BRIEF



Koli, acquitted in Nithari killings case, found dead

NEW DELHI
Barely a year after he was acquitted in all 13 cases related to the sensational Nithari killings, Surendra Koli, the man at the centre of the cases, was found dead in Haridwar, the police said on Friday. » Page 8

2 more women die in Rajasthan after C-sections

JAIPUR
Two women who underwent caesarean sections at a government hospital in Bundi died at separate private hospitals in Kota earlier this week. Bundi Collector Harphool Singh Yadav has sought a report on the incident. » Page 4

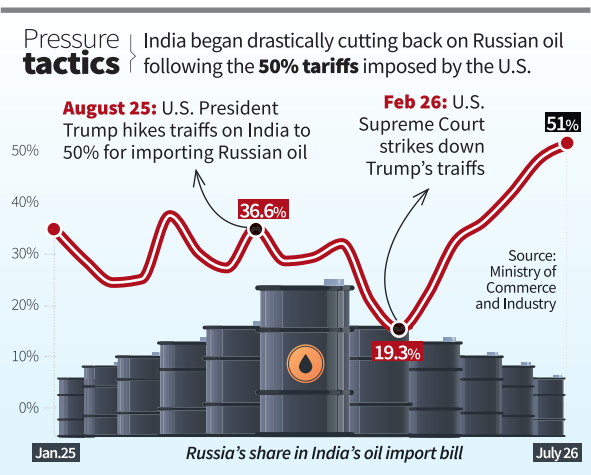
Data suggest Indian oil buys fall after U.S. curbs

The government says energy sourcing is based on 'national interest', but India slashed imports from Venezuela, Iran, and Russia following U.S. pressure, and resumed sourcing after curbs eased

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
Kailoj Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Over the past decade, India has complied with U.S. pressure to reduce oil imports from countries it has sought to isolate, such as Venezuela, Iran, and Russia, even though they were important sources. Once the U.S. pressure eased, official data show that India immediately turned back to these sources of oil.

The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday issued a strong statement asserting India's strategic independence in sourcing energy against the backdrop of a U.S. Bill that proposes tariffs of up to 100% on India for importing Russian oil. The Ministry spokesman said on Friday that



"energy sourcing is based on national interest" and that India continues "to buy energy from diversified sources". "As stated, we have already conveyed, at senior levels of the U.S. administration, the implications that the legislation could have on India's ener-

gy security, for the international energy markets, and the overall bilateral partnership," the spokesperson said. The Ministry said that in its communications with the U.S. the Indian side "made clear its determination to take all measures to

protect its trade and economic interests".

Data show that protecting "trade and economic" interests has, in the past, coincided closely with the U.S. sanctions and tariff programme. Russia's share in India's oil imports was around 30-40% between July 2024 and July 2025 but fell to 19.3% by February 2026 when the U.S. hiked tariffs to 50%. After the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the tariffs in February, India's oil imports from Russia increased, touching 51% this July. The share of Venezuelan crude fell from 6.7% in 2017-18 to zero by 2021-22, and that of Iranian oil plummeted from one-tenth to nil by 2020-21.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Mamata-backed Congress nominee held in Nandigram

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Hours after her candidate withdrew from the Nandigram bypoll race, former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Friday that her party would support the Congress nominee, Milan Pradhan, in the bypoll, even as the police arrested him in connection with an old case.

The development follows the Election Commission allotting new names and symbols to the two factions of the Trinamool Congress led by Ms. Banerjee and Ritabrata Banerjee, who is the Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly.

While the Mamata faction will be called the Mamata All India Trinamool Congress with "football player" as its symbol, the Ritabrata group was allotted the name Democratic Trinamool Congress and



Mamata Banerjee

the symbol "envelope". In an interim order issued on Thursday night, the poll body barred both factions from using the original party name, the All India Trinamool Congress and its 'Jora Ghas Phul' (two flowers with grass) symbol for the coming bypolls.

Ms. Banerjee called the decision to freeze the party name and symbol a "black day for Indian democracy" and said she would "fight it out" and emerge stronger. Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, have come in support of her ov-

er the poll body's order.

Reacting to the order, Mr. Ritabrata said: "It is a fight between an individual cult and a collective. We are a collective. The individual cult is resting on an individual and chose such a name, while we have upheld the collective and the values of democracy, nationalism and secularism."

Ms. Banerjee decided to back the Congress candidate after Sanchita Pradhan (Dey) withdrew her nomination following a meeting with BJP leader and Chief Minister Suven- du Adhikari. Ms. Banerjee is also supporting the Congress in the Nagaon Lok Sabha bypoll in Assam.

The bypoll in Nandigram is being held because Mr. Adhikari relinquished the seat after getting elected from Bhabanipur and Nandigram in the polls.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

21 killed in bomb blast at mosque near Pakistan police offices

Associated Press
PESHAWAR

A vehicle bomb exploded on Friday at a mosque near police offices in northwestern Pakistan as gunmen tried to storm the compound in an attack that killed at least 21 people and wounded 80 others, police and rescue officials said. Among those killed and wounded were police officers attending prayers at the mosque.

The bombing occurred in Kohat, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. An attacker apparently rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the mosque, said Zulfiqar Hameed, the provincial police chief.

At least seven gunmen also attempted to enter the police compound and exchanged fire with officers. Six of the gunmen were

killed, according to police, who said one suicide bomber attacked the nearby office of an intelligence agency.

The police compound housed counter-terrorism police, who had carried out operations against militants across the province in recent years.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack and expressed sorrow over the casualties. He directed authorities to accelerate rescue operations.

Photos showed the outer wall of the police offices had collapsed and the mosque was badly damaged. Smoke rose over the site after the blast, which witnesses and residents said was heard far away, followed by gunfire.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8



People gather at a mosque damaged in a suicide attack in Kohat district of Pakistan on Friday. REUTERS

India, Nepal discuss post-flood recovery, reset in bilateral ties

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Nepal's reconstruction plans post-floods and the "reset" of India-Nepal ties with the newly elected government were at the top of the agenda as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met Nepal's Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle here on Friday, as both sides prepare for a visit by Nepal Prime Minister Balen Shah to New Delhi later this year.

Mr. Jaishankar said he offered his deep condolences to Mr. Wagle over the recent flash floods. "Discussed ways to strengthen our overall cooperation, especially in economic, energy and connectivity domains," he added in a social media post where he tagged the government's "Neighbourhood First" slogan.

Mr. Wagle's visit to New Delhi follows a visit by Nepal Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal in June, as part of a call by ruling Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) chairman Rabi Lamichhane for a "reset" in ties between New Delhi and Kathmandu, troubled over the past few years on both boundary disputes and economic issues.

Multilateral support

Mr. Wagle met Mr. Jaishankar a day after meeting Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday, during which India committed to continuing support for Nepal's recovery efforts after the floods. According to officials, the entire reconstruction required after the floods on August 26, which have left more than 1,400 dead and more than 6,000 missing,



S. Jaishankar greets Nepal Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle in New Delhi. ANI

will top \$5 billion.

Nepal will be making an appeal for multilateral support at the UN General Assembly next week in New York, as Mr. Shah is expected to make his first international speech. Mr. Wagle is in Delhi on his first visit abroad since he took office and will travel soon to Doha for a meeting of the Board of the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and to the IMF and World Bank meetings in Bangkok.

In a readout, the Finance Ministry said Mr. Wagle had thanked India for its assistance after the floods on the Trishuli river that overflowed in areas on both sides of the Nepal-China border and destroyed a major Chinese border crossing at Rasuwa. They also discussed the strengthening of bilateral economic ties and "initiatives to enhance connectivity for deepening of trade, investments and people-to-people exchanges". Nepal wants to explore connectivity in road and rail, but officials have said they are keen to resolve the long-pending issue of overflight for flights to Nepali airports.

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» PAGE 8

'Shift to CBT for NEET-UG under active consideration'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Centre told the Supreme Court on Friday that a switch to computer-based testing for NEET-UG 2027 remains under "active consideration", with the Nandan Nilekani-led task force, set up to recommend technological reforms for the National Testing Agency, expected to submit its report by September-end. The court directed the task force to file an affidavit and questioned when reforms would be implemented.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 10

Bail for U.S. national as NIA misses chargesheet deadline

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday granted default bail to U.S. national Matthew Aaron Van Dyke, who was arrested in March in connection with an alleged cross-border ethnic conspiracy involving armed groups in Myanmar. The court noted that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) did not file a chargesheet covering the alleged terror offences within the mandatory 180-day period.

Special Judge Prashant Sharma of the Rouse Avenue Courts allowed Mr. Dyke's bail application after noting that the chargesheet filed by the NIA on September 8, the last day of the statutory deadline, invoked only "piecemeal" charges of Sections 21 and



The NIA invoked just 'piecemeal' charges against Matthew Aaron Van Dyke instead of UAPA, under which he was initially booked, said the court. FILE PHOTO

23 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, which can be settled at the level of the Foreigners Regional Registration Office, rather than the more serious Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) under which Mr. Dyke was originally booked. Section 21 addresses

punishment for entering India without valid entry documents while Section 23 covers general contraventions, including overstaying a visa and violating visa conditions.

The court said the investigating agency cannot use an incomplete chargesheet to sidestep the default bail provision under Section 187(3) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

Conditions imposed

Granting him release, the court also directed Mr. Dyke to furnish a personal bond and surety bond of ₹1 lakh each, subject to conditions including that he remain within Delhi and not leave without the court's permission.

It also asked him to refrain from influencing witnesses or tampering with

evidence, keep the Investigating Officer informed of his address, maintain an active phone number and remain available for further questioning whenever required.

Relief for 6 Ukrainians

The order also noted that the same reasoning extends to the six co-accused in the case, all Ukrainian nationals, who remain in judicial custody, and directed that copies of the order be sent to them so they may pursue their own default bail applications.

Mr. Dyke was arrested by the NIA on March 13 at the Kolkata airport. The six Ukrainian nationals were arrested at airports in Delhi and Lucknow.

According to the probe agency, the seven accused entered India on tourist vi-

sas and travelled to the north-eastern region without obtaining the mandatory permits. The NIA also alleged that they subsequently crossed illegally from Mizoram into Myanmar, where they were involved in training ethnic armed organisations.

The Central agency had initially invoked provisions of the UAPA, including those relating to conspiracy, as part of its investigation into the alleged cross-border network.

During earlier hearings, the agency told the court that the accused had made significant disclosures while in custody about the alleged conspiracy. It also claimed that the seven accused were involved in assembling equipment and had targeted a passenger aircraft in Myanmar.

Meghna Gulzar challenges circle of public conscience

A gritty examination of the cost of instant retribution, police procedural, anchored by Prithviraj and Kareena Kapoor Khan, probes the grey area where the line between justice and vengeance blurs

FILM REVIEWS

Anuj Kumar

Coming at a time when society is increasingly seduced by the idea of instant, extra-judicial justice, Meghna Gulzar's *Daayra* takes a diagnostic look at the rot within the body politic where 'encounters' are routinely packaged and sold as desperate acts of self-defence, and a frustrated public gleefully buys it for the wheel of justice is excruciatingly slow.

Heavily informed by the details and fallout of the 2019 Hyderabad case, the film takes away the sensationalised, high-octane tropes synonymous with Bollywood police procedurals that have long normalised law enforcement officers becoming a law unto themselves.

Following the brutal assault on a young girl, DCP Raman Kumar (Prithviraj Sukumaran) delivers immediate, lethal retribution to the suspects under the guise of an 'encounter', igniting public euphoria. However, when the Human Rights Commission takes note, the State launches an internal investigation led by the DCP Ajooni Kohli (Kareena Kapoor Khan).

The setup frames the central moral conundrum between the slow wheels of institutional justice and the immediate catharsis of *uniformed* vigilantism. By juxtaposing the efficiency of Raman's methods against Ajooni's allegiance to the book, Meghna refuses easy moral absolutes, instead probing the terrifying grey area where the line between justice and vengeance blurs.

Structurally, Meghna, who knows how to walk the *Talvar's* edge between objective reportage and cinematic drama, adopts the clinical neutrality of a



Prithviraj Sukumaran in 'Daayra'. PEN MOVIES/YOUTUBE

Daayra (Hindi)
Director: Meghna Gulzar
Duration: 143 minutes
Cast: Prithviraj Sukumaran, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Jitendra Joshi, Kshitree Jog, Kanwaljeet Singh
Synopsis: When a controversial police encounter eliminates four heinous crime suspects, a strict vigilance officer is tasked with probing the incident.

news report, meticulously presenting competing viewpoints with near-journalistic detachment. Early in the narrative, she systematically details the flaws within the machinery of justice, pointing out how privileged lawbreakers receive premium treatment while safely behind bars. Though the narrative eventually stays on the surface of the guilt of the accused youngsters, the writers (Meghna along with Sima Agarwal and Yash Keswani) use the scene where a police officer serves avocado toast to an inmate having spa treatment in a cell to draw a link with a deeply disturbing truth where the public and the police are far quicker to demand and execute instant justice when the accused lack social capital, wealth, or legal resources. She methodically checks how petty jurisdictional disputes and stereotypes about young working women lead to deliberate delays in police response and how the expansion of isolated expressways with moody

CCTV networks has left vulnerable scooterists exposed to roadside crime. Most critically, drawing links with the juvenile offender in the Nirbhaya case, she confronts the fault lines in the juvenile justice system at a time when minors are increasingly found complicit in heinous crimes.

Yet, despite this guise of a balanced, objective lens, the narrative subtly tips toward Raman, giving the impression that it is soft-pedaling the biases it sets out to critique. By granting Raman's deep frustration the heavier share of dramatic momentum and affective resonance, the film quietly validates the fury behind his lawless crusade, even as it pretends to document it merely. Meghna hints at the mental instability of the main accused but then skims it, inadvertently creating a blind spot in its own debate.

As for the craft, the tight first hour moves with the clinical efficiency to build an airtight case for its ideological conflict. However, the editorial pacing stumbles in the second half, making the climax feel more like an over-deliberated deposition.

The screenplay's grounded realism suffers when the writing loses faith in its own imagery, and the characters begin clumsily spelling out the subtext. Kareena's unusually relaxed, detached demeanour comes across as less like a calculated character choice and more like a narrative void. At one point, it seems Geet joined the vigilance department after *Jab We Met*. In an attempt to subvert the aggressive, loud Bollywood lady-cop stereotype, the screenplay swings too far in the opposite direction, stripping Ajooni of clear internal conflict and urgency.

It is telling that Prithviraj and Jitendra Joshi get the meat of the dialogues, leaving Kareena with little room to push back structurally. While Prithviraj delivers his lines with a terrifying, low-register conviction, Kareena is left defensively quoting protocol. Ultimately, *Daayra* may not completely redraw the circle of public conscience, but it possesses more than enough friction to nudge a broken system and a reactionary public to stop, look within, and take note.

Daayra is currently running in theatres.

Kunal Kemmu aspires for stars in rudderless comedy

Back after the 'Madgaon Express', Kemmu goes all out for laughs and comes back with a broken nose, injured neck and a laborious sophomore feature that gets lost under its own idiosyncracies

Shreyas Pande

There's comfort in letting Kunal Kemmu be Kunal Kemmu. His animated buffoonery has shaped itself over the years whether it is the mix of his flirty bad-boyish excesses in *Dhol* and *Go Goa Gone*, the no-brainer antics of the *Golmaal* films or the recent touch of innocence that came spilling through Netflix's *Single Papa*. Kemmu invokes it all in his sophomore directorial *Vibe*, playing a serial tripper, Hardik, who feels like an updated version of his past comedic characters, always having a one-line up his sleeve, as he painfully navigates through unexpected situations with his instinctive comic timing. However, none of it proves enough for *Vibe* as Kunal Kemmu (the writer-director), relies far too much on the spontaneity of Kunal Kemmu (the actor), forgetting the propulsive riches of his debut, *Madgaon Express*, where the comedy progressed beat-by-beat into a hilarious outing. As it goes, he struggles to match his own *vibe* the second time around.

The troubles start showing up early on as the screenplay hastily switches between characters and plot lines. One of them begins with Bhagirath (Sparsh Srivastava), a hustler working at a software company where he traps his boss into employing Hardik, his good-for-nothing, stoner best-buddy from school. Meanwhile, a terror attack is being planned at an undisclosed location and its input is gathered by an intelligence agency headed by Madam H (Preity Zinta). Hardik is caught in the midst and along with Bhagirath, the two are pulled into a deadly web of conspiracy.

It is difficult to really situate Hardik's humanity in the story as Kemmu's writing never lets him follow one characteristic. The tone keeps shifting as Hardik immodestly flirts with an office intern Kareena (Vanshika Dhar), often imposing his liking with borderline creepiness, like how during a song sequence Hardik bends over in the elevator to sniff Kareena's fragrance and the moment plays over with a cutesy pretence. Earlier, Bhagirath warns him, mentioning the company's stricter sexual harassment policies. The casual nature of these sequences is troubling for how later Hardik is made out to be an innocent lover boy as he plans a dreamy date for Kareena in a planetarium. She enjoys it and hugs him before leaving, which again brings out the 'bad boy' as he squeezes into her for a moment. Kemmu treats Hardik with a strange ambiguity, often normalising his ill-manners under the garb of humour. The film rises from the discomfiting nature of these easy-laughs



Sparsh Srivastava and Kunal Kemmu in 'Vibe'. AMAZON MGM STUDIOS

Vibe (Hindi)
Director: Kunal Kemmu
Cast: Kunal Kemmu, Preity Zinta, Sparsh Srivastava, Yashpal Sharma, Dinesh Lal Yadav
Runtime: 145 minutes
Synopsis: Two best buddies are pulled into an unlikely terror conspiracy that puts them in unexpected comedic situations as they navigate along with their conflicting personalities

and tries to be an action-comedy, as Bhagirath and Hardik become unlikely leads to stop a terror attack. Much of these sequences in the second half play without invention and Kemmu doesn't go all out with his comedy like he did in *Madgaon Express*. In comparison, the surprises here aren't too many as Kemmu doesn't pick up a spoofy style that would have worked well with the rest of the quirkiness, seen earlier this year in Vir Das' inconsistent but snacky spy-comedy, *Happy Patel*. Das instilled a distinctness to Mona Singh in the film, making her play a menacing gangster with a touch of eccentricity. There was a chance to do that and more with Preity Zinta's in *Vibe* but her character is written without flair; she doesn't rise beyond her bossy outcomer as the actor too stays within familiar terrains with her performance. Sparsh is not revealing either as he tries to

add some jest to an underwritten character while Yashpal Sharma and Dinesh Lal Yadav are practically wasted as the two associates of Madam H. The focus stays perennially on Hardik, and Kemmu is capable of livening moments even when the writing doesn't offer as much support. He remains watchable with his inimitable, buoyant voice, right from the first time it is heard before the opening credits through the brand logos and special thanks section. "The movie is about to start," he says while mildly roasting the practise. There's great promise of a self-aware, chirpy flick even before the first frame comes up. But Kemmu withdraws from the path and chooses another, longer and laborious one instead, where he is the center of his own world, sagging beneath his own image, as he defies himself with an introductory slow-mo sequence over pumped up music, following that up with another similar moment of superstar machismo in the climax.

Where's the goofy Kunal Kemmu? Where's the 'Josh hai to haule hai, chidiya hai to ghosle hai...' rigour from *Golmaal 3*? The sophomore spark fizzles out soon. Here's hoping that the third time's a charm.

Vibe is currently running in theatres.

There is more than lust behind closed bedroom doors in these stories of desire

A mirror to modern relationships, the franchise's third instalment sheds its past shock value for the disturbing terrain of emotional isolation, where intimacy becomes a means of communication even as emotional safety remains elusive

Anuj Kumar

If the birth of *Lust Stories* was a shout for liberation, a tearing down of the velvet curtains that long hid Indian intimacy, then the third iteration is the echo. Helmed by a new set of original voices – Shakun Batra, Vikramaditya Motwane, Kiran Rao, and Vishal Bhardwaj – and bol-



Konkona Sen Sharma and Radhika Apte in 'Lust Stories 3'. Netflix

stered by an ensemble of actors who translate subtext through the vocabulary of body language, it does not seek to shock, nor does it carry the heavy burden of breaking taboos. It treats desire as a messy mirror.

The four-part anthology shows how physical proximity often masks isolation in modern relationships. It shows how lust is weaponised, bargained with, or surrendered to. In the earlier films of the franchise, the stories followed a clear arc of liberation, a character realising their worth or claiming their pleasure. Here, within the recognisable OTT beats, the liberation is rarely external. In

three segments, intimacy is readily available, but real emotional safety is scarce.

Batra's approach is sharper and much more relatable as he once again makes us care for two messed-up souls and, along the way, exposes the common internal dissonance where individuals love their partners but are actively, silently suffocated by them.

However, when the subtext and the surface narrative don't fully synchronise, the narrative loses its grip. You are left admiring the cleverness of the concept, but remain largely cold to the human drama.

Lust Stories 3 is currently streaming on Netflix.

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AFFIDAVIT

I, Smt Bijaylaxmi Mishra, W/O- Army No-7036226, Rank-Ex-Sep, Name-Late Jagannath Mishra, resident of Brahmanagar lane, Brahmapur, PS- B.N.Pur, Dist- Ganjam, Odisha, Pin-760001, want to change my name from Bajay Lakshmi to BIJAYLAXMI MISHRA and date of birth from 01.01.3001 to 01.01.1947 in my deceased Husband's Army Service Records vide affidavit dated 17.09.2026 sworn before 1ST CLASS MAGISTRATE, Brahmapur, Ganjam.

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KSRTC/2026-27/IND0343	Selection of Vendor for Supply and Maintenance of Front Dash Camera and Saloon Camera	8.00	19-10-2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0344	ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance System) for 100 Vehicles	0.50	19-10-2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0345	Procurement of Shackle Pins & Bushes	0.90	19-10-2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0346	Procurement of MS Welding Electrodes and CO2 MIG Coils	0.60	05-10-2026

Further any addendum / corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, scope, other tender terms and conditions etc., will be uploaded / published through e-Portal only. **Note:** Interested suppliers need to register in the e-Procurement Portal. For further information log into <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. In case of further assistance, contact e-Procurement Cell (**Phone No: 080-46010000 / 68948777**). Interested bidders may also contact e-Procurement cell for training on bid submission. Mail to Support@eprocelpdesk.com for further information if required. In case of bidders need assistance from KSRTC, can communicate at cspp@ksrtc.org (Contact: 7760990224).

Sd/- Controller of Stores & Purchases
(Tender Inviting Authority)

DIPR/CP/2825/Adverto/2026-27

Sharing the BJP's core strategy in its fight against drugs, Mr. Nabin said the approach would include

TMC withdraws from Nagaon bypoll against EC action

The EC, in an interim arrangement, has decided to freeze the "All India Trinamool Congress" name and its "flowers and grass" symbol for the October 6 bypolls, scheduled in Assam among other States.

🌞🌙 Timings KOLKATA			
SATURDAY, SEP. 19			
🌞 RISE	05:25	SET	17:37
🌙 RISE	12:40	SET	23:21
SUNDAY, SEP. 20			
🌞 RISE	05:25	SET	17:36
🌙 RISE	13:28	SET	00:00
MONDAY, SEP. 21			
🌞 RISE	05:25	SET	17:35
🌙 RISE	14:12	SET	00:15

Kolkata Weather	max	min
Ranchi	32	22
Imphal	32	20
Kolkata	34	26

Kolkata Today
35°C The weather will be warm. Few spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-shower to occur. Night will be comfortable.

Kolkata Tomorrow
34°C Morning will be comfortable. Day will be warm. Spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower to occur.



BJP national president Nitin Nabin (second right), BJP Punjab president Kewal Singh Dhillon (second left) and others in Pathankot on Friday. PTI

targeting drug traffickers, breaking the drug supply network, confiscating drug money, rehabilitating people affected by drug addiction and taking the campaign forward with the support of society.

“Today is a very special day. I have come to connect with the pain being experienced in households across Punjab. I have come from Patna, the land associated with Sri Guru Gobind Singhji, to take the message of de-addiction to every Punjabi,” he said.

Mr. Nabin said the BJP has always stood by the promises it makes to the nation. "We had undertaken a long struggle to fulfil our commitment to abro-

gate Article 370 and worked to eliminate terrorism and Naxalism,” he said adding the BJP had now resolved to eliminate drugs from the country.

Punjab's identity
The BJP chief said drugs cannot be Punjab's identity or strength. "Punjab's identity should be its heritage, ideas and youth. Its identity had traditionally been associated with the teachings of the Gurus, the sweat of farmers and the spirit of sportspersons," he said.

Hitting out at the Aam Aadmi Party government, Mr. Nabin alleged that it had treated the fight against drugs as a key to

political power and failed to understand the pain of the people. He said the Punjab government wanted to silence people speaking out against drugs but the voice of Punjab could not be silenced.

Mr. Nabin said the party's yatras were being undertaken from all four directions. "Through these yatras, the people of Punjab would be connected with the anti-drug campaign; a dialogue would be held with them, and social organisations would also be brought into the campaign," he said.

The 13-day campaign will culminate in Jalandhar on September 30 after covering all 117 Assembly constituencies in Punjab.

Donning a saffron turban, Mr. Nabin flagged off the first of four Statewide anti-drug yatras from Ekta Sthal here, with the slogan “*Bhajpa Da Naara, Nasha Mukauna Saara* (BJP’s promise, To end drug menace).

Before the flagging off, he paid floral tributes to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. and also met some families affected by the drug menace.

(With inputs from PTI)

Punjab poll: AAP to begin outreach campaign

Ahead of the Punjab Assembly election, due in early 2027, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has decided to start a door-to-door outreach campaign from September 20 to highlight the work of its government.

AAP leader and Punjab in-charge Manish Sisodia said on Friday that a State-wide door-to-door outreach campaign of the party would begin from September 20 and, through booth committee members, they would reach every household and highlight the work of the government.

Addressing a press conference here, he said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann will also join the campaign in Dhuri, even as the party will simultaneously launch its membership drive and release its election campaign pamphlet on September 19.

Noting that the AAP government has completed four-and-a-half years in office, he claimed the government has fulfilled all the election promises made in 2022.

 ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਬੈਂਕ ...भरोसे का प्रतीक ! punjab national bank ...the name you can BANK upon !		BRANCH OFFICE: CO-SAM CIRCLE OFFICE GAYA (R J Palace, Rai Kashi Nath More, Gaya) E mail: cogayasamd@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 Branch B. Name of the Account C. Name & addresses of the borrower/Guarantor's Account	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's Name(mortgagers 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 (in lakh.) B. EMD C. Bid increase amount	Date and time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditor
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 Chhathu Mahto . Add-AT-Vill-Aaropur, P.O-Tankuppa, Fatehpur,Distt- Gaya-824232	Property covered under Registered Sale deed No.-2633 Dated-05/02/2016, Khata No.-84, Plot no-964, Thana No-509, Area-1.812 Dismil in the name of Shri Devlal Prasad S/o Late Chhathu Mahto Situated at Gram-Aaropur, P.S-Wazirganj, P.O – Tankuppa, Distt-Gaya Bounded by N- Sundari Devi, S-Chharu Choudhary and Vasan Kuwar, E-Sukhdeo Yadav, W-Ramswarup Yadav	A. 06.02.2024 B. Due Amount: Rs.9,91,218.86/- (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/-	06.10.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL
2.	A. Branch:A.P COLONY, GAYA. B. Shri KUNAL BHARTI S/o Shri Jay Prakash Gupta. C. Shri KUNAL BHARTI S/o Shri Jay Prakash Gupta. Add-At-Vill-Durga Asthan Near UCO Bank, Manpur,PS + P.O: Buniyaadganj, Distt- Gaya -823003.	Property covered under Sale Deed No. 7019 dt.26.04.2017, Khata No: 7(New), 40 (Old), Plot No: 875 (New), 519(Old), Block No: 1, Mouja: Barev, Area: 929 sqft, P.S-Mufassil, Thana No:268, Distt-Gaya in the name of Shri Kunal Bharti S/o Shri Jay Prakash Gupta. Boundary -N-Block No-2 Vikash Kumar Aaj Kharidaar, S-Neej Lekhkari. E-10 ft wide Rasta, W-Sunita Singh W/o Rajesh Kumar Singh.	A. 13.11.2019 B. Due Amount: Rs.14,33,934.23 /- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Thirtee Three Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Four and Paise Twenty Three only) plus further interest w.e.f. 01.07.2019 and other Expenses with until Payment in full . C. 18.03.2020 D.Symbolic Possession	1.Rs.6,49,800/- 2.Rs.64,980/- 3.10,000/-	06.10.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL
3.	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 , Distt- 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.- Atri 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-Prastabit Rasta 14 ft., North-Aaj khareedar Kiran Devi, South- Nij Seller.	A. 27.03.2023 B. Due Amount: Rs.9,95,478.26/- (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/-	06.10.2026 11 am to 4 pm	NIL
4.	A. Branch:DOBHI, Gaya B. M/s Janta Beej Bhandar , Proprietor: Sh. Shankar Yadav S/o late Kauleshwar Yadav. C. M/s Janta Beej Bhandar, Proprietor: Sh. Shankar Yadav S/o late Kauleshwar Yadav Add-At-Vill-Fatehpur, P.O: Pidasin, P.S Dobhi, Distt-Gaya-824201. Add:At-Vill-Ghonghava , Anchal/Thana- Dobhi , Pin-824201 Distt- Gaya. Shri. Shankar Yadav S/o late Kauleshwar Yadav Add-At-Vill-Fatehpur, P.O: Pidasin. P.S Dobhi, Distt-Gaya. Add -At-Vill- Ghonghava, Anchal/Thana- Dobhi ,Pin-824201, Distt-Gaya . Add-At-Vill- Ghonghava, Anchal/Thana- Dobhi Pin-824201 Distt-Gaya. Add-At-Vill-Fatehpur, P.O: Pidasin,P.S Dobhi, Distt-Gaya	Property covered under Registered sale deed no.-7501 dated 28/12/2020.Plot No.990 (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-Rasta , S-Punit Yadav, E-Village Road , W-Kulojan 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/-	06.10.2026 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: 1. The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS" 2. 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. 3. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website https://baanknet.com on 06.10.2026 @ 11 AM TO 4 PM. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer https://baanknet.com & www.pnbindia.in.						
Date: 19.09.2026 Place: Gaya		STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002				
		Prakash kumar Authorized Officer Punjab National Bank Secured Creditor Mob:-7327079850				

THE HINDU
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India's National Newspaper



यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
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Union Bank of India
A Government of India Under taking

Hajipur Branch
Chandrapura House, Cinema Road,
Hajipur, Dist.- Vaishali, Bihar-844101

Rule 8 (1) POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised officer of Union Bank of India, Hajipur Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 54 of 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 16.05.2026 calling upon the following Borrowers, Guarantors and Mortgagors, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the said notice.

The borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors/ mortgagors and also the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described here under in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the Act read with rule 8 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002 on this 15th day of September of the year 2026.

The Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, Hajipur Branch (Branch Code 550183) for an amount mentioned as stated below and further interest thereon.

The Borrower's/Guarantor's/Mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Guarantor/Mortgagor and Branch	Description of Immovable Properties	a) Amount of Demand Notice & Date of Notice b) Date of Possession
1. M/s Balajee Tiles Traders Private Limited, Add: Ward No.7, C/O Nawal Prasad Singh, Vill- Rahimapur Hajipur, Distt - Vaishali Bihar-844502, 2. Rajiv Ranjan (Director) S/O Nawal Prasad (Singh) Ward No. 07, Rahimapur, Distt-Vaishali, Bihar-844502, 3. Nawal Prasad Singh (Guarantor) Add: Ward No.7, C/O Nawal Prasad Singh, Vill Rahimapur Hajipur, Distt- Hajipur, Bihar 844502	1. Land situated at khata no.377, Khesra No.721, Rakwa 6.75 dismil, North : Kapil Singh, South : Nawal Prasad Singh, East - Ram Naresh Singh, West : Rural Road. 2. Land situated at khata no.377, Khesra No.721, Rakwa 3.50 dismil, North : Arvind Singh and others, South : Nawal Prasad Singh (Banwar Haza), East : Ram Naresh Singh and Ramjanam Singh, West : Rural Road. 3. Land situated at khata no. 127, Khesra No.722, Rakwa 17.00 dismil, North: Rudal Singh and Kapil Deo Singh, South : Ganaur Thakur and Rambriksh Thakur, East : Gaya Singh, Chattu Singh, Channu Singh and others, West: Road	a) Rs. 31,80,648.70 (Rupees Thirty One Lakhs Eighty Thousand Six Hundred Forty Eight and Seventy Paise only) as on 30.03.2026 b) Date of Demand Notice -16.05.2026

Place : Patna,
Date : 15.09.2026

Authorised Officer
Union Bank of India



यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
भारत सरकार का उपक्रम

Union Bank of India

A Government of India Under taking

Musallahpurhat Branch
Ground Floor, Savitri Complex, Musallahpurhat,
Chak Musallahpur, Koiritola, Patna - 800006

Rule 8 (1) POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised officer of Union Bank of India, Musallahpurhat Branch under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement Security Interest Act, 54 of 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 19.05.2026 calling upon the following Borrowers, Guarantors and Mortgages, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the said notice.

The borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgages having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/ guarantors/ mortgages and also the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described hereunder in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the Act read with rule 8 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002 on this 17th day of September of the year 2026.

The Borrowers/Guarantors/Mortgages in particular and public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, Musallahpurhat Branch (Branch Code 828114) for an amount mentioned as stated below and further interest thereon.

The Borrower's/Guarantor's/Mortgago's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of Borrower / Guarantor/Mortgagor and Branch	Description of Immovable Properties	a) Amount of Demand Notice & Date of Notice b) Date of Possession
1. M/s New Sonu Fashion, Add : Kiran Niwas, Musallahpurhat, Near Sai Mandir, Mahendru, Patna 800006, 2. Rukhsar (Proprietor) W/O Ali Gauh, C/O Salim Gauh, Flat No. 4/A Sapna Apartment - 1, Naya Tola, Bankipore, PS- Pirbahore, Patna-800004	Land/Building situated at Circle No. 32, Ward No. 12 (old) and 41 (New), sheet No. 86, Municipal Survey Plot No. 16 & part of 239, Holding No. 244A (New) and 201 (old), Property no. 2056128, Mauza - Kajipur, Thana- Pirbahore, Distt.- Patna - 800005, and bounded by : Deed No. 11112, dt. 31.08.2021, North : Main Road (Ashok Rajpath), South : Pirbahore Masjid, East : Sunview Studio, West : Canara Bank ATM Gali, At Present : North : Main Road (Ashok Rajpath), South : Pirbahore Masjid, East : Shanibihuyi Studio, West : Canara Bank ATM Gali.	a) Rs. 35,69,443.63 (Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs Sixty Nine Thousand Four Hundred Forty Three and Sixty Three paise only) as on 30.04.2026 b) Date of Demand Notice -19.05.2026

Place : Patna,
Date : 17.09.2026

Authorized Officer
Union Bank of India

THE RACE FOR ASIAN GLORY.

After a record 28 golds in Hangzhou, India heads to Aichi-Nagoya with another formidable medal challenge.

Pick up your copy of

"SPORTSTAR
#ALLINFORSPORTS

Also inside:

Indian shooters navigate ammunition shortages ahead of the Games, while Anicy Sojan sets her sights on 7m after breaking Anju Bobby George's 22-year-old record.

The image shows the cover of a magazine titled 'SPORTSTAR'. The cover features a collage of athletes in various sports, including a basketball player in the foreground, a soccer player, and a tennis player. The headline 'ONE NATION. ONE TEAM. ONE DREAM.' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the headline, it says '#ALLINFORSPORTS'. There are also two callouts: 'ON STANDS NOW!' in a red speech bubble and 'ALSO AVAILABLE ON BLINKIT!' in a yellow speech bubble. The background of the cover has a traditional Japanese torii gate and cherry blossoms.

A square QR code located at the bottom left of the page, which likely links to the magazine's website or subscription page.

Scan or visit newsth.live/SSSUB to subscribe and read the latest edition: **'ONE NATION. ONE TEAM. ONE DREAM.'**

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AT THE
ASIAN GAMES 2026



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*Amul (GCMMF) has been ranked the world's No. 1 cooperative based on GDP per capita performance, according to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), World Cooperative Monitor 2025 and the world's strongest dairy brand as per Brand Finance UK's Food & Drink Study 2026.



No hard ceilings

A rise in minimum PF pension will protect the worse-off among the retired

The Union Cabinet’s approval to raise the wage ceiling for mandatory coverage under the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) from ₹15,000 to ₹25,000, though belated, is commendable. The BJP-led government has finally responded to this long-standing demand of workers in the organised sector. Around 51 lakh additional employees may be brought under the PF fold, which has around 7.98 crore contributing members. Those in the wage slab of ₹15,000-₹25,000 will now be covered under the Employees’ Pension Scheme (EPS), 2026. Although Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya cited a government survey as the basis for the increase, the 12-year delay in implementing it should have been avoided. The Minister, who said that the average salary in private establishments was ₹23,000, should also make the survey’s findings public for a better understanding of the country’s overall wage situation. With some concerns having been raised that not every employer may be willing to make the additional contributions required after the revision, the government must ensure that all employers comply with the law.

So far, the government has been silent on revising the EPS minimum pension of ₹1,000, fixed in September 2014 alongside the previous revision in the PF wage ceiling. EPFO pensioners have been demanding the hike in the minimum pension amount. Before it assumed office at the Centre in 2014, the BJP had urged the Congress-led UPA government to keep the minimum pension at ₹3,000 and index it to inflation. Yet, it has not made even a symbolic beginning towards the indexation of pension to inflation. Moreover, about 45% of the nearly 82 lakh pensioners receive ₹1,000 or less. In March 2026, the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour reminded the government that “the existing minimum pension amount is inadequate to meet even the basic needs of pensioners particularly in the ... scenario marked by ... rising healthcare and living expenses”. Also, little is known about the follow-up to the panel’s recommendation for “an urgent and comprehensive review of the minimum pension”. The EPFO must release the findings of actuarial assessment, made by valuers in recent years. This should also be beneficial to the PF body, as EPFO CEO Ramesh Krishnamurthi observed in an interview with *The Hindu* in August that “there is a misconception that the [pension] fund has unlimited resources”, while ruling out the reopening of the window for higher pensions. Even if the government is unwilling to restore the pre-2014 coverage, under which all employees were covered regardless of their wages, it should consider relaxation of the restriction on the coverage. Else, many pensioners will be pushed below the poverty line.

Continental glory

India might get another 100-medal haul from a smaller contingent

Even as Japan, known for efficiency, welcomes its third Asian Games and the first in 32 years, on Saturday, the Aichi-Nagoya Games have already earned the ‘worst ever’ tag because of accommodation and logistical issues. A country that successfully hosted two Olympics – in 1964, within two decades of suffering atomic bombings, and in 2021, behind closed doors amid the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic – is now strangely struggling to accommodate more than 17,000 athletes and officials from 45 nations in hotels, containers and a cruise ship. Despite these issues, 501 of India’s athletes, including 267 men and 234 women, across 36 disciplines, will try to keep its flag flying high. At the previous Hangzhou Asiad, India had an impressive tally of 106 medals and was placed fourth behind China, Japan and South Korea. There is a significant drop in the number of Indian athletes, from 650-plus in 40 disciplines three years ago, following rationalisation, discouraging a mad rush because of the perks and money associated with the Asiad. Nevertheless, Indian sports authorities expect around 100 medals, which may noticeably improve the athlete-to-medal ratio.

The presence of 310 debutants in the contingent signals a brighter future for the country, which has spent nearly ₹800 crore on Asian Games preparations in the last cycle. Shooting and athletics, which together field 105 athletes, should continue to be the major contributors to India’s medals tally, followed by archery, boxing, badminton, squash and wrestling. Stars including Manu Bhaker, Mirabai Chanu, Lovlina Borgohain, P.V. Sindhu, Aman Sehrawat, Tajinderpal Singh Toor, Gulveer Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, Smriti Mandhana and Jasprit Bumrah will lead India’s campaign. At 39, squash player Joshna Chinnappa will be the first Indian to compete in seven consecutive Asian Games. The youngest athlete, 15-year-old cricketer Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, and the oldest, 55-year-old rider Shruti Vora, are the other attractions. Some attention will also be devoted to Indian men’s and women’s hockey teams, which will aim to win gold medals and secure berths at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. While India can take pride in fielding athletes in debut-making disciplines, such as mixed martial arts and teqball, it should ponder over its poor representation in swimming, gymnastics and cycling, which offer more medals and open avenues for Olympic glory. Meanwhile, the Indian men and women’s teams would be watched closely in cricket. In pushing for continental excellence, India should also remain vigilant about its deteriorating global reputation due to the sharply rising doping graph.

Technologies that once arrived in India through imports are increasingly being invented at home through local research institutions, industry, and startups. Three institutional foundations of an innovation economy are now advancing together: public research, corporate research and development (R&D), and deep-tech entrepreneurship. The transformation is yet incomplete, but the architecture is finally visible. Gallium Nitride (GaN) semiconductor technologies, critical for advanced radar, space systems, and next-generation communications, are increasingly being developed domestically, helping close a strategic gap in a tightly regulated, export-controlled field. At the same time, affordable immunotherapies developed in India are expanding access to advanced cancer care and demonstrating the country’s growing capacity for biomedical innovation.

Patent filings are often cited as a ready indicator of innovation. The filing numbers continue to show impressive growth. From just over 1,10,000 patent filings in 2024-25, the number grew to more than 1,43,000 in 2025-26, a 30.2% increase. Moreover, domestic applicants now account for almost seven in 10 filings.

However, the sheer volume of applications does not tell the complete story. Even a modest enquiry reveals an innovation story that begins to fray at the edges. The number of patents in force in India (just over 2,40,000 in 2025) is a fraction of those in China (5.7 million), the United States (3.5 million), and Japan (2.1 million); all these are 2024 data.

This suggests low grant rates, high abandonment rates, or a combination of both. Add to this meagre commercialisation, low R&D spending – India still spends just under 1% of GDP on research and development, against about 2.4% in China and 3.5% in the U.S. – and we see how far we are from a truly technology-driven, innovation-led economy.

The emerging pillars

However, there lies a resilient core, and shaping it are three strong and vital strands that promise to anchor India’s future. Public institutions with government support have made vital breakthroughs in long-gestation innovation. Private R&D spending exceeded that of all levels of government combined for the first time in 2024. This is expected to climb and account for 55% through 2025-26. Domestic industrial houses are beginning to reap rewards from focused and committed R&D. A maturing startup ecosystem is finding its feet beyond low-hanging service platforms, actively showcasing deep tech and complex manufacturing. That all three strands



Mukundan Chakrapani

Holds a PhD in science and a law degree and is an academic



Gaurav Jain

Founder of Hastin Research and an intellectual property rights expert helping enterprises, startups, and universities transform ideas into intellectual property

Homegrown research and deep-tech enterprise are helping India move beyond its identity as a services provider

are coming of age together bodes well for India.

In March 2023, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) scientists at the Solid State Physics Laboratory (SSPL) in Delhi and the Gallium Arsenide Enabling Technology Centre (GAETEC) in Hyderabad announced a breakthrough in making gallium nitride (GaN) monolithic microwave integrated circuits (MMICs). The technical know-how to make these circuits, which are critical for military and defence applications, was, by widely reported accounts, refused to India under the offset provisions of the Rafale fighter jet purchase from France. The DRDO is now actively transferring the technology for GaN High Electron Mobility Transistors (HEMTs)-based MMICs to be used in 5G/6G wireless infrastructure, electric vehicles on-board chargers, and renewable energy inverter systems. India is now one of seven countries to have mastered this technology, alongside China, France, Germany, Russia, South Korea and the U.S. AGNIT Semiconductors, a spin-off from the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering (CeNSE) at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru is translating homegrown GaN technology to real-world commercial applications.

From implementer to innovator

While long-gestation R&D at public institutions is starting to pay off, there is growing optimism from academia and domestic industry-led R&D as well. The Bharat 6G Alliance (B6GA) is making rapid progress in its stated aim of contributing 10% of the global 6G patents by 2030. According to a review meeting by Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia, B6GA members have made more than 7,700 patent filings across 5G and 6G technologies, including over 4,400 foreign filings. But, these are applications, not yet grants or declared standard-essential patents, and their true impact remains to be seen. However, taken together with almost 3,000 technical contributions to 3GPP last year, a 15-fold increase from 2020, these figures point in the right direction. The World Intellectual Property Organization’s 2025 Patent Cooperation Treaty rankings showed that Jio Platforms Limited had broken into the top 20 international patent filers for the first time, rising more than 300 places to be placed 19th overall.

While patent numbers are only a part of the story, participation in standards bodies and intellectual property ownership increasingly determine who captures value from future communication networks. India is securing ownership of critical digital infrastructure and is moving from being a standard-implementer to a standard-setting innovator.

Deep-sea discovery, environmental responsibility

India is standing at the threshold of a new frontier. But the most important question is not how deep we can go, how much we can mine, or how much wealth lies beneath the ocean floor. It is more fundamental: Should everything that can be technologically exploited necessarily be exploited? The question is particularly important as India strengthens its position in deep-sea exploration and develops the scientific and technological capabilities to access one of the least understood parts of the planet.

A growing deep-sea footprint

India is not new to seabed mineral exploration and holds three International Seabed Authority (ISA) exploration contracts covering approximately 95,000 square kilometres across the Central Indian Ocean Basin, Central Indian Ridge and Carlsberg Ridge in the international seabed area. Its exploration has identified an estimated 366 million tonnes of polymetallic nodules containing nickel, copper, cobalt and manganese, alongside extensive environmental and biodiversity studies.

Under the Deep Ocean Mission, India is developing deep-sea mining technology, underwater robotics and the MATSYA-6000 human submersible, while the National Institute of Ocean Technology has tested a mining machine at depths of about 5,270 metres. At the same time, biodiversity surveys across 19 seamounts have studied around 1,300 deep-sea organisms, including nearly 23 species reported as new to science. These achievements also impose a profound responsibility to decide whether technological ability should ultimately lead to exploitation.

Technological progress can create a dangerous assumption: if we can exploit something, we should. But the deep ocean challenges this logic. It is a complex and poorly understood ecosystem, and India’s own biodiversity research continues to reveal previously unknown organisms. We cannot confidently predict the consequences of



P. Ragavan

Marine biologist with over a decade of professional experience in the conservation and management of coastal and marine environments

India has an opportunity to become a global leader not only in deep-sea technology but also in deep-sea ecological governance

large-scale seabed disturbance while our understanding of these ecosystems remains incomplete. This is not an argument against science, but for more science before potentially irreversible intervention. Deep-sea minerals may have legitimate strategic importance for India’s renewable-energy, electric-mobility and advanced-manufacturing ambitions. However, strategic importance cannot automatically become ecological permission. Before considering extraction, India should ask whether the minerals are genuinely necessary at the proposed scale, whether alternatives exist, and whether demand can be reduced through recycling, efficiency, substitution and a circular economy. Necessity must be demonstrated, not presumed.

India’s investment in deep-ocean science need not imply a commitment to commercial mining. Exploration can advance knowledge, biodiversity assessment, environmental baselines and technology without leading to exploitation. Mining, however, would physically disturb the seabed. Therefore, adaptive management alone cannot guarantee ecological protection. India has an opportunity to adopt a stronger principle before exploitation begins: the question should not be “How can we mine with minimum damage?” but “Do we need to mine at all?” Since India’s ISA activities remain at the exploration stage, this is the right time to establish a high ecological threshold for any future decision to exploit.

Science must also teach us to say ‘no’

The deep ocean is now emerging as the next frontier for economic growth. Yet, we expect the ocean to regulate climate and support biodiversity while extending industrial activity into its least understood ecosystems. The ocean should not become a place where the environmental costs of human consumption are simply relocated. Scientific progress should not mean making more of nature exploitable and

There is also a marked shift in India’s startup ecosystem. Buoyed by the government’s commitment to Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) and private capital matched by initiatives such as the more than \$2.5 billion in deep-tech commitments made by members of the India Deep Tech Alliance (IDTA), Indian startups are aiming farther and higher than before. Pixxel Space, founded by two Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani alumni, is carving a niche in hyperspectral imaging technology with six satellites in orbit and a full constellation of 18 to 24 planned. The Vikram-1 low earth orbit launch by Skyroot Aerospace and the IIT Madras nurtured Agnikul Cosmos’s parallel push towards fully reusable launch vehicles promise to strengthen India’s role as a frugal space technology leader.

Startups such as ImmunoACT, incubated at IIT Bombay in partnership with the Tata Memorial Centre, are expanding access to advanced and affordable health care. NexCARI9, India’s first indigenous CART cell therapy, has delivered effective cancer treatment at a tenth of typical treatment costs. Leveraging the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) early-stage support, Bengaluru-based Remidio Innovative Solutions is at the forefront in the fight against preventable blindness, such as diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma, through smartphone enabled retinal imaging systems and AI.

The direction is clear

These examples do not by themselves make India an innovation superpower but demonstrate that the three strands are coming together to weave an enduring innovation ecosystem. The GaN story illustrates the emerging innovation pipeline. Government laboratories developed the foundational capability, academic institutions nurtured the talent and research ecosystem, and startups such as AGNIT are now carrying the technology into commercial markets.

However, sustaining these three strands will demand more work, from standardising tech-transfer terms for publicly funded IP and expanding examiner capacity at the patent office, to funding the translational gap between a granted patent and a first paying customer. Yet, as we look through the innovation lens, the direction is clear. India is gradually shedding its identity as a back-office service provider and strengthening the institutions that enable nations to generate their own technology, intellectual property, and industrial capabilities. The journey remains unfinished, but the contours of an innovation economy are beginning to form.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tariff threats, diplomacy

While maintaining a robust bilateral relationship with the United States is strategically vital, foreign policy cannot be dictated by the threat of economic coercion (Page 1, “U.S. clears Russia sanctions Bill; India faces tariff threat”, September 18). True partnerships are built on mutual respect and an understanding of each other’s domestic

compulsions. Imposing 100% tariffs would not only strain India-U.S. ties but could also destabilise international energy markets, leading to wider global economic friction. India must continue its balanced diplomatic approach — diversifying its energy sources while keeping communication channels open with Washington to resolve trade frictions through dialogue

rather than compliance.
Nagarajamani M.V.,
Hyderabad

Tata’s crisis of governance

Despite the leading roles played by the Tata Group in India’s growth in semiconductors, defence, software and electronics, the recent governance crisis and boardroom divisions at Tata Sons over leadership tenure and regulatory pressures pose a systemic

risk to the broader economy. The possible legal deadlock involving the Tata Trusts and regulatory mandates could stall vital national projects, highlighting the urgent need for an amicable resolution rather than protracted feuds. This is essential both in the national interest and to uphold the reputation of the Tata name, which is held in high esteem by the

people of India.
Rajakumar Arulanandham,
Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu

There is something quietly damning about a company that discovers the value of “leadership continuity” only when it needs to appear stable to outsiders. What this exposes is how thin the group’s commitment to its own governance standards becomes when a market debut is at stake. An

‘outgoing’ chairman’s stated principle was treated as a formality to be abandoned whenever it no longer suited investor optics. That is not stewardship. It is a company discovering, rather conveniently, that its rules mattered only until they became inconvenient.

Yashvi Patel,
Anand, Gujarat

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

GROUND ZERO



The private farmhouse on the outskirts of C.K. Tandya village that was allegedly being used as a counterfeit drug repackaging and re-labelling facility. MURALI KUMAR K.

A dangerous dose of deception

A heap of discarded medical waste near a farmhouse in South Bengaluru district led police to an alleged counterfeit drug repackaging unit and to an inter-State network supplying medicines to hospitals and clinics. The counterfeit drugs allegedly reached patients who were being treated for serious illnesses, including cancer.

Shilpa Elizabeth and Imran Gowhar report on the questions raised on accountability and patient safety

In mid-August, along the Bengaluru-Mysuru expressway, an agricultural labourer in C.K. Tandya village in South Bengaluru district (formerly known as Ramanagara) noticed something unusual on a strip of farmland: a heap of medical waste.

This wasn't the first time that the villagers in South Bengaluru had noticed suspicious objects or activity around the area which contained a farmhouse, say the police. They had seen men frequently moving in and out of it on a scooter without a number plate. They had also seen courier and e-commerce delivery vehicles making regular trips to the secluded location.

Spanning nearly eight acres and fenced by a compound wall, the farmland is situated on the outskirts of the village. According to the police, the owners, who live in Bengaluru, seldom visited the place.

The villagers would whisper among themselves about what they suspected – until the day the labourer decided to report the dumped medical waste to the local beat police.

The officers at Taverekere police station put the farmhouse and the movements around it under surveillance, while also making inquiries about the property and its occupants. The people they spoke to did not seem to know anything substantial.

According to an officer, the police learned that the farmhouse had been rented about a year earlier. But what was happening inside the compound remained unclear.

Days later, the police and Karnataka's health department, in a joint operation, decided to enter the premises. What they saw there – labels, medicine boxes, drugs, and other items associated with the preparation and packaging of medicines – changed the nature of the investigation. They alerted senior officers, who joined hands with officers from the State Drugs Control Department and conducted a raid on August 18.

The police took four people into custody. They discovered that the secluded farmhouse was being used as a counterfeit drug repackaging and re-labelling facility. What began as a local's suspicion had opened the door to a much larger pharmaceutical investigation.

According to investigators, the operation involved the procurement of low-cost, substandard, or expired pharmaceutical formulations from other States, which were then transferred into fresh vials and given counterfeit labels and packaging. "The aim was to make the medicines appear as genuine products of established pharmaceutical companies and introduce them into the pharmaceutical supply chain," says a police official familiar with the investigation.

During the seizure, the police recovered more than 5,600 vials of counterfeit antibiotic injections used in treating serious bacterial infections. The total seizure was estimated at ₹4.91 crore.

They also seized ledgers, invoices, mobile phones, and other records, which provided them with details of the supply chain.

From a farmhouse to the big city

The police then moved their investigation beyond C.K. Tandya. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) was constituted.

The trail led to Bengaluru and to Krupa Healthcare, a wholesale pharmaceutical distributor located on a busy commercial street in the ci-



After my mother passed away, I started suspecting something, perhaps a nexus, but I was in no state of mind to think about it. Now I'm questioning everything.

MAHESHPRASAD UPADHYA

ty. According to the police, the operators in the farmhouse supplied medicines to Krupa Healthcare, which distributed them.

The police found that the counterfeit medicines were not limited to antibiotics, but also included critical-care injections and cancer medicines. They say some of the medicines were offered to hospitals at "discounts of up to 50%".

Krupa Healthcare owner Veeresh Kumar Jain, who was arrested by the SIT, allegedly employed more than 15 medical representatives to promote the medicines and offered commissions to push the discounted stocks to private hospitals and medical centres.

The police then found that the alleged racket was not confined to Karnataka. A joint force subsequently carried out simultaneous searches across Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Telangana. The police are currently on the hunt for Bengaluru resident R. Prashant, who they believe is a key figure in the network. He is currently in Azerbaijan, and is Jain's partner, say the police.

Unanswered questions

The families of patients are shocked and angry at these revelations. On his WhatsApp profile picture, Maheshprasad Upadhyia, 30, poses with his mother. A cervical cancer patient, she passed away in 2024. After hearing the news, Upadhyia, a native of Odisha, cannot help second-guessing the events before his mother's death.

She was diagnosed with cancer in 2022, he says. For a year, she underwent chemotherapy and radiotherapy in Mumbai. The doctors then suggested immunotherapy. As treatment in Mumbai was expensive and there were also logistical difficulties in travelling to the city, the family decided to shift treatment to Bhubaneswar.

"The doctor we consulted referred a Bengaluru-based pharmaceutical distributor to us. I bought a medicine from them. It cost ₹1,65,990 per vial. My mother needed two vials. The distributor said if we purchase one, we would get another free," recalls Upadhyia.

He searched online and found that the manufacturer did offer such a programme. He decided to go ahead with it.

Upadhyia spent about ₹20 lakh on the overall treatment. "But we saw no improvement in her condition," he says. "When she was diagnosed with cancer, the doctor had said she would live up to five years. My mother passed away in one and a half years."

Upadhyia sounds calm, but he admits within him a tumult of emotions – anger, suspicion, and

helplessness. "One person who had got his father treated at the Bhubaneswar hospital had advised us against buying this medicine from this particular distributor," he says. "But we didn't listen since the doctor himself had advised it. After my mother passed away, I started suspecting something, perhaps a nexus, but I was in no state of mind to think about it. Now I'm questioning everything."

He confesses that there are times when he considers migrating abroad "after seeing how the corrupt try to profit from the desperation of the most vulnerable."

Parth Sharma, a resident of Gurugram, returned to India in 2017 to care for his ageing parents and mother-in-law, after spending 37 years abroad. "The people I came here for are no more," he says.

In October 2020, Sharma's mother was diagnosed with myelodysplastic syndrome, a condition where the bone marrow doesn't make enough healthy blood cells. The doctors informed the family that the disease was not curable. Given the patient's age – she was in her 70s – a bone marrow transplant was also not an option, they said. Nevertheless, treatment, including chemotherapy injections and blood transfusions, was started at a private hospital in December.

Sharma remembers that some of the expensive medicines were not available in India. "The doctor gave us the phone number of a person and said he would help get it imported. When you are desperate, you simply trust everyone. So, we contacted him," he says.

Sharma's mother's condition never improved. With her body too weak to fight the disease, she passed away in May 2021.

"After the report on the counterfeit drug racket came out, I started wondering more deeply about something I had suspected all along: were the medicines even working? We had spent a lot of money and given her the prescribed medicines. At that point, we trusted the system and did not even suspect the possibility of fake medicines," he says. He still has some of the tablets, which cost him around ₹80,000.

Living in uncertainty

The police say the suspect medicines have so far reached more than 90 hospitals and clinics in Karnataka and other States. While the State government has published a list of antibiotics seized during the Bidadi raid, it has not yet disclosed the names of oncology drugs or the hospitals and clinics that may have received the medicines, or the names and batch numbers of counterfeit medicines reportedly linked to serious illnesses such as cancer. There is pressure on the government to disclose this information.

According to the Karnataka Minister for Health and Family Welfare, U.T. Khader, the full list of spurious and counterfeit drugs has been communicated to the Union government and all State governments. "The SIT has taken charge of the investigation now. Once the report is finalised, we will reveal everything. We have got the list of hospitals. But when the SIT is there, it is not right on my part to disclose anything," he says.

As the SIT continues with its investigation, Upadhyia wonders what patients must be going through with the information they have. "Imagine their state of mind. Would they want to continue or discontinue treatment when they have no way of knowing whether the medicine they are taking is genuine or counterfeit," he asks.

Dr. B.S. Ajaikumar, radiation and medical oncologist and Founder and Chairman at Health-Care Global (HCG) Enterprises, says counterfeit drugs are a major problem in India today.

"I have been sounding the alarm on this for several years," he says. "Whenever somebody – say an insurance company – wants to bring drugs from outside, I don't allow it at HCG because I'm concerned it could be spurious. Any drug we purchase should come directly from the manufacturer. The authorities should also lay down stringent guidelines and ensure they are enforced. They should consult major users of oncology drugs like us, collaborate with us to develop a plan, and ensure spurious drugs don't enter the system."

Noting that cancer treatment often depends on the right drug, at the right dose, given at the

right time, Dr. Nitish Ranjan Acharya, Surgical Oncologist at Manipal Hospital, Bhubaneswar, points out that any compromise in the authenticity or quality of a medicine can directly affect a patient's treatment.

"If a patient receives a counterfeit, substandard, or expired medicine, the drug may not work as intended. This can delay disease control, allow the cancer to progress and, in some cases, affect the chances of achieving a good treatment response. The impact may be particularly difficult to identify because a lack of response can sometimes be mistaken for the cancer becoming resistant to treatment," he explains.

Dr. Acharya adds that there are more risks when the contents of the counterfeit drugs are unknown. "A drug could contain an incorrect dose, inactive ingredients, contaminants, or substances that may cause unexpected side effects. These risks can be especially serious for patients already receiving multiple cancer medicines," he notes. He also stresses the importance of appropriate storage and handling to maintain quality.

The question of accountability

The alleged racket also raises questions about what hospitals should do when patients may have already been exposed to counterfeit medicines. As S.V. Joga Rao, a lawyer who specialises in healthcare law and ethics, says, "Given the circumstances in India, a detailed investigation may take time. By that time, the spurious drugs may have found their way to patients."

According to him, hospitals need to work with investigating agencies to identify the medicines in question and their batch numbers. "If there is some kind of leeway in terms of information, the hospital has an ethical duty to inform potentially affected patients," he says.

Noting that regulatory authorities need to be mindful of Section 17B of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, which defines a spurious drug, and Section 18, which prohibits their manufacture, sale, stocking, distribution and other related activities, Rao also points to the legal duty of hospitals to procure responsibly, verify authenticity, and detect sophisticated counterfeiting. "If there are warning signs, they need to respond to that. The duties of the hospitals and regulators operate concurrently, although they are different in nature. It is a shared responsibility," he says.

Dr. Gopal Dabade, president of Drug Action Forum, Karnataka, says, "Drug inspectors are the first line of foot soldiers, but they are not adequately equipped. Punishment for wrongdoing is also not stringent enough." He is a part of the All India Drug Action Network, a group of non-profits working to "increase access and improve the rational use of essential medicines".

Another reality is the high cost of medicines, particularly cancer drugs, which can create a parallel market for cheaper counterfeit versions. "Better access to good quality and affordable treatment is the crux of the issue," Dabade says.

Sylvia Karpagam, a public health doctor and researcher, says people must demand an accountable public health system as part of the election mandate. She also points to the responsibility of doctors, and questions the role they play in ensuring accountability within the healthcare system. "Doctors who harp about 'evidence-based practice' in allopathy go mum when such incidents occur. Other than for their own pay cheques and to oppose any form of regulation, one barely sees doctors protesting on behalf of patients," she says.

She also stresses the importance of adequate budgets, trained and sufficient staff, and regular public scrutiny. "Unless the government has an ongoing system to prevent drug rackets, and makes it known to the public through ongoing reports, these kinds of incidents will continue – some get picked up, and many don't."

SIT head C. Vamshikrishna says he cannot comment on the case while the investigation is on. Repeated phone calls and messages to reach Srinivas K. Commissioner of the Food Safety and Drug Administration, Karnataka, have not elicited any response.

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The raid at the farmhouse in C.K. Tandya village. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

From Page One

Data suggest Indian oil buys fall after U.S. curbs

While Venezuela has never been a dominant source of oil for India, its share in India's oil imports stood at a relatively high 6.7% in 2017-18,. This share fell slightly to 6.4% in 2018-19.

This is where things changed. In January 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump once again widened sanctions on Venezuela to include its oil sector.

While Venezuela's share in India's oil imports fell to 5.9% in 2019-20, it crashed to 1.1% by 2020-21, and further to zero by 2021-22. It remained at zero in 2022-23 as well.

Under the Biden administration, India resumed small amounts of imports from Venezuela, but its share remained below 1%. However, Mr. Trump partially lifted sanctions on Venezuelan oil companies in March 2026 after he orchestrated a leadership change in the South American nation. Between April and July 2026, the share of Venezuelan oil in India's imports swung back up to 4.8%.

Isolating Iran

In November 2018, Mr. Trump reimposed wide-ranging sanctions on Iran in a bid to quell its supposed nuclear weapon ambitions.Iran's share of oil imports fell to 1% after the sanctions and then to zero by 2020-21. India imported no oil from Iran for the six years spanning 2020-26.

Then, in March 2026, Mr. Trump once again allowed Iran to sell limited quantities of oil in the global market. In the four months of April-July 2026, Iran's share in India's oil import bill has already risen to 1.1%.

India's energy relationship with Russia has been more resilient, but it too has bowed before U.S. pressure. Russia's share in India's oil imports rose consistently to largely hover between 30-40% during the period July 2024 to July 2025.

However, in August 2025, Mr. Trump hiked tariffs on India from 25% to 50% as a penalty for its import of Russian oil. Following this, India gradually began cutting back on Russian oil imports.

Russia's share in India's oil import bill fell to 19.3% by February 2026, from nearly double that when the tariffs were hiked. Then, in February 2026 itself, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Mr. Trump's tariff regime, thereby also removing the penal tariffs.

Immediately after, India began ramping up its oil imports from Russia, with the latest data showing Russia's share hitting more than 51% in July 2026. This also coincided with the start of the U.S. attack on Iran, the closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz, and global oil prices shooting up.

Mamata-backed Cong. nominee arrested

The BJP has nominated Hasirani Rath, mother of Chandranath Rath, Mr. Adhikari's former aide who was killed on May 6.

Bypolls to Nandigram and Rejinagar Assembly seat are scheduled on October 6. Rejinagar has been vacated by Humayun Kabir, a former Trinamool leader who floated the Aam Janata Unnayan Party and also won the Nowda seat.

According to the Election Commission rules, under Para 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation & Allotment) Order 1968, if an election or bye-election is imminent and the poll body cannot immediately verify a clear majority or conclude substantive proceedings, it may temporarily freeze, through an interim order, the parent party's name and official symbol so that neither faction uses them. Instead, they are directed to submit preferences for alternative temporary names (often including a linkage to the parent party) and choose separate symbols from the EC's list of free symbols, for ongoing polls.

(With inputs from Sreeparna Chakrabarty)

Bombing at mosque in Pak. kills at least 21

Inside the mosque, piles of bricks and concrete buried the floor, wires dangled from cracked walls and daylight poured through jagged holes in the roof, while a ceiling fan hung above the wreckage.

Residents said the exchange of fire continued hours after the coordinated attack.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, but suspicion was likely to fall on the Pakistani Taliban, formally known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP.

India and Nepal discuss flood recovery, reset ties

In particular, India's denial of permission for bi-directional flights to the Gautam Buddha International Airport at Bhairahawa near Lumbini and Pokhara International Airport has caused Nepal major financial losses in debt repayments.

According to the officials, the Shah government has been positive about its engagement with New Delhi since it came to power in March this year, despite some misgivings that led to the cancellation of Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's visit to Kathmandu in May. However, since then, the two sides have picked up ties, spurred by a visit in June by Mr. Lamichhane who met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

‘Over 37 lakh SIR appeals still pending in Bengal tribunals’

Election Commission tells court that about 1 lakh appeals have been disposed of so far; affidavit comes after petitioners had said that the details of pendency and disposal rates remain unknown

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (EC) has informed the Supreme Court that over 37 lakh of a total 38 lakh appeals arising out of special intensive revision (SIR) in West Bengal are still pending in 19 Tribunals. The EC said that only 1,02,231 appeals have been disposed of so far.

Over six months have passed since the Supreme Court constituted the Appellate Tribunals. The Municipal elections in the State are drawing near even as voters' fate remains in limbo.

The EC affidavit covers appeals across 24 districts in West Bengal. It said 38,20,683 appeals were submitted regarding both inclusions and exclusions of voters from the electoral roll during the SIR exercise. The number of appeals pending is 37,184,52.

The statistics have come out following a Supreme Court order after petitioners had complained that the details of the tribunals' pendency and disposal rates continue to be a closely guarded secret instead of being out there in the public domain.

On August 28, senior advocate Gopal Sankarana-



Status check: Voters look through West Bengal's post-SIR electoral rolls after the poll panel released them in February. FILE PHOTO

rayanan and advocate Neha Rathi, appearing for petitioner Prasenjit Bose, chairperson of the SIR Committee, West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, had banked on a Right to Information (RTI) response they got from the election authorities to flag the issue of pendency of the 38-odd lakh appeals.

The petitioner side had further pointed out that only seven lakh of these 38 lakh appeals were filed by disenfranchised voters. The remaining 31 lakh appeals, were filed by either the EC or other objectors to exclude more people from the West Bengal electoral roll, Mr. Sankarana-rayanan had submitted.

The EC affidavit, dated

September 16, contains annexures detailing the separate, district-wise statistics of pendency. For instance, it said 7,47,921 appeals were filed from Murshidabad district, and only 514 appeals were decided. Likewise, there are 3,03,155 appeals pending from Uttar Dinajpur district, with only 9,104 appeals disposed of.

The affidavit showed sparser figures of case disposal arraigned against other districts like Purba Bardhaman, where out of 2,80,029 appeals only 131 had been decided by the tribunals. The EC seemed to distance itself from the functioning of these tribunals, saying the appellate mechanism and accessibil-

ity fall within the Standard Operating Procedures governing these fora and the authorities entrusted with their administration.

“The feasibility, modalities and implementation of any such measures are matters best left to the consideration of the Appellate Tribunal concerned in accordance with the applicable framework, rather than being made the subject matter for directions against the Respondent (EC),” the affidavit said.

The top court had directed the EC to file an affidavit segregating the exact number of appeals filed by ousted voters seeking re-inclusion into the West Bengal electoral roll, and others wanting more voters to be excluded from the roll. The Bench had also asked the EC to consider a mechanism for updating, streamlining the progress of pending appeals before the tribunals.

“Give us the data. Give us the breakup of the nature of appeals filed, whether inclusion or exclusion. Then, we will make a call as to whether appeals by disenfranchised voters seeking re-inclusion should be prioritised,” Justice Joymalya Bagchi, part of a Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, had observed.

T.N. Governor seeks clarifications from govt. on varsities Bill

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI



Barring this Bill, the Governor has accorded assent to the 12 other Bills. FILE PHOTO

Tamil Nadu Governor R. Arlekar has sought clarifications from the Tamil Nadu government regarding some provisions of the Tamil Nadu Private Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which was passed by the Assembly recently.

Sources told *The Hindu* that the Bill is still under the consideration of the Governor, who has sought a briefing from the government on some of its provisions. The sources clarified this following reports that Mr. Arlekar had reserved the Bill for consideration by the President.

A total of 13 Bills were passed by the Assembly in the recent Budget session. Of them, the Tamil Nadu Private Universities (Amendment) Bill had attracted severe criticism from the Opposition. Barring this Bill, the Governor has accorded assent to the 12 other Bills.

The Tamil Nadu Private Universities Act, 2019, mandates that a minimum of 100 acres of contiguous land be required for the establishment of a private university. It also requires the sponsoring body to establish a permanent endowment fund of at least ₹50 crore.

The amendment Bill seeks to reduce the land re-

quirement to 12 acres in the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) area, 18 acres in other municipal corporations and municipal councils, and 25 acres in other areas. It also proposes to reduce the permanent endowment fund requirement to ₹25 crore.

Opposition's charge

Some Opposition parties had alleged that the Bill would lead to the commercialisation of education. A cross-section of teachers of colleges and universities too opposed the Bill and said that it would undermine the State-run education system meant to provide scope for the public to pursue higher education.

However, Minister for Higher Education P. Viswanathan had said the aim was to facilitate the establishment of world-class private universities

‘Settlement discussed with govt. day before Manipur violence’

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Kuki-Zos were about to finalise a political peace pact with the Union Home Ministry and the Manipur government a day before ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei people erupted in Manipur on May 3, 2023, a spokesperson of an insurgent group said.

Aron Kipgen, the spokesperson of the United People's Front (UPF), a Kuki-Zo group that signed the Suspension of Operations (SoO) pact with the Ministry and the Manipur government, told *The Hindu* that they were conveyed Home Minister Amit Shah's message to either culminate the political settlement or wind up the pact first signed in 2008 following Naga-Kuki violence.

Mr. Kipgen said negotiations before May 2023 focused on autonomy with

executive, financial, and judicial powers. But after the displacement of the Kuki-Zo people following the violence, the groups have changed their demand to a separate administration, including a Union Territory with a legislature or a similar constitutional arrangement.

He said that under the SoO pact, representatives of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the UPF, the two umbrella bodies of Kuki-Zo insurgent groups, met the Centre's interlocutor A.K. Mishra and Intelligence Bureau officials in Imphal on May 2, 2023. The meeting was convened after Mr. Shah directed officials to fast-track the peace process, he said.

“The message was that SoO needs to come to an end. Meaning, if a political solution can be reached, it is time to implement it. And if a political solution cannot be reached, it is



We never believed that communal clashes in Manipur would happen on a date when the situation was on the verge of bringing a political solution



ARON KIPGEN
United People's Front spokesperson

time to close the chapter,” Mr. Kipgen said.

Mr. Kipgen said the KNO and UPF representatives went to the May 2 meeting expecting that the negotiations would continue over the following few days and culminate in a political settlement in New Delhi.

“We were expecting that on May 3, the negotiation will continue, on May 4 it will continue and might continue till May 5 or 6. Following [that], the team would have been taken to New Delhi to sign a political settlement pact in the presence of the Union Home Minister,” he said.

According to Mr. Kipgen, the negotiations until May 2023 centred on an autonomous arrangement drawing from provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution and then Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was aware of the deal.

The Kuki-Zo groups had sought financial autonomy and executive and judicial powers, he said, adding that they also wanted recognition of the community's customary practices

and traditional justice mechanisms under the proposed arrangement.

“There were some points where the interlocutor brought up something we could not agree [to]. In any negotiation, it cannot be 100% agreed upon. Some negotiations were kept pending, where the solution could be reached and that could be continued,” he said.

Solution derailed

Mr. Kipgen said the talks had nevertheless progressed sufficiently for the groups to believe that the outstanding issues could be resolved. But the violence that broke out the following day brought the negotiations to an abrupt halt, he said.

“We never believed that communal clashes in Manipur would happen on a date when the situation was on the verge of bringing a political solution,”

Mr. Kipgen said. He alleged that the violence appeared to have been planned and claimed that Kuki-Zo houses in mixed neighbourhoods in Imphal had been selectively targeted. He said the mass displacement and geographical separation of the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities after May 3, 2023, fundamentally altered the premise on which the groups had negotiated with the Centre before.

“The whole community has come with one resolution that we can no longer stay under the same administration. We need a separate administration,” he said. He added that the Centre had conveyed through its interlocutor that it did not have a policy of creating new Union Territories. The Kuki-Zo groups, however, continue to press for a constitutional arrangement providing a separate administration.

Koli, acquitted in Nithari killings case, found dead in Haridwar

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Barely a year after he was acquitted in all 13 cases related to the sensational Nithari killings, Surendra Koli, the man at the centre of the cases, was found dead in Haridwar, the police said on Friday.

According to Haridwar City Deputy Superintendent of Police Shishupal Singh Negi, Koli was found hanging inside a new tea stall that he had been operating in the Sapirshi area. “A police team reached the tea stall after locals reported a body hanging inside, and identified him as Surendra Koli from an Aadhaar card found in his pocket,” the official said. He added that *prima facie* it appeared that Koli died



Surendra Koli

by suicide. “A forensic team was asked to examine the crime scene and the body was sent for post-mortem,” said Mr. Negi.

Narayan Singh, a social activist from Koli's hometown, who helped him in fighting the cases against him, said he had recently given him ₹25,000 to start a tea stall. “I am not sure why will he kill himself when he had future plans,” Mr. Singh asked.

In 2006, Nithari village

in Noida's Sector 31 came into national spotlight after a number of children went missing.

Skeletal remains were discovered in a drain near the house of businessman Moninder Singh Pandher in Nithari. Koli was a domestic worker employed at Pandher's house. Koli and Pandher were arrested in connection with 16 cases. However, both were acquitted at different stages after a long legal process.

A major turn in the case came in October 2023, when the Allahabad High Court acquitted Koli in all cases. The Supreme Court upheld the acquittal in November 2025 and ordered Koli's release.

(For those in distress, counselling is available at Tele MANAS 14416)

India rejects Pakistan's allegations regarding collision of naval ships

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India on Friday strongly rejected Islamabad's allegations regarding the collision between a Pakistani vessel and an Indian Navy warship in the Arabian Sea. New Delhi had summoned the Pakistani Charge d'Affaires on Wednesday and lodged a strong protest over the “unacceptable conduct” by the Pakistan Navy vessel.

The incident happened on Tuesday night after the Pakistani vessel closed in on the frontline Indian Navy warship that was on a routine surveillance mission in the north Arabian Sea, according to the Indian side.

The Pakistani Foreign Ministry had alleged that the incident happened following a “highly provocative and unacceptable action” by the Indian vessel in Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

“We have seen Pakistan's response to the protest we had lodged. It is the usual prevarication that we expected. We reject the allegations and insinuations contained therein,” MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. The Pakistan side has once again been “advised” about the need for all military units to observe due care, he said.

Mr. Jaiswal said the incident did not cause major damage to *INS Kolkata* and that she remains at sea.

CISF deployed against coal mafia across two States

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Around 12,000 Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel have been deployed across Jharkhand and West Bengal to crack down on coal pilferage and the organised coal mafia, the force said on Friday.

CISF Director-General Praveer Ranjan conducted a three-day operational review of coal-producing regions from September 16 to 18. “Guarding the treacherous terrains of the coal belt, over 12,000 CISF personnel deployed across 10 units are now engaged in a relentless battle against a long-thriving, organised coal mafia,” the CISF said.

JD(U) leaders back Nishant as the future CM of Bihar

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Janata Dal (United) leader Nishant Kumar, son of former Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, was unanimously projected as the party’s future and the next Chief Minister of the State during a crucial JD(U) meeting held at the party office in Patna on Friday.

JD(U) national president Nitish Kumar, MLAs, MLCs and other senior leaders of the party attended the meeting. It was a one-day orientation and training programme for newly elected JD(U) MLAs and MLCs.

Soon after the meeting, Barauli MLA Manjeet Kumar Singh said: “There is no doubt, Nishant Kumar is our leader, and he has all the abilities to lead the party and the State. We all want him to lead Bihar in the coming days,” Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Nishant did not react to his projection as future Chief Minister but rather chose to use the platform to attack the Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD).

EC should restore party symbol to Mamata: Cong.

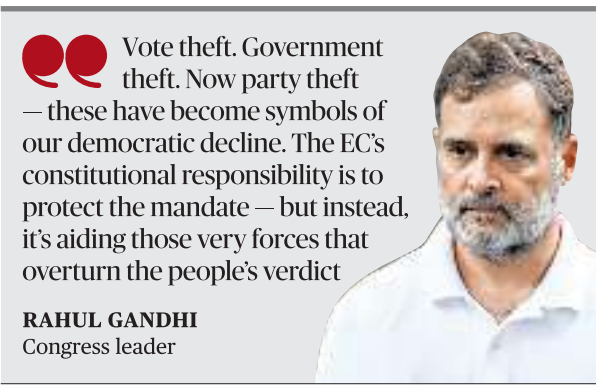
Rahul says the fight is not Mamata’s alone, but that of every party and voter who wants fair polls; Venugopal terms freeze on Trinamool name, symbol as CEC’s ‘late-night birthday gift to Modiji’

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Congress has come out in support of former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as the Election Commission (EC) froze the name and symbol of the Trinamool Congress.

The Commission on Thursday, barred both factions – led by Mamata Banerjee and Ritabrata Banerjee, from using the party symbol and name in the Assembly bypolls scheduled for October 6 in Nandigram and Rejinagar of West Bengal.

After defecting from the Congress, Ms. Banerjee set up the Trinamool Congress, with the symbol of grass and twin flowers, about 28 years ago, in 1998. She defeated the Left Front government in the 2011 Assembly polls and served as Chief Minister of the State for 15 years, before losing to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2026 Assembly polls.



Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi criticised the EC and said that the fight is not just Mamata Banerjee’s fight.

“It’s the fight of every political party, every voter who wants free and fair elections,” he posted on social media.

The Congress leader said that when an entire party can be stolen, it is hardly surprising that the votes of millions of Indians can be stolen too.

“Vote theft. Government theft. Now party theft – these have become

symbols of our democratic decline. The EC’s constitutional responsibility is to protect the mandate – but instead, it’s aiding those very forces that overturn the people’s verdict,” he posted on social media platform X.

Mr. Gandhi recalled that first it was Shiv Sena, then NCP, and now Trinamool Congress. “Every time, the same pattern – BJP and the Election Commission join forces to split a party. Then its election symbol is snatched away,” he said.

Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Ve-

nugopal, in a social media post, condemned the move and demanded that the EC immediately restore the party symbol to Mamata Banerjee.

‘EC’s gift to Modi’

“Freezing the AITC name and symbol – after a blatantly unconstitutional hijack by the BJP – is CEC Gyanesh Kumar’s late-night birthday gift to Modiji. Those who fought against the BJP, under Mamata Banerjee’s leadership, are now being given the red carpet to rebel against her and commit the unconstitutional sin of defection with the EC’s help,” Mr. Venugopal said.

Observing that whoever opposes the BJP is dealt a fatal blow and their entire electoral existence is snatched away from them, the Congress leader said that the EC has once again proven that it is nothing more than a puppet in the hands of the BJP – a tool to destroy democracy bit by bit.

Congress betrayed allies, sidelined veterans: BJP

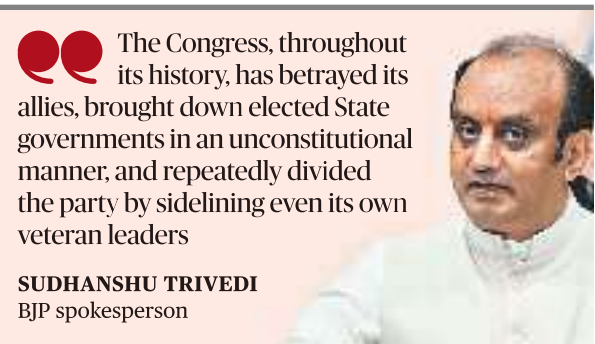
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In response to Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi’s allegations of “government theft” and “party theft” after the Trinamool Congress symbol freeze, the BJP on Friday said the Congress’s history was replete with instances of “betraying allies and bringing down elected governments”.

The Election Commission had barred two factions of the Trinamool from using the existing party symbol and name, and allotted them fresh symbols and names for use in the upcoming Assembly bypolls.

BJP MP and spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi described the Congress as the “Bhasmasur” of Indian politics, alleging that whoever came in contact with it was eventually destroyed.

At a press conference, he said that “the Congress, throughout its history, has betrayed its allies, brought down elected State governments in an unconstitutional manner, and repeat-



edly divided the party by sidelining even its own veteran leaders”, while the BJP was “a symbol of democratic values and unity”.

“Rahul Gandhi cannot even read enough to understand that the full form of NCP is ‘Nationalist Congress Party’ and that the name of the Trinamool Congress also contains the word ‘Congress’. Sharad Pawar separated from the Congress in 1999 over the issue of leadership by a person of foreign origin, while Mamata Banerjee left the party in 1997 after being distressed by the internal situation within the Congress, and later ousted the Congress itself from West Bengal,” Mr. Trivedi said.

He accused the Congress of sidelining and undermining several people, including its own leaders, over the years. “...in the 1969 Presidential election, Indira Gandhi called for votes against her own party’s candidate, Neelam Sanjiva Reddy”, said the BJP leader.

He further alleged that senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot was recently “prevented from becoming Congress president”. “The betrayal of Chaudhary Charan Singh during the Janata Party regime, the merger of the Lok Dal in Haryana in 1980, and the absorption of Chimanbhai Patel’s Janata Dal into the Congress in 1992” were among the alleged instances he cited.

Secularism is a ‘modern’ concept, does not fit India’s tradition, says RSS chief

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday cautioned young people against getting consumed by ego, saying the belief that everything is under one’s control and should happen according to one’s wishes is a misconception.

“Take the example of the Sun. Even if you do not believe in the Sun, it will still rise and set,” Mr. Bhagwat said while speaking at the ‘Yuva Dharma Sansad’ in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

He added that people should not live under the illusion that everything op-



Mohan Bhagwat

erates according to their control and highlighted that “if there is a rise, there will also be a fall”.

Regarding the definition of secularism, the RSS chief termed it a modern concept that does not fit India’s traditional under-

standing of the relationship between religion, society and the state.

He said India’s approach has traditionally been based on non-discrimination and equal respect for different religious paths.

Mr. Bhagwat also urged young people to respect their own chosen form of worship while showing equal respect for the practices of others.

Sharing his understanding of the Western concept of secularism, the RSS chief said it emerged from a historical conflict between kings and religious authorities. “...there was a conflict between kings and religious authorities over

who should have power. After much bloodshed, a compromise was reached which was that the king would look after this world, and the religious authorities would look after the other world. So, secular came to mean the material or worldly sphere,” he said adding that India’s tradition seeks both material prosperity and freedom from anger, greed and jealousy, viewing life holistically through dharma. Hence “secular does not fit the Indian context”, he said, claiming that “whenever India was governed by Indians, the country followed the path of dharma”.

Congress disputes panel chairperson’s claim on its MPs supporting UPI MDR

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday contested Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance chairperson Bhartruhari Mahtab’s reported assertion that Opposition members had supported the panel’s recommendation to explore a merchant discount rate (MDR) on high-value UPI transactions, calling the claim “erroneous and fallacious”.

Congress MP Manish Tewari, a member of the committee, said the suggestion that Opposition members had endorsed the proposal by not recording a dissent was “un-

founded and unfortunate”.

“With great respect, this is both erroneous and fallacious and therefore factious,” Mr. Tewari said, referring to the BJP MP’s assertion that the Congress MPs on the panel endorsed the move.

Only to ‘explore’

Responding to reports quoting Mr. Mahtab as saying that the presence of Opposition members and their participation in the panel’s report were matters of record, Mr. Tewari said the committee’s recommendation was only to “explore” a revenue model for sustaining the UPI ecosystem. “The core of the com-

mittee’s recommendation... is as follows: ‘The Committee recommend that while the proposed 3-year multi-year scheme and cash back components are necessary to democratise digital payments in untapped Tier 3-6 cities, the Department of Financial Services must concurrently explore a self-reliant, tiered revenue model,’” he said in a post on X.

Mr. Tewari said the government’s subsequent action-taken report, laid in the Lok Sabha on August 12, similarly stated that the Department of Financial Services was “currently exploring” two options – restoring MDR for certain

high-threshold transactions and adopting a tiered incentive structure to phase out government support.

“The key word is ‘explore’,” he said, adding that the proposal to actually levy a transaction fee on digital payments had never subsequently come up before the committee.

Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh, tagging Mr. Tewari’s post, said Mr. Mahtab was “otherwise a seasoned and sober Parliamentarian but is 2024 Batch Odisha cadre of the BJP”. “This explains his eagerness to mislead and misinformation,” he said on X.

Cong. targets PM over CBI probe against Arunachal CM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s silence over the Supreme Court-ordered preliminary CBI inquiry into allegations of irregularities in the award of public works contracts worth about ₹1,270 crore to firms linked to the family members of Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said Mr. Khandu should have resigned, or have been asked to resign, after the Supreme Court directed the CBI to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the matter.

“But both the CM and his Supreme Leader the PM decided to brazen it out,” Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X.

He said the Supreme Court, on August 24, had noted that instead of providing the relevant documents, the State government had supplied “huge chunks of documents” to the CBI. “It is extraordinary and totally unacceptable that the CM continues in office...,” he said.

JPC members question Centre on FCRA Bill’s asset takeover provisions

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

At the first meeting of Parliament’s Joint Committee on the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, members raised a barrage of questions on the proposed changes. The thrust of the ruling party MPs’ queries was on the utilisation of foreign contributions, while Opposition members questioned provisions dealing with assets when an organisation’s FCRA licence is cancelled.

The Opposition objected to the provision relating to the “designated authority”, which will have a wide ambit of powers. Under the provision, if an organisation’s FCRA certificate is cancelled, surrendered, or lapses automatically, foreign contributions and all assets created from them would vest in a government-appointed “designated authority”, without a prior hearing or judicial determination.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in its submission, said the proposed amendments are aimed at making the use of foreign contributions more transparent and accountable.



Many Opposition MPs had demanded the withdrawal of the FCRA Bill during the Budget Session of the Parliament in April. ANI

Ministry representatives also argued that the provision for a “designated authority” is not new to the law. Under the existing legislation, there is a provision for a “prescribed authority”, which, according to a notification issued on November 5, 2018, is the Additional Chief Secretary or Principal Secretary (Home) of the concerned State or Union Territory.

However, under the current law, there is no deadline for such custodianship, leaving the “prescribed authority” as a “passive custodian” unable to take “substantive decisions on assets”.

There is also no standard procedure for taking possession of such assets,

maintaining inventories or segregating foreign-contribution assets from domestically funded ones, the Ministry said in its submission, according to sources.

Officials further argued that in cases of prolonged custodianship, States may face budgetary and manpower constraints in managing vested institutions such as schools, hospitals and orphanages. The existing law is also silent on the final disposal of assets and the treatment of places of worship, they said.

According to sources, several Opposition members, including the DMK’s P. Wilson and the Trinamool Congress’ Menaka Guruswamy, argued that

deprivation of property cannot be permitted without a prior hearing under Article 300A of the Constitution.

The MHA’s presentation also came under fire for cataloguing foreign contributions received by different religious groups and highlighting that a majority of the funds were received by Christian organisations.

Members questioned the Ministry’s rationale for segregating contributions received under religious heads.

‘National security law’

The FCRA was enacted in 1976 at the height of Cold War geopolitics, amid deep mistrust of Western influence and heightened sensitivity regarding threats to India’s sovereignty and democratic institutions.

Prior to 1976, NGOs receiving foreign funds operated under general laws such as the Societies Registration Act, the Trusts Act and the Companies Act, with no centralised mechanism to monitor foreign contributions.

Citing this backdrop, the MHA said the latest amendment is, at its core, a “national security” legislation.



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA - DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
KANUPUR IRRIGATION PROJECT
AT/PO-BASUDEVPUR, DIST-KEONJHAR, ODISHA, PIN-758047
e-mail: ccekippbur@gmail.com

"e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE - Bid Identification No. CCE, KIP (KCB-D-12/2026-27
(Pertaining to Kanpur Canal Division-I, Jhumpura)

1. Name of the Work	As per Detailed Tender Call Notice
2. Total No. of Package	03 (Three Nos. of individual Work)
3. Estimated Cost	221.86 to 543.04 Lakh
4. Period of completion	As per Detailed Tender Call Notice
5. Class of Contractor	"B" or "A" Class Contractor as per Detailed Tender Call Notice
6. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	Dt.21.09.2026 from 10.00 Hours to Dt.05.10.2026 up to 17.00 Hours.
7. Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal	05.10.2026 up to 17.00 Hours.
8. Date & Time of Opening of Tender (Technical Bid)	07.10.2026 at 11.00 Hours
9. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Er. Mahendra Kumar Behera Chief Construction Engineer, Kanupur Irrigation Project, At/Po.- Basudevpur, Dist.- Keonjhar, Odisha - 758047.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>"
(Er.Mahendra Kumar Behera)
Chief Construction Engineer,
Kanupur Irrigation Project, Basudevpur, Keonjhar, Odisha
32001/882/2627
OIPR-32001/32376/1/26-27/0009



MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/46 - 2026 - 27

Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM Two Bid system from the registered vendors for Supply of following:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) (Inclusive of all Taxes)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
	Tender Fee (in Rs.)	
SP/T-0708/0926 [2nd] Call] (RFX No. 7000041595] for Procurement & Installation of Centralized Visual Advance Monitoring System (CVAMS) at various EHV S/s. (total 100 Nos.- 400kV, 220kV & 132kV) in MSETCL along with establishment of Centralized Control & Monitoring Centre at MSETCL, Mumbai & integration of existing installed as well as proposed CVAMS at various S/s in MSETCL	Rs. 8570.95 Lakhs	28.09.2026 12:00 Hrs
	25000.00 +GST	28.09.2026 12.30 Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (Gr-VII)
CPA, C.O. MSETCL, 1st Floor, Prakashgad Building, Bandra (E), Mumbai
Tel. No.: 022-69852712/ 69852720
Email id: cecpa@mahatransco.in, secpa@mahatransco.in, eegrp8@mahatransco.in, eepe@mahatransco.in,
For further details visit our website <https://srmetender.mahatransco.in/>
Any further amendments / clarifications will be published on the MSETCL website
www.mahatransco.in & <https://srmetender.mahatransco.in/>. Bidders are therefore requested to check these websites for further updates.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

FAITH

Fix the mind on Krishna

One is always advised to examine something that comes very easily in life, since nothing is easy to get in this world and to have a higher purpose. Considering that it is human nature to centre all our actions around the human body, we find it difficult to disown everything in this world and focus only on God. One should not worry if one has the mentality to handle the vagaries of worldly life, since Lord Krishna says to not worry about it, but surrender to Him. One should place one's mind on Krishna and believe that He will uplift us, said Swami Sivayoganandha.

Krishna is just a hand stretch away, if one can develop the bhakti the right way. There are many ways to reach Him and it is possible to try one of them. In order to attain the goal, one should prepare oneself. How? In Chapter 12, verse 8, Krishna says, "Fix your mind upon Me alone. After that, you will be within me, without doubt." In order to do that, one should align both the mind (emotions) and the intellect. The two are two sides of a coin and while one side might want God, the other would want only God. It is not enough to place an idol or an image in one's puja room; one should place Him in one's mind and see the world through Him. Krishna assures the devotee that when the mind is thus fixed upon Him, the devotee will remain with Him always, not merely in the present and the future, but beyond that as well.

One of the astounding aspects of the human mind is its ability to determine intention, especially when it comes to worldly matters. It is fine to ask Krishna for various things in life. However, one should have the determination and the wisdom to pray to Krishna saying, "I need You."

GENEVA
Yemen conflict displaces 1,12,000 people inside country, says IOM



At least 1,12,000 people have been displaced inside Yemen within the last two weeks as fighting continues along the country's west coast, while nearly 3,000 have fled to Djibouti, the International Organisation for Migration said. UN agencies described the latest fighting as being a crisis on top of multiple crises. REUTERS

KARACHI
Pakistan court blocks expulsion of Afghan medical college students



A Pakistan court blocked an order by the country's medical board for Afghans studying to be doctors to be expelled from colleges and universities and sent home. "The Lahore High Court has extended the stay order preventing the expulsion of over a hundred Afghan medical students," a Lahore court decision said. AFP

HENRICO
Early voting begins in several U.S. States as part of midterm elections



In-person voting for November 3 midterm elections began on Friday in Virginia, Idaho, Minnesota and South Dakota in the U.S., ushering in the final six weeks for Americans to decide which party they trust to lead Congress. Officials insist elections remain secure despite federal scrutiny and redistricting changes affecting millions. AP

WASHINGTON
Assad-era Syrian official jailed for 60 years by U.S. court for torture



Samir Ousman Alsheikh, a former Syrian government official who headed the Damascus Central Prison under ousted President Bashar al-Assad and was convicted of torture by a U.S. federal jury has been sentenced to 60 years in prison by a U.S. judge, federal prosecutors said. REUTERS

Russia begins three days of voting in first wartime parliamentary poll

The ruling United Russia party, backed by President Vladimir Putin, is expected to retain overwhelming control of the 450-seat Duma; any meaningful political competition has been removed from ballot with the support of nation's top court

Associated Press
MOSCOW

Russians on Friday began three days of voting in the country's first wartime parliamentary election, which features virtually no opposition and is all but certain to secure the Kremlin's political dominance. Authorities spread the election over the weekend, ending on Sunday, in a bid to boost turnout among the 111 million eligible voters, and they even allowed electronic balloting. The Kremlin wants the parliamentary election – the first since the start of the full-scale invasion of



Predetermined choice: An elderly man votes in parliamentary election at a polling station in St Petersburg in Russia on Friday. AFP

Ukraine in 2022 – to underline public support for the war and give a veneer of legitimacy to its action. It has sought to avoid any political risks by stamping

out even the slightest sign of dissent. "Your choice and resolve will once again demonstrate that millions of people stand behind our

fighters, that we are a united people, bound by shared values, historical memory, and love for the Motherland," President Vladimir Putin told the nation before the vote. Russian state news agencies reported that Mr. Putin voted online on Friday and released a video of him in front of a computer screen. The main Kremlin party, United Russia, is all but assured to retain its overwhelming control of the lower house, the State Duma. Several smaller parties of the "systemic opposition" that vote in sync with the government on all key issues also are expected to retain their presence.

Voters cast two separate ballots, filling half of the Duma's 450 seats by selecting political parties listed on the ballot. The rest are contested in single-seat constituencies, with voters choosing individual candidates. The liberal Yabloko party, the only registered political entity that dared to criticise the war, was removed from the ballot last month by Russia's Supreme Court, and only has a few dozen candidates in the single-constituency races. Additionally, some anti-war politicians have been imprisoned or forced to flee abroad ahead of the campaign.

Thousands attend Iran's government-organised rally

Associated Press
CAIRO

Hundreds of thousands of Iranians rallied on Friday in a government-organised show of defiance after months of war, pledging their readiness to take up arms in the biggest such demonstration since the United States and Israel attacked in February. Iran's government has sought to rally the people and stress national unity, even as the economy worsens under a U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports and new U.S. sanctions. Estimates varied of the number of people volunteering to receive limited military training and defend the country in an effort described as *Janfa-day-e Iran*, or the "ones who sacrifice their lives for



A woman carries a rifle as she marches with other armed women and children during a military-style parade in Tehran on Friday. AP

Iran". They marched through downtown Tehran in combat uniform, carrying flags, as onlookers cheered. For days, state media have encouraged Iranians to join the campaign, saying training with assault rifles would begin soon. The volunteers would be an additional layer of security to

the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and the Basij militia, which has played a key role in quashing anti-government protests. Tehran's Guard chief, General Hassan Hassan-zadeh, said that over 600,000 people had registered to participate, with over one million expected to take part in the training.

China's ship 'rammed' vessel in South China Sea, says Philippines

Agence France-Presse
MANILA

The Philippines said a China Coast Guard ship "rammed" one of its fisheries department boats on Friday in contested waters in the South China Sea. China's coast guard subsequently blamed the actions of the Philippine vessel, which it said "bears full responsibility for the incident". The incident took place near a shoal in the contested Spratly Islands chain, a fish-rich flashpoint that has been the site of violent confrontations with China Coast Guard vessels in recent years. Beijing claims most of



Damaged railings on the port side of BRP Datu Magat Salamat after a collision. AFP

the South China Sea despite an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis. The Chinese vessel "rammed BRP Datu Magat Salamat... as it carried out its maritime patrol to deliver fuel subsidy to our fishermen", Philippine Coast Guard spokesperson said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards say they hit oil tanker in Hormuz

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Friday they struck an oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, according to state news agency IRNA, as a British maritime agency also reported an attack. Iran has maintained its stranglehold on the strategic strait as Washington continues pressing its counter-blockade of Iranian ports during the West Asia war. The Islamic republic wants to charge ships for passage, attacking vessels it accuses of attempting to circumvent its preferred route.

"The Togo-flagged oil tanker *Trend* had been targeted and detained after a fire broke out on board" late on Thursday, the statement said, calling it an attempted "illegal passage". "Unknown projectile" Early on Friday, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) said a ship was hit by an "unknown projectile", causing a fire that was extinguished. The monitoring agency had also reported a "security incident" in Hormuz late on Thursday, without giving details. It was unclear if the IRGC and UKMTO reports referred to the same incident.

Hundreds of civilians, prisoners suffer sexual abuse in Ukraine war, says UN

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

Hundreds of civilians and prisoners have been subjected to sexual violence and torture – overwhelmingly by Moscow's forces – since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the UN reported on Friday. The UN Human Rights Office attributed 89% of the documented cases to "Russian authorities – including members of the armed forces, the prison service and the national security service". It blamed the remaining 11% on "Ukrainian authorities", saying both countries should investigate promptly and bring perpetrators to justice.



Ukrainians hold photos of their missing relatives as they watch freed Ukrainian soldiers arrive in the Chernihiv region of Ukraine. AP

"Some 1,004 cases of sexual violence were documented from February 24, 2022, when Russia's attack on Ukraine began, through to the end of July this year," the UN agency said in a report. "Sexual violence has

been used against civilians and prisoners of war (POWs) in Ukraine in a shocking pattern of torture, intimidation and coercion," it said. The 20-page report is based on confidential interviews "with hundreds of

victims and survivors of sexual violence committed by both parties", as well as court documents and official records. "Alarming reports" "I am deeply alarmed by the prevalence of these abhorrent acts documented in our report, and fear that they are almost certainly continuing amid the unceasing violence we are witnessing every day in Ukraine," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said. The youngest rape survivor the UN documented was a four-year-old girl and the oldest an 82-year-old woman. It blamed both cases on Russian authorities.

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PROUD MOMENT

Manu, Tajinderpal named India's flag-bearers for opening ceremony



FILE PHOTOS

Double Olympic medal-winning shooter Manu Bhaker and two-time defending shot put champion Tajinderpal Singh Toor were named India's flag-bearers for the Asian Games opening ceremony. "Manu will be one of the flag-bearers," Chef de Mission Sahdev Yadav said. Later, the AFI confirmed Tajinderpal as the second flag-bearer.

SWANSONG

Shuttler Prannoy says Aichi-Nagoya will be his final Asian Games



GETTY IMAGES

Indian shuttler H.S. Prannoy has said that the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games will be his last appearance at the continental extravaganza. "Yes, this is my last Asian Games. I'm pretty much sure," he said. Prannoy, who won an individual bronze medal at the last edition in Hangzhou, will compete in the men's team event in Japan.

WORDS OF PRAISE

India is a good model: FIH chief's advice to other Asian countries



FILE PHOTO

International Hockey Federation (FIH) president Tayyab Ikram has lauded India's approach over the past few years and urged the other Asian nations to emulate the eight-time Olympic gold medallist to rise on the global stage. "India is a good model to see where it was and where it is today," he said ahead of the Asiad.

ALL IS WELL

Every athlete, coach, official has an accommodation: OCA official



FILE PHOTO

Every athlete, every coach, every official has an accommodation. No single accredited person is without one. Every National Olympic Committee sent a longlist for participation with a total of 26,000 athletes requested. We came to the final shortlist just seven to 10 days ago — Director-General of the OCA Husain Al Musallam.

Time for the Indian athletes to make it count

The preparations are done and the hard yards put in as the country aims to match or even better the record haul at the previous edition in Hangzhou; hockey teams eye Olympic berth

ASIAN GAMES

Uthra Ganesan
NAGOYA

The number of athletes may have been reduced but India's ambitions of flexing its sporting muscle at the continental level will be tested when the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games officially kickstart at the Paloma Mizuho Stadium here on Saturday.

The quadrennial event, which began in India and which the country hopes to host again in near future for the third time, will have 501 Indian athletes in 259 medal events across 36 disciplines competing for a total of 356 medals. With 106 medals in the previous edition, any hopes of getting anywhere close to it would mean a fifth of Indian athletes finishing on the podium.

The record haul in Hangzhou has raised expectations but the country would do well to add a tinge of reality to temper them. With an ambitious



Proven performers: The likes of Tejaswin (athletics), Sindhu (badminton) and Mirabai (weightlifting) will be under the spotlight as they are expected to lead India's charge for medals. FILE PHOTOS

target of being in the top-10 in the medal tally by the 2036 Olympics, the performances at Aichi-Nagoya Games will provide both — a practical assessment of where Indian sports stands after the high of 2023 and a template for course correction to ensure the long-term targets remain feasible.

No one will be more in

the spotlight than the track and field athletes and the shooters, who contributed almost half of the total medals in Hangzhou.

Among the latter, Manu Bhaker — who along with shotputter Tajinderpal Singh Toor will be India's flagbearers — on Saturday — will deservedly be the one to watch.

But there are others too,

some bringing youth (Tilottam Sen and Ashi Chouksey in rifle and Esha Singh and Suruchi Phogat in pistol) and others experience (Rahi Sarnobat).

And then there are those that have both, the likes of Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Anish Bhanwal leading this group.

The situation is same in

athletics. With Neeraj Chopra out with injury, the mantle of doing the heavy lifting among the 74-member strong contingent will fall on the proven performers — Tejaswin Shankar, Murali Sreeshankar and Toor on the field. On the track, the return of Avinash Sable would be a welcome sight, the steeple-chaser along with Gulveer

Singh the biggest bet for a medal, even gold.

On the badminton court, P.V. Sindhu would be hoping for one last hurrah in her pursuit of a maiden Asian title while Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will be looking for more consistency after a topsy-turvy year so far in terms of results and injury concerns in their tit-

le defence.

Women boxers and compound archers are also expected to add to the medal count while Mirabai Chanu will be up against it in search of her first medal in the event, 12 years after her debut in Incheon and three years after a shock exit.

Among the teams, hockey will expectedly be the

main attraction with tickets to LA28 at stake for both men and women.

The recent outings at the World Cup is unlikely to have much impact, specially the men, who will only have to guard against complacency. For the women, China would be the biggest challenge but recent form gives hope.

Cricket will get the eyeballs, as it is bound to, but in terms of competition, there will be little by way of excitement unless either of the genders have a terrible day in their title defences.

The men, in particular, would be hoping to earn legitimacy for their title, given the final against Afghanistan in 2023 was declared on the basis of ranking after being washed out.

The men's kabaddi team too will be itching to prove their win last time was not a fluke and put all the bad memories of a rancorous-filled final against Iran to rest.

The preparations are done, the hard yards put in. It's time to reap the results.

Indian contingent formally welcomed amidst confusion



Starting trouble: The disorganised planning meant India's flag-hoisting ceremony was delayed by around an hour. R.V. MOORTHY

Uthra Ganesan
NAGOYA

The Asian Games chaos in Aichi-Nagoya continued ahead of the formal opening ceremony on Saturday, with the official welcome ceremony for several nations, including India, marred by disruptions, delays and confusion.

The Indian contingent, along with those from North Korea, Yemen, Palestine, Timor-Leste and Taiwan, was supposed to have its flag-hoisting ceremony at the Garden Pier — where the container accommodation is — at 1.30 p.m. local time in the second session of the day, but the disorganised planning meant it didn't happen before 2.30 p.m. and after a series of stops, starts and going backwards and forwards.

The delegations arrived on time and were assembled near the flag-hoisting area for at least half an hour. India's representatives — chef-de-mission

Sahdev Yadav and deputy CDMs Anjali Bhagwat, Alakananda Ashok, Lijo David Thottan and A. Sharath Kamal — kept waiting and were about to walk on to the raising area before being asked to return to the waiting area for further communication.

There was no clarity, and no one had any information on the reasons behind the delay.

"There is some problem, but we don't know what it is. We are also trying to find out," the volunteers and officials at the venue said.

"The communication between the Olympic Council of Asia Executive Board and Organising Committee was not well... that's why this happened," a statement from the organisers later clarified.

Sahdev admitted he was also experiencing something like this for the first time. At Aichi-Nagoya, however, it was just another in the already long list of issues plaguing the edition.

It's a stroll in the park for India against Japan

Uthra Ganesan
NAGOYA

Cricket barely scratches the sporting surface in Japan but there is no dearth of fans here for a sport that many would struggle to identify on screen. And no one has more, at least among the volunteers at the Korogi Sports Park, than Harmanpreet Kaur.

Even though the Indian captain did not come out to bat as India first decimated the Japanese batting, then strolled past the 58-run target in five overs for an eight-wicket win, the player with jersey No. 23 remains famous.

"I don't know the name but No. 23, I like her. My friend is an Indian and he also likes her game a lot. I really like watching the sport and her game," a volunteer gushed.

The venue is not for the easy-goers. Changing at least two train lines — three for some — and then walking for 15-20 minutes to reach the venue that at other times is a baseball field, a sport far more popular in the country, quite a few suffered heatstrokes and had to be administered fluids under the scorching sun.

With open temporary stands and barely any provision for shade, only the hardcore fans turned up. Among those were Virendra Maja and Aniket Yagnik, who took leave from work and came all the way from Osaka to watch the



Aggressive: Shafali finished the chase in a hurry. R.V. MOORTHY

Indian team play.

The two, originally from Madhya Pradesh, are big fans of Smriti Mandhana and Shreyanka Patil.

"It is a proud moment for us to watch the Indian women's team play in Japan.

"We applied for leave from work and drove here to cheer for them. It feels special," Maja said.

On the field, Shree Charani knifed through the Japan batting for a four wick-

et haul, then Shafali Verma's unbeaten 15-ball 40 meant the game was over in a blink.

The reward is a repeat of the Asia Cup semifinal against Bangladesh, a challenge that will be tougher than Friday's outing. Jersey No. 23 will, however, have the crowd behind her.

The scores: Japan 57 in 19.5 overs (Ayaka Kato-Stafford 25, Shree Charani 4/10, Shafali Verma 2/13) lost to India 59/2 in 5 overs (Shafali 40 n.o.).

Sindhu has a good chance, says Saina

Ashwin Achal

Saina Nehwal believes that P.V. Sindhu's big match temperament will hold her in good stead at the 2026 Asian Games.

After a dip in fortunes, Sindhu produced a vintage performance to clinch the Japan Open title a few months ago. The 31-year-old became the first Indian shuttler to win the Japan Open, on the back of an impressive straight games win over local favourite Akane Yamaguchi in the final.

"Sometimes, at the highest level, you go up and down over one or two years. But having won the Japan Open, and coming close to defeating Wang Zhi in the World Championship round-of-16, I think Sindhu has a very good chance of winning at the Asian Games," Saina said in a virtual media interaction on Friday.

"And it's in Japan, where she has always performed well. She is experienced. She is a big tournament

player; I've never seen her getting tense. She is always very disciplined and she concentrates very well," Saina, the first Indian woman badminton player to reach the World No.1 ranking, added.

Saina expects the Indian contingent to return home with at least three medals.

"We have winners in most events - Sindhu, Tanvi (Sharma) and Ashmita (Chaliha), Ayush (Shetty) in men's singles, and the men's doubles combination of Satwik and Chirag. Treesa (Jolly) and Gayatri (Gopichand) won the bronze medal in the World championships.

"Overall, the team looks very strong and confident. Of course, there are big expectations in these big tournaments, which adds a little bit more pressure. But I would say that we can definitely come back with three medals at least," Saina said.

(Watch Asian Games live and exclusive on Sony Sports Network and Sony LIV.)



Big hopes: Gayatri & Treesa. FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Quimcy and Imran Beg... still in the fray. INSTAGRAM/QUIMCYY

Quimcy closes in on historic teqball medal

Press Trust of India
NAGOYA

Quimcy Joaquim Dsouza is just a win away from securing a historic medal for India in teqball, which is making its Asian Games debut.

She marched into the women's singles semifinals here on Friday.

Quimcy stunned top-seeded Yuina Sakamoto of Japan 10-12, 12-11, 13-11 in her opening Group A match before defeating Cambodia's Koemyean DY 12-9, 12-7 to top her pool and qualify for the last-four stage.

Quimcy, who had got a bye in the quarterfinals, will take on Indonesia's Sumaya on Saturday.

Quimcy and Mohammed Anas Imran Beg, however, lost 7-12, 10-12 to Vietnam's Hoang Minh Tan Nguyen and Gia Nghi Trinh in the quarterfinals of the mixed doubles event.

But the duo still has a chance to finish on the podium on Sunday as it won the repechage tie against the Filipino pair of Jhoana Abulencia and Prince Augustin 12-3, 12-6.

INBRIEF



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Sooryavanshi will have to wait for his opportunity: Gambhir

Asked about the decision to bring back Sanju Samson into the XI at the expense of 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi in the T20I series win over Afghanistan, India coach Gautam Gambhir said: “I was very clear that we will go back to the combination we had during the World Cup. If a team has gone unbeaten in one World Cup and (then) defended the title, it’s a gun team. These guys do not become bad after two or three failures. Vaibhav will have to wait for his opportunity”.



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Nitish’s bowling returns a huge positive, says Gambhir

India head coach Gautam Gambhir termed Nitish Kumar’s bowling returns as a huge positive from the series win over Afghanistan. The all-rounder claimed six scalps. “It has been a huge plus for us. There are not many who can bowl and bat in the middle-order. The more he is going to bowl in international cricket, the better he is going to get,” Gambhir said after the third and final T20I on Thursday.



Buttler becomes first batter to reach 15,000 T20 runs

England’s Jos Buttler became the first batter to reach 15,000 T20 runs, achieving the feat in the six-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the second T20I in Cardiff on Thursday. The 36-year-old has done so in 528 matches (497 innings) at an average of 35.46 and a strike rate of 147.46. Buttler also surpassed West Indies’ Kieron Pollard as the highest run-scorer in T20 cricket.

The scores: Sri Lanka 145/9 in 20 overs (Nissanka 37, Asalanka 31, Archer 2/34, Dawson 3/32, Overton 2/23) lost to England 146/4 in 12.1 overs (Buttler 30, Banton 52 n.o.). **Toss:** England; **PoM:** Dawson.

Head the hero as Australia wins series against Zimbabwe

Opener Travis Head smashed a 75-ball hundred in Australia’s series-clinching 84-run victory over Zimbabwe in the second ODI in Harare on Friday. Head was well supported by captain Mitchell Marsh’s 53 and Cooper Connolly’s 78 in Australia’s total of 356 for six. Zimbabwe never looked like reaching the target, despite five of the top six batters scoring 30 or more.

The scores: Australia 356/6 in 50 overs (Marsh 53, Head 112, Connolly 78, Peake 41 n.o.) bt Zimbabwe 272 in 48.3 overs (Raza 45); **Toss:** Zimbabwe; **PoM:** Head.

Betis climbs to third in LaLiga with victory over Getafe

Ez Abde scored on Thursday as Betis won 1-0 at Getafe to continue its strong start to the Spanish season and climb to third.

The results: Real Betis 1 (Abde 45) bt Getafe 0; Malaga 1 (Dotor 12) lost to Villarreal 3 (Moleiro 40, Gueye 45+2, 86-pen).

LIVE TELECAST

Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 5, 7.30 & 10 p.m.
LaLiga: FanCode, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Serie A: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday)
Bundesliga: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 7 & 10 p.m.
England vs Sri Lanka: Third T20I, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 7 p.m.
Asian Games: Day 2, Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 5.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Cricknet: Asian Games (Women), Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 5.30 a.m. (Sunday)

Agarkar’s eventful stint as chief selector all but over

BCCI secretary Saikia plays his cards close to his chest and says that a decision will be taken in 15 days’ time; former wicketkeeper Parthiv emerges front-runner to replace the Mumbaiakar

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Ajit Agarkar’s three-year tenure as chairman of the senior men’s selection committee has effectively come to an end, with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) now set to initiate the process of finding his replacement.

The BCCI’s 95th Annual General Meeting (AGM) here on Friday authorised the office-bearers to suitably fill vacancies, in line with the recent convention. Multiple member representatives who attended the AGM confirmed to *The Hindu* that, on the sidelines of the meeting, the office-bearers informed delegates that the board would initiate the process to find the Mumbaiakar’s successor.

A BCCI office-bearer, speaking on condition of anonymity, also confirmed that “Agarkar has formally



Enough is enough: According to a source, Agarkar has formally informed the BCCI that he doesn’t wish to continue. FILE PHOTO

informed the BCCI just before the AGM that he doesn’t wish to continue as a selector” after his term ends on October 4.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia, however, remained non-committal about Agarkar’s future. “Today, there was no discussion on any individual,” he said after the AGM. “We still have 15 days to go. Fifteen days is a long time in the world of cricket. We have 15 days’ time, we will take a decision at an appropriate time. We will let you know about it.”

Agarkar remained unavailable for a comment.

The former India seester took charge of the selection committee in July 2023 and was at the centre of several significant decisions during his stint. These included elevating Suryakumar Yadav as T20I captain in place of then vice-captain Hardik Pandya in 2024, overseeing a period of high-profile Test retirements, replacing Rohit Sharma as the ODI captain with Shubman Gill after India’s Champions Trophy triumph last year

Nitish and Hardik can be part of the same XI, feels Gambhir

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

In a series win as emphatic as India’s 3-0 sweep over Afghanistan, there will be many bright spots to revel in. But if there was a fresh takeaway from the T20I series, it was Nitish Kumar’s enhanced contribution with the ball. Back from a quadriceps injury, the 23-year-old seam-bowling all-rounder started shakily with figures of 2-0-30-0 in his first outing, but bounced back with three scalps each in the next two games.

More than the wickets, which can come arbitrarily in a format where batters are obliged to attack, the fact that Nitish bowled at brisk pace in different phases was heartening. Particularly in light of the prolonged absence of Hardik Pandya, who has been sidelined with injury since the conclusion of the Indian Premier League.

The 32-year-old is expected to return to action when India-A plays three one-dayers against Australia-A in Puducherry from



Valuable assets: All-rounders Nitish and Hardik could have a big role to play in next year’s ODI World Cup. FILE PHOTO

October 6 to 11.

With India’s next big priority being the 2027 ODI World Cup, coach Gautam Gambhir understandably wants both all-rounders to be fit and firing.

“We know how important seam bowling all-rounders will be in a year’s time when we go to South Africa. The more the merrier. Sometimes we could even go on to play both of them in the XI,” Gambhir said on Thursday. “At the moment, Hardik cannot bowl 10 overs. He hasn’t played cricket since the IPL. So, we don’t want to push him into international cricket be-

cause it can be extremely tough on your body.”

Gambhir conceded that the Indian players’ recent injury breakdowns weren’t ideal. He was echoing the views of Test and ODI skipper Shubman Gill, who highlighted the issue after the tour of England in July.

“Yes (it is a problem), especially in Tests and ODIs. You want your best players to play as many Tests and ODIs. It’s not fair on a young captain as well if he doesn’t get the best team playing regularly. It is important for Shubman to get the best playing XI as many times as he can,” Gambhir stated.

Yashbardhan’s all-round show takes India past Australia

YOUTH ODI SERIES

Shayan Acharya
RAJKOT

India u-19 edged Australia u-19 by seven runs in a rain-shortened youth ODI at the Niranjan Shah Stadium on Friday, with Yashbardhan Singh Chauhan starring with both bat and ball. He top-scored with 54 off 34 balls (5x4, 2x6) before returning to claim two wickets.

After heavy rain reduced the contest to 20 overs a side, India posted 182 for six. Inserted to bat, India was 88 for four before Yashbardhan and Anvay Dravid steadied the innings with a 69-run stand.

Anvay, the younger son of Rahul Dravid, smashed 38 off 18 balls (2x4, 3x6) before being bowled by Eli Brain.



Yashbardhan. SAURASHTRA CA



Sehwag. SHAYAN ACHARYA

Years after Virender Sehwag and Dravid shared the India dressing room, their sons were together in National colours at the u-19 level. On his debut, Aaryavir Sehwag (28) showed flashes of his father’s attacking strokeplay, but fell to Spencer Green. As Aaryavir tried to take on the Australian attack, Sehwag watched on from the stands, following every shot.

Australia’s Neel Patel and Hayden Barbulovic added 58 for the opening wicket. But Yashbardhan

The scores: India u-19 182/6 in 20 overs (Yashbardhan 54, Anvay 38) bt Australia u-19 175/7 in 20 overs (Neel 45, Barbulovic 40, Czosnek 55). **Toss:** Australia; **PoM:** Yashbardhan.



Going the distance: Chung brought all his experience into play to emerge victorious after more than three hours. AP

Korea races away to a 2-0 lead against India

DAVIS CUP

Press Trust of India
SEOUL

India’s hopes of making the Davis Cup Final 8 were pushed to the brink after Dhakshineswar Suresh and Sumit Nagal squandered promising starts to lose their respective singles, leaving the visitors trailing 0-2 against Korea at the end of the opening day of their Qualifier tie here on Friday.

Dhakshineswar lost the first match of his fledgling Davis Cup career when Korea’s No.1 player Soonwoo Kwon beat him 3-6, 6-3, 6-4. The onus to bring India back was on India No.1 Nagal but he also frittered

away a solid start to lose 6-2, 4-6, 5-7 to the experienced Hyon Chung after battling for more than three hours.

Chung showed the temperament of a big player as he earned points when it mattered the most.

Kwon has not lost a Davis Cup match at home and that trend continued.

Now India needs to win all three matches on the final day to advance to the knockout stage which has happened only twice in India’s history: in 2010 against Brazil at home and in 2018 against China in an away tie.

The results: Korea 2 leads India 0 (Soonwoo Kwon bt Dhakshineswar Suresh 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; Hyon Chung bt Sumit Nagal 2-6, 6-4, 7-5).



Top show: Humpy got the better of Tsolakidou as India eased past Greece. FIDE

Nihal, Gukesh help India beat Italy; women keep winning

CHESS OLYMPIAD

Sports Bureau

Nihal Sarin posted his third straight win, but Arjun Erigaisi had to survive a scare, as India beat Italy 3-1 in the third round of the Chess Olympiad at Samarkand. World champion D. Gukesh scored a win on the fourth board on Friday.

Arjun’s was one of the day’s last games to finish, as he drew with Luca Moroni in 64 moves.

Before that, Gukesh had beaten Sabino Brunello and Nihal defeated Francesco Sonis. On the top board, R. Praggnanandhaa split the point with Lorenzo Lodici.

The defending champion thus has won all its

three matches.

The Indian women, who also were crowned champions at the Budapest Olympiad two years ago, once again played more impressively than their male counterparts. They made short work of Greece 3.5-0.5.

Koneru Humpy beat Stavroula Tsolakidou on the top board and avenged her defeat at the Global Chess League final in Bengaluru on Sunday. Vantika Agrawal and B. Savitha Shri also won, while Divya Deshmukh drew.

Important results:
Open: India bt Italy 3-1 (R. Praggnanandhaa drew with Lorenzo Lodici; Arjun Erigaisi drew with Luca Moroni; Nihal Sarin bt Francesco Sonis; D. Gukesh bt Sabino Brunello).
Uzbekistan bt Austria 3-1; USA bt

Denmark 2.5-1.5; China bt Bulgaria 3.5-0.5.
Germany bt Uzbekistan (2) 2.5-1.5; Azerbaijan bt Switzerland 3-1; France bt Kazakhstan 3.5-0.5.
Hungary bt Slovenia 2.5-1.5; Armenia bt Sweden 2.5-1.5; Ukraine bt Slovakia 3-1.
Armenia bt Sweden 2.5-1.5; Lithuania drew with England 2-2; Ukraine bt Slovakia 3-1; Spain bt Belarus 3-1.

Women: India bt Greece 3.5-0.5 (Koneru Humpy bt Stavroula Tsolakidou; Divya Deshmukh drew with Anastasia Avramidou; Vantika Agrawal bt Ekaterini Pavlidou; B. Savitha Shri bt Antonia Christodoulaki).
Uzbekistan bt Indonesia 3-1; USA bt Cuba 3.5-0.5; Azerbaijan bt Sweden 2.5-1.5; Poland bt Latvia 4-0; Germany bt Belarus 2.5-1.5; China bt Turkiye 3-1.
Mongolia bt Peru 2.5-1.5; Kazakhstan bt Slovenia 3.5-0.5.
Armenia bt Croatia 4-0; Iran bt France 3-1; Poland bt Latvia 4-0; Serbia bt Canada 2.5-1.5.

Zuccaro for President Of India Gold Cup

HYDERABAD: The six-year-old gelding Zuccaro, who is unbeaten in his last five starts and maintains form as evidenced by the morning trials, may score an encore in the President Of India Gold Cup, the feature event of Saturday’s (Sept. 19) races.

1 ROCK OF GIBRALTAR PLATE (1,200m) (Terms), Maiden 3-y-o only, Cat. II, no whip, 1.55 p.m.: 1. Bella’s Touch (3) M.S. Deora 56, 2. Chanced One (7) D.S. Deora 56, 3. French Lieutenant (4) Antony Raj 56, 4. Sporting Touch (8) Ajay K 56, 5. Costa Mesa (1) P. Sai K 54.5, 6. Gaechanmanasvin (6) Md. Ismail 54.5, 7. Khamagani (2) Gaurav 54.5 and 8. My Touch (5) Akshay K 54.5.

1. FRENCH LIEUTENANT, 2. MY TOUCH, 3. BELLA’S TOUCH
2 FALAKNUMA TROPHY (DIV. II) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45, Cat. III, 2.30: 1. Cosmic Gift (9) Trevor 60, 2. Victoria Dhora (8) Imran Chisty 58.5, 3. My Way My Rules (7) Vivek G 58, 4. Materiality (2) P. Ajeeth K 57, 5. Beverley (6) Arjun 55.5, 6. Celestial Power (3) Uday Kiran 54, 7. Anemoli (5) Surya Prakash 53, 8. Barbarossa (4) Ajay K 52.5 and 9. Timeless Elegance (1) G. Naresh

51.
1. COSMIC GIFT, 2. MATERIALITY, 3. MY WAY MY RULES

3 FALAKNUMA TROPHY (DIV. I) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45, Cat. III, 3.05: 1. Coming Home (3) B. Nikhil 60.5, 2. She’s A Bomb (2) Surendra 60, 3. American Affair (1) Ashad Asbar 57.5, 4. La Quinta (4) Akshay K 57.5, 5. Flare (8) V.S. Shekawat 55, 6. Lego (10) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5, 7. Commanding Warrior (7) Surya Prakash 53, 8. Golden Aura (9) G. Naresh 52, 9. Santorini Sky (5) D.S. Deora 51.5 and 10. Rate Of Interest (6) Arjun 50.

1. SHE’S A BOMB, 2. LA QUINTA, 3. AMERICAN AFFAIR
4 TOTARAM’S CUP (1,200m) (Terms), 3-y-o upward, Cat. 1, 3.40: 1. Celestial (7) Gaurav 58, 2. One N Only (9) Akshay K 54.5, 3. Shadow Of The Moon (6) Saqlain 53.5, 4. Uchchaishravas (8) Neeraj 53.5, 5. Black Onyx (2) D.S. Deora 52, 6. Detective (1) Vikram 52, 7. Calista Girl (3) Bhawani 50.5, 8. Emerald Touch (4) M.S. Deora 50.5 and 9. Reigning Beauty (5) Santosh Raj 50.5.

1. ONE N ONLY, 2. UCHCHAIHSHRAVAS, 3. CELESTIAL

5 PRESIDENT OF INDIA GOLD CUP (Gr. II) (2,400m), (Terms), 4-y-o and upward, 4.15: 1. Duke Of Tuscany (7) R. Ajinkya 60, 2. Ramiel (1) Antony Raj 58, 3. DYF (5) Yash Narredu 57, 4. Zuccaro (6) Vivek G 56.5, 5. Miracle Star (3) Trevor 55.5, 6. High Command (4) P. Ajeeth K 53 and 7. Vyasa (2) Ashad Asbar 52.

1. ZUCCARO, 2. DUKE OF TUSCANY, 3. RAMIEL
6 NELSTON PLATE (1,600m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45, Cat. III, 4.50: 1. Onslaught (2) Imran Chisty 61, 2. Hoping High (8) Mohit 58.5, 3. Silver Arrow (9) A.A. Vikram 58.5, 4. Quintessential (1) P. Ajeeth K 57, 5. Photograph (10) G. Naresh 55, 6. Valledonna (6) Antony Raj 55, 7. Shubhrak (3) Rafique Sk. 52.5, 8. American Gangster (5) D.S. Deora 52, 9. December Rain (7) Arjun 52 and 10. See My Attitude (4) Surya Prakash 50.

1. QUINTESSENTIAL, 2. HOPING HIGH, 3. ONSLAUGHT
Day’s Best: **ONE N ONLY** Jackpot: 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.
Mini Jackpot: 3, 4, 5 & 6.
Trebble: (1) 1, 2 & 3, (1) 4, 5 & 6.
Tanala: All races.