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PUJARA RETIRES FROM ALL FORMS OF CRICKET

The Saurashtra batter who served as India's Test No 3 for more than a decade calls it a day...

THIRTEEN-YEAR-LONG TEST CAREER COMES TO AN END

Pujara, who last played for India in the 2023 World Test Championship final, announced his retirement on Sunday. "Wearing the Indian jersey, singing the anthem, and trying my best each time I stepped on the field—it's impossible to put into words what it truly meant. But as they say, all good things must come to an end, and with immense gratitude I have decided to retire from all forms of Indian cricket," the 37-year-old posted on social media

CLASSICAL MATCH-WINNER IN MODERN ERA

With 7,195 runs at an average of 43.60 from 103, Pujara is eighth Indian among the highest run-getters in the format
An old school batter, the 37-year-old defined some of India's historic Test wins in last decade especially in South Africa, England, New Zealand and Australia (SENA countries) | P11

HE FEATURED IN 11 TEST WINS IN SENA COUNTRIES, THE MOST FOR ANY INDIAN

First flight-test of home-grown air defence weapon system successful

India's air defence shield poised to get major upgrade to defend against aerial threats

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

IN a big boost to India's air defence capabilities, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully conducted the maiden flight-test of the Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS), the Ministry of Defence said on Sunday.

IADWS is a multi-layered air defence system comprising the quick reaction surface to air missiles (QRSAM), very short range air defence system (VSHORADS) missiles, and a high-power laser-based directed energy weapon (DEW).

The indigenous air defence system was flight-tested at 1230 hours off the coast of Odisha on Saturday.

"During the flight-tests, three different targets including two high-speed fixed-wing unmanned aerial vehicle targets and a multi-copter drone were simultaneously engaged and destroyed completely by the QRSAM, VSHORADS and High Energy Laser weapon system



DRDO conducts maiden flight-tests of Integrated Air Defence Weapon System | P11

Navy, Coast Guard to get 76 helicopters

The Ministry of Defence on Sunday issued a Request for Information (RFI) to procure 76 naval utility helicopters for the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard. Fifty-one helicopters will go to the Navy and the remaining for the Coast Guard. These twin-engine choppers, which will replace the Chetak helicopters, will be procured under 'Buy and Make (India)' category. RFI is the first step in the procurement process | P7

at different ranges and altitudes," the defence ministry said. It added that all the weapon system components, including the missile systems and drone detection and destruction system, command and control mechanism along with communication and radars, performed "flawlessly". The performance of the system was

confirmed by the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur.

The missiles successfully intercepted and neutralised the indigenously developed, SHIKRA aerial targets, manufactured by Anadrome Systems. These targets fly at high speeds of 650 kmph with operational altitude of 9000m and ranges up to 200 km.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented DRDO, the armed forces, and the defence industry for the successful development of IADWS. He said the flight-tests established the country's multi-layered air-defence capability.

The integrated air defence system will undergo more tests before being commissioned.

ONGC gets nod for exploration wells, TN asks green body to revoke consent

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA @ Chennai

A few hours after reports emerged that the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) has granted environmental clearance to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) for drilling 20 onshore exploratory wells in Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu Environment and Climate Change Minister Thangam Thennarasu said the state has advised the SEIAA to revoke the clearance accorded to the ONGC.

In a statement issued on Sunday evening, Thennarasu said the government "would not allow any project relating to hydrocarbon in any part of the state, either now or in the future". The statement also said



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

that "it has come to the notice" of the state government that the SEIAA had "directly" granted the clearance.

The clearance, issued on March 11, allows ONGC to explore a designated block spread across 1,403 sqkm in the Ramnad sub-basin. Each well is expected to be drilled to depths of 2,000-3,000 metres, with operations lasting up to four months. Though the environmental clearance is granted, the ONGC

can commence the work only after obtaining Petroleum Exploration Licence (PEL) from the state industries department, for which an application has already been filed and is pending for approval, sources told the TNIE.

"Considering the welfare of farmers and the general public, it is the firm policy decision of CM MK Stalin that no hydrocarbon-related projects can be permitted in any part of TN," Thennarasu's statement said.

Environmentalists say the block where the 20 exploratory wells are proposed is close to ecologically-sensitive areas like Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park and several notified bird sanctuaries. The environmental clearance has also raised questions over transparency. P4



Chief Minister MK Stalin presents a bronze statue of Thiruvalluvar to V-P candidate Sudershan Reddy in Chennai | EXPRESS

Reddy labelled Naxal to hide centre's fault, says Stalin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

ACCUSING the BJP of wearing a Tamil identity mask to seek support for its Vice-President candidate CP Radhakrishnan, Chief Minister and DMK president MK Stalin on Sunday said it is ideologies and not individuals that guide politics as individuals are just symbols. "We should support the ideology that stands for the people," he said.

Addressing a meeting of leaders of INDIA bloc and the alliance's MPs from Tamil Nadu in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to support Justice B Sudershan Reddy's candidature for the V-P election, in Chennai, the CM also hit out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah for targeting the former SC judge over Naxalism. "The centre could not end Naxal-based extremism and in order to hide its incompetence, Justice Reddy was labelled a 'Naxal' by Shah," the CM alleged.

"You (Reddy) are eminently qualified for the post of Vice President of India. That is why the INDIA bloc has declared you as our candidate. At a time when the BJP is attempting to undermine the Constitution, we need a judge who has defended it once to safeguard it again. Justice Reddy is also one who respects Tamil Nadu and its sentiments," Stalin said.

Recalling Reddy's call for withdrawal of the new National Education Policy (NEP), Stalin said Reddy had said the NEP is against human dignity since it would only promote 'I-Me-Mine culture'. P4

BJP, JD(U) likely to contest equal number of seats in Bihar election

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

SEAT-sharing talks between allies of the NDA for the upcoming Bihar assembly election are in the final stages with sources pointing towards BJP and JD(U) expected to contest an equal number of seats, likely around 100 each.

However, both parties are likely to face a challenge in satisfying smaller allies like Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) and Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustan Awam Morcha (HAM), which are demanding 40 and 20 seats, respectively.

A senior LJP (RV) leader on a condition of anonymity said, "We have made it clear to contest not less than 40 seats in the elections." Even if Chirag's LJP (RV) relents, it is not expected to contest less than 30 seats, sources added.

On the other hand, a senior HAM leader said, "My party would not settle for less than 20 seats. We should not be offered fewer seats than what LJP gets. We have four legislators in the state assembly while the LJP has none."

Bihar JD(U) president Umesh Kushwaha confirmed seat-sharing talks are underway, and it will be finalised at the appropriate time. "We will let you know when it is finalised," he said. Sources said the seat-sharing negotiations among NDA allies is likely to be finalised either by the end of August or the first week of September.

JD(U), sources said, would not contest less than 100 seats in any condition. This means, sources said, that the BJP will also not accept less than 100 seats. The other ally, former union minister and MP Upendra Kushwaha has not opened his cards so far, but would like to contest on a "respectable" number of seats.

In the 2020 Assembly elections, JD(U), led by chief minister Nitish Kumar, contested 115 seats and won 43, while the BJP fought on 110 and won 74 seats.

BJP says Aadhaar alone can't give voting rights; Rahul slams EC

PARVEZ SULTAN & RAMASHANKAR @ New Delhi/Patna

THE BJP on Sunday accused the Opposition of indulging in propaganda after the Supreme Court said that voters excluded during the ongoing SIR exercise in Bihar can submit Aadhaar along with other documents, asserting that the Supreme Court did not say Aadhaar alone can be a valid document to get voting rights.

Aadhaar is only a proof of identity and residence and does not establish citizenship, BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya said on X. "It is amusing to see the various interpretations of the Supreme Court's order dated Aug 22 in ADR vs ECI case, particularly with respect to Aadhaar... Nowhere in the judgment does the Supreme Court even suggest, let alone direct, that Aadhaar should be used as a valid document for SIR," Malviya wrote on 'X'.

"The truth is simple: SIR is intact, Aadhaar alone cannot get you enrolled; dead, fake, Bangladeshi and Rohingya names will be removed and only Indian citizens will elect the next government — not foreigners. Don't fall for propaganda. The Supreme Court has seen through the 'game'," Malviya said.

Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, during his 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Araria district of Bihar, said SIR in Bihar was an "institutionalised attempt" by the Election Commission to benefit the BJP. "The poll panel is working to help the saffron party. But it will not succeed as the people of Bihar are alert," he said. Rahul also accused the BJP-RSS of "closing the doors of opportunity" for Dalits, backward classes, women and the poor, and of attempting to "destroy the Constitution."



The LJP question
In the 2020 poll, even though LJP won one seat despite contesting 135 seats, it cost Nitish's JD(U) dearly by cutting votes



JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA and Japan are in the process of finalising a new bilateral framework to strengthen cooperation in economic security, with a focus on securing stable supply chains for critical goods coinciding with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan on August 29 and 30.

The framework is expected to cover key sectors including semiconductors, essential minerals, communications, clean energy, artificial intelligence (AI), and pharmaceuticals, sources said.

Both sides are also preparing to announce a dedicated AI Cooperation Initiative, aimed at supporting collaboration between startups and tech firms in the emerging artificial intelligence space.

The initiative aims to promote ties between Japanese and Indian firms. "Such cooperation is a win-win and mutually beneficial and can contribute to the growth of the Japanese economy," a source said.

The announcement is set to coincide with Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Japan. Modi may also travel to Sendai to see an experimental bullet train and visit a leading chip-making equipment manufacturer.

Japan is home to major players in the global semiconductor industry, including Kioxia, Renesas Electronics, Sony Semiconductor Solutions, and Toshiba Electronic Devices. These companies are central to advancements in chip-making and related technologies. Sendai, where Prime Minister Modi is expected to visit, is part of a region that has been increasingly focusing on semiconductor innovation and development, positioning itself as a hub for next-generation tech.

Modi is set to visit Japan on August 29-30 at invitation of Japanese PM Shigeru Ishiba, to participate in the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit.

During the visit, the two leaders will review the progress of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, with discussions also covering key areas such as defence.

EXPRESS READ

No V-Cs in 14 TN univs, 2 more may join list soon

CHENNAI: The administrative void in Tamil Nadu's public-funded higher education sector is reaching an alarming level with 14 of the 22 state-run universities already functioning without V-Cs and two more to become headless in four months. V-Cs of two universities were given one-year extension by the governor recently | P2

Man sets wife, son afire over family spat in Nellore

TIRUNELVELI: Enraged over a domestic spat, a 66-year-old man locked up his wife and son inside a room and set the room on fire using fuel, killing them both at Arakulam, Tirunelveli, on Sunday. Saverly, the accused, later set himself on fire but was rescued and admitted to Tirunelveli govt medical college hospital | P5

MAYHEM SIX KILLED IN RAIN FURY IN RAJASTHAN

Six people, including four minors and a government school teacher, died in separate rain-related incidents as heavy to very heavy rain battered parts of Rajasthan in last 24 hours; Dausa was the worst hit



IN STEP WITH THE HOLY SCRIPTURE

People from the Sikh community carry the 'Guru Granth Sahib' in a palanquin during the 'Nagar Kirtan' procession at the Golden Temple on 'Guru Granth Sahib Parkash Utsav', in Amritsar, on Sunday | P11

One in four rabies deaths in TN caused by pet dogs, show recent data

SINDUJA JANE @ Chennai

WITH the recent Supreme Court judgments triggering intense and polarised debates on the issue of increasing stray dog population, dog bites and rabies cases, data show that of the 64 rabies deaths recorded in Tamil Nadu in the last 18 months (January 2024 to Au-

gust 2025), 15 deaths (23.4%) were caused by pet dog bites and rest due to attack by stray dogs (76%).

According to the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine data accessed by TNIE, of the 43 rabies deaths recorded in 2024, 41 were due to partial or complete lack of vaccination, and two persons died



Stray dogs roaming on a street in Coimbatore district | FILE PICTURE

even after completion of full vaccination schedule due to possible viral load.

Experts said the data underscored the need for dog owners to get their pets mandatorily vaccinated once every year as the trend indicated that a large number of pet dogs may be unvaccinated.

Doctors also emphasised the

need for people to take required doses of rabies vaccine (along with rabies immunoglobulin depending on the nature of the bite) as part of post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) even if they are bitten by their vaccinated pet dogs.

Though the chance of getting infected could be minimal in case of vaccinated dogs, there

is a remote possibility of infection if the victims skip PEP, experts said.

Of the 43 rabies deaths last year, 33 were due to stray dog attack, and remaining 10 were due to attack by pet dogs. P5

3 CHILDREN, 20 OTHERS HURT IN STRAY DOG ATTACK IN MAYILADUTHURAI | P5

V-C logjam throws state varsities into disarray

16 of 22 state-run universities won't have vice-chancellors in 4 months; 1-year extension not the solution, says expert

BINITA JAISWAL @Chennai

THE administrative void in Tamil Nadu's public-funded higher education sector is reaching an alarming level with 14 of the 22 state-run universities already functioning without vice-chancellors (V-Cs) and two more to become headless in four months.

As these universities also function as affiliating institutions for colleges, academicians warn that the administrative chaos would not remain contained to the universities alone, but also impact the higher education sector at large.

The number of universities without V-Cs would have already been 16 if not for the extension of one year granted by Governor RN Ravi when the three-year tenure of the V-Cs of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and Alagappa University came to an end last week. The extension received mixed reactions with some opining that it is better to have a V-C instead of the administration be-

LIST OF HEADLESS INSTITUTIONS

Table with 4 columns: UNIVERSITY, V-C POST VACANT SINCE, DAYS WITHOUT V-C. Includes Bharathiar University, Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, University of Madras, TANUVAS, Madurai Kamaraj University, Anna University, Annamalai University, Tamil University, TN Physical Education & Sports University, Bharathidasan University, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, TN Dr Ambedkar Law University, Periyar University, Thiruvalluvar University.



V-C is head of the university and the leadership vacuum if stretching into years will have a serious impact on the quality of higher education. S P Thyagarajan, academican

ing taken over by the convenors' committee, while others pointed out that this was yet another display of the governor relentlessly not allowing the state government to have a larger say in the administration, which led to the issue in the first place.

The state asserted its right,

backed by the Supreme Court's landmark order granting "deemed assent" to 10 bills that took away powers to appoint V-Cs from the governor in 18 universities in April. However, the matter is still in a legal wrangle after a division bench of the Madras High Court stayed the

operation of nine of these bills. Moreover, the governor can grant such extensions only if the acts governing the respective universities have the provisions to do so. For instance, the tenure of the V-C of Thiruvalluvar University also ended last week along with the other two. "He cannot be given extension as the university statute doesn't allow for extension of the term of the V-C," said a senior official of Thiruvalluvar University.

The other two universities where the V-Cs' tenure will end in four months, in the first week of January 2026, are Mother Teresa Women's University (MTWU) and the Tamil Nadu Open University (TNOU). While MTWU's statute allows for extension, TNOU's doesn't.

By January TNDU MGR Medical University and T N Dr J Jayalalitha Fisheries University will be the only ones among the 20 state varsities that have governor as chancellor to have V-Cs. The TN National Law University and TN Jayalalitha Music and Fine Arts University do not face

the problem as the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court and the chief minister are the respective chancellors and not the governor.

"Extending tenure of V-Cs by one year is not a solution to this long-standing problem. V-C is head of the university and the leadership vacuum if stretching into years will have a serious impact on the quality of higher education. It's a very sorry state of affairs," said noted academican S P Thyagarajan.

"Amid this fight of ego and politics, ultimately the students, who are the future of the nation, are paying the price. I would suggest the state government and the governor to come to the table and sort out issues," added Thyagarajan. "The temporary convenors' committee can only manage daily operations, while recruitment, curriculum updates, certifications, and financial clearances are severely delayed. Efforts should be taken to break this logjam," said P Duraisamy, former V-C of University of Madras.



Matchmaking prevention cell

Ethiraj College for Women in Chennai appears less like a college and more like a parental surveillance bureau. Here, a transfer certificate is not a document but a family outing: a student can only collect it if she physically brings her parents. One student, whose single mother was bedridden, dared to submit an authorised letter—only to be told, after a day of bureaucratic suspense, that she must wait for her mother's recovery. When TNIE pressed for a reason, a teacher offered: "In the past, a few instances occurred where girls took TCs without their parents' knowledge and eloped with boys. So, to avoid such instances, the rule was framed." Clearly, nothing safeguards education like turning a college into a matchmaking prevention cell. - Binita Jaiswal

Peace achieved - No duty paid

The great tug-of-war at Tiruchy Customs seems to have drawn to a close, not with a handshake but with a transfer slip. For weeks, two senior officers were engaged in a bureaucratic version of musical chairs, each undoing the other's staff postings at the airport. Officers barely had time to unpack their teacups before being whisked off again, leaving them dizzy from all the to-ing and fro-ing. Complaints flew faster than duty-free liquor bottles, with some staff feeling more like pawns on a chessboard than public servants. Thankfully, one of the officers has now been packed off to the GST and central excise department. The rest can get back to stamping passports instead of trying each other's patience. - P Thiruselvam



Couple among four booked for selling newborn girl

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Salem

A couple in Salem has been booked for allegedly selling their newborn daughter for ₹1.20 lakh. Police have also named two others, including the buyer, in the case.

Police said Santhosh (25), a daily wage worker, and his wife Sivagami, a homemaker from Magudanchavadi, sold their baby to Ranjith, a daily wage labourer from Bengaluru.

The baby, born earlier this month in a private hospital in Bengaluru, is the couple's second child; the two already have a three-year-old son. Police added that the couple met Ranjith through regular visits to a church in Maniyanur, Salem.

Police have also implicated Devaraj, a relative of the couple, for facilitating the transaction. The matter came to light after a field nurse from the Veerapandi Primary Health Centre, during a routine house visit, noticed the infant was missing. She alerted the child helpline (1098), which passed on the information to the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU).

Following inquiries, the DCPU lodged a complaint with the all-women police station in Sangagiri, leading to the registration of a case against the four.

Officials confirmed the baby has since been reunited with the mother.

EXPRESS READ



ICF rolls out prototype of hydrogen train for trials

CHENNAI: The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) on Saturday rolled out a 10-car prototype of India's first hydrogen-powered train for trials and testing. The 1,200 HP rake consists of 10 coaches, with powered units positioned at both ends. "Eight of the coaches have been designed as non-AC second-class sitting, similar to the regular DEMU/MEMU configuration. The train is intended for short-distance travel, much like DEMU and MEMU services," said an ICF official. The Railway Board has decided to introduce the train on the Jind-Sonapat section of Northern Railway. According to sources, the prototype will undergo 180 days of speed trials and testing under the standards prescribed by the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO). ENS

Sick tigress found dead in Singara forest range at MTR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Nilgiris

A 12-year-old tigress, which had been sick and roaming near the forest boundary in the Singara forest range of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) died on Sunday.

After a video of the sick tigress went viral on social media, a team of forest staff began monitoring the animal on August 19 to prevent any conflict with humans or livestock. According to sources, the tigress was old and had lost its teeth, making it unable to hunt on its own. It had resorted to eating chicken waste that had been dumped by traders in a nearby abandoned quarry owned by the revenue department.

"We began monitoring the animal's movement around the clock since it was spotted near



The tigress fell ill on Sunday afternoon and died in the evening | EXPRESS

the forest boundary to prevent it from catching easy prey like cows or goats," a forest department official said. The tigress fell ill on Sunday afternoon and died in the evening. A post-mortem has been scheduled for Monday morning.

No entry

In Tirunelveli, around 4,200 people brought in buses to receive free house pattas from minister KN Nehru were left cooling their heels outside the Nehru Kalai Arangam on Saturday. The hall, it turned out, was already occupied by the government Siddha medical college for its diamond jubilee function. Revenue officials who had ferried the beneficiaries conveniently switched off their phones, leaving men, women and the elderly stranded. The beneficiaries were later taken to the collectorate and given the pattas. What was supposed to be a welfare bonanza turned into a game of musical chairs - except the music never stopped and the chairs were missing. - Thinakaran Rajamani

Dose of drama

In Hosur, National Deworming Day took a dramatic turn when a private school refused albendazole tablets for its students. The visiting health team was not just turned away but allegedly threatened by retired health officials whose grandchildren study there, an elected representative, and even another health department official in Krishnagiri district. The District Health Officer then sent a notice to the school, flagging several irregularities in the institute. In short, the health team went in to get rid of worms in children and ended up stepping on a whole nest of political ones. - Sivaguru S

(Compiled by Adarsh TR, Dinesh Jefferson E)

Chennai college gets a slice of football history, engraved in stone

SUBASHINI VIJAYAKUMAR @ Chennai

HAVE you ever wondered where football's very first rules came from or who laid them down? The answer now lies in a three-metre tall, 1,700-pound stone standing quietly inside the YMCA College of Physical Education, Nandanam. Etched on it are the 11 Cambridge Rules of Football - regarded as the earliest written code of the world's most beloved game.

Back in 1848, Cambridge University students drafted 11 rules and nailed them to trees

at Parker's Piece, a public park in Cambridge. The "Cambridge Rules," as they came to be known, were among the first attempts to standardise football.

They went on to shape the Laws of the Game, codified later by the Football Association in 1863 and maintained since 1886 by the International Football Association Board (IFAB), said Paul Sunder Singh, secretary of Karunalya, a city-based NGO.

To commemorate this legacy, the Cambridge City Council in UK commissioned two artists in 2017 to carve a massive stone

divided into nine segments, each bearing the rules in different languages. Of the nine, four segments were installed at Parker's Piece. Five were sent across the world - to Brazil's Maracana Stadium, Shanghai Shenhua FC's training ground in China, the Maadi Olympic Centre in Egypt, and Glads House adjacent to Bomu Community Stadium in Kenya, each having rules engraved in their respective language. The fifth stone sent to India, with rules carved on it in Tamil, has now found its home at the YMCA College of Physical Education



The 3-metre-tall stone on which the 11 Cambridge Rules of Football have been inscribed in Tamil | MARTIN LOUIS

after its unveiling on Sunday. "The Cambridge City Council partnered with Street Child United, a UK charity, to place the sculptures globally. Since Karunalya is Street Child United's partner in India, and our team plays the Street Children's World Cup (Crickets and Football), the stone was gifted to us," explained Paul.

Initially kept on their premises, Karunalya felt the monument deserved a more public sporting stage. "We approached both the AIADMK and DMK governments, informing them about the significance of the

sculpture and requesting a place for it in a sports stadium, but we got no response. Finally, we chose the YMCA college - India's first physical education college - as a fitting home," said sports instructor and activist B Ramkumar David.

While Brazil and China showcase their stones at iconic sporting venues, Chennai's football monument stands at YMCA as a humble yet proud tribute to the origin of the game's rules, first posted on trees in Cambridge and now celebrated across the continents.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

25th August: The whole solar system is in a state of excitement as a series of powerful planets form vibrant celestial relationships. But what exactly is the outcome? Most astrologers are able to predict uncertainty: that's easy! However, when we look at world affairs, it's extremely difficult to be more precise. Anything could happen!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) Today it's Uranus, that most distant and surprising of celestial bodies, which gives you the chance to skip the normal preliminaries in putting your ambitions into effect. Cash questions will preoccupy you later on, perhaps with unexpected results.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) It's fair to say that your planetary patterns are favourable, all the more so if your inclination is generally inspired, visionary even. The closer you come to practical responsibilities, the greater the need for additional care and caution.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Partners can't read your mind, so tell them what you think. If your aims are professional, and if you're planning a spot of personal promotion, you could do worse than set your sights on the next few days. You may just receive a windfall, even if only on a modest scale.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) The Moon is normally such a sympathetic planet, but today it leaves you in no doubt that it is other people who require your loving care and sympathy. Reach out and offer the hand of support to those in need. They will pay you back in their own way - when they can.

LEO (July 24 - Aug. 23) There's no escape from your busy planetary pictures and hence no way to avoid your responsibilities. The best course may be to get as much achieved as you possibly can, in order to give yourself more scope for relaxation tomorrow and the day after. Have a break. Put your feet up!

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23) You may see creative self-expression as a voluntary activity, but the planets don't agree. Today, in so many little ways, you may be compelled to be an individual and be true to your own utterly unique talents. Employees please: read it and family members please take care!

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23) There seems little doubt that home and family affairs will dominate your thoughts and feelings today. Even if you are determined to give the highest priority to work, it will be deep and fundamental issues which demand your attention, including your domestic relationships.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22) Some celestial indications suggest that you may be called away from home, possibly on account of work or a similar responsibility. In any event, the main goal is to communicate clearly and make yourself properly understood. Someone else may owe you an apology, but don't hold your breath!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 22) Business affairs will occupy your attention. Your financial stars are looking considerably less complex than this time last year, and today you may cut across a whole series of irrelevant hangovers like the proverbial hot knife through butter.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20) The ball is in your court. Tackle private affairs and deal with professional activities only if you feel a deep personal motivation. Romantic encounters and sentimental journeys are desirable, if only because the results may be much more delightful than expected.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19) Any feelings of uncertainty or confusion should be short-lived, and by late tomorrow you could be back in the driving seat. In the meantime, remember that you're now into a fantastically productive long-term cycle. The world will judge you by your deeds rather than by your words.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - Mar 20) Sometimes you just have to pay more attention to your own needs. After a long period of social responsibility, you may begin to strain under your personal commitments. If you're picky of your sign, your inclination is to withdraw from a particular public arena.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-27.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-27.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-27.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-27.

Jumble puzzle grid with words VCICI, CNBHE, LDRALO, TGRETU.

Cop clicks link in official group, loses ₹1L

EX PRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

A 44-year-old traffic constable attached to the Greater Chennai Traffic Police (GCTP) allegedly lost ₹1.22 lakh after clicking a phishing link that he received on a WhatsApp group of traffic police personnel, on August 16. A case has been registered and an inquiry is underway to trace the fraudster.

On August 16, he received a message on the official WhatsApp group with a link to a mobile application called "RTO." Mukesh closed the application after clicking on it but later in the night, ₹10,000 was debited from his account which he thought to be an EMI deduction.

Speaking to **TNIE**, Mukesh said, "The next day, ₹1.12 lakh was debited in a single transaction. That's when I got worried and went to the

bank. The officials checked and said that my phone was hacked and the money was stolen."

Mukesh then lodged a police complaint and the cyber crime wing police are conducting an inquiry. Preliminary inquiries revealed that the person, also a police personnel, who sent the message in the WhatsApp group, also compromised his phone when he accidentally clicked the link from the same group. However, he did not lose

money. A probe is underway to trace the first victim.

"I have submitted my phone for investigation and it has been found that after I clicked the link, the fraudster had gained control over my phone and used it to transfer money. The person had full access to my messages for OTP," Mukesh said. A senior police officer said that the cyber crime police team is actively pursuing all leads and those involved will be swiftly identified and arrested.



'Sun shades' to offer rain cover at eight city signals

GCC to install shades at traffic points in Royapuram at a cost of ₹28L

PRAVEENA S A @ Chennai

WITH only two months to go for the northeast monsoons, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) is all set to install eight new green 'sun' shades near traffic signals in the Royapuram zone at a cost of ₹28.3 lakh. The tenders were floated this month amidst complaints that the existing shades were damaged even during the brief spells of rain this summer, and their assembly and removal every year were resulting in recurring costs to the exchequer.

When asked why the shades, originally planned to bring relief to those waiting at the signals in summer heat, were being installed at this time of the year, a corporation official said that they were reimagining the shades as all-weather structures, that can offer a level of protection during rain and the sun.

"Since the green nets got damaged during rains, to prevent similar incidents, the new shades will have vertical coverings on both sides using fibre sheets. However, the top portion will continue to be covered with green netting," the official said.

Activists expressed concerns that installing sun shades just two months before the monsoon would potentially be a waste of taxpayers' money. Since the new structures are



The shade pavilion that was set up at Quid-e-Millath Government College junction road in Anna Salai at Chennai recently | FILE PIC

also to have the green net on top, water may still seep through, during the rains.

"Zone-wise fund allocation doesn't mean the money must be spent in haste without considering the consequences. If the funds allocated for that particular project can't be executed within the allotted time, it should then be diverted to timely needs like desilting works. Installing green shades now would be pointless, as they're likely to be damaged during the rains," FNCRWA president T K Shanmugam said.

The move has also been termed as a waste of public money. "When the corporation is spending ₹4-4.5 lakh on each of these structures, why make them with green nets again? Spending lakhs every year on shades that collapse during the rains is a complete waste. Durable materials such as asbestos

sheets or heat-resistant fibreglass composite should be used, which can also offer permanent solution," said L M Jaiganesh, a social activist.

Royapuram zonal officer, under whose jurisdiction the tenders were floated, said he would look into the matter. An official from the corporation's Bus Route Roads department said they were not aware that the tenders had been floated, since it was done at the zonal level, and assured to look into it.

Notably, the latest tenders have raised questions over cost variations with each unit being assembled in the city. In June, the corporation floated a tender for a 15mx10m green sun shade at the Gurunanak College junction at a cost of ₹3.37 lakh. Now, for a similar-sized structure at West Kalmadampam Road, the cost is only ₹3 lakh, including vertical fibre coverings.

History-sheeter hacked to death in Pallavaram

EX PRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

A 24-year-old history-sheeter, Ganesh from Pammal near Pallavaram, was hacked to death on Kattabomman Street near Moongil Eri on Saturday night by a gang with machetes and knives. The Sankar Nagar police have identified the suspects as Karthik alias Kaaka and two of his friends who arrived in an autorickshaw and assaulted Ganesh due to a previous altercation. The police recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem at Chromepet Government Hospital.

In a separate incident, Azharuddin Shah (38), a Kerala native working as a driver in Madipakkam, succumbed to injuries on Saturday after being assaulted by his roommates, who were his relatives, in a drunken brawl. The Madipakkam police said Hajamaideen (31) was arrested while another accused, Sameer, is on the run. The three who lived together in a housing complex at S Kolathur, quarrelled on August 18 over food shortage.

That night, while Azharuddin was asleep, Hajamaideen and Sameer attacked him in a drunken rage, hitting him in the stomach. Though he initially took treatment at Chromepet Government Hospital, his condition worsened, and he later died at Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital. Based on the post-mortem report confirming death due to abdominal injuries, police altered the case to murder and secured Hajamaideen, the police said.



FRAMES OF ELEGANCE

Artistes from Rajarajeswari Kalaniketan led by Dr Veena Murthy Vijay present a vibrant Kuchipudi recital and Bhama Kalapam at the Kala Mela 2025, held at Bharata Kalakshetra Auditorium in Chennai, on Sunday evening | ASHWIN PRASATH

Five held in separate drug cases in city

EX PRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE Tambaram Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) on Sunday afternoon arrested Nilachal Palaka (35) of Odisha, near Pallavaram 200ft radial road and seized 105 kg of ganja, a car and a mobile phone. Police said he worked as a painter and had brought the contraband from Odisha to supply in Tambaram, Chrompet, and Pallavaram.

In another incident, the Palikaranai PEW on Saturday secured Saravanan (44), Amarendiran alias Amar (24) and



Kamalesh (26) in separate locations near Kamatchi Hospital and Gowrivakkam bus stop, and seized 15 kg of ganja, an autorickshaw and three phones. Cases were registered and all

four accused were remanded in judicial custody.

In the third case, the Shastri Nagar police on Saturday arrested Arunpandiyam (34) of Kanyakumari district, near a restaurant at Shastri Nagar and seized 10 grams of methamphetamine from him. The police said that said Arunpandiyam, who had earlier completed engineering and worked at a private firm in Bengaluru, later quit his job and began sourcing methamphetamine from the Bengaluru to sell in Chennai, the police said. A case was registered, and he was remanded in custody.

EXPRESS READ

World folklore day: Students showcase prowess in folk art

CHENNAI: Students from government model schools on Saturday organised an exhibition titled 'Transforming Art into a Tool' at the Egmore Government Museum, showcasing hundreds of traditional musical instruments and performing arts to mark World Folklore Day. The exhibition was organised jointly by students learning paraiattam in all schools with their instructors. The event also featured a discussion on the evolution of folklore. ENS



MARTIN LOUIS

25-year-old woman dies by suicide after wedding called off, fiancé arrested

CHENNAI: 25-year-old woman died by suicide at her fiancé's house at Vepery on Saturday evening after the man allegedly refused to marry her citing personal differences, the police said. The woman was identified as D Harshita of Royapuram. More than a year ago, Harshita got acquainted with D Darshan (26), who runs a business. Their engagement was held in February. However, a few months back, Darshan called off the wedding. On Saturday evening, Harshita along with her family and relatives went to Darshan's house to resolve the issue. Despite discussions, Darshan did not agree to the marriage. Harshita later went to the terrace of the building and killed herself. Based on a complaint, the police arrested Darshan was arrested. (Assistance for those having suicidal thoughts is available on TN's health helpline 104 and Sneha's suicide prevention helpline 044-24640050) ENS

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Corporate Office: 1004/5, 10th Floor, C-Wing, One BKC, C-66, G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai 400 051, Maharashtra, India.
CIN: U65999GJ2016PTC093692. Website: www.tygercapital.in

DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

You the below mentioned Borrowers, Co-borrower(s) / Guarantor have availed loan's facility(ies) from Tyger Capital Pvt Ltd. (formerly known as M/s. Adani Capital Pvt Ltd) vide Certificate of Incorporation dated 6th June 2024, issued by the Registrar of Companies, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, herein after referred to 'TCPL' by mortgaging your immovable properties (Securities). Consequently to your defaults your loans were classified as non-performing assets. Tyger Capital Pvt Ltd for the recovery of the outstanding dues, issued demand notice under Section 13(2) of The Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the Act), the contents of which are being published herewith as per Section 13(2) of the Act read with rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Name Of The Borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor / EsSEL Loan Account No / Old Loan Account No	Mortgage Property Address	Demand Notice Date / O/s Amount / O/s Date
Raj G R Poongodi 106MSM001021352 + 105MSM001104039	All that piece and parcel of land and building natham S No 88/1A (North Part), measuring with an extent of 960 Sq. ft. situated at No. 44, Bhajani kol street, Paranjipur-Village, Sripennumbur Taluk, Kancheepuram District Bounded as East - Common Passage, West - Mari naicker's Property, North - Parasuraman's Plot, South - Remaining part of land	12-Aug-25 Rs.2212160.05 (1914134.05 + 298026) (Rupees Twenty Two Lakhs Twelve Thousand One Hundred Sixty and Five Paise Only) As On Date - 11-Aug-25

You the Borrowers and Co-borrowers/Guarantor are therefore called upon to make payment of the above mentioned demanded amount with further interest as mentioned herein above in full within 60 days of this notice failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to take action under the act to enforce the above-mentioned securities. Your attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the act by virtue of which you are at liberty to redeem the secured asset within period stipulated in the aforesaid provision. Please note that as per section 13(13) of the said act, you are restrained from transferring the above-referred securities by way of sale, lease or otherwise without our consent.

Place : TAMIL NADU
Date : 25.08.2025

For Tyger Capital Pvt Ltd.
Sd/-
Authorized Officer

DEMAND NOTICE

Notice under Sec.13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 Sent on 09.06.2025 by Regd.Post to 1.Mr.J.Perumal,S/o. Jayaram,No.9/44, Dhulasingamudhali Street, Pallavaram Cantonment, Chengalpattu - 600 043,2.Mr.C.Devaraj,S/o. Chellan,No.51, Crikarai Street, Maraimalai Nagar, Chengalpattu- 603 209.

Sub: Loan account:Term Loan:PLVROM712300001 with M/s.Shriram Finance Limited,Pallavaram Branch.

You committed default in repayment of loan to the tune of Rs.Rs.90,26,621/- (Rupees Ninety Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Six Hundred and Twenty One Only) as on 05.06.2025 with further interest at the agreed rate from 06.06.2025 till date of repayment. The company issued notice on the Act on 09.06.2025 calling upon you to repay the outstanding amount of Rs.90,26,621/- as on 05.06.2025.

The notice were sent to both of you by Regd. Post with acknowledgment which has been received by 11 of you and returned with an endorsement "Insufficient Address" from 2 of you. You are called upon to pay Rs. Rs.90,26,621/- (Rupees Ninety Lakhs Twenty Six Thousand Six Hundred and Twenty One Only) as on 05.06.2025 together with interest from 06.06.2025 till date of payment within 60 days from the date of this notice failing company will be constrained to exercise its rights of enforcement of security interest as against the secured assets given in the schedule hereunder. This Notice is without prejudice to any other right remedy available to the company. This Notice is without prejudice to any other remedy available to the company-including its right to proceed with the proceedings presently pending before DRT/RO of DRT/DRAT/Court and proceed with the execution of order/decreed obtained/to be obtained.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY
Property belongs to (i)Mr.Karthik.R and (ii) Mr.Kiran.R (Settlement Deed in favour of sons) Document No. 1633 of 2011
Property belongs to (i) Mr. J.Perumal (Sale Deed Document No.484 of 2008)

ITEM -I
All that Piece and Parcel of land comprised in IyenPunjai Survey No.12/1C measuring an extent of 0.19,25 Ares (Acre 0.47/2 Cents) in below side out of 0.50,0 Ares and IyenPunjai Survey No.12/1D measuring an extent of 0.15,5 Ares (Acre 0.38 Cents) in upside out of 0.82,0 Ares totally Acre 0.851/2 Cents Situated at Poongunam Village, Vikravandi Taluk, Villupuram District, Land being:-
BOUNDED ON THE:North By:Gundalapuliyur Limit,South By: Land of Kannan Iyyanar,East By :Sale Land of A.VA,West By:Land of Subburayapillai,

ITEM -II
All that Piece and Parcel of land comprised in Iyen Punjai Survey No.12/1B measuring an extent of 0.23,5 Ares (Acre 0.58 Cents) in boundaries out of 0.47,0 Ares Situated at Poongunam Village, Vikravandi Taluk, Villupuram District, Land being:-
BOUNDED ON THE:North By:Sale Land of A.VA,South By :Land of Ravi, East By :Land of Subburayapillai,WestBy:Land of Subburayapillai,Totaling an extent of Acre 1.431/2 Cents within the Sub Registration District of Villupuram and registration District of Vikravandi.

Date: 25.08.2025
Place: Pallavaram
For M/s.Shriram Finance Limited

Authorized Officer

BAJAJ HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED
Corporate Office: Cerebrum IT Park B2 Building, 5th Floor, Kalyani Nagar, Pune, Maharashtra - 411014, Branch Office: Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd, Ground floor, Chateaud Ampa, No.37, Nelson Manickam Road Chennai-600029
Authorized Officer's Details: Name: Rathish Ramachandran, Email ID: Rathish.ramachandran@bajajhousing.co.in, Mob No. 9940155459 & 877385481, 8689189048

APPENDIX IV - A [Rule 8(6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
E-Auction Sale notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the securitisation and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of the 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 physical possession of which has been taken over by the Authorized Officer of the Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is below is", "Whatever there is" and "Without Recourse Basis" for recovery of the loan dues, applicable interest, charges and costs etc. payable to Bajaj Housing Finance Ltd as detailed below.

Details of Borrower/Co Borrowers and Loan Details	1.Date & Time of E-Auction, 2. Last Date of Submission of EMD, 3. Date & Time of the Property Inspection	1. Reserve Price, 2. EMD of the Property, 3. Bid Increment
LAN: H403ECN0366355 AND H403HLP0192154, 1. Vimal Kumar V (Borrower), 2. Shalini P (Co - Borrower) both at No 1/42A 5th Main Road, Ganga Nagar Chennai. Tamil Nadu - 600042 Total Outstanding: Rs. 53,49,293/- (Rupees Fifty three lakhs forty nine thousand Two hundred and Ninety Three Only) as on 20/07/2025 along with future interest and charges accrued w.e.f. 20/07/2025	1) E-Auction Date :- 26-Sep-2025 Between 11:00 AM To 12:00 PM With Unlimited Extension of 5 Minutes, 2) Last Date of Submission of EMD With KYC is :- 26-Sep-2025 Up to 5:00 P.M. (IST), 3.) Date of Inspection: 26-Aug-25 to 26-Sep-25 (Between 11:00 Am To 4:00 Pm (IST).	1) Reserve price: Rs.35,00,000 I- (Rupees Thirty five lakhs Only), 2) EMD: Rs.3,50,000/- (Rupees Three lakh fifty thousand only) 10% of Reserve Price :- 26-Sep-2025 - Rs.25,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Thousand Only) & IN Such Multiples.

Description of the Immovable Property: All that piece and parcel of Flat No. G-2, in the Ground floor having a plinth area measuring an extent of 945 sq.ft., inclusive of common area and common works, the flat known as "GANESH SHELTER" together with 600 sq.ft., undivided share of land in and out of 2400 sq.ft. In 9th Street, Periyar Nagar approved layout No. D.D.T.P. No. 226/74, Madipakkam, Chennai - 600091, comprised in Survey No. 199/12, Patta No. 5560, as per Patta Survey No 199/ 12F situated at Madipakkam Village, bounded on North by : Plot No.42 Part, South by: Plot No. 41, East by: Plot No. 33, West by: 30 Feet Road

Terms and Conditions of the Public Auction are as under:
• The Secured asset will be sold below the Reserve price • The Auction Sale will be online through e-auction portal. • The e-Auction will take place through portal https://bankauctions.in, on 26-Sep-2025 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM to onwards with unlimited auto extension of 5 minutes each • For detailed terms and conditions please refer company website URL https://www.bajajhousingfinance.in/auction-notices or for any clarification please contact with Authorized officer.

Date: 25/08/2025
Place: Chennai
Authorized Officer (Rathish Ramachandran)
Bajaj Housing Finance Limited

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STATE PANEL PUTS FORTH 234 QUESTIONS ON CONSTITUTION OVERHAUL

Committee on union-state relations will file its interim report by January 2026, submit the final report within two years

T MURUGANANDHAM @Chennai

THE questionnaire of the High-Level Committee on Union-State Relations (HLUSR) of the Tamil Nadu government, released by Chief Minister MK Stalin on Saturday, has put forth 234 questions revolving around an overhaul of the 75-year-old Constitution to make India a 'genuinely' federal country in all key areas.

The questionnaire is set in 20 broad heads including nature of Indian federalism, creeping centralisation since 1950, procedure for amendment of the Constitution, formation of new states and alteration of areas, boundaries or names of existing states, GST reforms, union-state financial relations, role of the governors and the President, language, delimitation of constituencies, elections and anti-defection provisions, inter-state river disputes, union-state administrative relations, national security and state autonomy, union-state legislative relations among others.

It can be answered on <https://hlusr.tn.gov.in>.

The first question is whether the respondent agrees with the contention that the Constitution heavily borrowed from the Government of India Act, 1935 and continued with a colonial design that centralises power in New Delhi.

Ever since the Constitution was approved in 1950, there have been criticisms against it. Many political parties have been demanding a review of the Constitution for decades

based on their own ideologies. While the BJP has been seeking review of the Constitution to 'Indianise' it, the DMK has been seeking a review to 'federalise' it.

The HLUSR seeks to examine and review the provisions of the Constitution of India and the existing laws, orders, policies and arrangements that bear upon union-state relations.

The committee will submit its interim report by January 2026 and final report within

two years.

At a time when political parties in Tamil Nadu are raising their voice in support of power share in the state government, two questions posed by the committee assume significance: "Do you agree that the dominance of a single national party ruling both in the union and in most states has historically reinforced unitary trends in India, limiting state autonomy? Has the rise of coalition governments at the union and regional parties forming gov-

ernments in the states improved the federal balance?"

There are also questions relating to post-partition centralisation and its continued relevance, amending the Constitution for stronger states and federalism, decentralisation of union ministries and state functions, why there is reluctance to let the state government participate in the management of airports, sea ports, railways, etc, at a time when private entities are allowed in that.

SOME KEY QUESTIONS



1 Do you believe India's federal system inadequately protects its regional, linguistic and cultural diversity, with attempts to impose uniformity?

2 With the idea of India now firmly established, is the centralisation in the Constitution still justified?

3 Should large union ministries handling State List and Concurrent List matters be decentralised to improve governance?

4 Has the "High command culture," where chief ministers are imposed by party headquarters, weakened state autonomy?

5 Should India make constitutional amendments harder by reducing provisions amendable by a simple majority, raising the quorum to 50%, and requiring approval of the total membership of each House?

6 Should constitutional amendments by special majority require two-thirds of the total membership of each House, rather than two-thirds of those present and voting?

7 Should the list of constitutional provisions requiring state ratification be expanded to cover all matters affecting state rights and the federal balance?

8 Should India, like Germany, codify the Constitution's basic features (democracy, federalism, secularism, etc.) as expressly unamendable rather than relying solely on judicial interpretation?

Kanimozhi to get Periyar award at Mupperum Vizha

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

THE DMK headquarters on Sunday announced that annual awards for 2025, instituted in the names of Dravidian leaders, will recognise the long-standing work of party functionaries. The awards will be presented at the Mupperum Vizha to be held in Karur on September 17 by party president MK Stalin.

DMK deputy general secretary and parliamentary party leader Kanimozhi Karunanidhi has been chosen for the Periyar award. The Anna award will be given to Subha Seetharaman, a former member of the DMK's audit committee and former chairperson of the Palayamkottai municipality.

Similarly SM Ramachandran, a centenarian and former MLA from Anna Nagar Assembly constituency, will be honoured with the Kalaignar award. Veteran functionary of the DMK and member of the executive committee, Kulithalai Sivaraman, has been chosen for the Pavendhar award, while former MLA and chairman of the DMK's Adi Dravidar Welfare Committee, Marudhur Ramalingam, will be presented with the Perasiriyar award. Former minister Pongalur N Palanisamy will be honoured with the MK Stalin award.

Manachanallur DMK MLA facing questions over organ transplant at his hospital, says EPS



AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami addressing a campaign in Manachanallur near Tiruchy on Sunday | EXPRESS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Tiruchy

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Sunday levelled serious charges of 'organ theft' at a private hospital linked to Manachanallur DMK MLA's family, and charged that the state government was turning a blind eye to the issue.

"Instead of serving his constituency, the MLA is facing questions over how organ transplants are being handled at his hospital. These are not small lapses as they affect lives. However, the DMK government has chosen to remain silent," Palaniswami said during his campaign in Manachanallur.

He also highlighted the "mounting difficulties" of farmers in the region owing to erratic power supply, fertiliser shortage and delays in crop in-

AIADMK cadre assault ambulance driver

Ahead of Palaniswami's visit, Thuraiyur town witnessed mild chaos after a 108 ambulance driver and a female technician were allegedly assaulted by AIADMK cadre. The driver, who was later admitted to Thuraiyur GH, said they had received a call that an AIADMK cadre attending the event had fainted near MSK Mahal and they rushed to pick him up. However, on reaching Athur Road, party cadre surrounded the vehicle, hit it with their hands, and manhandled the staff. A video clip doing the rounds on social media shows the driver being manhandled.

insurance payouts. Palaniswami contrasted this with his government's record of waiving ₹12,100 crore farm loans and

settling pending dues.

"Cultivators here are unable to plan their samba season properly. The government has abandoned them," Palaniswami claimed, and added that if voted back to power, the AIADMK will construct four new check dams along the Cauvery in Tiruchy to improve irrigation and groundwater recharge.

At Thuraiyur, Palaniswami turned his attack on Minister for Natural Resources, Courts & Prisons S Regupathy, accusing him of misusing political power to control quarry and crusher operations. Palaniswami alleged that the minister's circle was benefitting out of illegal royalty while farmers and small traders were suffering owing to rising input costs. At Manachanallur, Palaniswami interacted with farmers.

Edappadi is NDA's CM candidate in TN: Nainar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Tiruchy

DISMISSING claims that AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami was upset with Union Home Minister Amit Shah for not mentioning him as the CM candidate of the NDA in Tamil Nadu during his visit to Tirunelveli, BJP state president Nainar Nagenthran on Sunday said, "No one is disappointed. EPS is heading the NDA in Tamil Nadu."

Interacting with media persons in Tiruchy, the BJP leader to a query on whether the NDA would form the next government alone or with partners urged them not to indulge in unnecessary speculation.

Dismissing speculation of friction between the BJP and the AIADMK, Nagenthran said that the BJP is a national party with over 1,200 MLAs and 330 MPs. "Those claiming that the AIADMK-BJP alliance is incompatible should first say how many MPs or MLAs they have. Ours is a strong alliance," he added.



VCK president Thol Thirumavalavan talking to reporters in Thoothukudi | EXPRESS

Thiruma: V-P poll is about India's welfare & not Tamil identity

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

VCK president Thol Thirumavalavan on Sunday said the Vice President election must be approached as a contest between the BJP and non-BJP parties even though it has fielded a Tamil as candidate.

Speaking to reporters after presiding over a cadre's marriage, Thirumavalavan said, "Fielding CP Radhakrishnan as Vice President candidate shows the BJP's focus is on Tamil Nadu, but it is not necessary to support him only for the Tamil identity, because the election is for the welfare of India and mainly between BJP or non-BJP parties."

The Chidambaram MP further said he has sent an email to all MPs appealing to them to support INDIA bloc candidate Sudharshan Reddy and protect democracy. "The BJP has forced this election upon us. Former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar has been placed under house arrest under military surveillance by the BJP government. If this is the situation for a former vice president, what would be the common man's situation under the BJP govern-

ment", he said.

Refuting criticism of double standards regarding the agitation of cleanliness workers in Chennai, Thirumavalavan said, "Making them permanent should not reduce cleaning work to a particular community. The concern is it should not become a permanent job for a particular community. Through adopting mechanisation and advanced technologies, the government should create a situation to deploy anyone who knows technology," he said.

While appealing to government not to privatise cleanliness work, Thirumavalavan asked if the government will follow 10% EWS and 69% OBC reservation in appointment of sanitation workers.

Regarding the electrocution death of sanitation worker Varalakshmi in Chennai, Thirumavalavan held the electricity department responsible for the death. "The contractor had extended ₹10 lakh compensation, but it is insufficient. The government should take responsibility for the education of her children till higher education, provide government job for her husband, and provide additional assistance," he said.

Now it is your turn to judge me: Sudershan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE retired judge had said the NEP would not nurture plurality or the democratic spread of education. "Do we need a bigger reason for proposing this personality for the V-P post," Stalin asked.

The CM also charged that the BJP-led union government has been using central agencies against its political adversaries. It has also been transforming autonomous bodies into subsidiaries of the BJP. So, the Constitution itself is in peril. At this juncture, it is our duty to support a person who believes in the fundamental principles of India — secularism, federalism, social justice, and unity in diversity.

Addressing the gathering, Justice B Sudershan Reddy said Tamil Nadu leads the country in the art of imagination and vision. But for that vision, the state would not have been in the present situation leading the rest of the states in the Human Development Index, he said. "I have given enough judgments. Now it is your turn to judge me. Hitherto, I was upholding the Constitution, having true faith and allegiance to the Constitution. If given an opportunity, I will

do everything possible to protect and uphold the Constitution," Reddy added.

Later, answering queries of reporters flanked by leaders of DMK allies — K Selvaperunthagai, Thol Thirumavalavan and Vaiko — Reddy said he was grateful to all leaders of the opposition political parties that represented more than 64% of the population of the country.

When asked about Amit Shah's criticism of him, Reddy said he had already responded to that. "I don't keep on responding to that. It would not be appropriate on my part to continuously talk about a matter which is totally irrelevant to our present purpose."

To another question, Reddy declined to comment on NDA's V-P candidate CP Radhakrishnan. "It is the contest for the post of V-P of the nation. I have promised the nation, and I reiterate it. It is going to be one of the most decent elections ever fought in the recent past. I do not wish to make any comments about him, and he is a candidate." DMK parliamentary party leader Kanimozhi, CPM state secretary P Shanmugam and senior leaders of the DMK and its alliance parties were present.

Shocked by clearance to ONGC, parties want nod withdrawn

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

POLITICAL parties, including allies of the ruling DMK, reacted with shock on Sunday after the Tamil Nadu State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) granted environmental clearance for drilling 20 onshore exploratory wells in Ramanathapuram. Later in the evening, Environment Minister Thangam Thennarasu clarified that the state would ask SEIAA to withdraw the clearance given to ONGC for the wells.

MDMK general secretary, Vaiko, in a statement, said the clearance given to ONGC will affect the livelihood of fishermen and also the environment. Hence, the TN government should review the clearance given and withdraw it. PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss said his party has already opposed such a clearance to ONGC, and despite that, the government had proceeded to grant it. The technology to be used for onshore exploratory wells would make the Ram-

anathapuram district a desert.

AMMK general secretary TTV Dhinakaran said, contrary to the promise made by the DMK government that no permission would be granted for hydrocarbon exploration, the

clearance has been given covertly. The expert committee headed by Professor Sultan Ismail submitted a detailed report on the adverse impacts of hydrocarbon wells already established in the Cauvery delta.

He said the failure to release the report deepens the suspicions against the government.

Manithaneya Makkal Katchi president MH Jawahirullah said that already, Chief Minister MK Stalin had promised

that he would not allow hydrocarbon wells anywhere in TN. But contrary to his promise, the clearance given to ONGC has come as a big shock to the farmers as well as environmentalists.

Eco clearance document uploaded on outdated website

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

INSTEAD of being posted on the Union Environment Ministry's Parivesh portal, the official platform for tracking environmental approvals, the EC document was uploaded on the outdated environmentclearance.nic.in website. Activists allege this was a deliberate move to escape public scrutiny.

Moreover, after exploration activities in the hydrocarbon sector were moved from Category A to Category B2, they now require environmental clearance only from the states concerned and will not require preparation of an EIA report or public hearing, as per the EIA



notification which was amended in 2020. Development or production, both on offshore / onshore fields as hydrocarbon blocks, will continue to merit assessment as "category A".

"Even as early as November 2023, we urged that ONGC's application be rejected. Yet, disre-

garding all objections, clearance has been granted. This deserves our strongest condemnation," said G Sundararajan, coordinator of Poovulagin Nanbargal. He added, "Chief Minister MK Stalin himself promised not a single hydrocarbon well would be permitted in Tamil Nadu. This approval is a betrayal of farmers."

Critics also point to the government's failure to release the report of an expert panel led by soil biologist Prof Sultan Ismail, which was submitted in February 2022. The committee had reportedly warned of the grave ecological hazards posed by hydrocarbon drilling, but the report remains under wraps.

"Whose commercial interests are being protected by suppressing this critical document," Sundararajan asked.

In 2020, the state had enacted the Cauvery Delta Protection Act which declared delta districts-including Thiruvavur, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Pudukottai and later Mayiladuthurai-as protected agricultural zones where new hydrocarbon projects are banned. Since Ramanathapuram and Sivaganga were not a part of the Act's ambit, farmers have been demanding the government to amend the Act and extend the protection to these two districts since they too are considered agri-dependent.



GILDED FIELD

Sunflower fields in Tenkasi have become a tourist attraction, drawing large numbers of visitors, especially from Kerala | V KARTHICALAGU

Clamour for Kerala Cong MLA's resignation grows

K S SREEJITH@TPuram

THE resignation of Congress MLA Rahul Mamkootathil appears imminent, with mounting pressure from within the party in the wake of sexual misconduct allegations. Senior leaders, including Ramesh Chennithala, have urged swift action, while KPCC president Sunny Joseph has insisted that a decision will follow due consultations.

intensified after a fresh phone conversation linked to the case surfaced. Sunny Joseph has since held talks with senior leaders and working presidents A P Anil Kumar, P C Vishnunadh and Shafi Parambil, while consultations with MLAs and members of the political affairs committee are under way. Party sources said Rahul is left with little option but to resign. "That decision will come within days. This is a time for Rahul to accept he has hit rock

bottom," a senior leader told TNIE. Chennithala, currently abroad, reportedly telephoned Sunny Joseph, stressing that resignation was the only way forward with Assembly elections nearing. AICC general secretary K C Venugopal termed the issue "serious". He reminded that Rahul had been forced to quit as Youth Con-



Rahul Mamkootathil

gress president within 24 hours of the first allegations. "Now more charges have surfaced. Senior leaders in Kerala are discussing the matter and will soon convey the party's decision," he said. Divisions, however, remain visible. Some leaders feel Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan overstepped by declaring that Rahul lacked

his backing without consulting the KPCC. UDF convenor A Dor Prakash, along with Anil Kumar, Vishmunadh and Shafi, argued that organisational procedures must be followed. "No one can impose a unilateral decision," Prakash said. Rahul's supporters contend that, in the absence of a formal complaint or police case, he deserves a chance to be heard. On Sunday, he claimed conspiracy behind the release of an audio clip implicating him.



Chief Minister M K Stalin interacting with schoolchildren | FILE PICTURE

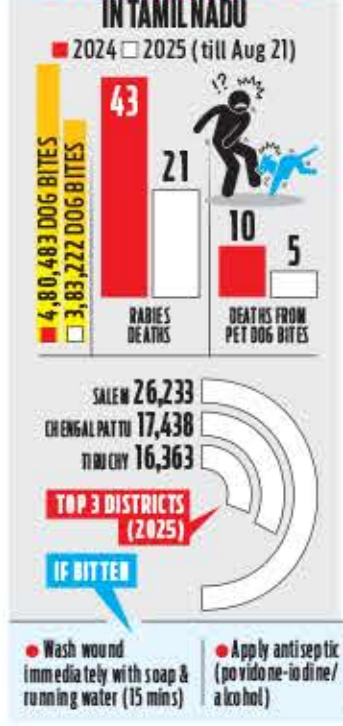
Complete immunisation doses even if attack is by vaccinated pet: Doctors

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

WHILE a person had suffered category I bite (licks on intact skin), four persons suffered category II bite (minor scratches, abrasions without bleeding), and five others suffered category III bite (scratches, bites or licks on broken skin). The category of 33 cases was uncertain.

total of 43 deaths were reported in 2024, compared to 21 (49% of last year) reported in 2025 as of August 21. Of the 43 deaths last year, the deceased were bitten by pet dogs in 10 cases. This year, the number was five out of 21. As per

the data, of these 21 deaths, 18 were either unvaccinated or partially vaccinated. Dr Somasundaram said people should realise that rabies in humans is 100% fatal if they do not get fully jabbed after getting bitten. "They should complete all four doses without fail," he said.



He stressed that many mistakenly think that they should take subsequent doses only at the same hospital where they took the first dose, leading to many failing to complete all four doses. "This is not true. Even if someone has travelled to a different place after the first dose, they can get the second or subsequent doses at any hospital," he said.

The doctor added that DPH has a system in place for following up with people for dog bite cases to complete vaccination. Acknowledging that some people missed their jabs despite this, he pointed out that sending reminders to people through SMS can be considered to strengthen the follow-up mechanism.

Dr K Kolasandaram, former director of DPH, said that deaths happen in the case of pet dog attacks because most of them miss booster doses for dogs. Once every year, the dogs should be given booster doses. If the immunity of vaccinated dogs is weak, there's a high possibility of them not being fully protected, he said.

As per the National Guidelines for Rabies Prophylaxis issued in 2019, "The history of rabies vaccination in an animal does not guarantee that the biting animal is not rabid... it cannot be presumed that a vaccinated dog is actually protected, given the variable efficacy of various anti-rabies vaccines in animals or health status of animals. Hence, irrespective of the vaccination status of the biting animal, the PEP should be given."

Dr A Somasundaram, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, said, "People should understand that they cannot skip vaccines and that they are not safe just because they are bitten by pet dogs. Even if the dog has been vaccinated properly, one cannot be sure if the dog is 100% protected. Hence, people should get fully vaccinated."

The data also showed that dog bite cases are on the rise in the state. While 4.81 lakh cases were reported in 2024, 3.83 lakh cases (80% of last year's) have already been recorded in the first eight months of 2025. Meanwhile, human rabies deaths seem to show signs of marginal decline as per the numbers reported so far. A



Ahead of the festival season, city authorities set up a temporary pond for idol immersion on the banks of the Kuakhai River in Bhuvanagar on Sunday | DEBAPATTA MALLICK

FAITH FINDS FLOW

Ahead of the festival season, city authorities set up a temporary pond for idol immersion on the banks of the Kuakhai River in Bhuvanagar on Sunday | DEBAPATTA MALLICK

CM to launch breakfast scheme in 2,430 aided schools tomorrow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

CHIEF Minister M K Stalin will inaugurate the extension of the free breakfast scheme to 2,430 government-aided schools on Tuesday. Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann has been invited to take part in the event through DMK MP P Wilson, Stalin said in a letter to party cadres on Sunday.

Reiterating the objective of the scheme, Stalin said it aimed to ensure that no child attended classes on an empty stomach. "Instead of waiting until noon, children must begin their day of learning with a healthy breakfast before their noon meal," he said.

The CM noted that during his school inspections, he had mon-

itored the food, assessed its quality and interacted with students. "Since the results were encouraging, the DMK government has decided to expand the scheme further," he said.

Stalin added that despite Tamil Nadu's considerable economic growth, many families were still unable to provide breakfast for their children before sending them to school. The scheme, he stressed, was designed to bridge this gap.

Recalling the initiative's historical roots, Stalin said it was under Pitty Theagaraya Chetty of the Justice Party that a resolution was passed in the Madras Legislative Council in 1920, leading to the introduction of the noon meal scheme at the Thousand Lights Corporation School.

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED Credit Recovery and Management Department

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— Rammath Goenka

CORE VS HEADLINE: INDIA'S INFLATION DEBATE DEEPENS

THE RBI's Flexible Inflation Targeting (FIT) framework will turn 10 next year, and the central bank believes it has met its expectations. Over the last nine years, India experienced a hump-shaped performance, with inflation behaving like an obedient child in the first and last three years. The middle three years saw retail prices breach the upper tolerance band, mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. If average inflation hovered around 4 percent from 2016 to 2019, it stayed above 6 percent for five quarters from the first quarter of Financial Year 2022 to the fourth quarter of Financial Year 2023. With a review slated for next March, key questions arise: Should core inflation replace headline inflation as the anchor for monetary policymaking, as suggested by the Economic Survey, 2025? Or should the government re-examine the 4 percent target and consider establishing a tolerance band?

Those championing core inflation argue that the food component is outside the RBI's purview and, therefore, core inflation should guide policy. They reason that stabilising core inflation leads to better economic outcomes. However, RBI maintains that persistent food inflation can spill over to core inflation through higher wage costs, higher rents, and higher markups. Which is why its expert committee in 2014 insisted that since food and fuel constitute more than 50 percent of the consumption basket, inflation based on less than half the basket would not be representative. As former Governor Shaktikanta Das noted, eliminating food from the target would amount to having no target at all. "It will make no sense to the average citizen, as it is the headline inflation that the common person understands and should remain that way." Even as the debate over core vs headline remains unfinished, there's another view that the inflation target itself needs to be reset.

However, the central bank may not be in agreement. In its recent discussion paper, it noted that changing the target now, when the global economy is confronted with geopolitical uncertainty, can be interpreted by international investors as a dilution of the IT framework, thereby undermining policy credibility. It reasoned that the current tolerance band of 2-6 percent allows headroom to account for deviations from temporary food and fuel price shocks. That said, price stability is a shared responsibility between the government and RBI, and hence needs effective monetary-fiscal coordination to prevent second-round inflationary effects.

FERTILISER DEMAND, POOR SUPPLY STIR FARM CRISIS

A crisis is simmering in Telangana, and the farmers are at the receiving end. Serpentine queues at the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society centres for hours on end, at places even from early morning, have become the norm—something not witnessed in years. The reason is an acute shortage of urea.

The Centre has allotted 9.8 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) to Telangana for this Kharif, but the state has received 5.42 LMT so far. The situation is largely the same in other states. Reasons are many. There are global supply chain disruptions and lower-than-expected imports due to factors such as China halting its exports. Still, India has agreements with the Saudis, UAE, Nigeria, and other countries to import urea. It's not that we are entirely dependent on imports; we are the world's third-largest producer of fertilisers. However, as the second-largest user in the world, the country is not yet self-reliant. It is clear that something has gone wrong, and the sooner the Centre and states acknowledge it, the better. Domestic production isn't on expected lines. The Ramagundam Fertilisers and Chemicals Ltd went out of action for some time. The urea stock with the Centre at the beginning of this month was about half of what it was last August.

Furthermore, the increased cultivable area in Telangana is taking its toll. Farmers in the state use about 170 kg per acre. When we consider that the sown area increased to 118.69 lakh acres from 91 lakh acres last year, the picture becomes clearer. Additionally, paddy cultivation has grown significantly, resulting in increased demand for fertilisers. A closer examination raises pertinent questions. Granted, we have import constraints. What have the Centre and states done to keep pace with the demand? There are programmes to promote natural farming and fertilisers other than the widely used ones. However, much more needs to be done to raise awareness among farmers. Importantly, domestic production must be freed from the 'inspector raj' as industry bodies demand. Currently, the Centre must expedite imports, ramp up domestic production, and improve distribution. Both the ruling and opposition in the state have turned the crisis into a boxing match, with the result that panic is spreading. The onus is on both to see reality for what it is, rather than confusing the farmers.

QUICK TAKE

COURTING MARRIAGE

RECENTLY, the Chhattisgarh High Court ruled that mocking a husband for being jobless is cruelty, while the Bombay High Court said that mocking a wife's complexion is just a domestic quarrel. Different circumstances, different interpretations. This contrast raises a question: why let things reach this stage at all, with love reading like a charge sheet? An eminent sociologist suggests that today's couples share a greater sense of individuality. The Supreme Court also states matter-of-factly that a forced union runs contrary to the purpose of matrimonial law, which envisions companionship and shared responsibilities. Ultimately, a relationship isn't a test of who wounds the other deeper.

THE surest way to throttle democracy is to weaponise laws and target those opposing the government. This government seems to have converted this into an art.

I recall the day the amendment to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), was taken up for discussion in Parliament. The Home Minister openly stated that this was necessary, for none could oppose the inclusion of terrorists and terrorist organisations in the First Schedule of the UAPA, seeking to destabilise our Republic. I intervened and expressed my fears that these laws are likely to be used against our citizens; it has turned out to be a reality. The prosecution of young students, like Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, under those laws has resulted in them languishing in jail for years without a trial. Such laws have been used against journalists, academics, and members of religious communities in this country. The obvious intent was to silence them.

The weaponisation of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) is evident in its widespread use against political opponents, including chief ministers and ministers from opposition-ruled states, such as Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendra Jain, Hemant Soren, and Farooq Abdullah, among others. Valiant attempts were made to move against Siddaramaiah, but they came to nought. These laws have also been used to instil fear in several leaders who were once part of the opposition but have been persuaded to join the BJP to save themselves from prosecution and imprisonment. The BJP has, particularly in Maharashtra, rewarded opposition leaders against whom serious allegations of corruption were publicly made for causing a split in their erstwhile parties. They are now part of the coalition ruling Maharashtra.

The latest example of weaponisation of laws is the introduction of two Constitution (Amendment) Bills in Parliament on August 20, 2025. It is claimed that this is being done in public interest, for the welfare of the people and to uphold the principles of constitutional morality, and good governance—concepts that are alien to the functioning of this government. What is likely to serve is not public interest, but the political interest of the ruling dispensation. This is clear from the fact that the proposed law provides that the chief

The growing use of laws like UAPA and PMLA to pin political opponents and dissenters reveals a disturbing trend of abuse of legal frameworks. The latest Bills pave the way for a new form of dictatorship

DEMOCRACY ON TRIAL: FROM THE RULE OF LAW TO RULE BY LAW

KAPIL SIBAL

Senior lawyer and member of Rajya Sabha



SOUBHAY ROY

ministers and ministers being investigated for offences punishable for more than five years and being in custody for more than 30 days will, on the 31st day, if they have not resigned, be dismissed by the governor of the state.

The principle of law that our Republic has embraced is that a person is innocent till proven guilty. In this case, a minister or a chief minister can be removed on a mere allegation without any proof. We are all aware that many such cases have been pending trial for over a decade and that the conviction rate in several of these prosecutions is abysmally low. If the proposed constitutional amendments become law, it is most likely that trumped-up allegations will be made to target sitting chief ministers and ministers, and after 30 days

in custody, they will be dismissed from those positions. Such allegations in the past have served the political interests of the BJP. The present establishment seeks to utilise these laws for its own political purposes.

This weaponisation is also evident from how laws such as PMLA or UAPA have been used against influential ministers seeking to coerce them to join the BJP, or even public servants not belonging to any political party, in opposition-ruled states. Ironically, since 2014, these laws have never been invoked against any minister in any of the BJP-ruled states, or, for that matter, against any minister within the ruling establishment at the Centre. Obviously, the selective use of such laws serves the political interest of the party in power.

WHEN WISDOM TOOK THE CROWN

WE pray to Ganesha to remove difficulties from our path. However, on the ground, this means developing our emotional intelligence to get out of difficulties ourselves with minimal damage control. So, let us revisit in greater detail than September 2022, a story of high emotional intelligence.

This tale concerns one of the world's oldest royal houses, which went under the rubble of time. Trigarta was an ancient kingdom in Punjab, traversing the rivers Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej. It is mentioned in the Ramayana, Mahabharata and the Brahmanda Purana. The Trigartas are said to have fought off the Persians and Assyrians and appear in the annals of Alexander's expedition to India in 326 BCE. Raja Parmanand Chandra is believed to be the 'Porus' who fought and lost to Alexander on the banks of the Beas. When 'Porus' was brought captive to him, Alexander, who considered him a worthy foe, asked him how he wished to be treated, and 'Porus' reportedly answered with superb simplicity: "Like a king."

In the Mahabharata, the kings of Trigarta are described as sworn territorial enemies of Matsya, a kingdom allied to the Pandavas. So, they fought against them under their first cousin, Duryodhana, at Kurukshetra. Susharma, the Trigarta raja, led a do-or-die squad called the Samsaptaka to capture Yudhishtira. He and his entire force were killed by Arjuna.

Just so, the Trigarta rajas are said to have fought and lost to Sri Rama. The Trigartas are nobles of the Chandravanshi or 'lunar dynasty'. The Katoch Rajputs, who claim descent from the Trigartas, founded the kingdom of Kangra in the hills to the east of Punjab that later became the modern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The first-known Katoch raja was Bhumi Chand, and the Brahmanda Purana says he built the original temple to Devi Parvati at Jwalamukhi in the Kangra Valley, which still draws flocks of devotees. The Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Zuan Xang visited the Katoch kingdom in the seventh century, then known as 'Jalandhara'.

The Katoch also fought the great kingdom of Kannauj, from which the royal houses of Marwar and Bikaner sprang. They battled Mohammed of Ghazni and Mohammed of Ghor, and resisted Akbar's siege in 1615. They sided with Guru Gobind Singh against Aurangzeb and fought Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who vis-



RENUKA NARAYANAN

FAITHLINE

ited Jwalamukhi in 1815 and covered the temple spire with gold. The Katoch also fought the British. In 1847, Raja Parmodh Chandra fired a 101-gun salute, a practice later reserved by the British Crown for itself, to inform his people that their king was on the throne. He led an army of 8,000 Katoch across the Beas against the British forces stationed in Pathankot for the Second Anglo-Sikh War. Parmodh Chandra was betrayed by a person named Pahad Chand, defeated, and deported to the hill town of Almora, where



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Raja Hari Chand's tale highlights the power of humility and inner peace. His decision not to challenge his brother is a product of his emotional intelligence, a quality essential for navigating life's challenges

he died in 1851. Kangra was subsumed in the British Empire. Today, any number of Katoch fight in the Indian armed forces. To follow the annals of the Katoch clan is to unspool the history of North India in one skein, for they appear in every epoch—sturdy warriors who repeatedly fought forces greater than theirs. Their fortunes flourished, but they went on. No other noble house seems to have had quite that continuity.

Although the princely order was abolished by modern India in 1971, a Katoch raja by name still exists today, and there are four branches of Katoch: Jaswal, Guleria, Sibaia and Dadwal.

Our tale is about a scion of this ancient clan sometime in the fifteenth century. He was the founder of the scenic hill kingdom of Guler, a Katoch king called Raja Hari Chand from the old royal family of Kangra.

Like most royals and feudal chiefs around the world, Hari Chand loved the hunt. One fine day in late summer, his quarry led him on a long chase, and the king left his companions far behind. Along the way, he dismounted to look for tracks. His foot slipped and he fell into a deep hole. "A dry well," he thought before his head struck a rock and he passed out. The grasses that hid the well closed over it again.

Meanwhile, the king's companions searched the forest, growing increasingly afraid. When the king's horse was discovered, a companion rushed back to the fort to get reinforcements. The king's younger brother, the prime minister, the senapati, and a select band of soldiers and trackers went looking. After days of desperate search, they were forced to mourn the king as dead. His younger brother was crowned the new raja of Guler.

Months into the new reign, the court was disturbed one day by a great commotion in the forecourt. Into a shocked silence walked Raja Hari Chand, leaner, scarred, and simply dressed. The new king ran forward to hug his elder brother and touch his feet. Tears in his eyes, he bowed and indicated the throne to him.

And this is when emotional intelligence spoke. Hari Chand refused to take back his rightful kingdom. Life had ordained that his brother should sit on the throne. To take it away seemed wrong and impractical. It was miraculous enough that gypsies had found him, nursed him, and brought him home.

To everyone's amazement, Hari Chand said, "With your Majesty's permission, I will make myself another fort below Guler, on the banks of the Banganga river." And that's what happened. In one graceful move, he not only secured his own status but also retained his brother as an ally, rather than an enemy. Surely, Ganesha would have approved.

(Views are personal) (shebaba09@gmail.com)

The other matter of great concern is that such laws will allow the governor to dismiss a chief minister or a minister of the opposition-ruled state, which, under the present legal framework, can happen only upon conviction. In addition, prosecution against public servants holding such positions can only be launched by seeking the sanction of the Council of Ministers in the case of prosecution against a minister and that of the governor in the case of a chief minister. By seeking to do away with the sanction provision, such laws weaponise the governors appointed by the Union to dismiss a minister or a chief minister. This is a direct invasion of the federal structure of this country, which the Supreme Court has held to be one of the basic features of the Constitution.

Having set out the above, it is also significant that these constitutional amendments have been introduced by the present establishment, aware that such Bills cannot become law without garnering the support of a two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The NDA, at present, consists of 293 members of the Lok Sabha, whereas for such Bills to pass muster, it must receive the support of 363 members. This is obviously a tall order, and these Bills, in all likelihood, will fail.

If they become law, they will surely be challenged in the courts. The courts will not favour such attempts to deface the Constitution. On the face of it, these Bills are manifestly unjust, violate the fundamental tenets of federalism and the basic principles of the rule of law.

One wonders why these Bills were introduced in the first place. There may be two reasons. One, the canard that the government wishes to rid the polity of criminals who are being prosecuted and that the opposition does not want to uphold the principles of constitutional morality—a political narrative, which in the context of how this government has jettisoned these principles, will not find favour with the people. Perhaps the other and real reason is to divert the attention of the people of India from the massive show of public support for opposition leaders in the run-up to the assembly elections in Bihar.

It appears constitutional democracy can be throttled and stymied through the weaponisation of laws. A new form of dictatorship!

(Views are personal) (Tweets @KapilSibal)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

India's pendency

Ref: A governance quiz missed at monsoon session (Aug 24). Our administrative ecosystem is brimming with propaganda and less substantive output. India has become the pendency capital of the world. From pending litigations to unfilled vacancies and unspent budget allocations, our lacklustre efforts paint a gloomy picture. **Rajaroo Kumar, Bengaluru**

National degradation

Ref: Vice precedence (Aug 24). The column sheds light on the nuances through which citizens have been kept in the dark. It is a serious matter that the politico-ideological scape of the nation has undergone tremendous change—as far as the cultural plurality and its underlying unity is concerned. **Krishnaprasad S, Palakkad**

Industries pollute

Ref: The right to clean environment (Aug 24). A stark difference has been seen after the early 1990s when our economy opened up and the pollution of water bodies increased. Even though pollution control boards—central and state—took measures to control water pollution, industrial pollution has been rampant. **P Narasimhan, Dharmapuri**

Judicial authority

Ref: Level playing field (Aug 23). Disqualification must remain tied to convictions by the judiciary; shortcuts that eject elected representatives upon mere detention will corrode the presumption of innocence and federal checks. A 'level playing field' would ideally consist of fast-track trials with safeguards and statutory oversight of enforcement agencies—not summary removals. **Sanjeev Jha, Delhi**

Pan-global reach

Ref: Postal service to US first to take hit (Aug 24). Despite declining usage in the digital age, India Post remains a dependable and affordable service, often more trustworthy than private couriers that overcharge customers. Unlike courier firms, India Post ensures wider reach, especially in rural areas where alternatives are scarce. **RS Narula, Patiala**

Overlooked fatalities

Ref: They are not strays, they are ours (Aug 24). The article is weighing heavily in favour of our canine community. Neither the administration nor the activists come forward to think of the plight of the hapless living victims of dog bites leading to immense physical/mental suffering and even death. **A M Chakravarty, Hyderabad**



Bhupesh Baghel @bhupeshbaghel
If a "badjar" can become the Home Minister of this country and the national president of the BJP, then why can't a former judge become the V-P of the country?



Amit Shah @AmitShah
Remembering Arun Jaitley. It is his Panchayati... His unwavering commitment to public service will continue to inspire young leaders and policymakers.



Mahua Moitra @MahuaMoitra
Even with oppositionistic allies: BJP doesn't have numbers to pass constitutional amendment... Kudos to @ATCOfficial for boycotting tactical LPC.

New copters to be procured to replace Chetak in Navy

76 twin-engine helicopters to be equipped with wheeled landing gear

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

THE Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Sunday issued a request for information (RFI) for the procurement of 76 naval utility helicopters (NUH) for the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard.

As per the MoD, of the 76, as many as 51 helicopters will be for the Navy and the remaining 25 for the coast guard. These helicopters will replace Chetak helicopters and will be inducted for maritime search and rescue, HADR mission, low intensity maritime operations.

The helicopter should be capable of operating from ship and ashore. Towards maritime surveillance and targeting capability, weapons to meet the envisaged role would be required to be integrated with the helicopters. The vendors are to submit their responses by October 17, 2025.

As per the RFI, the helicopter should be twin engine, having wheeled landing gear and blade fold capability with maximum all up weight not exceeding 5 tons. The RFI is the first step in the procurement process to gather general information about potential products, services, and suppliers before issuing the formal proposal.



New copters to operate from ship and ashore

The helicopter should be capable of operating from ship and ashore. Weapons to meet the envisaged role would be required to be integrated with the helicopters. It should be twin engine, having wheeled landing gear and blade fold capability with maximum weight not exceeding 5 tons.

The helicopter will be procured under 'Buy and Make (India)' category and should be able to perform the maritime search and rescue, casualty evacuation, medical evacuation, communication duties, aerial fire-fighting and low intensity maritime operation (LIMO) among others, by day and night.

As per MoD, 'Buy & Make (Indian)' category refers to an initial procurement of equipment in Fully Formed (FF) state in quantities as considered necessary from an Indian vendor engaged in a tie-up with a foreign

Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), followed by indigenous production in a phased manner involving Transfer of Technology (ToT) of critical technologies as per specified range, depth and scope from the foreign OEM.

Under this category of procurement, a minimum of 50% Indigenous Content (IC) is required on the cost basis of the make portion of the contract. Acquisition under this category can also be carried out without any initial procurement of equipment in FF state.

Swachhata campaign 5.0 goes beyond scrap, to focus on e-waste disposal

PARVEZ SULTAN @New Delhi

THE Centre's annual special campaign on 'swachhata' (cleanliness) will expand its scope this year by prioritising the disposal of e-waste generated in government offices, in addition to clearing old files and scrap. Ministries and departments have been directed to scientifically manage discarded electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) such as printers, CPUs, monitors, batteries, and laptops under Special Campaign 5.0, beginning October 2.

According to Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan, who has written to all secretaries, the aim is to institutionalise cleanliness and reduce pendency. The campaign will cover not only ministries and departments but also field and outstation offices with direct public interface, as well as autonomous bodies and PSUs.

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), which has steered the initiative since 2021, has issued guidelines to ensure compliance with the E-Waste Management Rules, 2022. "This year's edition will place special emphasis on scientific

disposal of e-waste. Offices must identify and safely dispose of discarded electronic equipment," officials said.

The campaign will be conducted in two phases. During the preparatory phase from September 15 to 30, ministries will nominate nodal officers, identify pending references, plan space utilisation, assess scrap and e-waste volumes and finalise disposal procedures. The implementation phase will start on October 2, and will focus on cleanliness drives, e-waste disposal and clearance of pending matters, including MPs' references, PMO notes and public grievances.

According to officials, over the last four years, the special campaign has generated revenue of ₹3,220 crore from scrap disposal, covered nearly 12 lakh sites and facilitated the closure of 1.37 crore files.

In his letter sent to secretaries of all ministries, Somanathan's directive noted, "Your leadership and active involvement will be crucial for the success of the campaign as in the past four years. Appropriate instructions may also be issued to all offices under your ministry for meaningful participation."

INSIDER TRACK

Where's Dhankhar? Speculation on

"There is a big story behind Dhankhar's resignation... and also a story about why he is in hiding," Rahul Gandhi said recently, setting off fresh speculation. Ever since the abrupt exit of the former Vice President, curiosity about his whereabouts has only grown. Sources indicate that Dhankhar is doing well, spending his days at the Vice President's Enclave engaging in activities such as yoga, table tennis, and spiritual reading. But many in Delhi aren't buying it. Opposition MPs complain that they've tried to reach him, but only receive the standard reply: "He will contact you soon." CPI MP P. Sandosh Kumar has even written to him, urging a public reassurance. Adding to the mystery, Dhankhar hasn't yet claimed his official residence on APJ Abdul Kalam Road. Missing? Not quite. Absent? Certainly.



Vastu theory behind resignation

The Monsoon Session was always expected to be stormy. What no one saw coming was Jagdeep Dhankhar's sudden resignation as Vice President. With no apparent reason given, Delhi is buzzing with theories. The latest floating around: Could it be Vastu? Some politicians whisper that the new Parliament building—and even the VP's residence—may have a Vastu dosh. Congress leader Pranod Tiwari has hinted at it, while staffers chuckle but don't dismiss the timing. After all, the new building has been dogged by controversy from day one—boycotts, Sengol debates, and even RJD's "coffin" comparison. Some are even linking the BJP's reduced tally in 2024 to this supposed cosmic imbalance. Far-fetched? Perhaps. However, in Delhi, when politics becomes murky, even the stars get drawn in. A Parliament staff member asks: "Maybe it's time for a Vastu recheck?"

Few tweaks to lateral entry 2.0

Remember when the government opened its doors to private-sector professionals for top jobs in Delhi? That "lateral entry" experiment is now being retooled. Behind closed doors at DoPT, officials are tweaking the model after a bumpy first round. Three key issues stand out: whether to allow reservations, how to define roles clearly, and how to align salaries with those of civil servants. Many outside hires struggled with the slow pace of bureaucracy—some even found themselves overwhelmed by paperwork far removed from their areas of expertise. A second innings for lateral entry is on the cards. But this time, the system wants fewer bruises.

Rail Bhawan needs a new boss

With Railway Board Chairman Satish Kumar set to retire on August 31, the guessing game is in full steam. Kumar had just a year in the hot seat—and chatter has begun on who will take charge next. Two names top the shortlist: Naveen Gulati, Member (Infrastructure), and Vivek Kumar Gupta, Western Railway GM. Gulati has seniority but little time left before retirement. Gupta has more years in hand, plus experience with the Gati Shakti and Bullet Train projects. But this is Rail Bhawan, where surprises are always possible. A six-month extension for Kumar is also being quietly discussed. For now, the platform is crowded, and the signal is still red.



SC asks states to expedite boundary demarcation of wetlands within 2 months

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @New Delhi

NOTING that state wetland authorities are moving at snail's pace, the Supreme Court has directed States to expedite the ground truthing and boundary demarcation of wetlands within two months.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and N V Anjarlia said the exercise carried out by the authorities reflects the sorry state of affairs and the directions issued have not yielded positive results.

"We direct these States to expedite the ground truthing and boundary demarcation expeditiously and at any rate within an outer limit of two months from today, failing which, the secretaries of the concerned States of the Department of Environment and Ecology will have to personally remain present before this court on next date of hearing," the bench said.

The SC made clear that inaction on the part of authorities would compel it to pass coercive orders against those States which have failed to comply with the directions.

"In the light of the wetlands having been identified, it is incumbent upon the State Wetland Authorities to publish the same in the respective State Governments' website... Let the affidavit of compliance be filed immediately after such an exercise being undertaken and at any rate before the next date of hearing," the bench said in its August 19 order.

The SC said the Union of India shall coordinate with the State Level Wetland Authorities and expedite the issuance of notifications for which the draft notifications are already in place.

"The statistics furnished would also reflect that wetlands, which are less than 2.25 hectares, are required to be identified as prescribed under the extant rules and the affidavits of the state governments of wetland authorities shall also delve upon as to the manner and method in which steps have been taken or being taken to protect these wetlands which are less than 2.25 hectares, which according to the statistics is around 5,55,557 as mentioned in the Wetland Atlas," the bench said.



New bills a move to topple Oppn govts, says Kharge

PARVEZ SULTAN @New Delhi

REFERRING to the three bills that lay down the framework for the removal of the prime minister and chief ministers following their arrest for 30 consecutive days, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday accused the Centre of snatching the people's rights to form and remove governments and passing it on to agencies such as Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Sharpening his attack further, he said that after "vote chori" (vote theft), the BJP is now engaged in "satta chori" (stealing power) by bringing bills to "topple opposition governments within 30 days" and "destabilise democracy" by using arrest as a weapon.

"After vote theft, the BJP is now engaged in power theft. On the last day of Parliament, they brought three new bills, including a constitutional amendment, even though they do not have a two-thirds majority. This takes away the right of citizens to form or remove their elected government and hands that power to institutions like the ED and CBI. This is like running a bulldozer over de-



democracy," said Kharge.

He was addressing the newly-appointed presidents of the District Congress Committees (DCC) of Haryana and MP at the party headquarters.

The veteran leader said that the Government had introduced The Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025, The Government of Union Territories (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill during the recently concluded Parliament session despite it lacking the required two-third majority.

Kharge said that 193 opposition leaders were facing ED cases but only two had been convicted. "With this bill, the BJP can topple opposition governments within 30 days, using arrests as a weapon to destabilize democracy itself..." he added.

After TMC & SP, AAP says won't join House panel

PARVEZ SULTAN @New Delhi

AFTER the two key members of the INDIA bloc—the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Samajwadi Party—decided not to join the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probing three bills seeking the removal of the Prime Minister and chief ministers, AAP has also announced to follow suit.

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Sunday announced the decision, adding that the law has nothing to do with fighting corruption but everything to do with horse-trading and crushing opposition parties.

The TMC, on Saturday, announced that it would not nominate any member to the JPC to look into the Constitution 130th Amendment Bill, and had called the panel a "farce". The Samajwadi Party is also unlikely to nominate any member to the JPC, according to a party source.

Male nurses face stigma but paid more: Study

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @New Delhi

NURSING is often considered a "female profession," leading to male nurses experiencing occupational segregation and stigma. But despite low numbers, male nurses earn more than their female counterparts.

"Although women constitute a larger share of the global nursing workforce, on average, men earn more than women, with a pay gap of 24% points, which needs attention," said a study published in the BMJ.

Focusing on the need to increase the nursing workforce, the study noted that with ageing populations, the rising burden of chronic diseases, demand for nurses is to continue rising.

"Empowering nurses is not just about tackling workforce shortages, it is also about unleashing the full potential of a profession that is central to realising universal health coverage for all," it said.

According to Dr. Preeti Kumar, the lead author of the study and VP, Health Systems, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), nursing has traditionally been associated with

Male nurses experience occupational segregation and stigma but earn more than women

THE NUMBER OF NURSES GREW TO 29.8 MN IN 2023 FROM 27.9 MILLION IN 2018

Global shortage of nurses estimated at 5.8 MN

HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES HAVE HIGHER NUMBER OF NURSES PER CAPITA THAN LOW & MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES

INDIA HAS 77.2 NURSES PER 10K POPULATION

13% OF NURSES WORK IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY FROM THE ONE IN WHICH THEY WERE BORN OR TRAINED



WOMEN'S DOMAIN

The US and UK together receive more than 15,000 foreign nurses annually, many from the Philippines and India

Global remittances from nurses in 2021 were \$773bn, \$605bn of which went to low and middle-income countries

women, dating back to the times of Florence Nightingale. In India, male nurses are concentrated more in certain specialities, such as emergency departments and ICUs, with limited access or discouragement in other areas, including obstetrics and paediatrics, due

to patient comfort and gender appropriateness, she said.

The need of the hour is to promote gender diversity and inclusivity. By 2030, India is projected to have a total of 2.74 million nurses and midwives, but only 1.4 million are likely to be actively working in the

health system. India's nurse-to-population ratio is 1:670, which is below the WHO's recommendation of 1:300.

"Effective strategies to increase male participation include public awareness campaigns, balanced recruitment strategies, quotas for men in nursing education, and financial assistance," it said.

Quoting the 2025 report on the state of the world's nursing from the WHO and the International Council of Nurses (ICN), most low and middle-income countries are unlikely to meet their goals to achieve better healthcare outcomes by 2030.

The study highlighted that the migration of nursing professionals to high-income countries is a global challenge. Around 13% of nurses work in a country different from the one in which they were born or trained.

India has approved 157 new nursing colleges, with around 15,700 nurses graduating every year.

After North, adverse weather triggers pest attack on cotton crops in S India

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @New Delhi

AFTER North India, cotton crops in South India are now grappling with a severe pest outbreak triggered by abnormal weather, raising fears of reduced yields and further decline in the country's overall cotton production.

Prolonged monsoon spells and high humidity in August have led to a surge in "boll rot" disease across cotton fields in Andhra Pradesh. According to experts, this year's outbreak is more severe than in recent years, with scientists recommending integrated pest management practices advised by the Central Institute of Cotton Research (CICR).

A field survey under the government's Project Bandhan found "boll rot" thriving in moist conditions, damaging standing crops and raising concerns over yield loss, fibre quality deterioration and economic strain for Kharif 2025-26 growers. The survey was conducted by the South Asia Biotechnol-



ogically damaging for cotton in South-Central India. Dr Dilip Monga, former head of ICAR-Central Institute For Cotton Research, noted that incessant rains have worsened boll rot severity, with leaf spot cases also rising in recent years. Farmers have been advised to adopt combined cultural practices, balanced crop nutrition, prophylactic measures and integrated pest management for sustainable control.

For the first time in a decade, the economic threshold level of boll rot has crossed the severe outbreak mark of 20% in Kurnool district

Dr C D Mayee, cotton epidemiologist

BLAZE
A Class III student was charred to death while three others were injured in a fire that broke out at the hostel of a government school in Arunachal's Shi-Yomi district on Sunday.

MAN
STABBED TO DEATH BY WIFE'S LOVER IN UPS SAHARANPUR

INDIA	Max	Min	Mumbai	Max	Min
Ahmedabad	29	25	Mumbai	27	25
Bhopal	26	23	Panaji	29	25
Jaipur	28	25	Patna	30	27
Amritsar	28	24	Lucknow	29	26
Chennai	34	28	Port Blair	29	26
Kolkata	32	26	Imphal	27	21
Srinagar	24	17	Chandigarh	29	25

Cong leader exudes confidence about Oppn results in Bihar polls • Patna Sahib MP Prasad accuses Cong, RJD of misleading public

Rahul: INDIA bloc united, common manifesto soon

RAMASHANKAR @Patna

CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday asserted that all the INDIA bloc constituents in Bihar were working unitedly for the upcoming assembly polls and that the results will be fruitful.

Speaking to reporters during his ongoing 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Araria district, where he was accompanied by RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, Rahul said the alliance would soon release a common manifesto for the polls, due later this year. "All constituents of the Opposition are working unitedly. We are both ideologically and politically aligned, mutually respecting each other. The results would be fruitful," he said.

Launching a scathing attack on the ruling NDA, the leader of opposition in Lok Sabha alleged that the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar was an "institutionalised attempt" by the Election Commission to benefit the BJP. "The poll panel is working to help the saffron party. But it will not succeed as the people of Bihar are alert," he said.

Rahul also accused the BJP-RSS of "closing the doors of opportunity" for Dalits, backward classes, women and the poor, and of attempting to "destroy the Constitution."



LOP Jokes about his marriage, says 'talks on'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday quipped that "talks are on" with RJD president Lalu Prasad, a political ally and family friend, regarding his earlier suggestion that the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha should get married. The 55-year-old made the remark at a press conference in Bihar's Araria during the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra'.

The Yatra, which began from Sasaram in Rohtas on August 17, entered Purnea district on Sunday, its eighth day. Rahul and Tejashwi rode motorcycles with supporters as residents turned out in large numbers to welcome them. Independent MP from Purnea Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, who recently merged his Jan Adhikar Party with Congress, also joined the tour.

Rahul said the Yatra was drawing people "organically,"

reflecting public anger over alleged attempts at vote theft. He noted that workers of alliance partners were coordinating at the grassroots, with RJD cadres carrying Congress flags and chanting his name, "something never seen before."

"One can imagine the impact of our yatra that even small kids are now raising the slogan of 'vote chor, gaddi chhor'," Gandhi added. Tejashwi had earlier claimed that the EC had "lost its credibility."

EC blamed after loss: BJP shreds 'vote theft' claim

RAMASHANKAR @Patna

FORMER union minister and BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of spreading 'canards' and making baseless 'vote theft' allegations against his party.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state headquarters, Prasad said that in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, Samajwadi Party won 37 seats in Uttar Pradesh, while BJP won 33, and Congress six.

"Even in that election, the Election Commission was the same. If people vote for them, then the Commission is fine, but if they lose, then the Commission is bad—how can this logic work?" he asked.

He also cited the case of Maharashtra, where Congress won 13 seats, BJP and Shiv Sena 9 each, and NCP 8. "Was not the same Election Commission there too?" he asked. He added that Congress also formed governments in Himachal Pradesh and Telangana, asking whether the EC was only valid when the Congress won. Prasad said, "If the people do not vote for Rahul Gandhi, what can anyone do? In Haryana, Delhi, and Maharashtra assembly elections, BJP won because the people saw through his lies." He accused



Bihar SIR: ECI says docus of 98% electors received

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Sunday announced that documents of 98.2% electors had been received by electoral officers, even though eight days are still left for people and political parties to file their claims and objections to the draft electoral roll of Bihar, published as part of the SIR of the state's voters' list. Between June 24 and August 24, in 60 days, 98.2% people submitted their documents.

Gandhi of consistently attacking constitutional institutions by making shameful allegations. "Today it is the Election Commission, earlier it was 'Chowkidar Chor Hai'," he remarked.

He claimed that Gandhi was targeting the Election Commission, media, the Prime Minister—everyone but he must understand that he could not say anything he wanted and expected the country to simply tolerate it.

Prasad further said that in Bihar, Gandhi was trying to mislead people by levelling baseless allegations. He alleged that Tejashwi Yadav's language against Prime Minister was unacceptable. "The people of this country have elected Narendra Modi as Prime Minister thrice. Tejashwi must apologise for calling the Prime Minister a liar and advised him to be careful not to adopt Gandhi's ways under his influence," he asserted.

NAGALAND

5 tribal bodies reject invite for Guv swearing-in

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

SIGNALLING the escalation of their conflict with the state government on the job reservation issue, five tribal organisations in Nagaland spurned a government invite to attend Monday's swearing-in ceremony of Ajoy Kumar Bhalla as the state's governor.

Bhalla, the Manipur Governor, was given the additional charge of Nagaland by President Droupadi Murmu on August 16, after Nagaland Governor La Ganesan had passed away in Chennai. In a statement issued on Sunday, the "5 Tribes Committee on Review of Reservation Policy" (CoRRP) acknowledged that it received an invitation to attend Bhalla's swearing-in ceremony.

"However, with our 9th August 2025 resolution in force, we regret the inability to attend the ceremony....," the statement said. On August 6, the state cabinet approved the constitution of a seven-member commission, to be headed by a retired IAS officer of the Nagaland cadre, to examine the job reservation policy and prepare a report. However, the CoRRP opposed the composition of the commission.

Farmers wearing Shibu Soren masks protest RIMS-2 project

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

JHARKHAND police on Sunday resorted to light force and tear gas shells to disperse the farmers protesting against the construction of Ranjendra Institute of Medical Sciences-2 (RIMS-2) on agricultural land, wearing masks of 'Dishom Guru' Shibu Soren.

Despite heavy police deployment, the protesting farmers, most of them tribal men and women, wearing the mask of Shibu Soren, reached the proposed site of RIMS-2 through the footpaths of the fields and ensured ploughing and planted saplings as per the pre-determined 'Hal Joto-Ropa Ropo' programme.

Thousands of farmers from far-flung areas, including, Latehar, Lohardaga, Bijupada, Hatma and Bedon joined the movement to save their agricultural land. The administration fired tear gas shells to drive away the villagers who had reached at the proposed site for RIMS-2 at Nagri, but this did not affect the farmers as they kept on ploughing their land and planting the saplings.

"Prohibitory orders have been imposed in the entire area. When the crowd became uncontrolled and tried to create



Police resorted to mild force and fired teargas shells to disperse farmers protesting against land acquisition for the construction of a medical college | EXPRESS

ruckus and enter the restricted area, police had to use tear gas to disperse the crowd. The situation is now under control and the police is monitoring the situation," said Ranchi Rural SP Praveen Pushkar. Meanwhile, the farmers blocked the Ring Road for quite some time due to which hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the road for several hours, till the blockade ended by six in the evening.

In anticipation of these protests, Ranchi police placed ex-CM and BJP leader Champai Soren under house arrest on Sunday morning to prevent public disorder. Authorities formally cited law and order

concerns for the precautionary detention. Several other tribal leaders were also taken into custody ahead of the 'Hal Joto-Ropa Ropo' programme.

Soren, however, called the move as undemocratic, emphasising that his objection was not to RIMS-2 per se but to its placement on tribal land. He reiterated his demand that the project be elsewhere. The BJP denounced the arrest as authoritarian overreach, labelling it "outright dictatorship" by the state administration.

According to local villagers, no construction has been done on the land acquired for RIMS-2 for a long time, so they have a natural claim on the land.

J&K recruitment exam for junior engineers cancelled amid SSB paper leak row

FAYAZ WANI @Srinagar

THE OMR-based written exam for Junior Engineer (Electrical) posts in Jammu and Kashmir was marred by a controversy on Sunday after shocking purported videos emerged from an examination centre in Srinagar — showing candidates openly using mobile phones and solving questions in groups and allegations of paper leak.

After massive outrage, Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) cancelled the examination. The recruitment for JE (Electrical) posts in J&K is being held after nearly a decade, and thousands of candidates appeared for the exam at multiple centres across the Union Territory.

However, as the examination began in the morning, shocking videos began circulating on social media from one of the centres (Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothibagh) in Srinagar. In the videos, aspirants were seen using mobile phones inside the examination hall and discussing answers in groups. Adding to the chaos were allegations of a paper leak.

Aspirants seen using phones inside exam hall

However, as the exam began in the morning, shocking videos began circulating on social media from one of the centres in Srinagar. In the videos, aspirants were seen using mobile phones inside the examination hall and discussing answers in groups. Adding to the chaos were allegations of a paper leak.

Some candidates claimed the question paper had been accessed before the exam officially started. "At around 10:47 am, we were handed the OMR sheets. About 5-6 minutes later, when some had already started going through the paper, an official came in and announced that the exam was postponed due to heavy rain in Jammu," said one candidate at the Kothibagh centre. He alleged many students walked out with the paper. "Outside, groups began solving the questions using Google and other platforms on their phones."

The candidate alleged that after nearly more than an hour, they were told to return to the exam hall and write the exam.

Experts flag constructions in fragile fault line

NARENDRA SETHI @Dehradun

AS Uttarakhand reels from recurring natural calamities, geologists have sounded a strong warning against large-scale construction along the Main Central Thrust (MCT) — a fragile Himalayan fault line identified as a key driver of disasters.

The caution comes as the Centre prepares to send a high-level team to assess the damage caused by heavy rainfall and landslides. Experts say the MCT, a 5 to 10 kilometre wide zone stretching across regions such as Uttarakashi, is geologically unstable. "Large construction in the MCT zone should be avoided, and ideally prohibited, as the region is inherently brittle," said a senior geologist.

Recent disasters like the Bhatwari land submergence and the formation of a lake in the Yamuna River at Syana Chatti due to debris from Kupda Khadd have been linked to MCT activity. Similar phenomena were seen earlier when Tail



Gad debris blocked the Bhagirathi River between Dharali and Harsil.

Professor M P S Bisht, a senior geologist and head of Geology at Garhwal University, explained that Kupda Khadd's upper catchment remains landslide-prone due to the MCT's friction zones. "During heavy rainfall, debris from these weakened rocks cascades into valleys, triggering disasters," he said, citing historic incidents like the Belakuchi floods

of 1970 and the creation of Gona Tal lakes in 1893 and 1970.

Meanwhile, the Central government has constituted a seven-member team to conduct on-site inspections. The state Disaster Management Department, on the directive of the Chief Secretary, is preparing a detailed proposal for submission to the Centre.

Secretary (Disaster Management) Vinod Kumar Suman said the team will assess the affected areas.

7,300 Mussoorie forest pillars go missing: Officer

NARENDRA SETHI @Dehradun

A senior forest officer has called for a probe into the disappearance of 7,375 boundary pillars from the Mussoorie Forest Division in Uttarakhand, according to an official letter.

Chief Conservator of Forests (Action Plan) Sanjeev Chaturvedi, in a letter to the head of the Uttarakhand Forest Department PCCF Sameer Sinha, sought a Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe, accusing officials of collusion in illegal land occupation and mining.

DFO Mussoorie Amit Kanwar said the missing pillars were identified in a survey covering two districts - Tehri and Dehradun in six ranges and 33 beats, and an FIR will be filed.

Indian-origin truck driver facing homicide charges in US denied bond

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

A 28-year-old Indian-origin truck driver, Harjinder Singh, accused of making an illegal U-turn that killed three people in Florida on August 12, was denied bond on Saturday.

Harjinder, who hails from the Rataul village in the Tarn Taran district of Punjab, had reportedly entered the US in 2018 via Mexico through the "donkey route". He was arrested six days after the accident at his California home and is now lodged in the St Lucie County Jail in Florida. He faces three counts of vehicular homicide and could be sentenced to around 50 years in prison. His next court hearing is slated for August 27.

Meanwhile, his family back home in Rataul are hoping for a lighter punishment. His brother Tejinder Singh admitted that Harjinder had made a grave

Truckers' visa woes

Meanwhile, Bathinda MP and SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal has expressed concern over the US' decision to stop issuing worker visas for commercial truck drivers. "Punjabi and Sikh drivers make up 20% of the US trucking industry," she noted while decrying the move.

mistake but stressed that it was just an accident and not a deliberate act. "We are sorry for the three deaths in the accident," he expressed, reiterating that he should face the law but be handed a lenient sentence, given it was an accident.

Dilbagh Singh, another one of Harjinder's relatives, echoed those sentiments, saying, "He is just 28 years old. You can imagine what our condition will be if he gets around 45 years of jail. Dilbagh has appealed to Sikh bodies to come forward and provide assistance to Har-



RANCHI DIARY
MUKESH RANJAN
Our correspondent in Jharkhand
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Grand memorial for Shibu Soren in Ranchi

A grand memorial dedicated to 'Dishom Guru' late Shibu Soren is set to come up in Ranchi, with the Urban Development Department initiating the process of land allotment for the project. The Jharkhand State Housing Board has been directed to identify a suitable plot along the bypass road in Ranchi, one of the city's busiest stretches. According to officials, land in Bhusur Mauza has emerged as the preferred site. The Housing Board had earlier acquired 59.13 acres here from the Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) for an integrated housing scheme. A portion of this land—around four acres—is now being considered for the memorial.



JPSC gets flak for holding back cut-off marks

The Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) has once again come under scrutiny for failing to release the cut-off marks of candidates declared successful in the 11th to 13th Civil Services Examinations. This is the second time that the results were published without disclosing the cut-off, in clear violation of the commission's own transparency rules. According to the commission's transparency guidelines issued in 2015, the marks of both successful and unsuccessful candidates must be made public. Despite these clear provisions, the JPSC has not yet uploaded the required details for the 11th to 13th Civil Services Examinations.

J'khand ATS extradites gangster from Azerbaijan

In a first such operation in the state's history, Jharkhand's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has achieved a major breakthrough with the extradition of gangster Mayank Singh, also known as Sunil Meena, from Baku, Azerbaijan. Singh, who faces nearly 50 criminal cases in Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and other states, was flown to Ranchi and was produced in a Ramgarh court. Investigators believe Singh played a crucial role as a connecting link between jailed gangster Aman Sahu and the Lawrence Bishnoi network, strengthening ties between the two groups even from behind bars. Officials emphasised that this extradition marks a significant step.



76 captives held in 'bandit' camp rescued by Nigeria military



Beijing	36	23	SNY	Los Angeles	27	17	SNY
Colombo	31	27	LC	Melbourne	16	6	SNY
Dhaka	32	27	LR	Moscow	28	16	LC
Dubai	44	35	SNY	New York	32	22	SNY
Houston	35	26	SNY	Singapore	34	27	SNY
Istanbul	29	23	SNY	Toronto	19	15	LC
London	30	19	TDS	Washington	36	25	SNY

Ukraine marks I-Day amid Russian strikes, Carney visit

Fires broke out at energy facilities in Kursk and Leningrad regions, including a nuclear plant, as Canadian PM pledged \$1.5 billion military aid and support

KYIV

RUSSIA accused Ukraine Sunday of launching drone attacks that sparked a fire at a nuclear power plant in its western Kursk region overnight, as Ukraine celebrated 34 years since its independence.

Russian officials said several power and energy facilities were targeted in the overnight strikes. The fire at the nuclear facility was quickly extinguished with no injuries reported, according to the plant's press service on Telegram. While the attack damaged a transformer, radiation levels remained within normal ranges.

The United Nations' nuclear watchdog said it was aware of media reports that a transformer at the plants had caught fire "due to military activity," but hadn't received independent confirmation. It said its director-general, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said that "every nuclear facility must be protected at all times." Ukraine did not immediately comment on the alleged attack.

Firefighters also responded to a blaze at the port of Ust-Luga in Russia's Leningrad region, home to a major fuel export terminal. The regional governor said approximately 10 Ukrainian drones were shot down, with debris igniting the fire.

Russia's Defense Ministry claimed



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, right, shakes hands with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during their meeting in Kyiv, Ukraine | AP

its air defenses intercepted 95 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory overnight into Sunday.

Russia fired 72 drones and decoys, along with a cruise missile, into Ukraine overnight into Sunday, Ukraine's air force said. Of these, 48 drones were shot down or jammed.

The incidents occurred as Ukraine marked independence day, commemorating its 1991 declaration of independence from the Soviet Union.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered remarks in a video address from Kyiv's Independence Square,

emphasizing the nation's resolve. "We are building a Ukraine that will have enough strength and power to live in security and peace," Zelenskyy said, calling for a "just peace."

"What our future will be is up to us alone," he said, in a nod to the US-Russia summit in Alaska earlier in August, which many feared would leave Ukrainian and European interests sidelined.

"And the world knows this. And the world respects this. It respects Ukraine. It perceives Ukraine as an equal," he said.

US special envoy Keith Kellogg was in attendance at independence day celebrations in Kyiv, during which Zelenskyy awarded him the Ukrainian Order of Merit, of the 1st degree.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney arrived in Kyiv on Sunday morning for meetings with Zelenskyy. "On this special day — Ukraine's Independence Day — it is especially important for us to feel the support of our friends. And Canada has always stood by our side," wrote Andriy Yermak, Zelenskyy's chief of staff. In a joint press conference with Zelenskyy, Carney said Canada will invest 2 billion Canadian dollars (\$1.5 billion) in new military assistance for Ukraine to boost its army and provide urgently needed weapons.

AP

Four dead as Israeli forces opens fire near aid site in Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH

ISRAELI forces shot dead four Palestinian aid-seekers traveling Sunday through a military zone south of Gaza City that is regularly used to reach a food distribution point, a hospital and witness said. Gaza City is in famine after 22 months of war, while Israel's military moves ahead with a planned offensive to seize the city, perhaps within days. Israel's defense minister has warned that the city of hundreds of thousands of people could be destroyed.

Al-Awda Hospital and two witnesses told The Associated Press the Palestinians were killed when troops opened fire on a crowd heading to a site run by the Israeli-backed U.S. contractor Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in the Netzarim corridor area, hundreds of meters (yards) from the site.

"The gunfire was indiscriminate," said Mohamed Abed, a father of two from the Bureij refugee camp.

Abed and Aymed Sayyad, another aid-seeker, said troops opened fire when a group near the front of the crowd pushed toward the site before its scheduled opening. Sayyad said he and others helped two people wounded by gunshots.

"This incident didn't occur near our site nor as described," the GHF said in an email. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Gaza's Health Ministry reported another eight malnutrition-related deaths Sunday, including a child. That brings the total number of malnutrition-related deaths during the war to 289, with 115 of them children.

AP

Dhaka presses Pak on 1971 war apology during Ishaq Dar visit

DHAKA

BANGLADESH on Sunday raised pending issues, including an apology for the 1971 war, with Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who is the most senior leader from his country to visit Dhaka since 2012.

Dar, who arrived in Dhaka on Saturday on a two-day visit aimed at rebuilding ties with Bangladesh following the ouster of longtime prime minister Sheikh Hasina, held talks with the interim government's Foreign Adviser M Touhid Hossain. "We have raised unresolved issues such as an apology or expression of regret for 1971, claims over assets, and the matter of stranded Pakistani citizens (with Dar)," Hossain told reporters after talks with Dar.

It would be wrong to expect problems of 54 years to be solved in a single day, he said.

"Both countries have presented their respective positions on these issues," the foreign adviser said at a press conference.

Dar, who is also the deputy prime minister, said the unsettled issues over 1971 were resolved twice — first in 1974 in tri-partite talks involving New Delhi in India.

Later, the then president Pervez Musharraf settled the issues of genocide again during his Dhaka visit when he talked in public with an open mind, Dar added.

Israeli strikes hit Yemen's capital, targeting Houthis

CAIRO

ISRAELI airstrikes hit Yemen's capital on Sunday, just days after the Houthi rebels fired a missile toward Israel that its military described as the first cluster bomb the rebels had fired at it since 2023.

The Iranian-backed Houthis said the strikes hit multiple areas across Sanaa. The Houthi-run health ministry said that at least two people were killed and 35 others were wounded.

The rebels' Al-Masirah satellite television reported a strike on an oil company, and video on social media showed a fireball erupting there. Israel's military said it struck the Asar and Hizaz power plants, calling them "a significant electricity supply facility for military activities," along with a military site where the presidential palace is located. Sanaa residents told The Associated Press they heard loud explosions close to a closed military academy and the

presidential palace. They said they could see plumes of smoke near Sabeen Square, a central gathering place in the capital.

"The sounds of explosions were very strong," said Hussein Mohamed, who lives close to the presidential palace. Ahmed al-Mekhlafi said he felt the sheer force of the strikes. "The house was rocked, and the windows were shattered," he told AP by phone. The Houthis have launched missiles and drones toward Israel and targeted ships in the Red Sea for over 22 months, saying they are attacking in solidarity with Palestinians amid the war in Gaza.

Nasruddin Amer, deputy head of the Houthi media office, claimed the latest airstrikes won't deter the rebels, and vowed to continue attacks on Israel.

"Our military operations supporting Gaza won't stop, God willing, unless the aggression is stopped, and the siege is lifted," he wrote on social media.

AP



Myanmar's historic Gokteik bridge destroyed amid fighting

YANGON: Myanmar's junta said anti-coup armed groups bombed and destroyed the Gokteik Viaduct, a colonial-era railway bridge once the world's tallest. The 102-metre-high structure, a tourist draw linking Mandalay to northern Shan State, was shown collapsed in social media videos. The Ta'ang National Liberation Army denied responsibility, blaming junta drone strikes.

PTI

WAR AFTERMATH

Sudanese return to ruined homes after army retakes Khartoum

KHARTOUM

ALL that remains of Afaf al-Tayeb's home in Sudan's Khartoum province is a charred, windowless structure with peeling paint — yet in June, she eagerly returned, feeling safe again for the first time since the Sudanese army said it retook the capital from the rival Rapid Support Forces.

Al-Tayeb had been displaced with her son Mohamed al-Khedr and their family at least four times since the civil war in the North African nation broke out over two years ago. They were displaced in different areas in Khartoum, yet nothing has ever felt as comforting as their house in the Al-Qawz district of Khartoum City. She misses the photographs of her parents and late husband which were lost when

her home was damaged by fire in March, along with all her other possessions. The loss of her home left her in tears and deep sorrow, she told The Associated Press. The family was first displaced to the Hilaliya area, in Gezira province, taking nothing but the clothes they were wearing, until the RSF made advances in the province and forced them to return to Al-Qawz.

Al-Tayeb said RSF fighters then expelled her and her family, and they had to flee to east Khartoum onto Shendi and then Om Durman city. "They looked very strange — indescribable — and their appearance was frightening," she said of the RSF fighters who raided her home.

Al-Tayeb and her son are among roughly 1.2 million

people who returned to Sudan between December 2024 and May this year, according to the latest estimates by the International Organisation for Migration.

The UN's refugee agency says more than 12 million people have been forcibly displaced since the current conflict began in April 2023, with 3.2 million Sudanese seeking refuge in neighboring countries.

The conflict has killed more than 40,000 people, pushed many to the brink of famine, and caused several disease outbreaks. Khartoum was the epicenter of fighting at the start of the war, but the army said it had recaptured the capital earlier this year, including important landmarks such as the airport and ministerial buildings.

AP

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 38

The following e-tender is published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to www.ireps.gov.in and quote against the tender. Manual Quotation will not be entertained for the tender.

Open Tender No.	Short Description of the Item	Tender Value (₹)
2025499211943	Works Contract for carrying out Installation of Aluminium Composite Panels and Mouldings in Railway Passenger Coaches	1,31,52,280

Date of tender Closing: 17.09.2025 at 14.45 Hrs / Opening on 17.09.2025 at 15.00 Hrs. Hindi Version of the above advertisement is available in <https://itc.indianrailways.gov.in/>

Corrigendum to tender no. 2025499211932 - Date of tender Closing & Opening may be read as Date of tender Closing: 12.09.2025 at 14.45 Hrs & Opening on 12.09.2025 at 15.00 Hrs.

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer / Fur-III

UJVN Ltd.
(An Uttarakhnad Govt. Enterprises)

HO "UJVN", Maharanji Bagh G.M.S. ROAD, Dehradun-248006.
Telephone: 0135-273099, Fax: 0135-273208
CIN No. - U40101UR20019SGC026866 Website: www.ujvn.com

RO No. 601 Time Extension Notice-04 Date: 23.08.2025

Due to unavoidable circumstances, due dates in respect of online Bid Identification Nos. (i) T-01/EE(Solar)/2025-26 (ii) T-02/EE(Solar)/2025-26 (iii) T-03/EE(Solar)/2025-26 are extended as follows:

Date for availability of bid document on the portal: 15-09-2025 from 17:00 Hrs.

Last Date /Time of Receipt of bid on the portal: 06-10-2025 till 16:00 Hrs.

Detail of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website.

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>.

Executive Engineer (Solar)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

Kerala State IT Mission (KSITM)
Department of Electronics & Information Technology
Government of Kerala

Saankethika, Vrindavan Gardens, Near EPF Office, Pattom P. O
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala 695004, Tel: 0471 2525444

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Ref. No: e-Governan/2/2025-KSITM Date: 22.08.2025

Kerala State IT Mission invites Request for Proposal for the Selection of Agency for the Development and Implementation of Integrated WhatsApp & Chatbot Solution

Proposals shall be accepted only through online at <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in> and no manual submission of the same will be entertained. RFP document may be downloaded from <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in/nicgepalapp>

Last date of proposal submission: 18th September 2025

Clashes erupt in UK after court orders asylum hotel closure

LONDON: Pro- and anti-migrant groups staged heated protests across Britain after a court ordered a London hotel to evict asylum-seekers. Immigration has become a political flashpoint amid record arrivals, with over 27,000 unauthorized crossings this year alone. The government, facing mounting pressure, pledged to speed up asylum appeals, cut backlogs, and disrupt smuggling gangs. Tensions over housing remain high, with about 32,000 asylum-seekers still in hotels. Politicians warn tensions could rise as communities resist housing migrants.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
TAMIL DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
Secretariat, Chennai - 600 009.

Tender Notice

Tenders are invited online for selecting a qualified agency to carry out infrastructure works and publicity arrangements for the Inaugural Function of the Global Startup Summit, MSME Department to be held at Codissia Trade Fair Complex, Coimbatore, on 9th and 10th October 2025. The details are as follows:

Sl. No.	Venue of the Event	Period and Time for Downloading Tender Documents through Website
1	Coimbatore	From 25.08.2025 to 08.09.2025, up to 6.00 PM Pre-Bid Meeting - 02.09.2025 at 3.00 PM Tender Opening - 08.09.2025 at 3.00 PM at the office of the Director, Department of Information and Public Relations Office, 9th Floor, Namakkal Kavignar Maaligai, Secretariat, Chennai - 9.

For further details regarding works to be carried out, please refer to the tender document available at the website: www.tntenders.gov.in

Director,
Department of Information and Public Relations,
Secretariat, Chennai - 9.

DIPR4591/Tender/2025

Indian Bank SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES EGMORE BRANCH

APPENDIX IV-A [See Proviso to rule 8(6)]

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 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the below mentioned Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the schedule mentioned immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Egmore Branch, the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of amount due specified for each of the accounts thereto, which is due to payable to the secured creditor, with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon.

1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS/MORTGAGORS: (1) Mr. Prabhu Ramalingam, (Borrower and Mortgagor), S/o Ramalingam, No.3/137, Mariamman Village Koll Street, Pandur, Ulundurpet, Dist. Kallakurichi - 606 102. Also at: No.8, 4th Cross Street, Kavi Kuyil Nagar, Pondicherry - 605 013, Landmark - Saram. (2) Mrs. Aruna, (Co-borrower), W/o Mr. Prabhu Ramalingam, No.3/137, Mariamman Village Koll Street, Pandur, Ulundurpet, Dist. Kallakurichi - 606 102. Also at: No.8, 4th Cross Street, Kavi Kuyil Nagar, Pondicherry - 605 013, Landmark - Saram.

AMOUNT DUE TO THE BANK AS ON 22.08.2025: Rs.74,31,479/- (Rupees Seventy four lakhs thirty one thousand four hundred and seventy nine only) with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon from 23.08.2025.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY: Schedule A Property: All that piece and parcel of vacant house site bearing Plot No.39, measuring an extent of 2600 Sq. ft. comprised in Old Survey No.653/1 as per Old Patta No.15666, New Patta No.32382 New S. No.653/1L, in the layout named "Sai Baba Nagar" situated at Pallikarana Village, Sholinganallur Taluk, Kancheepuram District near Chennai District. Measuring on the - North by: 40 feet, South by: 40 feet, East by: 65 feet, West by: 65 feet. Within the Registration District of Chennai South and SRO of Saidapet Joint. Schedule B Property: 55% i.e. 1,430 Sq. ft. undivided share of land from out of Schedule A Property. Schedule C Property: 435 Sq. ft. undivided share of land (out of Schedule "A" mentioned property) Residential/Double Bedroom apartment measuring approximately 1086 Sq. ft. inclusive of share in the common areas of the building to be known as "Sudharshan Sayee" delineated in the drawing in Third Floor, Flat No. T-1 and one covered car parking.

POSSESSION TYPE: Physical **PROPERTY ID:** IDIB7536573303 **ENCUMBRANCES ON PROPERTY:** Nil

RESERVE PRICE: Rs.45.00 Lakhs **Bid increment:** Rs.10,000/- **EMD:** Rs.4.50 Lakhs

BANK WEBSITE	E-AUCTION WEBSITE	PROPERTY LOCATION	PROPERTY PHOTO	PROPERTY VIDEO

2. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS/MORTGAGORS: (1) Mr. Prabhu Ramalingam, (Borrower and Mortgagor), S/o Ramalingam, No.3/137, Mariamman Village Koll Street, Pandur, Ulundurpet, Dist. Kallakurichi - 606 102. Also at: No.8, 4th Cross Street, Kavi Kuyil Nagar, Pondicherry - 605 013, Landmark - Saram. (2) Mrs. Aruna, (Co-borrower), W/o Mr. Prabhu Ramalingam, No.3/137, Mariamman Village Koll Street, Pandur, Ulundurpet, Dist. Kallakurichi - 606 102. Also at: No.8, 4th Cross Street, Kavi Kuyil Nagar, Pondicherry - 605 013, Landmark - Saram. (3) Mr. Parthiban, (Co-borrower), S/o Ramalingam, No.3/137, Mariamman Village Koll Street, Pandur, Ulundurpet, Dist. Kallakurichi - 606 102.

AMOUNT DUE TO THE BANK AS ON 22.08.2025: Rs.71,39,404/- (Rupees Seventy one lakhs thirty nine thousand four hundred and four only) with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon from 23.08.2025.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY: Schedule A Property: All that piece and parcel of vacant plot bearing Plot No.446 situated at Sundaresan Street, Gnanamurthy Nagar, Ambattur, Chennai - 600 053 with landed area of 3300 Sq. ft. as per Document and 3056 Sq. ft. as per Patta, comprised in Re-Survey No.85 by virtue of Patta bearing New Survey No.65/3 and correlated to T.S. No.110/1, in Block No.13 of Ward C, Survey No.65/1B part of No.20, Menambadi Village, Ambattur Taluk, Thiruvallur Dist. And North Chennai Registration District, Ambattur Sub-Registration District and within the Civic limits of Corporation of Chennai. Measuring - East to West on Northern side - 41 feet, East to West on Southern side - 43 feet, North to South on Eastern side - 83 feet, North to South on Western side - 80 feet. In all 3300 Sq. ft. Schedule B Property: All that Flat bearing No. T-2, situated at the Third Floor of No.20, Menambadi Village Plot No.446, Sundaresan Street, Gnanamurthy Nagar, Ambattur, Chennai - 600 053, Ambattur Taluk, Thiruvallur District comprised in Re-Survey No.85 by virtue of Patta bearing New Survey No.65/3 and correlated to T.S. No.110/1, in Block No.13 of Ward C, Survey No.65/1B part having plinth area of 1076 Sq. ft. (including common area) and with car parking marked as car parking Flat No. T-2, together with electric fittings, common rights to use stair case, terrace, borewell, motor, water pipes and sewage lines with other co-owners with equal rights and 410 Sq. ft. undivided share of land out of the land described in Schedule A herein above.

POSSESSION TYPE: Symbolic **PROPERTY ID:** IDIB7352933661 **ENCUMBRANCES ON PROPERTY:** Nil

RESERVE PRICE: Rs.45.00 Lakhs **Bid increment:** Rs.10,000/- **EMD:** Rs.4.50 Lakhs

BANK WEBSITE	E-AUCTION WEBSITE	PROPERTY LOCATION	PROPERTY PHOTO	PROPERTY VIDEO

3. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE BORROWERS/GUARANTORS/MORTGAGORS: (1) Mr. Vetriganesan G. (Borrower/Mortgagor), S/o Ganapathy, No.11, Flat No.F, Block 2, Santhi Sagar Radhakrishnan Salai, Valasaravakkam, Tiruvallur (TN) - 600 087. (2) Mrs. C. Sangeetha, (Co-borrower), W/o Mr. Vetriganesan G. No.11, Flat No.F, Block 2, Santhi Sagar Radhakrishnan Salai, Valasaravakkam, Tiruvallur (TN) - 600 087.

AMOUNT DUE TO THE BANK AS ON 22.08.2025: Rs.48,91,527/- (Rupees Forty eight lakhs ninety one thousand five hundred and twenty seven only) with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon from 23.08.2025.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY: Schedule "A" Property: All that piece and parcel of the property being vacant land measuring 80,224 Sq. ft. (184 Cents) situated in Karanaiapuduchery Village, now Vandalur Taluk, Chengalpatt District (formerly Chengalpatt Taluk, Kancheepuram District) detailed in Item No.1, 2, 3 & 4 below. Item 1 - Total extent measuring 83 Cents in Survey No.53/2. Item 2 - Total extent measuring 36 Cents in Survey No.75/2A. Item 3 - Total extent measuring 30 Cents in Survey No.75/2B, 15 Cents in Survey No.75/2C, 4 Cents in Survey No.75/2C2. Item 4 - Total extent measuring 19 Cents in Survey No.75/3 & 17 Cents in Survey No.75/1. Within the Registration District of Tambaram (formerly South Chennai) and Sub Registration District of SRO Guduvanchery. Schedule "B" Property: All that piece and parcel of the property being vacant Land of Plot No.1 to 33 and 207' wide private road as per the Sub Division Approval Nos.24/2012, 25/2012, 26/2012, 27/2012, 28/2012, 29/2012, 30/2012, 31/2012, 32/2012, 33/2012 & 35/2012 dated 18.02.2012 total measuring an extent of 76,054 Sq. ft. in Survey No.53/2, 75/2A, 75/2B, 75/2C, 75/2C2, 75/3 & 75/1 of Karanaiapuduchery Village now Vandalur Taluk Chengalpatt District (formerly Chengalpatt Taluk, Kancheepuram District) in and out of the Schedule "A" Property. Schedule "C" Property: An undivided share of land measuring 581 Sq. ft. out of 1641 Sq. ft. of Plot No.23 comprised in Survey No.75/2A and 281 situated at Karanaiapuduchery Village Vandalur Taluk, Chengalpatt District in more fully described in the Schedule "B" Property. Within the Registration District of Tambaram (formerly South Chennai) and Sub Registration District of SRO Guduvanchery. Schedule "D" Property: A Residential flat bearing No.23-E, having super built up area of 989 Sq. ft. (including common area) in the Second Floor building with covered car parking and E.B. etc. in the Encumbrance "B".

POSSESSION TYPE: Physical **PROPERTY ID:** IDIB766269275 **ENCUMBRANCES ON PROPERTY:** Nil

RESERVE PRICE: Rs.30.00 Lakhs **Bid increment:** Rs.10,000/- **EMD:** Rs.3.00 Lakhs

BANK WEBSITE	E-AUCTION WEBSITE	PROPERTY LOCATION	PROPERTY PHOTO	PROPERTY VIDEO

Date and Time of Inspection of the Properties & related documents :
03.09.2025 to 04.09.2025 between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m.

DATE AND TIME OF E-AUCTION: 10.09.2025 BETWEEN 11.00 A.M. AND 4.00 P.M.

Last Date for submission of Tender Form/EMD: 10.09.2025

Bidders are advised to visit the website (<https://www.baanknet.com>) of our e auction service provider PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. Helpdesk No. 8291202220, email id - support.baanknet@psballiance.com and other help line numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. and EMD Status, please contact support.baanknet@psballiance.com.

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit : <https://www.baanknet.com> and for clarifications related to this portal please contact Helpdesk No.8291202220.

Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with <https://www.baanknet.com>.

Date: 22.08.2025
Place: Chennai

AUTHORISED OFFICER, INDIAN BANK.

Income tax return filing tips for freelancers

While tax slabs are same as for salaried employees, freelancers can't claim standard deduction of ₹50,000

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

CONSULTANTS and freelancers face a slightly different set of rules while filing their income tax returns (ITR) compared to salaried employees. Here are some key points to ensure error-free and compliant filing.

Choosing the right ITR form

Professionals earning consultancy or freelancing income are required to file ITR Form 3. Those opting for presumptive taxation scheme under Section 44ADA must file ITR Form 4 (Sugam). Under ITR 3, taxpayers must prepare a profit and loss account as well as a balance sheet. Filing an incorrect form can render the return defective or invalid.

ITR 4 can't be used where income exceeds ₹50 lakh, losses are carried forward, foreign-

sourced income is reported, or taxpayer qualifies as a non-resident. In such cases, ITR 3 must be filed. For FY25, deadline for filing ITR is September 15. If a tax audit under Section 44AB is applicable, due date extends to October 31, with audit report to be filed by September 30, 2025.

Presumptive taxation scheme

Section 44ADA allows notified professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, technical consultants, and interior designers to declare 50% of gross receipts as taxable income. Those with income above ₹75 lakh per annum can't avail this benefit. No deductions against business expenses are permitted when opting for this scheme.

Tax regime considerations

Consultants have limited flexibility when switching tax re-



gimes. Once the new regime is chosen, a switch back to the old regime is allowed only once in a lifetime. After reverting, opting for new regime again is not permitted. From FY24, new regime has become default, though taxpayers can opt out of it.

While tax slabs are same as for salaried employees, freelancers can't claim standard deduction of ₹50,000. They may, however, claim deduc-

tions under Chapter VI-A (such as 80C, 80D, and 80E), but only under the old tax regime.

Maintaining records

Freelancers should maintain records of receipts and payments, bank statements, asset and liability details, capital gains, and expenses. Form 26AS, which captures TDS, must be reconciled with actual income. If receipts show ₹10 lakh but Form 26AS reflects ₹8 lakh, discrepancy must be resolved to avoid rejection of returns and loss of refunds.

Reporting other incomes

Earnings from shares, securities, or virtual digital assets must be disclosed. Non-disclosure or under-reporting could invite scrutiny and penalties.

Section 69 exposure

As per Gaurav Makhijani, sen-

ior tax advisor at Roedl & Partner, even under presumptive scheme—where detailed books of accounts are not mandatory—freelancers remain exposed to Section 69 (unexplained investments). If investments or expenditures appear disproportionate to declared income and remain unexplained, tax authorities may treat them as undisclosed income. Such income is taxable at a penal rate of 60% plus surcharge and cess under Section 115BBE, with no deductions or set-offs allowed.

Makhijani said disclosures in ITR-4 including high-value transactions reflected in AIS/26AS or assets reported in Schedule AL, where applicable must align with presumptive income declared. Any mismatch between declared income and reported financial activity could invite additions under Section 69.

IN CONVERSATION



PRASHANT PARAMESWARAN
President, Tata Soufful

'Aim is to mainstream millets by making them taste better'

KOTTARAM Agro Foods, co-founded by Prashant Parameswaran, introduced millet-based food products under the brand "Soufful" in 2013. In 2021, the brand was acquired by Tata Consumer Products. Since then, Soufful has scaled up to the level it had aspired to before becoming part of Tata group. Prashant Parameswaran, President, Tata Soufful, speaks to Dipak Mondal of *The New Indian Express* about the brand's journey under the Tatas. Excerpts:

It has been four-and-a-half years since Tatas acquired Soufful. How has been the journey so far? The partnership was about scaling Soufful, entering multiple new categories, and building on the millet platform. Most importantly, it was about mainstreaming millets and taking them across the length and breadth of the country. Those were the clear objectives we set for ourselves four-and-a-half years ago.

Whatever was purpose of this acquisition by Tata Consumer Products, have they been able to achieve those targets? Yes, directionally we are moving in right direction. You may not achieve every single metric, but in three-, five-, or 10-year plans, what matters is whether you are on right path. I would say we are.

Why was a millet-based product company so important for Tata Consumer Products, which is itself such a big brand? It's not just about millets. Soufful was about health and wellness—less sugar, "better-for-you" products, and affordability. We were never going to be a niche brand for only top 1% in metros. The idea was to create relevance for 200-300 million households. That's why the platform was valuable.

What strategies have you adopted to reach those households?

We focus on three things: Product—Food must combine taste and nutrition. Taste is non-negotiable. Price points—India needs affordable entry packs (₹5, ₹10) that let consumers try the brand without diluting quality. Accessibility—Availability across states, retail, and multiple touchpoints. We use a multi-pronged category approach—breakfast cereals, kids' snacking, wafers, choco sticks, rusk, masala oats, and more. We're not a one-product company but a portfolio serving different consumer segments.

The partnership was about scaling Soufful, entering multiple new categories, and building on millet platform. It was about mainstreaming millets

What scale have you achieved since the acquisition? Can you share revenue numbers?

We are about five times larger than at the time of acquisition. The foundation we have built ensures we can keep doubling every two-four years. We don't disclose segmental revenues. Whatever is available publicly is under "growth businesses".

How do you see consumer acceptance of millet-based products, especially with the government push?

Taste is paramount in India. Millets have distinctive flavors (ragi, jowar, bajra), and our expertise lies in using food science and technology to retain nutrition while making them palatable without artificial ingredients. For example, our new Nomada Rusk blends millets with flavors like cardamom and butter to suit consumer tastes.

So, people are liking the products?

Yes. We are in the food business, not pharmaceuticals. Success depends on repeat consumption and loyal customers, which we are seeing.

Are you focused only on the domestic market? What new launches are you planning?

Predominantly yes, though we also have a significant presence in the West Asia, mainly among the Indian diaspora. We have entered many categories in the past two years. Now, the focus is scaling them. For example, the rusk market is about ₹6,000 crore. We've just entered with Nomada Rusk, launched in states like Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, with Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, and South India to follow.

MONEY-WISE

INVESTING IN EQUITY FOR THE LONG TERM



FINANCIAL ADVICE

PV SUBRAMANYAM
writes at
www.subramoney.com and has authored the best seller 'Retire Rich - Invest ₹40 a day'

MANY people have this question at the top of their minds, whether they should invest in equities or in equities through mutual funds.

As of today (Aug 2025), domestic market presents a compelling case for long-term investors, despite short-term volatility and elevated valuations. Nifty 50 closed at 24,870.10 on August 22. Earlier in the week, the index hovered above 25,050, reflecting a mixed performance driven by global cues and domestic earnings. Year-to-date, MSCI India Index has underperformed, posting negative returns while global peers gained up to 18.9%, highlighting concerns over high valuations and external risks. For horizons of 5-10 years or more, India's structural strengths outweigh these headwinds.

Economically, India remains a bright spot globally. The OECD projects real GDP growth at 6.3% for FY26 and 6.4% for FY27, powered by strengthening private consumption and government capex. Our balance of payments, current account deficit, etc. remain healthy and robust. Private sector balance sheets are not leveraged at all. Long-term drivers include a young demographic, digital transformation via UPI and Aadhaar, and policy reforms like PLI boosting manufacturing.

Sectors like technology, and infrastructure are poised for

multi-year expansion, with economists noting "imminent recovery" and compelling opportunities in emerging markets equity. Medical tourism has taken the hospital shares to a different orbit.

Valuations provide a nuanced picture. Nifty 50's price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio stands at 21.9 as of August 22, slightly above long-term average of about 18-20 but far from bubble territory. This elevation reflects optimism in earnings growth, projected at 15-18% annually over next few years. Compared to historical corrections, current levels suggest room for mean reversion, offering value for patient investors. Experts emphasize India's resilience amid global slowdowns, with digital booms and economic stability creating "compelling bets" for 2025 and beyond. A market that has remained at a PE of 20 for past 8 years (ignore Covid fall) has been robust and should current PE is not scary at all.

Risks can't be ignored. Geopolitical tensions, potential US rate hikes, and domestic inflation (4%) could trigger corrections. Recent market dips, underscore volatility from FII outflows and overbought conditions. Some investors warn of possible crashes tied to global events, advising diversification. Yet, historical data shows equities delivering 12-15% CAGR over decades.

For long-term investors, now is a prudent time to invest via SIPs in diversified funds or blue-chips as recommended by analysts. One analyst argues it's "strategically sound" for quality positions, emphasizing discipline over timing. Investment sentiment echoes this, with users promoting ETFs like Nifty Bees for safe, long-term growth. While short-term caution is warranted, growth trajectory makes equities a strong wealth-builder. Focus on fundamentals, diversify, and stay invested—time in the market beats timing it.

MONEY MATTERS

WHY COMMON SENSE MATTERS IN INVESTING



FINANCIAL KNOWLEDGE

RAJAS KELKAR
(The author is editor-in-chief at www.moneyminute.in)

THE goalpost for the use of common sense in investing shifts with time. It has a direct correlation with the prevailing knowledge and financial innovation. In the old times, people saved on physical assets like precious metals or jewellery. It was common sense to hoard them.

With the evolution of money, it became the way to save. People started hoarding cash and building savings in a bank account. Investing was all about buying real estate. Yet again, hanging on to something that you can touch physically or that is tangible. That continues to date. Although there is a visible increase in savings and investments through financial assets, the penetration of financial products in India remains low. It is perhaps why businesses selling financial products, such as mutual funds, insurance, and banking services, are booming in India. The future of common sense savings and investing is driving the current market value of financial services companies.

As a percentage of gross domestic product, the penetration of most financial services like loans, car loans, education loans, home loans, life and health insurance, mutual funds and equity assets is well below the global average. If India is to become a developed country, its financial services sector must be robust, with deposits, investments, and a vibrant trading activity in the equity, debt, and currency markets.

There is a lot to absorb if you wish to learn about investing. Financial assets are now the asset class for your financial future.

Even physical assets like gold and real estate can be held in the form of a tradable security or a mutual fund. If you are new to investing, you do not have the baggage of a history of hoarding your wealth in a physical form.

Once you determine that financial assets are the way forward for your investment life, you fall into this vortex of financial information. There is so much of it that can overwhelm you, and that would be a good enough reason for not absorbing it.

John C Bogle, the founder of Vanguard, a company that probably manages more assets than the wealth of several nations,



MANOJ PARIKAR

Coke bottler sees ₹7k cr revenue in FY26

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

SLMG Beverages, one of Coca-Cola's bottlers in India, is targeting revenues of ₹7,000 crore in FY26, backed by expanding manufacturing capacity and focus on sustainable growth.

The Lucknow-headquartered company, operates eight modern manufacturing facilities across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttarakhand, has been stepping up investments in new plants and distribution networks.

Vivek Ladhani, director, SLMG, acknowledged EBITDA margins remain under pressure due to rationalisation and fresh investments but expects to stabilise in medium term, with margins returning to 18-20%. Until recently, SLMG was the largest independent Coca-Cola bottler in India. That changed after the Bhartias of Jubilant



Group acquired 40% stake in Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, Coca-Cola India's bottling arm, giving them control of southern and western markets. SLMG continues to serve key markets of UP, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.

Unlike PepsiCo, which relies entirely on listed bottler Varun Beverages, Coca-Cola works with 15 independent bottlers in

India. None of them are listed. Asked if SLMG would consider going public, Ladhani said it may explore a listing in future, subject to Coca-Cola's approval.

Long runway for growth

SLMG caters to 400 million consumers, about one-third of India's population, but per capita consumption in its markets remains 25-30 bottles annually, as against 400-500 in developed economies. Even neighbouring Pakistan and Bangladesh report higher figures. "This gives us a massive runway for growth. Our target is to grow at 20% annually, three times India's GDP growth. Even during COVID and extreme rainfall seasons, we have never reported single-digit growth," he said.

Sustainability at the core

"Coca-Cola's vision is to re-

turn to nature everything we draw from it. We are investing heavily in rainwater harvesting, pond revival, and recharge shafts," Ladhani said, adding that water management will remain at heart of capex plans.

Competition in Cola market

While PepsiCo has consolidated its India operations under a single listed bottler, Varun Beverages, Coca-Cola continues to work with multiple regional partners. At present, there are around 15 bottlers for Coca-Cola in India, though the number has been shrinking.

"Over time, only a few large bottlers will remain," said Vivek Ladhani, Director of SLMG Beverages.

turn to nature everything we draw from it. We are investing heavily in rainwater harvesting, pond revival, and recharge shafts," Ladhani said, adding that water management will remain at heart of capex plans.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

BANK of India has classified the loan accounts of Reliance Communications (RCOM), its subsidiary Reliance Telecom (RTL), and several former directors as "fraud." The move comes after a forensic audit pointed to fund diversion and other compliance lapses.

In a filing dated August 23, 2025, RCOM said it received two letters from BOI a day earlier, conveying the decision. The bank's action was based on a forensic audit carried out by BDO India LLP, which found ₹350 crore of loan funds earmarked for operational expenses had instead been parked in a fixed deposit—an action the report described as a violation of sanction terms.

Along with RCOM and RTL, fraud tag has been extended to erstwhile directors including promoter Anil Ambani, Manjari Ashok Kacker, and RML's former director Grace Thomas, among others. As of August 7, RCOM's outstanding dues to BOI stood at ₹724.78 crore.

RCOM has challenged the bank's move, calling it legally untenable in light of ongoing Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP). Its resolution professional cited Section 14(1)(a) of IBC, 2016, which bars proceedings against companies under CIRP. It stressed that a resolution plan, already approved by the committee of creditors—including BOI—awaits final clearance from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

LIC to be public shareholder in IDBI Bank

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has cleared reclassification of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) as public shareholder in IDBI Bank, a move that paves way for the lender's strategic disinvestment. The approval, which comes with a set of conditions, will take effect once the transaction is completed.

In a regulatory filing on August 24, LIC said the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) had informed it of Sebi's approval, received a day earlier. The decision is a crucial step in the government's plan to privatise IDBI Bank, which was cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in May 2021.



Former India captain Sourav Ganguly was on Sunday named head coach of SA20 team Pretoria Capitals ahead of the 2026 season in what will be his first stint at the helm of affairs of a side. Ganguly, who an ex-BCCI chief, will succeed former England batter Jonathan Trott, whose stepping down from the top job was announced on Saturday.

With 7195 runs, 19 centuries and innumerable Test victories, 37-year-old Pujara announces his retirement from all forms of cricket

BORN TO BAT, CHETESHWAR HANGS HIS BOOTS

GOMESH S @Chennai

THERE it was, the official announcement at 11.11 on a mundane Sunday morning. Cheteshwar Pujara is no longer an active cricketer. After 13 years and 103 Tests, the last of the batting stalwarts from the generation of R Ashwin, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma joined them in the legion of retired cricketers.

"Wearing the Indian jersey, singing the anthem, and trying my best each time I stepped on the field - it's impossible to put into words what it truly meant. But as they say, all good things must come to an end," the 37-year-old posted on social media.

Now, unlike the other aforementioned three, Pujara's retirement does not come as a surprise or a shock. In fact, his last appearance for India came

15,797 No Indian has faced more balls in Test cricket since Pujara made his debut

99.4 Highest number of balls per dismissals for an Indian since his debut

64.10 Pujara's average against spin since 2013 is highest among Indian batters with 1200 runs or more. Yashasvi Jaiswal averages 77.23 with 1004 runs so far against spin

two years ago at the World Test Championship final. And yet, there is a sense of warmth in the adulation and tributes that have followed since his announcement.

For the generation that grew up watching the Indian team through the 90s and 2000s, Pujara was the continuation of their childhood. The connecting factor who took forward the legacy of old school batting into the modern era. For the generation who was raised by IPL, Kohli and Rohit, Pujara gave them peace when he was out there on the 22 yards doing what he was born to do — bat.

Right from when he was about three, that was all he did. Arvind Pujara, the senior, put

a bat in his hand, and made sure Cheteshwar followed. A former first-class cricketer, Arvind hoped and dreamt of making his son an India cricketer and did everything he could to make sure Cheteshwar was on the right path. Together, they aimed for the stars, were willing to put in the work, blood, sweat and toil, and the rewards came along in time. Watching his son walk out for the 100th time in Test cricket is a memory Arvind holds very dear.

In all 13 years of international cricket and more than two decades of professional sport, if there ever was one thing that defined Cheteshwar, it was his love for batting. From the time

he hit a triple century at U-14 level to his last first-class match (Saurashtra versus Gujarat) at his home ground in Rajkot earlier this year, batting was one constant. It did not matter if he was an India No 3 or someone on the fringes because of his slow batting or someone Indian cricket moved on from, Cheteshwar never moved on from batting, until Sunday.

One example comes to mind. It was Day 1 of the third Test between India and England at Rajkot in February 2024. By then, the selectors had made it clear that they had moved on from Pujara, who was training at the venue along with his Saurashtra teammates for his next Ranji Trophy match

against Manipur. Some of the scribes went to meet him during lunch, and he indulged. Cheteshwar checked in on the score, and responded saying it was not ideal to lose three wickets on that pitch for that score. He enquired about the pitch and went on to say that runs will come later. When the conversation veered towards his past records and what he could have done on the surface, Pujara redirected towards his next challenge — batting well and taking Saurashtra into knockouts.

That is just who he was. A polite team man who willed his way through the ranks with his batting. And his batting was as much about time as it was

about runs. Watching him go about his routines at the crease can be therapeutic; almost like the comfort of re-watching your favourite sitcom again and again. He defended, took blows, maneuvered spinners and piled on runs. And the longer he batted, the safer the team was. Ask the Australians who lost all but one Test series they went up against Pujara.

Indian cricket knew it all too well. The fact that he featured in 11 SENA wins, more than any other Indian, sums up the kind of impact he had — which goes far beyond the 7195 runs, 19 centuries next to his name. For that, and everything else he has done over the last two decades, Indian cricket will always be thankful to Cheteshwar Pujara.



Worlds battle awaits Sindhu & Co

INDIAN SHUTTLERS WILL BE HOPING FOR A TURN IN FORTUNES WHEN THEY BEGIN THEIR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS QUEST IN PARIS ON MONDAY. A LOOK...

World No 1 vs Lakshya

Despite an improved show in his last tournament, Lakshya Sen has largely had a rough season with as many as seven first-round exits so far this season. Lakshya will have to play out of his skin if he's to avoid that unwelcome trend as he'll be up against World No 1 Shi Yu Qi of China in the Round of 64 on the opening day.



Rd 1: vs Shi Yu Qi | Monday
LIVE ON SPORTS18 NETWORK

Experienced aces seek boost

PV Sindhu is no stranger to winning at this level but she has been a pale shadow of her former self in recent months. Up against young and hungry rivals, the five-time Worlds medallist will be looking to regain her magic. The same goes for HS Prannoy, who has struggled mainly due to injuries and health issues in recent times. Prannoy, a former bronze medallist, will be hoping to spring a surprise.

Sindhu: Rd 1: vs Kaloyana Nalbantova | TBS

Prannoy: Rd 1: vs Joakim Ojeda | TBS

Can SatChI get back to winning ways?

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have been the only consistent force for India in recent times. However, they have had their share of doubtful moments. The former World No 1 had briefly endured some tough matches earlier this season and they'll be looking to get back to winning ways at a venue where they have thrived in the past.

Rd 1: Bye | Rd 2: TBS

Eyes on Dhruv and Tanisha

The mixed doubles pair of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto have been quietly making a steady rise in the rankings (they are World No 17 at the moment) and they'll be looking forward to getting much-needed exposure at the elite level. This could be an event that propels them to a higher level.

Rd 1: Bye | Rd 2: TBS

Step in right direction for Sreeshankar

CHANDRA PRABHU @Chennai

AS the evening settled down, the temperature dipped a bit but the humidity was pretty high. Every now and then the sea breeze would bring in comfort but for one man in the stands, nothing could have calmed him. He seemed more tense than the athletes in the middle.

S Murali is not just long jump exponent M Sreeshankar's coach but also his father. He knew what challenges his ward had to endure in the last 650 days before starting to compete again last month. Sreeshankar seemed relaxed but after each jump he seemed fidgety and at times, not even looking at the electronic board that displayed his jumps. They both knew that the event — National Inter-state Senior Athletics Championships — Sreeshankar was taking a shot at was his last chance to seal a ticket at the World Athletics Championships, which is slated to be held next month in Tokyo.

The two had endured some challenging times not so long ago with Sreeshankar taking the longest break of his career so far due to injury and rehab. When the Kerala athlete returned to competitive action in Pune last month, he had crossed the 8-metre mark and on Sunday, he managed 8.06m.

The day's effort earned him a gold medal but the winning jump was not enough to match the Worlds qualification mark of 8.27m. Going by his recovery path, it was always going to be a daunting task for him. Yet, he never gave up. Competing in five competitions in just over a month was always going to be a



M Sreeshankar in action during Inter-State Athletics meet on Sunday | P PRAVIKUMAR

RESULTS (WINNERS)

Men: Javelin throw: Rohit Yadav (UP) 83.65m; Long jump: Sreeshankar M (KL): 8.06m; 3000m Steeplechase: Balakrishnan (HR) 8:51.75; 4x400m relay: Tamil Nadu: 3:07.53.
Women: 1000m: Ravina Gayakwad: 35:09.57; High jump: Gobika K (TN) 1.80m; Heptathlon: Anamika KA (KL) 5466 points; 3000m SC: Ankita Dhyani: 9:44.83s; 4x400m: Karnataka: 3:38.29s.

having their national championships," he said.

After the aforementioned injury issue, Sreeshankar began proper training only in April. "We had some eight months of rehabilitation in the Inspire Institute of Sport, Bellary last year and then shifted to National Centre of Excellence, Trivandrum in January," he said.

Despite being in a position of disadvantage, Sreeshankar never lost hope. "At this time last year, I did not know if I could be jumping and now I am competing," he said. With the Asian and Commonwealth Games next year and the LA28 in less than years' time, he will now turn his focus on these major events.

Meanwhile, Rohit Yadav was also on the winning side as he pipped Sachin Yadav for gold in the men's javelin throw final. Rohit recorded a best throw of

83.65 metres, which is his personal best, to claim the top prize. After throwing from a higher angle in his initial attempts, Rohit tweaked to make a flatter release of the javelin. That change paid dividends. "After the first two throws, which were a little high, my coaches (Sergey Makarov and Parveer Singh) told me to go flat, and that has got me my personal best," he told reporters.

But Rohit rued missing out on the Worlds qualification mark of 85 metres. "I had the capacity today (Sunday), but I could not (pull it off)," he said.

The final turned out to be a thrilling affair as the throwers kept re-raising the bar until Rohit sealed the deal with his impressive effort. Sachin finished with a best effort of 83.20m. Sachin later revealed that he was unwell. "I came in with a little fever. I can still feel it," he said. Ranked 22 in the world rankings, Sachin has a good chance of making Worlds cut. A clearer picture of his qualification will be known after August 27, when the final list of eligible athletes via world rankings will be released. No one managed to make the Tokyo Worlds in this meet through the direct qualification mark.

As the curtains for the meet was drawn, hosts Tamil Nadu, with a tally of 195 points, were awarded the overall title. Tamil Nadu also won the team championships in both the men's and women's categories.

National Record holder in 400m, Vishal TK, was declared the best athlete in the men's individual section while steeple-chaser Ankita Dhyani took home the women's individual award.

Continental delight for rifle shooter Aishwary

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

PERFECT shots, technical snags, disastrous shots...the men's 50m rifle 3 positions final had all the elements that makes shooting an exciting watch. Amidst that rollercoaster ride, one man stood out. India's Aishwary Prasad Singh Tomar. Aishwary, 24, was the favourite to win the event with some relatively inexperienced faces in the eight-man final of the ongoing Asian Championships in Shymkent, Kazakhstan. And it was no surprise to witness him get a handy lead with a series of solid hits after the kneeling and prone stages. Towards the end, China's Zhao Wenyu threatened to steal the gold but Aishwary held firm to come out on top with a tally of 462.5. Japan's Naoya Okada finished third.

Senior pro Chain Singh, who suffered a technical snag at the close of first stage (kneeling), finished fourth. He returned with a disastrous 8 after he was forced to pause due to some issue involving his target. Akhil Sheoran also had some disastrous rounds which cost him.



Emma Raducanu plays a forehand return against Ena Shibahara on Sunday | AFP

First victory since 2021 triumph for Raducanu

AGENCIES @New York

EMMA Raducanu bagged her first US Open victory since her fairytale 2021 title triumph on Sunday with a straight sets demolition of Japanese qualifier Ena Shibahara.

The Briton was in complete control throughout, breaking Shibahara's serve routinely on her way to a 6-1, 6-2 drubbing on the Louis Armstrong Stadium showcourt.

The win was Raducanu's first at the US Open since she made history four years ago, winning the championship as a

little-known unseeded qualifier at the age of 18. "I'm very pleased to have come through that match," Raducanu said afterwards. "First rounds are very challenging always, the nerves, and I wanted to win a match here really bad."

Results (Rd 1): Men: Jakob Mensik (CZE x16) bt Nicolas Jarry (CHI) 7-6(5), 6-3, 6-4; Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (ESP x18) bt Alexander Shechenko (KAZ) 6-1, 6-1, 6-2. **Women:** Polina Kudumetova (RUS) bt Nuria Parrizas Diaz (ESP) 2-2 retired; Tejera Valentova (CZE) bt Lucia Bronzetti (ITA) 6-3, 3-6, 6-4; Emma Raducanu (GBR) bt Ena Shibahara (JPN) 6-1, 6-2; McCartney Kessler (USA x22) bt Magda Linette (POL) 7-5, 7-5.

Pacer Achyuth impresses ahead of Ranji Trophy

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @Chennai

KEEPING in mind their past struggles, Tamil Nadu are looking to put together a strong pace attack ahead of the upcoming Ranji Trophy. Thus all the Tamil Nadu selectors right from chairman K Shri Vasudeva Das watched both the TNCA President's XI and TNCA XI fast bowlers with rapt attention in the Buchi Babu tournament at Gojan grounds on Sunday. Both the games ended in a draw.

Apart from captain and left-arm spinner Sai Kishore, pacers Sandeep Warrior, Gurjapneet Singh, Sonu Yadav will be the key bowlers for the state. The place for the fourth seamer is up for grabs. CV Achyuth

At Gojan 'B': TNCA President's XI 384/9 & 4/2 in 5 ovs drew with Maharashtra 228 in 74/1 ovs (Pitthi Shaw 66, Harshal Kate 62, CV Achyuth 3/50). At SSN: Himachal Pradesh 144 & 74/2 in 15.4 ovs drew with Chhattisgarh 227/6 decd in 65.4 ovs (Rishi Sharma 51, Apoorva Walla 3/57). At TI-Murugappa: Baroda 176 & 182/9 in 45 ovs (Vanshaj Sharma 4/74, Abid Mushtaq 4/78) lost to J&K 280 & 82/0 in 24.3 ovs (Yavar Hassan 48 n.o.). At SRMC (Turf): Odisha 222 & 184/8 in 45 ovs (Akash Pandey 4/64) lost to Indian Railways 210 in 60.5 ovs (Zubair Ali Khan 80, Sumit Sharma 4/10, Badal Biswal 3/57) & 197/5 in 38 ovs (Dinesh Mor 67). At Gojan 'A': TNCA XI 414/8 drew with Haryana 207 in 63.2 ovs (Lakshya Dalal 73, DT Chandrasekar 5/67). At IITM: Mumbai 266 drew with Bengal 325/5 in 90 ovs (Aditya Purcjit 122). At MRF-Pachalyappa's: MP 230/9 & 230/8 in 45 ovs (Mangesh Yadav 75, Prerit Dutta 3/89) lost to Punjab 395/9 decd in 89 ovs (Uday Pratap Saharan 109, Anmol Malhotra 87, Aditya Mishra 5/93) & 68/4 in 6.2 ovs (Aditya Mishra 3/31). At Guru Nanak: Jharkhand 283 & 130 in 25.3 ovs (Tanay Thyagarajan 4/74, Arjket Reddy 3/25) lost to Hyderabad 330 in 82.4 ovs (P Nitish Reddy 106, Rabut Radesch 70, Manishi 3/84, Rishav Raj 3/67) & 89/8 in 22.3 ovs (Rishav Raj 5/44, Manishi 3/39).

BRIEF SCORES

and D Deepesh are strong contenders for the fourth bowler slot. The duo playing for the TNCA President's XI and TNCA XI respectively bowled with a lot of fire and vigour at the adjacent grounds. Former

first class cricketer and a key member of the selection panel S Srinivasan who watched the matches admired the way both Achyuth and Deepesh bowled. "Both Achyuth and Deepesh are very good prospects for the

state. Both bowled with good rhythm and hit the deck. Very pleased with our talent pool," said Srinivasan. Achyuth, who took three wickets against Maharashtra, was happy with the way he bowled. He also spoke to Prithvi Shaw and Mukesh Choudhary of Maharashtra after the game to seek their inputs as to how to bowl better. "It was a good feeling to pick three wickets against Maharashtra because there wasn't much from the wicket. And I bowled the correct lengths for this surface, because it was a little slow compared to the other wickets that we have played," said Achyuth.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

Ind A Women lose to Oz A in unofficial Test

BRISBANE: The Australia A top-order fired in unison after off-spinner Amy Edgar completed her five-wicket haul as the hosts defeated India A by six wickets in the unofficial Women's Test. India A folded for 286 in their second innings, setting the hosts a 281-run target. They achieved the target in 85.3 overs.

Golfer Aditi in top 30 with one round to play

MISSISSAUGA (ONTARIO): Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded an even par round of 71 on the third day of the CPKC Women's Open to sit tied 29th on the leaderboard. The 27-year-old golfer from the country (71-69-71) now has a score of two under par at the Mississauga Golf & Country Club.

WEIGHTLIFTING

Commonwealth C'ships: Mirabai returns to action

AGENCIES @ Ahmedabad

TOKYO Olympics silver medalist Mirabai Chanu will return to competitive action on Monday after a year-long hiatus, leading the home challenge at the Commonwealth Championships where Indian weightlifters are expected to bag a rich medal haul. Chanu, who has battled injuries in recent years, was last seen at the Paris Games, where she missed the podium by a kilogram.

With the new Olympic weight categories in force for the 2028 LA Games, the 31-year-old has decided to move down from the 49kg division to 48kg, a weight class in which she won her world championship title and two Commonwealth Games medals, but hasn't competed in it since 2018. Managing the weight will be a challenge, and Chanu herself has admitted it. But the tenacious Manipuri, who has collected almost every accolade the sport has to offer, has embraced it. Working closely with chief coach Vijay Sharma, she has also been fine-tuning her technique in pursuit of the elusive 90kg snatch.

Man Utd held by Fulham, Everton win in new stadium

AGENCIES @ London

MANCHESTER United remain without a Premier League win this season after being held 1-1 at Fulham on Sunday, while a Jack Grealish-inspired Everton opened their new stadium with a 2-0 victory over Brighton. Ruben Amorim's United were left to rue Bruno Fernandes' wayward first-half penalty as they were pegged back at Craven Cottage.

Rodrigo Muniz's own-goal put United in front, but Emile Smith Rowe came off the bench to rescue a point for Fulham. Results: Fulham 1-1 Man Utd; Everton 2-0 Brighton; Palace 1-1 Forest.



Everton's James Garner celebrates after scoring the second goal on Sunday | AP

Barca fight back to win

VALENCIA: Barcelona fought back from two goals down at Levante to win 3-2 on Saturday while Atletico Madrid were held 1-1 by Elche.



In the wake of a new US visa regime seen as aggressively anti-International student, experts, in conversation with **Karthikeya S**, warn Indian aspirants not to do anything that puts them on the radar — and to consider other options

SURVIVING TRUMP 2.0

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EDITION

WITH the fall admission cycle to American universities underway, uncertainty looms for international students. Under President Donald Trump's tighter visa regime, many Indian students fear their chances of approval are slimmer. Let's look at the data: About 6,000 international students in the USA had visas revoked in the last 9 months, while new visas issued to Indian students declined by 30 per cent. A report by the Institute of International Education found 35 per cent of US colleges declaring falling enrolments this year. Data from June 2025 shows Indian arrivals down by 46 per cent. Concerns deepened when the USA halted visa interviews in June and resumed them with enhanced social media scrutiny. The mood, say experts, is grim. "Students are reconsidering going to the USA for higher education," says Anusha Bheri, Managing Partner at Bheri Overseas. Students already in the US are warning their relatives against applying. "Due to the new salary criteria for H-1B visas and the lack of clarity on OPT, students are finding it difficult to sustain themselves," she says.

Law & order, not racism

While Trump's detractors call these changes racist and xenophobic, supporters see this as "putting America first." Experts suggest a middle ground: that the new rules aim to ensure international students comply with US laws. "If I invite someone to my place, I would like them to behave themselves. The same is the case with the USA's new rules," says Saurabh Arora, Founder & CEO of University Living. He adds that the regime addresses issues such as improper documentation, overstaying, flouting traffic rules, and displaying "anti-American sentiments".

Manisha says, "The USA is expecting international students to be more accountable for their behaviour, and adhere to US laws. They face the same scrutiny as all other immigrants." Vibha adds that Indian students have little to fear, as such "disruptive behaviour" has not been observed. "They often have a very hectic academic life," she points out. She adds that visa rejections are now due to weak applications and interviews, not discrimination.

More options for students

While one might speculate endlessly on the intent of these rules and their fallout, students are already looking beyond the USA. Experts cite the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and Germany as reliable alternatives, and the UAE, China, Singapore, Japan and South Korea as emerging contenders. "These countries offer diverse, more affordable programmes, post-study work opportunities, and even citizenship pathways," Anusha says. Manisha says, "If they want academic rigour, they choose American universities. If they want settlement pathways, they choose countries that provide them." Students may also turn to transnational education, studying at US universities' offshore campuses to reduce immigration risks while retaining academic quality. "They could split their education between the US and other partner countries," Vibha says.

This begs the question: Is the American Dream now distant for Indian students?

Fear & misinformation rife

Several experts point to widespread misconceptions about the new visa regime, fuelled by panic and ignorance. The most prevalent myth is that the Trump administration has banned Indian students. "Bad news travels faster. There is no ban on Indian students, just more scrutiny — on all international students," clarifies Anusha. Many experts also point out that the USA cannot afford to impose such a ban. "US universities depend heavily on international talent — not only for tuition revenue but also for research and innovation. Nearly 54 per cent of US STEM graduate students are international," Vibha Kagzi, Founder & CEO of ReachIvy, points out. That universities are accepting international students, while the administration isn't, is also false, says Manisha Zaveri, Joint MD, Career Mosaic. She adds, "Several students are not only receiving their visas but are already in the USA."



"You know that you aren't there to break any rules or dupe the system. If your intentions are proper, there's no need to be afraid."

Manisha Zaveri, Joint MD, Career Mosaic

Better safe than sorry

For students sticking with US plans, the advice is simple: obey the law. Maintain a full course load, report address changes, avoid unauthorised work, and be mindful of social media. Focus on strengthening your profile and upskilling. "Create value for your university, community, and employers. If you want to stay beyond education, provide a compelling reason," says Saurabh.

CHANGE IN TIDE!

How US policy on international students changed between presidents

GIVEN how popular the USA is as a study-abroad destination, international students often keep a close eye on the American Presidential Elections, because their dreams of studying there can rise or fall depending on who wins. Sure enough, those dreams took a sharp turn after Republican candidate Donald Trump defeated Democratic nominee and former Vice President Kamala Harris in the 2024 race. Almost immediately, Trump reversed several of the previous administration's policies on international students.

HERE'S A LOOK AT STUDENT VISA RULES UNDER DONALD TRUMP AND FORMER PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

Visa appointments & interviews	Longer processing; no waivers. Visa interviews froze mid-2025; resumed with stricter social-media checks.	Relaxed the appointment & interview process post-COVID, increased interview waivers.
Screening process	AI-driven "catch & revoke" programme targeting international students. Visas revoked for "politically sensitive" reasons.	Maintained routine checks and regular vetting procedures without additional monitoring mechanisms.
Duration of Stay (D/S)	Proposal to restrict D/S period cleared by the White House.	Indefinite period while maintaining OPT status, typical for F-1 visas.
Post-study work pathways (OPT, H-1B)	No formal rollback of OPT, wage-based H-1B visas introduced.	Extended STEM-OPT in 2022 and curbed multiple H-1B sponsorships per applicant.
Visa revocations and deportations	Students had visas revoked and faced deportation for skipping class, traffic violations, and even brief encounters with law enforcement.	No mass revocations or deportation of international students.

SIT FOR SAT

Everything you need to know about SAT in 2025

Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration, Changes, & Cancellation Deadline
Sept 13	Aug 29	Sept 2
Oct 4	Sept 19	Sept 23
Nov 8	Oct 24	Oct 28
Dec 6	Nov 21	Nov 25

Mode: Fully adaptive online
Duration: 2 hours 14 minutes
Modules: Evidence-Based Reading & Writing (EBRW) (54 questions, 800 marks)
Mathematics (44 questions, 800 marks)
Total marks: 1600

THE SAT UNLOCKS SEVERAL DOORS IN THE USA FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, SUCH AS:

- **Admission to top US Universities:** A SAT score above 1300 enhances a student's admission application and opens doors to more competitive universities.
- **Merit scholarships & financial aid:** Universities are introducing transparent score-linked scholarship policies, giving high-achieving students a tangible advantage.
- **Research programmes:** A good SAT score shows a student can handle the intellectual demands of university-level research programmes.
- **Pre-college internships:** Several US pre-college programmes now use the SAT as an objective measure of readiness for advanced work.
- **Leadership & experiential learning programmes:** Several leadership programmes also see SAT scores as a benchmarked measure to gauge the potential of students and applicants.

Universities accepting SAT scores

Harvard University EBRW: 730-790 Math: 730-800	Massachusetts Institute of Technology EBRW: 720-770 Math: 770-800	Columbia University EBRW: 700-780 Math: 710-790
Yale University EBRW: 730-780 Math: 730-800	University of California, Berkeley EBRW: 730-720 Math: 630-760	Cornell University EBRW: 680-760 Math: 720-800

Trump's war on campuses

Why universities are being targeted, and their reactions

ONE of the first steps taken under the Trump presidency was an alleged "crackdown" on elite universities, including Harvard, Columbia, Brown and others. A Department of Justice probe into reported campus antisemitism after pro-Palestine protests soon expanded into funding cuts, a DEI clampdown, lawsuits, tighter monitoring of international students and visa revocations. While some institutions sued for injunctions and issued defiant statements, others capitulated to DoJ pressure.

Columbia University

ACTION: ● \$400 million in federal funding frozen
● Investigations by the DoJ & the Department of Education
REACTION: ● Reached a settlement of \$220M with the Trump administration ● Agreed to mask ban at protests, hire 36 security officers, and uphold university neutrality



Harvard University

ACTION: ● Over \$2 billion in federal grants frozen ● Proclamation banning international student enrolments
REACTION: ● Sued the Trump administration against international student ban & research fund cuts ● In talks for a \$500 million settlement, with similar conditions as Columbia



Brown University

ACTION: ● Federal research grants worth over \$510 million halted
● Investigations launched into alleged antisemitism, "racial bias" in admissions process
REACTION: ● Agreed to invest \$50 million over 10 years in Rhode Island workforce programs ● Removed race-based concessions, diversity quotas in admissions



University of California (Los Angeles)

ACTION: ● \$584 million in federal grants frozen ● Trump administration demanding settlement of \$1 billion, as well as policy concessions
REACTION: ● Filed legal pushback, secured restoration of \$81 million in federal funds ● \$1B Trump settlement demand condemned by California Governor Gavin Newsom



LOOK EAST

Asian Alternatives to the American Dream

WHILE restrictions on international students are making the USA a less viable option, several countries in Asia are emerging as strong alternatives. With fast-developing economies, top-ranked universities, and affordable tuition & living costs, these countries offer Indian students several benefits.

China
Popular streams: Computer Science, Engineering, Medicine
Cost: ₹ 2.2L to 9L per year
Top Universities: Peking University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University

Singapore
Popular courses: Engineering, Business, Data Science
Cost: ₹ 6L to 12L per year
Top universities: National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore University of Technology and Design

Japan
Popular courses: Engineering, Environmental Science, Language & Culture Studies
Cost: ₹ 3L to Rs 6L per year
Top universities: The University of Tokyo, Kyoto University, Osaka University

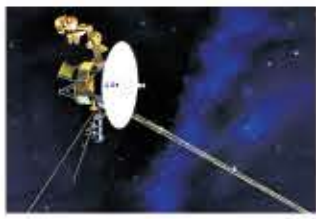
United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Popular courses: Business Administration, Engineering, Hospitality & Tourism
Cost: ₹ 8L to Rs 15L per year
Top universities: United Arab Emirates University, Khalifa University, University of Sharjah

South Korea
Popular courses: Korean Language & Culture, Science, Engineering & Technology, Design & Fashion
Cost: ₹ 2.6L to Rs 4.25L per year
Top universities: Seoul National University, Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology, Yonsei University



Interview with Vasanth Ravi

PG 4



DAY'S DIARY

Interstellar record

Voyager 1 became the humanity's first object to enter interstellar space on this day in 2012. The historic announcement came from NASA

LAUNCH

Voyagers 1 and 2 were launched in 1977 to take advantage of a favourable alignment of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, and are now exploring interstellar space



TRIVIA

As of 2024, Voyager 1 is over 24 billion kilometers (15 billion miles) from Earth. NASA engineers considered 10,000 plus trajectories for the mission



TRAILBLAZER

According to NASA, the Voyagers are the first to pass through the heliosheath, which exists somewhere from eight to 14 billion miles from the Sun



RM PALANIAPPAN, Artist



As someone who has lived and worked in this city for decades, I have personally witnessed the evolution of artistic practices in Chennai. In the earlier years, intimacy bound the artists. Ideas and philosophies were exchanged whenever artists met. Composition and concepts were discussed. The human touch was paramount. Today, I find a stark transformation. Styles are global, technological aid and AI have enhanced the artist's skill, the connectivity provided by the internet has resulted in international collaborations, and visibility is now paramount. I have been a part of this transition period, and although I do look back with fondness at the days when the system was not so commercial, I also feel happy that Chennai now offers better opportunities for young artists.

Founded on August 22, 1639, the city of Madras stands proudly on its rich history, nourished by narratives, layered by relentless human activity, and looking at a glorious future.

As the city celebrates its birthday, those who have been a significant part of its cultural landscape, share their thoughts with Jitha Karthikeyan

As the city celebrates its birthday, those who have been a significant part of its cultural landscape, share their thoughts with



C DOUGLAS, Artist

My memories of the city took root at the Madras College of Fine Arts. Every day, I felt the red building, the library, the wooden steps, and the teachers waiting for me. Walking was an integral part of my life then.

Strolls to Moor Market in search of second-hand books and to St Andrew's Church (The Kirk) next to the college, where the trees in the premises were a subject for our landscape paintings in watercolours, are all unforgettable. The Udupi restaurants with their strong



coffees in steel tumblers, the libraries, the musical concerts at Music Academy will all remain etched in my memory. It's hard to believe how time went by so quickly and silently, and how much the city has changed since.

THE CULTURAL ECHOES OF MADRAS



PRAVIN KANNANUR, Artist, Theatre personality



Madras gave me the languages I have since thrived in — Tamil and French. Eventually, I also learnt the languages of contemporary art and theatre, abstraction, and the absurd. It was a fabulous city to be in as a young person, if you were scientifically or culturally oriented. Culture was easy to access, although classical arts had primacy. I was able to partake in a lot of action. Rock groups were creating waves while folk forms were also flourishing. Koothu-p-Pattarai, operating out of the Alliance Française of Madras, the crucible for culture, had already blazed a strong contemporary idiom melding the traditional and the modern, the classic and the vernacular. I was lucky enough to be able to walk into these worlds and was amazed to find myself in a non-hierarchical relationship with stalwarts in the art scene. The irrepressible Na Muthuswami allowed me to direct my first professional play with his group when I was barely 22. Artist John Tun Sein painted a 15-foot x 20-foot abstract canvas for this play. There was a lot of fluidity between the various fields, much lively debate, ferment, and collaborations. Today, the Chennai Sangamam is a yearly window to engage with the finest of our folk artists in a truly contemporary setting. It gives us a taste of what has gone into shaping our cultural landscape. Chennai still has so much to offer, although one has to make space for oneself as a youngster.



PARVATHI NAYAR, Artist, Author

Chennai, for me, is not just where I live, but the city that continually shapes my art. I have had my studio here for over sixteen years, and the rhythms of the city speak to my practice. Stories of water, the environment, and the people that coexist in Chennai flow into the way I think and create my art. As a Chennai-based artist, it was a privilege to present my six-year project, Limits of Change, to the city earlier this year. The work explores war, violence, identity, and reconciliation, bridging personal memory with geopolitical history. Audiences were guided



ed through nine rooms of the fictional Story Museum created at Lalit Kala Akademi, each room filled with art installations, videos, drawings, archival texts, and objects. At its heart lies a near-forgotten chapter of history: the Custodian Force India (CFI), which sailed from Madras in 1953 to help bring peace in Korea after the Korean War.

They conducted their mission in the dangerous Demilitarised Zone, then returned in 1954. The emotional core of the work comes from my father, Gen TNR Nayar, who was part of the CFI. The work uses archival videos shot by my father that include scenes of the Madras Port in 1954, with such luminaries as C Rajagopalachari welcoming the returning soldiers. Madras is, thus, a vital cartographic marker.

H MADHU, Proprietor, Lakshana Art Gallery and Framers

Ever since the inception of Lakshana in 1984, the space has been a hub for art lovers in Chennai. My fondest memory is of the inaugural show at my new gallery that opened in December 2004. MF Husain kindly consented to inaugurate the show with his painting of the renowned Carnatic musician, MS Subbulakshmi, which was a turning point in my life. He remained a friend and mentor since then, until his death. My bond with most of the artists in the city has encouraged me to be a part of Chennai's artscape.



GITA HUDSON, Artist, Curator, Filmmaker



Growing up in Chennai, my parents, who had very liberal views, exposed me to all faiths. The sculptures I discovered in the temples I visited, and the vibrant colours of the city, found their way into my canvases in abstract forms. These aesthetics have also influenced my films. When the hand-drawn hoardings on Mount Road gave way to digital ones, I made a film on banner artists. My biggest learning has been from two sources. One was my visits to the studios of artists like Achuthan Kudallur, whose collection of art books was a treasure trove. The other was my experience as a curator at DakshinaChitra. All the senior artists I met then and whose practices I have documented were driven by passion, and shows were never a destination. Today, the younger crowd needs gallery support to gain national recognition. In my view, what the city needs is a platform that can serve to be a meeting point for all art forms — dance, music, theatre, literature, and art.



PERFUMED TALKS

VENNAPUSALA RAMYA

NATIONAL crush — that's what her fans lovingly call her. Rashmika Mandanna has become one of the most adored and bankable actresses in the country. Whether lighting up the screen in a blockbuster or sharing candid moments online, she radiates warmth and relatability. Recently, as she launched her perfume brand Dear Diary, CE caught up with her for a candid chat.

Excipients: Tell us about Dear Diary. Dear Diary, for me, has been more than just a brand, I truly mean it. With Dear Diary, I feel like I'm becoming a little more intimate with my audience, my people. So, it is super special to me.

Why did you name the brand Dear Diary? I named it Dear Diary because it felt like the story of my life. I wanted Dear Diary, the perfume, to become a part of other people's lives too; to be a part of their story. The name just sat really well with me. Dear Diary is something you address when you're writing your most personal thoughts — your secrets, goals, feelings. That makes it



more personal, unique, and sweet.

As you open up more to the audience with Dear Diary, what's the most unfiltered version of yourself that we haven't seen? I think people have only seen 30-40% of who I really am. And that's intentional. I'm not someone who likes to be completely out there. But at the same time, what you do see is the real me. There's 70% of me that people haven't seen and I'm okay with that.

What's your favourite perfume? Right now, my favourite is 'Irreplaceable' by Dear Diary.

How do you unwind? Well, when I'm working, there's not much unwinding because it becomes a routine. I wake up, do the first workout session, go

writer? I don't know!

What has your journey in the film industry taught you? I've learned that patience takes you to great places. I think that applies to life in general, if you're patient, you'll go far. Also, kindness. It may not earn you more money or more fame, but it makes a huge difference. Being kind to your team — the lightmen, the costume department, the direction team — just makes the shooting experience so much better. I've always believed in being kind, even before I became an actor. That's one thing that hasn't changed. And I've learned to trust my instincts as an actor. You know yourself better than anyone else. We're all trying to figure life out, none of us have it all together. Respect is important; respect for everyone. When things get tough, just keep reminding yourself that 'this too shall pass'. That quote has helped me through some hard times. You have to be thick-skinned. And if you're not, make sure you have people around who genuinely support you. Once you've chosen this path, there's no going back. And I hope that anyone who needs to hear this, does and it helps people.

Future projects? Upcoming releases include The Girlfriend and Thama, which is a Hindi film. There are more projects, but they haven't been announced yet. I've started shooting for Mysaa, a pan-Indian film where I play the lead. The next year looks very exciting. Once you see the lineup, you'll know what I mean. I hope we have a blast shooting and create more iconic films.

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BOOK NOOK

Goa, 1961
 By Valmiki Faleiro
 The subject of the liberation of Goa in 1961 and its integration into the Indian Union in 1962. What were the events that led to the 36-hour military operation, possibly the first since Independence that occurred entirely at India's initiative? What role did Goans play?



The Sunshine Project
 By Uma Krishnaswami
 Anil loves karate, his friends and the solar power project he has been championing in his community. He doesn't love having to speak up — as his karate sensei says, best fight, no fight. One day, staying quiet isn't an option anymore.



Comrades and Comebacks
 By Saira Shah Halim
 This book tries to sketch a rich historical narrative that foregrounds left politics in world history, locates its relevance in India and charts a future of its revival.



Tiger Slayer
 By Ruby Lal
 More than four centuries ago in India, a Muslim woman ruled a magnificent empire: Nur Jahan, whose name means 'light of the world'. Nur led troops into battle atop an elephant, hunted tigers, designed public buildings, and issued coinage and royal decrees in her own name.



CHENNAI TRADE CENTRE

A TRADE TAKE OFF

With infrastructure and connectivity, the city's rising skyline unfolds new stories of success. | P RAVIKUMAR

QUICKFIX

CHEESE CORN BALLS

- INGREDIENTS**
- Boiled sweet corn: 1 cup (crushed)
 - Cornflour, breadcrumbs: 1 tbsp each
 - Garam masala, chilli powder: 1 tsp each
 - Grated cheese: 1/2 cup
 - Oil: 2 cups
 - Salt: to taste

METHOD

- In a bowl, combine boiled corn, grated cheese, cornflour, breadcrumbs, salt, and pepper.
- Make small, smooth balls from the mixture.
- Roll each ball in extra breadcrumbs to coat evenly.
- Rest for 15-20 minutes to set the shape.
- Deep fry in hot oil on medium flame until golden and crispy. Serve hot with sauce.



Contributed by Veda Bai, Bengaluru

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Furniture sale

Therapy furniture to Sheesham wood pieces, leather sofas, recliners, carpets, and more.
 WHEN: Till August 24, 10 am-8:30 pm
 WHERE: Chennai Trade Centre, Nandambakkam

New menu

This Madras month, Moonbakes has whisked that sentiment into a menu as comforting as it is celebratory. The special spread — Assorted Madras Tea Cake Box, Assorted Madras Ties Leches Box, and Assorted Madras Puffs Box — takes you on a journey of taste and memory



Thailand on a plate

Asia Kitchen by Mainland China brings the authentic taste of Thailand to Chennai with its vibrant Thai Food Festival at Somerset Greenways. It is a celebration of Thailand's rich culinary heritage, bold flavours, fresh ingredients, and colourful dishes that narrate stories of culture and tradition.
 WHEN: 11.30 am - 3.30 pm and 06.30 pm - 11.00 pm



Varuval meets wines

Sangamithirai at Feathers Hotel, presents 'Flavours, Stories & Pairings'. An exclusive wine dinner where ancient Tamil recipes find their perfect partner in world-class wines. This one-night-only dining experience brings alive the legendary Karikalan Virundhu.
 WHEN: August 29, 7 pm-10.30 pm



Tune into Tamilakam's traditions

Feathers Hotel celebrates the timeless charm of the city of Chennai with Madras Magizhchi, a food festival that brings alive the grandeur of Tamilakam's dining traditions.
 WHEN: Till August 31
 CALL: 7358018812, 7823977825

Talk on temple inscriptions

During the Madras Week, Chithra Madhavan will give a talk, Madhuradhvani, on the interesting temple inscriptions of Chennai.
 WHEN: Today, 6:45 pm
 WHERE: Arkay Convention Center, Mylapore

Tiffin tales

Embark on a flavourful journey across India as Hyatt Regency Chennai unveils 'Tiffin's of India - Small Bites, Big Flavours', a high-tea experience that reimagines the beloved tradition of Indian tiffins.
 WHEN: Till August 31, 3 pm to 7 pm



Madras Week Culinary Trail

As the city prepares to celebrate Madras Day, Taj Coromandel invites guests on a deliciously nostalgic culinary journey through Chennai's rich heritage and the timeless flavours of the Coromandel Coast with a special a la carte menu.
 WHEN: Till August 31
 WHERE: Southern Spice, Taj Coromandel



Madras in a glass

Experience the Madras revival at The Leather Bar & Pasha, THE Park Chennai. The chefs and bartenders have come together to craft a menu where classic Madras snacks with a contemporary twist, while cocktails are inspired by its legendary landmarks — each glass brimming with the city's character, charm, and spirit.
 WHEN: Till August 30



The expert is a senior veterinarian, Crown Vet, Delhi.

Is it true that dogs should not be fed chicken or mutton bones? The khichdi we give her does have few bones but they are well pressure cooked.

As a veterinarian, I advise against feeding dogs chicken or mutton bones. Cooked bones tend to splinter, which can lead to choking, internal injuries, or digestive blockages. While bones that are thoroughly pressure cooked, like those in khichdi, may be softer and less risky, it's still safer to avoid giving bones altogether. Instead, provide

ASK AN EXPERT

boneless, well-cooked meat or appropriate dog treats. Always observe your dog closely if they consume anything with bones, and consult your vet immediately if you notice any signs of distress or discomfort. Your dog's safety is the priority.



FITBIT

THE CASE FOR WARMING UP: WHY SKIPPING IT CAN COST YOU

We all know the rule of thumb for a healthy lifestyle — move at least 4-5 times a week, whether that's a brisk walk, a run or a gym session. But there's one crucial step that often gets ignored: the warm-up. Many either cut it short or skip it altogether, not realising that those few minutes can make or break their workout.

WHAT IS A WARM-UP?

A warm-up is a low-intensity routine done before exercise to prepare the body for physical activity. It increases blood flow to the muscles, raises core temperature and reduces the risk of injury. Warm-ups are of two types:

- Non-specific warm-ups:** Simple activities like jogging or cycling that elevate the heart rate.
- Specific warm-ups:** Movements tailored to the upcoming workout. For instance, slower-paced walking before a brisk walk, or mobility drills before a strength session.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Injury prevention:** Warm muscles are less prone to tears and sprains.
- Better flexibility and stability:** Improves range of motion and joint support.
- Increased blood flow:** Delivers oxygen efficiently to working muscles.
- Nervous system activation:** Helps recruit more muscle fibres for better power and technique.
- Improved mind-muscle coordination:** Prepares the brain to sync with movement patterns.

COMPONENTS OF A GOOD WARM-UP:

- Heart rate elevators:** Gradually raises heart rate without spiking it (spot jogging, jumping jacks).
- Mobiliser drills:** Improves joint mobility and elasticity (cat-camel stretch, world's greatest stretch).

- Dynamic stretching:** Prepares muscles for explosive movements (lunge twists, jump squats).
- Multi-planar movements:** Mimics real workout movements across directions and ranges.
- Muscle activation:** Primes specific muscle groups you'll target in your workout (glute bridges before squats, good mornings before deadlifts).

HOW LONG SHOULD IT LAST?

While the duration depends on the workout and fitness level, most warm-ups fall between 3-10 minutes. The intensity should feel moderate — enough to cause light sweating but not exhaustion. Beginners and advanced athletes share the same warm-up components, but intensity and complexity differ.

DO'S AND DON'TS:

- Do's**
- Focus on muscles you're about to train.
 - Incorporate core activation and balance drills.
 - Progress intensity gradually.
- Don'ts**
- Never skip the warm-up.
 - Don't exhaust yourself before the workout.
 - Avoid irrelevant or non-specific movements.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Next time you're tempted to skip it, remember, warm-up isn't wasted time, it is what makes everything else flow better.



By Abhishek K, fitness expert, cult — a fitness and wellness platform

ARTCORNER



AT DAYBREAK

Artist Ramdas Lobhi paints a woman in her sunlit courtyard, busy in the daily rhythms of life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

In a silent street of Nungambakkam, surrounded by high-rise buildings and even taller widespread branches carrying heavy winds, a man was laying a ramp at the entrance of a newly constructed building. His hands moved to the rhythms of the leaves, finishing the still-wet cement structure. The man, along with many others, was working towards a goal that launched on Sunday — the Acharya Foundation (Advanced Education, Simplified).

On the establishment of this foundation, Dr Varun Acharya, maxillofacial prosthodontist and implantologist, says, "In healthcare, and dentistry especially, we saw that while there are many avenues for formal education, there are fewer spaces for practical, ongoing, skill-based learning." He adds that professionals often have to choose between highly academic conferences that feel too abstract or commercial workshops that lack depth. "Acharya Foundation was born to bridge this gap — to provide a serious, structured, yet approachable platform for advanced learning," he notes. This idea also stemmed from implantologist, cosmetologist, and endodontist Dr Vijailakshmi Acharya's belief that "our endpoint should be the next generation's starting point. We need to impart whatever we know." Hence, the learnings from the combined exposure and experience — more than 50 years by Dr Vijailakshmi and over 10 years by Dr Varun — of the mother-son duo will be shared in addition to providing a platform where educational interactions and knowledge-sharing sessions are conducted. Dr Varun summarises, "The Foundation is a reflection. It embodies our belief that if we can keep learning, then we must also create spaces for others to do the same."

'Advanced Learning, Simplified.' This Acharya Dental tagline extends to the institution. Here, 'Advanced' reflects the level of expertise and rigour in the courses offered. And 'Simplified' reflects the way they are delivered. "In practice, this means that even complex topics are broken down into formats that learners can engage with easily, without any compromises because we believe that education should not be intimidating or inaccessible," shares Dr Varun. From entryways decorated with planters, mirrors, and unique, thoughtful artworks to colourful dental chairs, a simulation lab for hands-on experience, and a lec-



CLINIC MEETS CLASSROOM

To provide a structured and approachable platform for advanced learning in dentistry, Acharya Dental comes up with a plan



PHOTOS: A SHWIN PRA SATH

ture room named 'Think Tank' — the newly opened five-storey space is touted to be a "one-stop destination for everything dentistry." Dr Varun explains, "We recognise that today's learners need flexibility, interactivity, and technology-driven support. Our approach blends both: live teaching, mentorship, and community on one hand; and digital platforms, simulations, and self-paced modules on the other."

It's a single ecosystem where professionals can upgrade without leaving their professional identity behind. "Every dentist has to be a general dentist and have a speciality with-

in their practice. We want to go deeply into the depths of every subject and share what we know and learn what we don't know. In that process, everybody will be engaged," shares Dr Vijailakshmi.

Professionals, who can learn at their own pace, can expect a spectrum from advanced dental and medical courses to leadership and communication workshops to interdisciplinary events that bring different worlds together. The team also plans to host global faculty, research exchanges, and hands-on simulations, so there's something for every stage of a professional journey. "Dentist-



ry is a little scary subject. But we can make it as pleasant as possible. Learn the techniques to make it as painless as possible, then embrace all the new technology to simplify it," adds Dr Vijailakshmi.

Dr Varun believes, "Technology is not just an add-on; it's part of the fabric of learning today." He also notes that the industry today needs collaboration and curation. "Collaboration, because knowledge is still too compartmentalised — dentistry, medicine, and technology need to talk to each other more. Curation, because professionals are drowning in information."

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

BANARASI saris in crimson, Kanjeevarams in jewel blue, a gold-bordered green silk sari, and pink weaves worked in subtle monotone — the opening runway act at Hotel Savera on August 20 was a statement in heritage and craftsmanship. Draped in timeless silks and paired with ornate jewellery, the models set the evening in motion with a reminder of the city's textile legacy, one that continues to find relevance on contemporary ramps. The Duchess Utsav press meet fashion show, organised by the Duchess Club as a curtain raiser to its annual exhibition, blended colour with culture, presenting Chennai a vibrant glimpse of what awaits at the 24th edition of the Utsav.

Now in its 24th year, the Duchess Utsav not only celebrates fashion and design but also champions entrepreneurship, particularly for women. For the first time in its history, the organisers chose a pre-event fashion showcase, offering media, sponsors and partners a preview of the energy and vision that have sustained the Utsav for nearly a quarter-century.

The evening unfolded in themed rounds, each revealing a different tone of design. The traditional silks gave way to a sharp monochrome statement — the black-and-white collection, modelled by Duchess Club members themselves, pieces that will also be available for sale at the Utsav.

The glamour heightened with the arrival of the Miss O2 Man 2025 winners, who walked in outfits by Palam Silks, matched with Thangamayil Jewellery's collection. Between ramp walks, one of the participants, Sumedha, offered a refreshing interlude with a few songs, drawing applause for her voice and offering the audience a melodic pause between sequences.

Next came a floral-themed line from the brand Dhamyanthi, paired with Shaan Jewellery, modelled once again by Duchess members. The rounds that followed carried a lighter, experimental touch: denim sets, zebra-stripe collections, and quirky shirts, before giving way to the Savera Hotels segment, modelled by Savera's crew, donning outfits from the brand High on Drama. The finale brought the or-

DUCHESS UTSAV GETS A STYLISH CURTAIN-RAISER



PHOTOS: P JAWAHAR

ganisers themselves to the stage. All five founders walked together, draped in sarees but paired unexpectedly with vest coats — a symbolic gesture of the club's ethos, blending tradition with reinvention.

The show was choreographed by Jeffrey Vardon, who had just one day to transform members, hospitality staff and students into confident models. "Jeff is a perfectionist," Nina Reddy, one of the founders of the club, said. "But it's because of that discipline that such seamless results are possible. In less than 24 hours, you could see the confidence on their faces."

For many participants, walking the ramp was not about professional modelling but about personal growth. Nina noted that women often join the Duchess Club hesitant or soft-spoken, but through the exposure and camaraderie within the group, they "bloom into self-reliant, confident individuals." The fashion show, she said, was one reflection of that transformation.

Since its inception, Duchess Utsav has been positioned not just as a marketplace but as a platform for entre-

preneurs, particularly women starting out in business. "This year, we are giving five stall space to seven homepreneurs," said Sujata Mundhra, another founding member. "They've already been recognised for their ventures and are strong on social media. Now, they'll have the chance to launch into a wider market through the Utsav."

The Utsav will feature 80 to 85 stalls, drawing participants from across the country. Ranging from small-scale sellers to established names, the organisers emphasise their accessibility. "It's affordable shopping. Everybody who comes will find something to take home," Sujata added.

The Duchess Club has grown into a 300-member organisation, with honorary members including author Sivasankari, Prithika Chary and actor Suhani Mani Ratnam.

Over the years, its activities have extended beyond the Utsav to include initiatives such as the Duchess Women's Car Rally. The evening was marked by warm introductions, including the induction of makeup artist Mumtaz into the Duchess "tribe" and applause for new members who had contributed to the event.



Duchess Utsav will be held on September 1 and 2 at Hotel Savera from 10 am to 8 pm.

FUREVER FRIENDS



Stray dogs and cats don't need anything more than love. That's all they crave for when they follow you or try to grab your attention. Here are some puppies and kittens who can benefit from your love.

EIGHT kittens are up for adoption. They are two months old and are looking for loving homes. Healthy and playful, they are dewormed, vaccinated and litter trained.

Location: Manapakkam
 Contact: 9600227508



MULLAI (expanded to M for magical, U for unique, L for loving, L for lively, A for adorable, and I for Indian), a two-three months old female, is looking for a home. She is dewormed and vaccinated. She has a stealing personality, and is great with kids and other pets.

Location: Pallikaranal
 Contact: 9840636776



UNO is a tiny kitten who lost an eye in a cruel injury. Some people found her playing near a dumpster, rescued, and took care of her till she was healed completely. Uno is very curious, friendly, and playful. She has been vaccinated, dewormed, and litter trained.

Contact: 9940681783



To feature pets for adoption, write to cityexpress@gmail.com



THESE pups, who lost their mother, are looking for a forever home.

Location: West Tambaram
 Contact: 8667808057

MITTAI is a rare female orange tabby. She is two months old who is vaccinated and dewormed. She is very naughty and a foodie, and a professional toy destroyer! She has had enough of the streets and tough life. She now demands cuddles, snacks, and love.

Location: Pallikaranal
 Contact: 9840636776



JUST PLAY

When games travelled across the world

VINITA SIDHARTHA
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 The writer is an author and the founder of Vined, an organisation reviving traditional games

court. The Indian ruler wagered that Persians could not decipher the rules of this unfamiliar game without instruction. If they failed, Persia must pay a heavy tribute; but if they succeeded, the Indians would acknowledge Persian superiority and pay tribute instead. The stakes for this battle of wits were immense — prestige and wealth hung in the balance.

Bozorgmehr, the youngest and wisest of Khosrow's ministers, approached the chessboard and, after some deliberation, declared he understood the game. In essence, Bozorgmehr reconstructed the rules of Chaturanga without ever having seen it played. Having deciphered the



PHOTO: ABUL QASIM FIRDAUSI

game's mechanics, Bozorgmehr then demonstrated his understanding in practice. He sat down to play chess against the Indian envoy and proceeded to defeat the envoy, proving that not only had he grasped the game, but he had mastered its strategy as well. This dramatic victory confirmed the success of the Persians in meeting the challenge. True to the agreement, the Indian king was

obliged to pay tribute to Khosrow I. Shah Khosrow and Bozorgmehr decided to return the courtesy with an intellectual challenge of equal stature. Bozorgmehr is believed to have devised a brand-new board game to test the Indian court in retaliation; this game was better known as nard or backgammon. By the end of the first millennium, chess was a global game, and the legend of its introduction via a royal challenge encapsulates the moment when Indian innovation met Persian ingenuity, resulting in the dissemination of one of the world's most enduring games.

While the details of the story may be embellished, it reflects real historical interactions between India and Persia, and more importantly, the overwhelming role games played in the lives of people.

The story of an Indian envoy presenting the game of chess to a Persian shah has endured as a powerful tale of cross-cultural exchange, intellectual rivalry, and the birth of a global game. But beyond all else, it tells us how a simple game can bridge cultures and bring people together.

CHENNAI DIGEST

Financial literacy camp

State Bank of India, Somangalam branch, conducted Saturation camp for Financial Literacy under the guidance of Department of Financial Services at Meenakshi Mahal, Somangalam. It aimed at explaining government schemes and was presided by MVR Murali Krishna, general manager, NW 1, Chennai circle. Special speech was given by Prasad KVM Nori. Sanction letters handed over to women beneficiaries.



Madras Day at SBI

State Bank of India (SBI), Chennai Circle, marked Madras Day with a special programme at its Local Head Office. The event was inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony by customers, in the presence of Vvekanand Choubey, chief general manager, and Murali Krishna, general manager (NW-1), along with other senior officials and staff members. The celebrations featured a photo exhibition on the heritage of Chennai, showcasing the city's cultural legacy and historical landmarks.





'I'LL TRY MY BEST TO BE TAMIL CINEMA'S FAHADH FAASIL'

Actor Vasanth Ravi speaks about his recent release, *Indra*, being typecast in gritty roles, desire to do commercial entertainers, and discussing *Jaller 2* with Nelson



A still from *Indra*

films in recent times. "Commercial entertainers used to have a set formula. Now, people are excited with just the director-actor combination and the star cast involved. If you put the right team together, you can do your business even before the film releases. But then there are commercial films like *Kantara*, which defy any definition of a mass entertainer and still pulled in huge crowds from all over India."

A commercial entertainer might be Vasanth Ravi's next big destination, but his eyes are ever trained on the ultimate goal of gaining the audience's trust. "They currently trust me because I'm an up-and-coming actor who does content-driven films, and I want to build on that. That is why I am careful with my choices," says Vasanth, who has no qualms admitting that this isn't as straightforward as it seems. "I want to do unique films, but the producers and distributors don't feel the same way. They hesitate to experiment because they have to consider the market forces. I started facing this issue after *Rocky*."

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Vasanth Ravi

PRASHANTH VALLAVAN

DESPITE almost a decade in the industry, actor Vasanth Ravi has only seven films to his credit, and clearly, there is a lot of care in picking the right scripts. But what drives this focus? "I want to surprise the audience," the actor replies. If you take a closer look at his filmography, you'd see a critically acclaimed relationship drama (*Taramani*), a gripping actioner with a cult fanbase (*Rocky*), an experimental horror film (*Asvins*), and a blockbuster commercial entertainer (*Jaller*). "Yes, I love switching genres," explains Vasanth. "People thought I could only do intense roles, and that's when I chose to do a romantic comedy like *Pon Ondru Kanden*. I want to surprise the audience with every film I make." It is this quest for delivering surprises that propelled him to take up *Indra*, his recent release.



BTS still from *Indra*

"*Indra* is based on a real-life incident that happened in Kerala. When I first heard the story, it felt like a gripping Korean thriller. You know, the ones that surprise you in every scene. That's why I chose to do the film," says Vasanth, who reveals that he wasn't the first choice to play the titular role in *Indra*. "A number of actors rejected *Indra* because the protagonist goes from being a morally grey character to one with darker shades. Actors who were conscious of their image refused to do the film. I didn't have such issues. As

long as there is a convincing reason behind the machinations of the character, I don't care if it is dark, bright, or anything in between," says Vasanth, adding, "Also, people love it when stars do grey-shaded roles, but aren't as accepting when up-and-coming actors like myself do it." While Vasanth is particular about setting himself apart from image-conscious stars, he is also inspired by the vibrant choices of a star who has clearly refused to take up that mantle. "I love what Fahadh Faasil sir is doing in Malayalam cinema. He is doing interesting roles, and I will try my best to do something similar," says a resolute Vasanth.

Beyond the conscientious effort to build a colourful filmography with different genres, it is undeniable that Vasanth

Ravi is primarily known for his intense performances. "I do get typecast in gritty roles, but I think I can change that," he says, while also admitting that he does get lighthearted romantic roles, but none of them have excited him so far. "I think I'm at a point in my career where I need to do a film with a big director or a big-scale film to take me to the next level. But, I have to admit, I love working with debut directors. They come up with kickass ideas that they have worked on diligently for two years," says Vasanth, who has worked with first-time filmmakers like Arun Matheswaran (*Rocky*), Tarun Teja (*Asvins*), and Sabarish Nanda (*Indra*). Circling back to his desire to work with marquee directors, Vasanth comments on the state of commercial

Selvaraghavan-Dennis Manjunath film wraps shoot



DIRECTOR-turned-actor Selvaraghavan has completed shooting for his next acting venture, helmed by filmmaker Dennis Manjunath. The untitled film, which went on floors in Salem earlier this year after a formal pooja ceremony, has officially wrapped production, the makers confirmed.

The film features Kushee Ravi, best known for her role in the Kannada romantic drama *Da*, in a key role. The supporting cast includes YG Mahendran, Mime Gopi, Kousalya, Sathish, Deepak, Hema, Lirithika, and N Jothi Kannan.

Backed by Vijaya Sathish under the Vyom Entertain-

ments banner, the project marks Dennis Manjunath's third directorial after *Trip* and *Theokudurai*. The technical team comprises cinematographer Ravi Varma K, editor Deepak S, and music composer AK Priyan.

While details regarding the plot, title, and release date are yet to be revealed, the team is expected to make official announcements soon.

Meanwhile, on the directorial front, Selvaraghavan is currently working on *7G Rainbow Colony 2*. Ravikrishna, who led the original alongside Sonia Aggarwal, will reprise his role and will be joined by Anaswara Rajan in the sequel. The film is yet to get a release date.

AKSHAY KUMAR

AFTER a hiatus of 42 years, actor Sunil Kirpalani, popularly known as *Kadhal Oviyam* Kannan, is returning to the silver screen with Arun Prabu's *Shakthi Thirumagan*, starring Vijay Antony in the lead. A sincere believer in destiny, he says that both his debut and his return to films were a quirk of fate. Playing the lead in legendary director Bharathiraja's romantic tragedy *Kadhal Oviyam*, opposite an established Radha, the film was not a dream debut as he would have wanted it to be. Nevertheless, 42 years since then and shifting bases and profession, Sunil's love for films has brought him back to the Tamil industry. Sunil is game to start afresh and is hopeful of a salubrious second innings.

How did you cross paths with Bharathiraja sir? And how did Sunil become Kannan?

I used to perform in *therukoothu* as a youngster. Once, the director of the troupe wanted me to act in films. Through some networking, I got connected to Sathyajit Ray's cameraman, who was supposed to direct a film. I was rejected in the screen test though. Once back in Chennai, I was asked by a random stranger if I knew Tamil. I thought it was for a fight (laughs). I was in sheer disbelief when I came to know that he was the assistant of Bharathiraja sir. The grown hair and beard, which I was about to shave after getting rejected, fetched me the *Kadhal Oviyam* role. Bharathiraja sir wanted to change my name and asked for my suggestions. The name Kannappa Thambiran struck me as powerful. It was a *koothu* artist I knew. Bharathiraja sir shortened it to Kannan.

What was your reaction after *Kadhal Oviyam* failed?

I was disappointed the film didn't work. I tried for two more years after *Kadhal Oviyam*. I landed a small role in *Meendum Oru Kadhal Kadhai*. But I was turned down by multiple hit directors back then. As opportunities dried, I shifted focus to Avionics, which I was passionate about, and also did my Master's in Finance in the US. I worked for US Airways, which is now American Airlines. And then I switched to banking. I run a Risk Man-



THE SECOND COMING

agement concern for the banking business, which I am currently in. Despite moving far away from Tamil cinema and acting, I have been following films. My wife is a bigger movie buff, and we watch films regularly.

How did *Shakthi Thirumagan* happen?

Truth be told, this too was destined. My youngest daughter, Sanjana, wanted to pursue dancing full-time. I headed back to Chennai to see if I could get some help from

my old friends in Tamil cinema, or even maybe Bharathiraja sir. During my visit, Chitra Lakshmanan sir spotted me. He was my manager for a brief time. He invited me for an interview. *Shakthi Thirumagan* director Arun saw this interview and was interested in casting me in the movie. I was sceptical both about my return to films and Arun, as I didn't know about his work. Later, through some friends, I got to know his works and was convinced that I could act again.

What are your observations of the industry today?

Back in those days, we practiced like crazy and religiously before a shot. It is because you

cannot waste a film roll and you don't want to make Bharathiraja sir mad (laughs). But in the digital era, the possibility of multiple iterations is an advantage.

Did you have teething troubles of facing a camera again?

It was presumed in the sets of *Shakthi Thirumagan* that I would be okay. No one prepped me. Thanks to the experience and confidence I gained during *Kadhal Oviyam*, and as a foreigner in the US, I was able to lead several teams. That, in turn, made me confident during the shoot of *Shakthi Thirumagan*. But once I came in, I was coached by Vijay Antony and Arun. Vijay taught me the hacks in voice modulation and diction. I also dubbed for myself. It felt good to speak in Tamil.

Are you here to stay this time?

Positively. I like how Arun infuses social messaging in his films. I hope *Shakthi Thirumagan* and my role in it click. If it does, I will do more films.



VISHAL 35 IS MAGUDAM

ON Sunday, the makers of Vishal's 35th film announced with a title teaser that the film has been titled *Magudam*. Helmed by Ravi Arasu, the film also stars Dushara Vijayan, Anjali, and Yogi Babu.

The second production schedule for *Magudam* is currently underway in Ooty. The film marks Dushara's first collaboration with Vishal, while Anjali has worked with Vishal in the long-delayed and recently released *Madha Gaja Raja*. Yogi Babu has previously collaborated with Vishal in films such as *Patathu Yaanai*, *Ayogya*, *Action*, *Veeramae*

Vaagai Soodum, and *Rathnam*. Details about the rest of the cast members are kept under wraps.

While the plot is kept under wraps, *Magudam* will be an intense film in the lines of the director's earlier films *Eetti* and *Ayngaran*.

The film's music will be composed by GV Prakash, who is joining hands with the actor for the second time after *Mark Antony*. Cinematography is by Richard M Nathan, and editing is handled by Srikanth NB. G Durairaj is the production designer. Recently, Dhilip Subbarayan was roped in as the stunt choreographer for the film.

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari wraps filming

VARUN Dhawan has wrapped shooting for his upcoming romantic-comedy, *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari*. Helmed by Shashank Khaitan, who has previously made *Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania* and *Badrinath Ki Dulhania*, the film also stars Sanya Malhotra, Rohit Saraf, Akshay Oberoi, Abhinav Sharma, Manish Paul, and Manini Chhadha in pivotal roles.

In the post, he announced the film's wrap, and the actor also said he will be reuniting with Shashank Khaitan.

The official plot has been kept under wraps, but the film revolves around Sunny (Varun) and Tulsi Kumari (Janhvi), two people with opposite personalities. Sunny is a fun-loving and carefree guy, while Tulsi is a cultured and serious girl. Destiny brings them together, and they fall in love.

Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsi Kumari, releasing on September 12, is produced by Hiroo Yash Johar, Karan Johar, Apoorva Mehta, and Shashank Khaitan.

