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Several hurt in crackdown on CJP Parliament march

Scores hospitalised with fractures, head and eye injuries; CJP leaders meet Nadda, demand Pradhan's ouster; Wangchuk cites 'brutality', says will fast till MPs meet 'youth leaders' or him

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Several people were injured here on Monday when the police cracked down on a Parliament march called by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) seeking the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan even as the government reached out to the CJP.

At least 38 of the injured were taken to the Lady Hardinge Medical College and around 65 to the Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, with fractures, swellings, and head and eye injuries, sources said.

The protests brought to the fore the growing discontent over the NEET paper leak and irregularities in the CBSE school ex-



CJP supporters being confronted by security forces during a protest march in New Delhi on Monday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

amination process. Slogans of "Dharmendra Pradhan, isteeefa do (resign)" boomed.

The police action on one of the largest protests in the national capital in recent years came amid an Internet shutdown in the New Delhi district. Representatives of the CJP, Sau-

rav Das and Ashutosh Ranka, later met with Union Minister J.P. Nadda to formally seek resignation of the Union Education Minister.

The representatives said Mr. Nadda had told them he would discuss the demands with the government. However, the CJP

was still waiting for a response, Mr. Das said in the evening, adding: "The protest is continuing at Jantar Mantar."

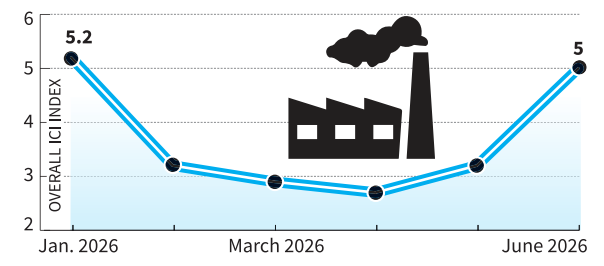
Seeing the "brutality with which peacefully protesting youth are being dealt with", activist Sonam Wangchuk said he will continue fasting "until the youth leaders are allowed to meet the parliamentarians at the Sansad Bhawan, or I am allowed to meet them here at the hospital." Mr. Wangchuk had earlier indicated that he was on the verge of calling off his fast if MPs met and assured him that they would raise the issue of education in the Monsoon Session.

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ANGER BEYOND PAPER LEAK
» PAGE 10

Core sectors grow at five-month high of 5%

Sharp uptick

The Index of Core Industries grew by 5% in June 2026 compared with June 2025



T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's core industrial sectors grew at 5% in June 2026, the fastest in five months, as per the inaugural release of the new and updated series of the Index of Core Industries (ICI).

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday released the new series of the ICI, with an updated base year of 2022-23 from the earlier 2011-12. Further, the updated index has an additional sector of iron ore added to it, taking the total number of sectors

it covers to nine. The sectoral weights and methods of estimation have also been updated.

Within the index, the fastest growth was recorded by iron ore, which grew 43.9% in June 2026 against 19% in May.

This growth, however, was likely due to a statistical base effect, since the sector contracted 16.4% in June last year. Electricity, cement, steel, and coal grew 9.8%, 9.8%, 4.6% and 1.4% respectively.

CONTINUED ON
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IN BRIEF

NC stages protest in Delhi seeking J&K Statehood

NEW DELHI
National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Ministers, MLAs and party workers staged a protest in Delhi on Monday demanding restoration of Statehood to the Union Territory. » Page 3

Sukhbir appears before SIT in 2015 firing case

CHANDIGARH
Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal on Monday was questioned for around two hours by the Punjab police's SIT probing the 2015 Bebal Kalan police firing incident. » Page 4

4 Indian seafarers killed near Odesa

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Four Indian citizens have been killed and one critically injured in an attack on a merchant vessel near the Ukrainian port of Odesa on Sunday. India condemned the incident and called such attacks impeding freedom of navigation "deplorable".

The Ministry of External Affairs on Monday reiterated India's opposition to attacks on merchant vessels as such incidents violate the freedom of navigation.

The Acting Foreign Minister of Ukraine, Andrii Sybiha, has blamed Russia for the attack and said five crew members of the ship remain missing. "On the evening of 19 July 2026, the

vessel MV *Golden Leo* was attacked while departing the port of Odesa. At the time of the incident, there were 17 crew members on board, including five Indian nationals. As per information available, four Indian nationals have tragically lost their lives, while one is hospitalised in a critical condition," read the Ministry's statement.

"India condemns such attacks and reiterates that targeting commercial shipping and endangering innocent civilian crew members, or otherwise impeding freedom of navigation and commerce is deplorable and should be avoided," the MEA said.

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Spanish delight



Hero's welcome: The Spanish team posing with the trophy on arrival in Madrid on Monday, after being crowned FIFA World Cup champion with a 1-0 victory over Argentina in the final on Sunday. It was the *La Roja*'s second triumph after the success in 2010. AP (REPORT: PAGE 15)

New U.K. PM Burnham vows to bring social reform

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Former Manchester Mayor, Andrew Burnham, was appointed Prime Minister of the U.K. on Monday, its seventh in a decade. Mr. Burnham described the moment as a "circuit breaker", as he promised to usher in a new political and social model for the country, taking power out of London and spreading it across the regions of the U.K.

The outgoing Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who had made history two years ago, when he led the Labour Party in one of the largest victories in modern times, made history again on Monday, but this time for becoming the U.K.'s shortest serving Labour Prime Minister in modern history. "I go with good grace, I go with a smile, and I go proud of everything that we have achieved," Mr. Starmer said in brief remarks outside on Downing Street, as he wished his successor "every success".

"We will make this moment a circuit breaker for Britain, bringing forward the biggest changes in the last 40 years: a new political model and a new economic model," Mr. Burnham said outside No.10 Downing Street, minutes after he was ceremonially invited to form a government by Britain's Monarch King Charles III.

CONTINUED ON
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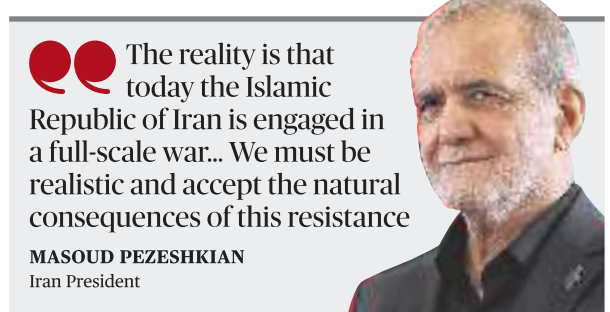
Iran in a 'full-scale war', says Pezeshkian as U.S. strikes city with nuclear plant

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran is fighting a "full-scale war" with the U.S., President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Monday, as Washington expanded its strikes across the Islamic republic including a city hosting a nuclear power plant.

Iran kept up its own attacks across the region in response, with its Revolutionary Guards announcing they had hit targets in Bahrain, Jordan, and Syria, while Bahrain said its air navigation systems were targeted.

"The reality is that today the Islamic Republic of Iran is engaged in a full-scale war," said Mr. Pezeshkian, according to a presi-



gency statement. "We must be realistic and accept the natural consequences of this resistance."

His comments came after state media and local authorities reported U.S. strikes on Monday in the north and centre of the country, areas away from the blockaded Strait of Hormuz waterway. The new fighting came after a

weekend in which the U.S. announced three new U.S. military fatalities and one service member missing in action. Despite the latest attacks, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei said diplomatic exchanges with the U.S. via mediators were ongoing. "Ideas have been conveyed to us by certain mediators," he told a press

conference in Tehran. Iran's Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni was set to travel to mediator Pakistan's capital on Monday.

In Bushehr, home to the country's only operational civilian nuclear power plant, Governor Mohammad Mozaffari told state news agency IRNA: "A few minutes ago, several locations in Bushehr city were hit by American enemy's projectiles." In East Azarbaijan province in the north, the head of the local crisis management unit Majid Farshi told IRNA that "one person was martyred and several others injured" in an attack there.

HOUTHIS' BLOCKADE
» PAGE 14

Martyrs' Day: TMC camps, Cong. to hold 3 separate rallies today

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Kolkata will witness three competing Martyrs' Day rallies on Tuesday within a 3-km radius as two factions of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Congress fight to claim ownership of the July 21 event.

Martyrs' Day is observed every year in West Bengal to commemorate the 13 Youth Congress workers killed in police firing on July 21, 1993 during the Left Front regime.

TMC chairperson Mamata Banerjee on Monday visited the venue of her faction's rally in front of the Birla Planetarium. The rival Ritabrata Banerjee-led faction has chosen

Mayo Road for its meeting. The Congress is conducting its own rally at Shaheed Minar and its leaders have been on the ground overseeing arrangements.

While Ms. Banerjee used to address supporters outside Victoria House till last year, the police have denied permission to any political group to hold a rally at the site this year.

Litmus test

The event will be a litmus test of the ability of the rival factions to mobilise crowds after the TMC lost the 2026 Assembly election and the BJP came to power in the State.

Ms. Banerjee has urged her supporters not to be misled by the police and at-

tend only the rally in front of the Birla Planetarium.

"Mamata Banerjee will remember the martyrs and show us the way forward," said Kunal Ghosh, MLA from the Mamata faction.

He also alleged that those attending the rival faction's event on Tuesday would not be honouring the martyrs, but "only honouring the BJP".

Meanwhile, Firhad Hakim, once a close confidant of Ms. Banerjee and now with the Ritabrata faction, said, "All of us who could have been martyrs that day (July 21, 1993) will be here on this stage."

The faction also claimed that the families of the 13 martyrs are likely to be present on its platform.

Four dead after inhaling toxic gas in Haryana well

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Four men died after entering an abandoned well to rescue a calf in Haryana's Jhajjar district, with police suspecting inhalation of toxic gas led to their deaths. Jhajjar Police Commissioner Rajshree Singh said rescue efforts were launched and the men were brought out and taken to hospital, but they were declared dead. "A calf fell into the abandoned well, which is about 40-50 years old. To save the animal, two men entered the well. When they did not come out, two more entered the well but they too did not come out. Rescue efforts were launched and they were taken to hospital where they were declared brought dead," Jhajjar Sadar SHO Inspector Paramjit said. The deceased have been identified as Monu, Dalbir, Narendar, all locals, and migrant labourer Ramu, the SHO said.

NC stages protest in Delhi for J&K Statehood; promise unfulfilled: CM

Democracy being strangled, says CM Omar who was unable to reach the protest venue due to the heavy deployment of police personnel; demonstration, however, gets overshadowed by the CJP protest; lacklustre event, says PDP's Iltija Mufti

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Escalating the political showdown over Jammu and Kashmir's political status, National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Ministers, MLAs and party workers staged a protest in the national capital on Monday, demanding the immediate restoration of Statehood to the Union Territory. The demonstration, held on the opening day of Parliament's Monsoon Session, was, however, overshadowed by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest march to Parliament. Mr. Omar, who arrived from Jammu in the morning, was unable to reach the protest venue at Jantar



CM Omar Abdullah during a rally to demand the restoration of J&K's Statehood in New Delhi on Monday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Mantar due to the heavy deployment of police personnel for the CJP protest.

Placards, slogans
The group of around 100 NC protesters gathered with placards reading "Apna wada pura karo (fulfil your promise)" and "Restore full Statehood", raising slogans targeting the

Union government over the delay in restoring Statehood. Mr. Omar later tried to reach the Constitution Club, where a seminar on Statehood was scheduled, but was stopped by police. Wearing a jacket emblazoned with "Restore Statehood", he sat on the pavement on Ashoka Road,

where some youngsters participating in the CJP protest also joined him. The protesters also raised slogans such as "Modi ka wada, kyun raha aadha? (Why has Modi's promise remained unfulfilled?)". Police allegedly used tear gas to disperse the growing crowd near the Constitution Club while Mr. Omar and his supporters were holding the sit-in. Addressing reporters later, Mr. Omar criticised the Centre and the Delhi Police over the action. "...here, along with the rest of the people, we were also targeted by tear gas. It is such a shame," he said. "We came to Delhi with around 100 supporters to press the Centre for early restoration of Statehood, but we are not allowed to protest peacefully here either. Democracy is being

strangled," he added. **Condemns police action** Condemning the police action, he said young people who had gathered from different parts of the country seeking justice had been subjected to tear gas. Mr. Farooq Abdullah urged the Modi administration to respect the democratic mandate of the region. Meanwhile, J&K Opposition PDP leader Iltija Mufti described the NC protest in Delhi as a "lacklustre and deliberately understated event". She said it was "unfortunate" that the elected government is choosing to normalise an "illegal and disempowering act" of abrogation of Article 370. The PDP, which was one of the parties invited by the NC, did not join the protest.

44 Somali pirates get life term in jail; court praises Indian Navy

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

A special court in Mumbai on Monday sentenced 44 Somali nationals to life imprisonment in two different cases on charges of piracy and other offences. The court also appreciated the bravery of Indian Navy in discharging legal and international duty in letter and spirit by taking all cost and risk. While imposing the maximum punishment of life imprisonment, Special Judge S.B. Dige noted that the offences committed by the accused were serious in nature. All the 44 accused had pleaded guilty before the court and had urged for leniency. The court said it was aware of the poor condition of the accused and the fact that they have voluntarily pleaded guilty. "But on the other hand, the act of piracy on high sea by hijacking a vessel and keeping crew mem-

bers hostage for ransom by attempting to kill them and to keep them as human shield and not obeying the lawful directions of Indian Navy are very serious things which cannot be taken casually," the court said. In the case in which nine persons were accused, as per the prosecution, Indian Naval Ship Trishul and Sumedha were deployed in Gulf of Aden (east coast of Somalia) for an anti-piracy mission. In March 2024, a hijacking alert was received from Iranian flagged FV Al Kambar, leading to the arrest of nine Somalian nationals. In the second case, INS Kolkata had, in December 2023, apprehended 35 accused, all Somalian nationals, who had abducted Merchant Vessel Ex-Ruen, a Malta Flagged bulk carrier. These accused were also charged and convicted under provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.



Parts of the Jobrang bridge getting submerged in the swollen Chandrabhaga river at Keylong in Lahaul and Spiti. PTI

Heavy rain batters North India; death toll now 23

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The death toll in rain-related incidents in Jammu and Kashmir rose to 23 on Monday as heavy rain triggered landslips and flash floods in the Union Territory, while Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh also witnessed widespread disruptions due to the downpour. The India Meteorological Department has forecast very heavy rain at a few places over Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh on Monday and Tuesday, and heavy rain in Uttarakhand, Bihar, and Assam and Meghalaya on Monday. J&K remained the worst-affected as at least 11 persons, including a mother and her two children, were

killed in rain-related incidents, officials said. In Uttarakhand, landslips triggered by incessant rain blocked around 150 roads, including four national highways, with the administration temporarily suspending the Char Dham Yatra as a precautionary measure. **'Red alert' issued** The met department has issued a 'red alert' for heavy to very heavy rain in Dehradun, Tehri, and Haridwar districts for Monday, and an 'orange alert' for the remaining districts, they said. In Himachal Pradesh, all educational institutions in Kangra, Mandi and Sirmour have been ordered to shut on Tuesday in view of a red alert issued by the weather department.

Timings KOLKATA			
TUESDAY, JUL. 21			
RISE	05:04	SET	18:22
RISE	11:36	SET	23:03
WEDNESDAY, JUL. 22			
RISE	05:04	SET	18:22
RISE	12:29	SET	23:39
THURSDAY, JUL. 23			
RISE	05:04	SET	18:22
RISE	13:24	SET	00:00

Kolkata Weather	max	min
Ranchi	30	24
Imphal	27	21
Kolkata	33	28

Kolkata Today
34°C The weather will be warm. Night will be pleasant. Spell of light to moderate rain and thundershower will occur.

Kolkata Tomorrow
33°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be warm. Spell of moderate rain and thundershower to occur.

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THE HINDU
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Notice over 'stripping, assault' of girls in Rajasthan

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission on Monday took suo motu cognisance over reports alleging that girl students at a government school in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district were frisked, beaten and forced to remove their clothes by teachers after one of them reported losing ₹1,000. The students of Classes 9 and 11 were allegedly assaulted and forced to remove their clothes, but no money was recovered.

Parents protest
The students informed their parents after returning home. The following day, a large number of parents reportedly gathered at the school to protest.



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As per result compiled till 19 July 2026 (06:00 PM)



Allowing dissent

Using criminal law to protect reputation of rulers is condemnable

At the heart of democratic disposition is tolerance of dissent and upholding of the rule of law; threats to these can undo the knit of a democracy. In the first couple of months of the Tamilaga Vetttri Kazhagam (TVK)'s rule in Tamil Nadu, at least 10 people have been subject to police action, on account of speaking against the Chief Minister or his cabinet colleagues. While the case of former Minister Anitha Radhakrishnan's arrest for criticising Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay gained the spotlight, there were several others who were arrested or faced police action over the course of this period. This includes James Raja of Tirunelveli; V. Vishnuprabhu and T. Manojkumar, residents of Coimbatore, for a Facebook post criticising the Chief Minister; and Thangamani of Karur. In the case of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)'s Gen Z wing leader A. Anbanantham, police searched his residence claiming that he made 'derogatory' posts regarding Mr. Vijay and his family. YouTuber Maridhas was arrested by the Chennai Cyber Crime police for his remarks against the Chief Minister and Industries Minister S. Keerthana. DMK MLA Markandayan was arrested in Thoothukudi over an alleged threat he made against the Chief Minister. Others arrested include Vinoth Suryakumar who commented on HR&CE Minister S. Ramesh and RJ Saran Jayaraman who was arrested by the police for content posted on Instagram targeting a woman who supported the TVK. A case was also filed against Indrani Sudalaimuthu for remarks made against S. Ramesh.

Political actors of all hues have normalised using the police and criminal law as a shield to protect their reputation, whenever they come to power. This creates a structural risk for democracy. The actions of the police indicate a wider pattern of speech-related arrests, and authoritarianism under the TVK government, where defamation, the IT Act and cyber crime provisions are invoked at will for any criticism against individuals in the government or the ruling party. Complaints being filed by the TVK cadre and the *suo motu* action of the police targeting dissenters could run the administration off the rails. The alacrity with which the government is ready to treat allegations against Ministers as criminal misinformation or defamation, rather than let them take the natural course of civil suits or political contestation, is disheartening. A new government has the opportunity to rewrite the rules of engagement with the public, to be tolerant of dissent, and not to misdirect the power it is vested with, just to curb opposition. Every government keen on development could be enriched by criticism and dissent articulated on public platforms, if it is willing. It must remember that the restriction of harmful, obscene and indecent content must be balanced with the overwhelming supremacy of freedom of speech.

Press and play

Spain smothered the opposition with possession and positional football

Spain's second World Cup title, achieved after a narrow extra-time victory over Argentina in the final, was a triumph of the collective. The Luis de la Fuente-coached outfit conceded just one goal in eight matches, was unmatched in the centre of the pitch with playmaker and Golden Ball winner Rodri completing a record 790 passes, and exhibited diffused excellence up front by having seven different players score its 14 goals. So much so that even the individual brilliance of the teenaged Lamine Yamal was astutely subsumed within the whole. In fact, de la Fuente and Rodri had combined to deliver the 2024 European Championship too, with the latter adjudged the world's best later that year. A second Ballon d'Or for the 30-year-old midfield metronome appears a certainty. The win also cemented Spain's position as the pre-eminent footballing force of the first quarter of this century. Starting 2008, the country has won two of the five World Cups and three of the five Euros. Spain is the reigning women's World Champion, and the assembly line of coaches it produces and players it exports make the nation a true powerhouse. Interestingly, after its maiden World Cup win in 2010, Spain had not gone past the round of 16 at three subsequent editions. The success in North America is thus a full-circle moment.

Another high point for the tournament was Lionel Messi's enduring genius. Argentina's quality in the final was dire and the behaviour of its players petulant, but that should not detract from the 39-year-old's excellence in bringing his country to the cusp of defending its crown. Kylian Mbappe's experience was bitter-sweet; he won the Golden Boot (10 goals) and became the all-time top-scorer in World Cups (22) but remained a mute spectator as Spain subjugated his star-studded France in the semifinal. Jude Bellingham inspired England to third place, the best performance for the nation since winning in 1966. But the summer sojourn laid bare the team's continued lack of cutting edge after back-to-back runner-up finishes at Euro 2020 and 2024. The World Cup will also be etched in memory for a plethora of missteps, which governing body FIFA unfortunately condoned. By arbitrarily invoking immigration rules, and trying to interfere politically in on-field matters, the co-host U.S. pushed the envelope in undesirable ways. Commercially driven hydration breaks and the half-time show in the final were tedious and disruptive. Football should be allowed to flow freely, on and off the turf.

Few sights are more ordinary in an Indian city than a pedestrian being pushed off a footpath and onto the road. A mother, holding a school bag in one hand and a child in the other, walks around a parked car. An elderly man tests a broken footpath before stepping down onto the road. A wheelchair user gives up before the journey has even begun. A vendor, debris, an open drain, a two-wheeler, and a signboard together form what is still, with bureaucratic optimism, called a pavement. The citizen is then forced to walk on a road designed as though only vehicles possess rights.

Upholding walkability
In June 2026, the Supreme Court of India gave constitutional language to this daily indignity, in *Maniyar Iliyaz @ Shaik Riyaz vs P. Ayyappan* (2026). It held that walking on demarcated footpaths is a fundamental constitutional right, protected under Article 19(1)(d) and Article 21 of the Constitution. It observed that pedestrians have a right to safe footpaths and footways, and directed States and Union Territories to frame policies and guidelines for their provision and maintenance. This is not a minor municipal instruction. It is a public health intervention, a road safety measure, and a democratic test of whether Indian cities are built for people or merely for machines.

The timing could not be more urgent. India is becoming less active precisely when it needs movement the most. Health risk factors and diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, fatty liver disease, and obesity are rising rapidly, as reported by every newly available population health dataset.

Walking and increased physical activity are among the low- and no-cost interventions that can halt and reverse this rise in metabolic diseases. Yet, the World Health Organization (WHO)'s India Physical Activity Profile 2024 estimates that 49.4% of Indian adults do not meet the recommended levels of physical activity; among women, the figure is 57.2%. Among children and adolescents aged 11 to 17 years, it is 74%. WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week for adults. For most citizens, this does not mean gym memberships or elite fitness routines. It means having the ability to walk safely to a bus stop, school, market, clinic, metro station, or park.

These are not failures of willpower alone; rather, they are exacerbated by the built environment. A city that makes walking difficult quietly prescribes sedentary living. Footpaths, therefore, are not decorative strips of cement



Chandrakant Lahariya

Practising specialist in 'preventive and cardiometabolic medicine' with nearly 18 years of work experience with the World Health Organization and the United Nations system

Safe, accessible footpaths are a test of governance, revealing whether India's cities truly serve their people

added after roads have been designed. They are preventive medicine laid in stone. A usable pavement allows children to walk to school, office-goers to use public transport, older adults to remain mobile, and women to move safely. Walking improves blood pressure, insulin sensitivity, weight control, mood, sleep, and joint function. It is the simplest health habit available to the largest number of citizens. Yet, we in India have made it difficult and dangerous. Many Indians would prefer to use cars and scooters less if cities offered safe, continuous, shaded footpaths.

The road safety argument is equally compelling. The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (Transport Research Wing) 'Road Accidents in India 2024' report found that two-wheeler riders and pedestrians together accounted for nearly 67% of road fatalities, with 1.28 lakh deaths among these vulnerable groups. The National Crime Records Bureau's 2024 data place the number at more than 1.1 lakh and the share at at least 60%. The exact totals differ across official sources, but the message is unambiguous: pedestrians and two-wheeler riders remain India's most vulnerable road users. Every time a footpath disappears, the road becomes a contest between flesh and metal.

Orderly shared streets
The solution cannot be episodic anti-encroachment drives, in which a few carts and cars are removed before the same disorder returns the following week. Nor can it be a punitive war on street vendors, who are workers with legal protections and legitimate economic claims. The answer lies in planned allocation: footpaths for walking, vending zones for vendors, parking spaces for vehicles, utility corridors for public infrastructure, and meaningful penalties for violations. A humane city organises the street so that livelihoods and mobility can coexist without endangering lives.

Citizens, too, have a role, though not the only one. First, walk deliberately: begin with 10 to 15 minutes after two major meals, or build towards 30 minutes at a fixed time each day. Second, convert short errands into walking errands; distances under one kilometre should not automatically require a scooter or car. Third, combine walking with public transport by using the metro, bus, or shared mobility for part of the commute. Fourth, make walking social: families, resident welfare associations, and workplaces can create walking groups and car-free morning routines. Fifth, reclaim walking as a health check. If breathlessness, knee pain, fear of falling, or

unsafe streets prevent walking, treat that as a signal to seek medical advice, improve strength, or demand civic correction. Most importantly, the recent Supreme Court decision has given citizens and resident welfare associations an opportunity to demand their right to walk on encroachment-free footpaths.

Yet, citizens cannot easily walk their way out of poor urban planning. Civic bodies and governments must act with seriousness. Every road project should include continuous, shaded, well-lit, and barrier-free footpaths, along with safe crossings. Footpaths must be wide enough for two people or a wheelchair, with ramps and clear passageways near bus stops. Encroachment control should be continuous, transparent, and fair. Parking on footpaths must invite stringent action, with penalties that change behaviour. Street design should prioritise schools, hospitals, bus stops, markets, and metro stations, where pedestrian volumes are high. Tree cover, benches, public toilets, and lighting are not embellishments; they determine whether women, children, persons with disabilities, and older people can walk.

Policy action
India also needs a national active-mobility mission linking urban development, transport, health, and education. Cities and urban planning should be assessed not by the length of flyovers built, but by the number of safe walking kilometres created. Municipal commissioners should publish ward-level footpath maps and annual audits of encroachment-free footpaths. School zones should have traffic calming measures and protected crossings. Employers should encourage active commuting. Doctors should prescribe walking advice to nudge behaviour, but governments must provide the pavements on which those prescriptions can be followed.

The Supreme Court has moved the footpath from the margins of municipal housekeeping to the centre of constitutional rights. The next task is to move it from judgment to habit, budget, design, and enforcement. A country battling diabetes, hypertension, obesity, stress, and road deaths cannot treat walking as an afterthought. India does not merely need more roads; it needs more rights of way for ordinary citizens. The footpath is where public health, dignity, and democracy meet. We need to take our cities back from cars. We need to rebuild our cities for people. The proportion of encroachment-free footpaths should become a barometer of whether elected governments value citizens' fundamental rights in every ward and on every major road.

Canada-India defence collaboration for a secure future

Canada is seeing an historic shift for our country – one that opens new opportunities for relations between Canada and India. Speaking at CANSEC 2026, Canada's leading defence, security and emerging technology event, on May 27, 2026, Prime Minister Mark Carney said: "The very nature of war is rapidly evolving, driven by the proliferation of drones, autonomous systems, and weapons in orbit. Conflicts could emerge closer to our borders than before, and new weapons are reducing the distance that separates us from them. The world has changed, and Canada must change with it. That is why, six weeks after forming the government, we announced our ambitious plan to rebuild, rearm, and reinvest in the Canadian Armed Forces."

This is at a time when the world is changing, and Canada-India defence collaboration can translate into a strategy for a secure future.

The good news is that we are already walking on this path. In 2025, Mr. Carney announced that Canada is on track to spend 5% of its GDP on defence by 2035. In March, we already surpassed 2% of the GDP, placing Canada among one of the 10 largest economies in the world.

As Mr. Carney said during his speech in January 2026 at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, there has been a rupture in the world order. Or as Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said, we are living through a decade of crisis.

Bilateral defence engagement
In this changing world, defence cooperation between Canada and India has become crucial and we have already taken steps to bolster it. Most recently, we accredited Defence Advisers in both Ottawa and Delhi. Mr. Carney and Mr. Modi agreed to establish a Defence Dialogue to



Chris Cooter

High Commissioner for Canada to India

Shared interests drive Canada and India toward a stronger strategic defence partnership

prioritise cooperation on shared interests and align capacities. Canadian and Indian navies participated in the Rim of the Pacific exercises and Talisman Sabre exercises. In June this year, a delegation from India's National Defence College visited Canada. This will allow Indian officers to have direct exchanges with military colleges and bases in Canada.

We have established a national Defence Investment Agency to streamline military procurement. We have also launched a defence Industrial Strategy to diversify supply chains so Canada does not rely on just one country. That is why we are calling on natural partners such as India to participate in co-development, subsystem manufacturing, and sustainment. We are investing in innovation, including through a half billion-dollar investment in next generation aerospace technologies, including a drone innovation hub.

Strategic technology cooperation
Canada's strengths in advanced technologies can complement India's scale, manufacturing capacity, and expanding industrial base. Canada is one of only a few countries with a full-spectrum aerospace sector, while India's domestic aviation industry is the third largest domestic market in the world. Canada is a research and development powerhouse, while India is focused on advancing innovation capacity and high-end manufacturing. Canada and India are part of a small group of countries with advanced space capabilities. The importance of civilian space cooperation was highlighted in the joint statement between our two Prime Ministers. Canada's strengths in advanced components for satellite technology and space robotics can complement India's strengths in low-cost platforms. Canada's RADARSAT constellation system can have

application in meeting India's aim of advancing its naval capacity in the region. Critical minerals are the building block of defence technologies – another area where Canada and India can expand their partnership. Amid the crisis in West Asia, national security and economic security are inextricably linked. Here, a critical partnership between Canada and India can take shape.

Canada has vast geological reserves of 31 critical minerals from cobalt to helium. Canada holds the tenth largest reserves of rare earth elements; the third largest recoverable resources of uranium; and 5% of the world's tungsten reserves. Additionally, Canada is the second largest producer and exporter of uranium globally, with 24% of global production in 2024. Canada has embarked on a strategy to diversify its trusted partners. For India, there is a need for reliable partners such as Canada to reach its own economic and national security goals. The Canada-India memorandum of understanding on Critical Minerals Value Chain, signed during Mr. Carney's visit to India in February-March 2026, laid the groundwork for the integration of stable, resilient supply chains between the two countries.

Building on shared legacy
As we look forward, it is worth recalling our shared history and common sacrifice. Recently, I visited the Kirkee War Cemetery in Pune where members of the Royal Canadian Air Force killed during the Second World War were laid to rest. As I walked through the memorial site, I was reminded that our countries have stood shoulder to shoulder in the past, not just on the battlefield but for common causes and for the shared security of our countries. Let us continue that long-standing tradition as we reshape the defence cooperation between our two countries.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Batons over dialogue
I am writing to express my anguish and concern following the events I witnessed at Jantar Mantar on July 20. As someone who was present at the site from the night of July 19 till 4 p.m. on July 20, I stood among thousands of students and youth who had gathered there peacefully to demand transparency and accountability regarding examination irregularities. What I witnessed was not the handling of a public order issue, but a disproportionate and brutal

crackdown on the democratic right to dissent. Is this the landscape of our democracy today, where the voices of the youth are met with batons instead of dialogue? Using force to disperse peaceful protesters does not address the underlying issues of the movement; it only deepens the divide and erodes trust in our institutions. **Kota Venkata Yogesh,** Proddatur, Andhra Pradesh

A threat to federalism
The ongoing parliamentary session presents a dangerous turning point for

Indian federalism. In its push to pass structural shifts such as "One Nation, One Election" and delimitation, the ruling BJP is seeking a contrived majority to fundamentally alter the constitutional balance. It is alarming to see regional forces — some a fierce bulwark of state autonomy — flirt with tactical concessions on these Bills. In political terms, this is asymmetrical co-optation. For States such as Tamil Nadu, population-based delimitation and synchronised elections will

permanently dilute their parliamentary representation and penalise development. Defending the core federal values of the Constitution is no longer just an ideological duty. It is a matter of absolute political survival. **M. Jameel Ahmed,** Mysuru

FIFA World Cup final
While Spain's performance was masterful, Argentina's was widely criticised as lacklustre. Spain dictated the tempo from the start with 65% ball possession at one point in the final

match. Despite this heavy pressure, Argentina hung on to force extra time largely due to goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, who set a game record of 11 saves. While Argentina displayed defensive resilience, their inability to maintain ball possession or create offensive momentum led many — including me — to view the game as a one-sided tactical exercise. **Govardhana Myneedu,** Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Spain's triumph was a masterclass in modern football, where collective

brilliance outweighed individual stardom. Argentina fought with determination and resilience, and Lionel Messi remains one of the finest players ever seen. Yet, this final was a reminder that even the greatest player cannot single-handedly overcome an opponent whose strength lies in collective organisation, tactical discipline, and unwavering teamwork. **A.P. Thiruvadi,** Chennai
Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Share of funding spent on environmental initiatives in 2023-24

8.4 in per cent. Only 8.4% of the total corporate social responsibility spending was allocated to environmental initiatives in the financial year 2023-24, according to a Sattva Consulting report. It also stated that 30 of India's 50 most climate-vulnerable districts received only 1% (₹106 crore) of the total environmental CSR spending over the past three years. PTI

Number of polluted river stretches in India in 2025

296 The number of polluted river stretches declined to 296 in 2025 from 351 in 2018, according to the Central Pollution Control Board report. The government said rivers are polluted mainly due to untreated or partially treated sewage, industrial effluents, inadequate dilution, dumping of solid waste, and other non-point sources of pollution. PTI

Key reforms advanced by Haryana to boost ease of doing business

21 Haryana has emerged as one of the leading States in the Centre's compliance reduction and deregulation initiative, with 21 of the 28 priority reforms either approved or under implementation to make the regulatory environment simpler and more business-friendly. An official said that another 15 reforms are currently under implementation across departments. PTI

Number of UPI users onboarded on the payments platform

55.49 crore. Parliament was informed that around 55.49 crore UPI users were onboarded on the payments platform until June 2026, on Monday. UPI transactions stood at 24,162 crore in volume and ₹314 lakh crore in value in FY 2025-26, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. PTI

Forex inflows received by India under the RBI's swap facility

20.72 in \$ billion. India received \$20.72 billion in foreign exchange inflows under the Reserve Bank of India's swap facility as of July 17. The facility was introduced to encourage overseas fundraising by state-owned firms and foreign currency non-resident deposits. REUTERS
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Why inflation is rising in India

India's recent inflation surge has been mainly driven by higher fuel costs and food price pressures rather than excess demand; food inflation stems largely from supply shocks such as poor monsoons, while rising oil prices have pushed up production costs and manufactured goods inflation

ECONOMIC NOTES

Rohit Azad
Indranil Chowdhury

Inflation, except during the COVID-19 pandemic, has remained relatively low in India for over a decade. But it is back with a bang. Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation is hovering close to 10% in June (**Chart 1a**). After remaining low – negative, or close to 0 – until December last year, the climb started with a sharp jump since March this year.

Even those with only a fleeting connection to economics believe that prices rise when demand outpaces supply (overheating), and vice versa. But is that really the case?

Before we go into the causes, let us look at what contributed to this rise in WPI inflation in the first place. The WPI is a weighted average of three sub-categories of commodities: primary articles (food, minerals, etc.), fuel and power and manufactured products. **Chart 1b** shows the contribution of each to total WPI inflation. The latter two – the orange and the red bars – have contributed to this dramatic jump in recent months. Fuel and power prices require little explanation as they are determined by oil prices purchased from abroad and are essentially imported prices. However, primary commodity and manufactured product prices need to be understood.

Structural differences in pricing

The Polish economist Michal Kalecki argued that while primary commodity prices are demand-determined, industrial prices are cost-determined. In other words, inflation of industrial commodities is not determined by a demand and supply mismatch. Come to think of it, this is commonsensical if you leave aside the quintessential demand-supply curves out of your head. After all, prices of cars, cycles, or toothbrushes do not fluctuate with a change in their demand. If more cars are demanded, more are produced and supplied to the customer instead of increasing the price. Prices of tomatoes or mangoes, on the other hand, vary quite significantly with a mismatch between demand and supply.

Viewed this way, the demand and supply curves need to be reconstructed (**Graph 1**). For primary commodities (panel (a)), supply is virtually fixed, represented by a vertical curve on the quantity axis, whereas demand follows the usual downward sloping curve. A decline in supply (shifting of the supply curve in panel (a) to the left) will increase its prices. In the case of food, for example, a bad monsoon will affect production adversely, thereby decreasing supply and increasing its prices. A good monsoon, on the other hand, will bring the prices down. Inflation here is demand-pull.

For the manufactured commodities (panel (b)), the supply curve is flat, which means a rise or a fall in demand (shifting of the demand curve) will bring about an equivalent supply of such commodities with no change in their prices. Again, the reason is simple. Most such commodities, except in cases of supply constraints, are produced in factories that run below capacity, so an increase in their demand simply increases their production. Demand here, quite opposite to the earlier case, has no role to play in determining their prices. Prices are determined instead by the cost of

Decoding India's inflation

A look at the main drivers of India's recent inflation and the forces shaping prices across the economy

Chart 1a: Wholesale Price Index (WPI): YoY inflation (%)

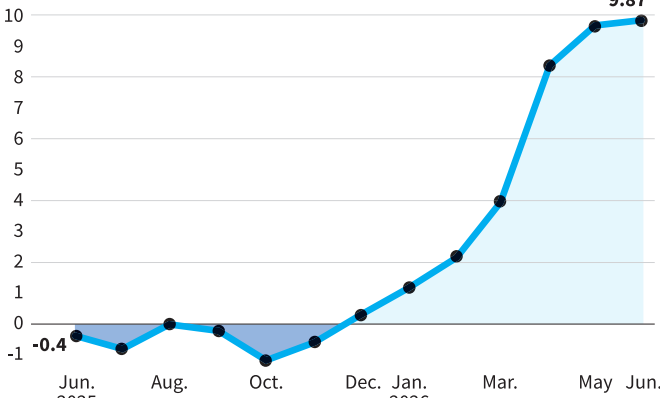
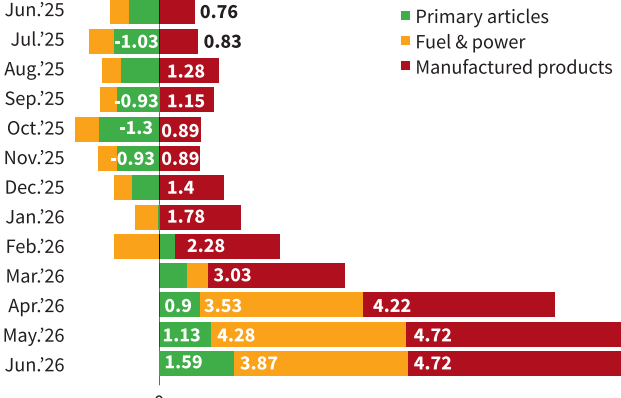
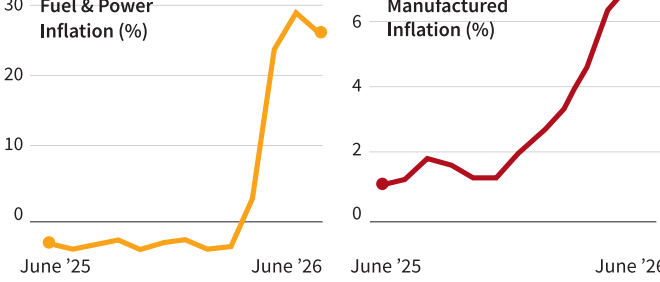


Chart 1b: Weighted contribution to WPI inflation (in %)

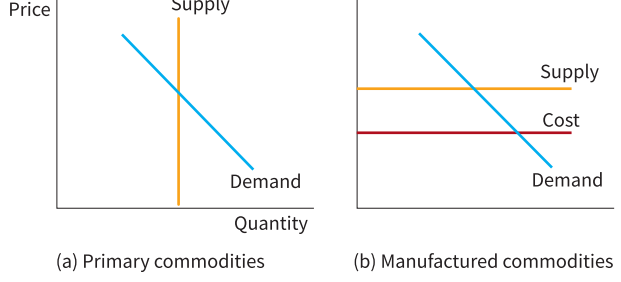


Source: Authors' calculations; Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India (WPI, base 2022-23)

Chart 2: Fuel and power and manufactured inflation (%)

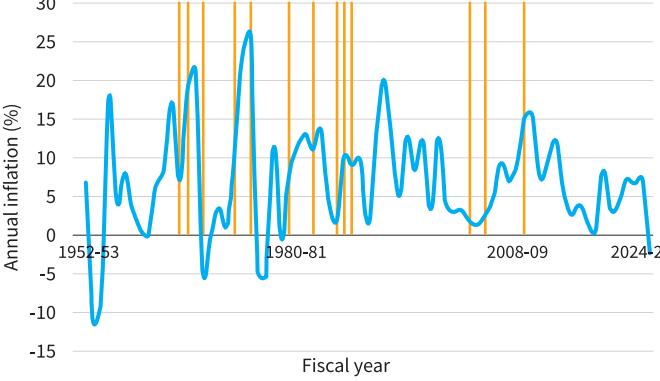


Graph 1: Structural differences in pricing



Source: Authors' calculations; Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India (WPI, base 2022-23)

Chart 3: Food articles: annual WPI inflation and drought years (1953-54 to 2025-26)



production. The supply curve is nothing but a profit markup over the cost (the vertical difference between supply and cost is the profit markup). A rise in the costs would push the cost curve up, and, unless the capitalists want to absorb this rise in cost through a lower markup, this would get passed on as higher prices in the market. Inflation here is purely cost-push.

What happened in the Indian case?

Having seen this difference, let us apply this idea to the inflationary problem currently facing India. If manufactured prices are cost-determined, what do their costs depend on? While wage cost is an important component of total costs, it is usually not the factor that pushes prices up because Indian workers do not really have space to bargain for higher wages. In other words, Indian workers are mostly price-takers; they make do with what they get. It is the material costs instead, which create the inflationary impulse.

One of the most important materials used in the production of any industrial commodity is oil. If we plot the movement of oil and power against the manufactured prices (**Chart 2**), we can

see almost a one-to-one correspondence between the two. A rise in fuel and power prices raised the manufactured inflation as well.

Food prices, too, have risen. One likely reason is the adverse impact of an inadequate monsoon, as a result of the El Niño effect, on agricultural production this year. **Chart 3** plots data on food price inflation with years in which the country experienced droughts. In every instance, drought conditions were accompanied by a significant rise in food inflation, much in line with the Kaleckian structuralist idea. To be sure, there have been instances in which food price inflation has taken place even in the absence of such supply shocks. These could perhaps be the years of high demand. Suffice to say that a drought is a sufficient, even if not a necessary, condition for food prices to soar.

What is to be done?

Given these structural differences, can something be done to control inflation? Let us start with the food prices. We believe food prices need to be decoupled from the vagaries of nature to the extent possible. That India solely depends on the

rain gods to feed its population is in itself quite unscientific and an anachronism in the modern era of technology. The country must invest heavily in agriculture, particularly in irrigation infrastructure, which is not entirely dependent on the monsoon.

As for manufactured goods, controlling fuel and power costs, when crude oil prices are rising, may be difficult, but there are still ways that they can be controlled. Instead of the ill-thought-out inflation targeting framework, the government should apply a countercyclical indirect tax policy to keep fuel and power prices in check. If the government can reduce the customs and excise duties when crude prices soar, the cost at the pump can be controlled. In fact, this is exactly what the government did a few months ago, which is why pump prices were held constant despite soaring crude prices in the international markets. Unfortunately, the government has withdrawn this measure, which is one of the primary reasons WPI inflation has risen sharply. (The authors are a part of the DevMac (Development Macroeconomics) network, which seeks pluralism in Economics)

THE GIST

Manufactured goods prices are determined largely by production costs, while primary commodity prices respond more to changes in demand and supply.

Higher global crude oil prices have raised fuel costs, which in turn have pushed up inflation in manufactured goods.

Food inflation has been exacerbated by an inadequate monsoon, underscoring the need for greater investment in irrigation and measures to cushion fuel price shocks.

BUILDING BLOCKS



Engineers get the train to float above the tracks using electromagnetic suspension. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

How magnetic levitation lifts and propels high-speed maglev trains

Maglev trains use powerful magnetic fields to move above the track without wheels, eliminating rolling friction, enabling speeds of over 400 km/hr; however, the technology requires dedicated guideways with precision engineering, making construction and operation expensive

Vasudevan Mukunth

Maglev’ is a portmanteau of ‘magnetic levitation’. Instead of running on wheels, maglev technology uses strong magnetic fields to lift the train and move it forward. Since the train floats above the track, there is no rolling friction during normal operations, nor are operations affected by inclement weather, like rain or snow. The result: the train can move at extremely high speed, topping 400 km/hr, while also giving passengers a smooth ride.

How is a train lifted? Nature has four fundamental forces: the two nuclear forces, the electromagnetic force, and gravity. Of them, gravity is the weakest by far – around 1039 times weaker than the electromagnetic force. This is why a small magnet can stay stuck to your fridge despite having the entire gravitational force of the earth pulling it down. The same idea applies to lifting a train weighing somewhere from 150 to 500 tonnes.

Engineers get the train to float above the tracks using electromagnetic suspension (EMS). The train has two ‘arms’ that wrap around the guideway over which it runs. Strong electromagnets on these arms point magnetic fields up towards the protruding parts of the guideway. Say you are lifting a bag with your hand. Your fingers wrap around the bag’s strap. The train’s arms do something like this – they wrap only just halfway, and from the bottom part, i.e., where the tip of your finger would be, exert a magnetic field into the underside of the strap. When these electromagnets are turned on, they exert a magnetic field that

attracts them towards the guideway, i.e., your fingers would be attracted towards the strap. As a result, the train is pushed upwards. The train is fit with sensors that help it float around 10 mm above the guideway at all times.

In a closely related technology called electrodynamic suspension (EDS), there are superconducting magnets on the train that are cooled to a very low temperature. When the train moves, the magnets that move with it induce an electric current in coils built into the sides of the tracks. (The phenomenon is called electromagnetic induction.) The result is a repulsive force that pushes the train up. Since the magnets have to move to induce the current, the train often needs to be travelling at around 100 km/hr before the effect can kick in, and until then it uses wheels. The train also hovers higher above the track, at around 100 mm.

But in exchange for requiring wheels, EDS can support higher speeds. EMS systems operate at around or under 500 km/hr whereas the SCMAGLEV EDS system in Japan achieved 603 km/hr during testing in 2015.

How does the train move forward? The walls of the guideway are lined with coils that carry an alternating current (AC). This current creates a magnetic field that constantly shifts its poles (north to south) along the track. The magnets on the train are attracted to the ‘opposite’ pole ahead and repelled by the ‘like’ pole behind. As a result, the train is simultaneously pulled forward from the front and pushed forward from the back. And to make the train go faster, engineers just need to increase the frequency of the AC.

Similarly, the current is used to switch

the direction of the magnetic field to slow the train or altogether stop it. This process may also use regenerative braking to divert the energy ‘saved’ by braking to the electric grid.

If a fast-moving maglev train starts to drift, there are magnets on the sides that repel/attract accordingly to ensure it stays centered. For emergencies or when the magnetic braking fails, the system is also fit with friction brakes. They come in two forms, although there are other technologies as well. One: the maglev train is also fit with ‘regular’ auxiliary wheels, and these wheels have a braking system akin to those in other trains and cars. Two: braking pads between the guideway and the train apply friction to further slow it down.

What are the downsides of maglev? The maglev system including the guideway cannot reuse existing guideways and stations vis-à-vis non-maglev trains. It needs its own. And this infrastructure is very expensive as the guideway needs to have magnets and coils with precision engineering.

The Shanghai Maglev, which was completed in 2004, cost ₹580 crore to ₹720 crore per kilometre (adjusted for inflation). This is excluding the cost of preparing the local terrain first – and operational costs like maintenance. Ergo, there needs to be very high and consistent passenger demand. Otherwise, the economics won’t work out.

On the engineering front, while there is no rolling friction, a train moving very fast – especially over 300 km/hr – experiences aerodynamic resistance due to the flow of air around the train’s body. This is why maglev trains have aerodynamic designs (which can add to

the cost), including a front portion that resembles a bird’s beak.

Is maglev technology used elsewhere? Maglev is essential about using magnetic fields to support or move objects – a use-case that arises in many enterprises. High-speed turbines and compressors suspend their rotating shafts in a magnetic field instead of conventional bearings, minimising mechanical contact and allowing the blades to turn faster. Similarly, modern aircraft carriers use the linear motor technology that pushes maglev trains forward to accelerate aircraft on the vessels’ runways.

Factory automation systems also use it to achieve the rapid, precise motion crucial in semiconductor manufacturing, food and medicine packaging, CNC machining, inspection cameras involving lasers or X-rays, and DNA sequencing, among others.

Scientists have also used magnetic fields to levitate biological samples, liquid droplets, molten metals, and even small animals for experiments. Following a suggestion by his wife, the British physicists Andre Geim and Michael Berry used a magnetic field to levitate a frog in 1997. This was possible because a form of magnetism called diamagnetism gives all materials a very weak magnetic field. The duo had to work out the strength of the field required to ‘cancel out’ the gravitational force exerted on the frog by the earth. Thus, they were able to get the frog to float using a 10-tesla magnet.

For this work the duo won an Ig Nobel Prize in 2000. Today, Geim remains the only scientist to have won both an Ig Nobel Prize and a Nobel Prize. Berry is also a noted physicist, known for his work on semi-classical physics.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of “apple polishing”? (Rahul Sharma, Kola, Rajasthan)

It means “flattery”. Believe it or not, this is an expression which owes its origin to the practice followed by school children. What is it that people do in order to win the approval of their superiors? They either give them gifts or flatter them. Some school going children did the same thing in order to be in the teacher’s good books. These kids took apples to school and polished them till they gleamed. Then they presented them to the class teacher! They hoped that by doing this, the teacher would overlook their poor performance in class and instead give them good marks.

Vani’s apple-polishing didn’t get her anywhere.

Do not use this word in formal contexts. It is considered slang.

What is the difference between “homophone” and “homonym”? (P.V.V.S. Lakshmi, Kakinada)

In everyday contexts these two words are used interchangeably. But there is a difference in meaning between the two. The word “homophone” comes from the Greek “homo” meaning “same” and “phone” meaning “sound”. Strictly speaking therefore, the word homophone is used to refer to words which sound alike, although they have a different spelling and meaning. Here are a few examples: mail, male; wear, ware; metal, mettle; etc. A homonym, on the other hand, is used to refer to words which have the same spelling and pronunciation but have a different meaning. For example May (month), may (possibility); can (be able), can (put something in container); bear (the animal), bear (to carry). As I mentioned earlier, this distinction is seldom maintained in everyday conversation. People in general tend to use “homonym” to mean “homophone”.

A note about the pronunciation. The first “o” in both the words is pronounced like the “o” in “hot”, “pot”, and “got”. The second “o” is like the “a” in “China”. It’s the first syllable which has the stress in both words. This is one way of pronouncing the words.

How do you answer someone who says “Nice to meet you”? (P. Lokeshwar Rao, Mosopalli)

When you are introduced to someone and the person says, “Nice to meet you” the standard reply is “Nice to meet you” with the emphasis on “you”. It’s like “How do you do?” When someone says “How do you do?” your reply is, “How do you do?”. Other ways of responding to “Nice to meet you” are “Likewise”, “It’s a pleasure meeting you”, “Same here”, etc.

Is the word “orange” a Tamil word? (P. Somasundaram, Chennai)

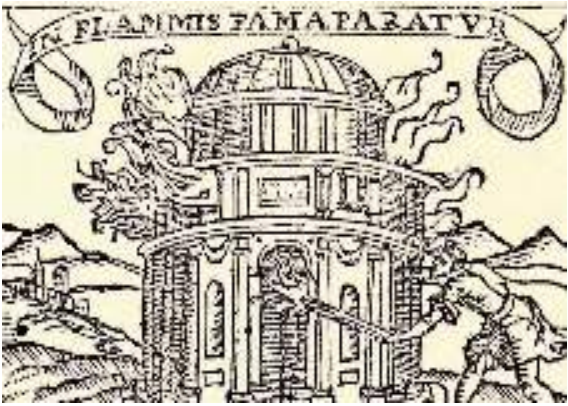
Many Tamilians would like to think so! Some argue that the word orange comes from the Tamil words “six” and “five” respectively. The good news is that the word does come from an Indian language – Sanskrit. Scholars who have studied the origin of words contend that the word “orange” comes from the Sanskrit “naranga”.
Published in The Hindu on May 1, 2001

THE DAILY QUIZ

On July 21, 356 BCE, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World was destroyed in an act of deliberate vandalism. Test your knowledge of the monument

Prathmesh Kher

- QUESTION 1
What was the monument called, and to which Greek deity was it dedicated?
- QUESTION 2
Who deliberately set fire to the temple in 356 BCE, and what was his stated motive?
- QUESTION 3
What measure did the Ephesian authorities reportedly take to deny Herostratus the fame he sought?
- QUESTION 4
Besides being a place of worship, what important civic and economic function did the temple serve?
- QUESTION 5
Which ancient writer included the Temple of Artemis among the Seven Wonders of the World in his famous epigram?



Visual Question: This illustration from the 1610 work *Emblemas morales* (Moral Emblems), imagining Herostratus burning the Temple of Artemis, is topped by the Latin phrase ‘In flammis fama paratur’. What does it mean? SEBASTIÁN DE COVARRUBIAS/PUBLIC DOMAIN

- Questions and Answers to the previous day’s daily quiz:** 1. With which physical oddity was Sobers born? **Ans: Six fingers in each hand**
2. To make his inclusion legitimate in the Police Cricket Club, how was Sobers, still in his teens, recruited? **Ans: Bugle player in the police band**
3. According to his autobiography, Sobers never ducked into a bouncer in his career after being hit on the forehead by a legendary fast bowler in a match against the touring English side in 1953-54. **Ans: Fred Trueman**
4. Name the sci-fi book he supposedly authored in 1967. **Ans: ‘Bonaventure and the Flashing Blade’**
5. Where and against whom did he notch up the record-breaking knock? **Ans: At Kingston against Pakistan**
6. Name the bowler at the receiving end when Sobers hit six sixes in an over. **Ans: Malcolm Nash**
7. The winner of which ICC award is given the ‘Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy’? **Ans: Men’s Cricketer of the Year**
8. Which innings by Sobers did the great Don Bradman describe as ‘probably the greatest exhibition of batting ever seen in Australia’? **Ans: 254 for the Rest of the World at the MCG in 1972**
Visual: Name this Indian actress and model to whom Sobers was briefly engaged in the 1960s. **Ans: Anju Mahendru**
Early Birds: Tamal Biswas | Piyali Tuli | Lalchand Bhutani | Tito Shiladitya | Arun Kumar Singh

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

Word of the day

Harangue:

a loud, bombastic declamation expressed with strong emotion

Synonyms: attack, lecture, criticism

Usage: *Everyone listened to her long harangue in silence.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/harangue

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈhæræŋ/



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Monsoon Session off to stormy start amid Opposition protests

Opposition MPs raise NEET paper leak, Ram Temple donation theft issues; Lok Sabha adjourned after repeated disruptions; MPs of Congress, SP and Trinamool troop into the Well of the House; DMK raises Mekedatu issue, skips Cong-led meeting

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The proceedings in the Lok Sabha were disrupted on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament on Monday as Opposition parties raised various issues, primarily the alleged National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) paper leak and Ram Temple donation theft.

The disruption over the NEET issue came amid attempts by protesters, led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), to break barricades to march to Parliament, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the alleged paper leak and CBSE exam irregularities.

The House was adjourned six times since it met in the morning, and was later adjourned for the day at 3 p.m. The only business transacted was the introduction of a Bill by Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal to replace an Ordinance which in-



Turbulent start: Lok Sabha proceedings under way on the first day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi on Monday. SANSAD TV

creased the number of Supreme Court judges from 34 to 38.

The changed political alignments following the recent Assembly polls were also visible during the proceedings.

As soon as the Lok Sabha assembled, Opposition MPs raised slogans, with Congress, Samajwadi Party and Trinamool Congress members protesting over alleged NEET paper leaks and the donation embezzlement at the Ram Tem-

ple in Ayodhya. However, the Trinamool MPs who trooped into the Well of the House did not include the 20 rebel MPs who now claim to be a part of the National Citizenship Party of India (NCPI).

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which parted ways with the Congress after the latter switched sides and allied with the newly elected TVK government in Tamil Nadu, too entered the Well. But the party mem-

bers raised slogans over the Karnataka government's proposal to build a dam at Mekedatu across the Cauvery river rather than the issues flagged by the Congress.

The split between the Congress and the DMK appeared clear inside the Lok Sabha, although DMK MP T. R. Baalu continued to occupy his earlier seat next to Congress MP K.C. Venugopal, with Speaker Om Birla yet to approve the party's request for separate seat-

ing. The DMK skipped the customary strategy meeting of Opposition parties convened by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge at his Parliament office on Monday morning.

Sources told *The Hindu* that DMK chief M.K. Stalin made it clear that the party's Lok Sabha members should not associate themselves with issues raised by the Congress on the floor of the House.

Repeated adjournments Mr. Birla, who began the proceedings with obituary references to six former MPs, first adjourned the House till noon as Opposition MPs raised slogans during the Question Hour.

The House was repeatedly adjourned before being adjourned for the day at 3 p.m.

Earlier, at 2 p.m., BJP MP Jagdambika Pal, who was officiating as the Speaker, said there was adequate quorum to conduct business, but some Opposition MPs alleged they were being prevented from entering the House.

Modi stresses vital role of Parliament, urges MPs to engage in informed debate

Devesh Pandey
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged MPs to engage in informed and respectful debate, with a shared commitment to the country's progress, in the Monsoon Session of Parliament that began on Monday.

In a veiled attack on the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, he spoke about the innovators at the start-up Skyroot Aerospace, saying the company's team — with an average age of 28 — had taken India's flag to space.

"I am not talking about some 56-year-old 'youngster'. I am talking about a start-up, the young people with an average age of 28 who have planted India's flag in space... these are the kinds of achievements that fill India with immense pride," he said.

"India's youth have truly soared to new heights in the space sector, it is a tremendous success," he said. Built by Skyroot, the Vikram-I rocket lifted off the Sriharikota launch pad on July 18 and placed its



Parliament begins: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the media in New Delhi on Monday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

payloads in an orbit about 450 km above earth, making India the third country after the U.S. and China whose private industry has demonstrated such a capability. India's expanding presence in space reflected the talent, aspirations, and limitless potential of the country's youth, he said.

Mr. Modi said India had achieved several key milestones over the past month, enhancing its standing and credibility on the global stage. He said an oil refinery in Rajasthan was dedicated to the country, India's third semiconductor plant commissioned, and a green hydrogen-powered train launched.

He said India remained

the world's fastest-growing major economy, recording a 7.7% GDP growth rate, despite disruptions to supplies of petrol, diesel, LPG and other commodities caused by the conflicts in West Asia.

Stressing that facts and reason should guide discussions, Mr. Modi said every point of view deserves respect.

He said that as India gathers pace in its development journey, Parliament had a vital role in providing a fresh impetus through constructive debates. He called for cooperation across party lines and contributions by experienced MPs to address the aspirations of the country.

Govt. introduces Bill in Lok Sabha to raise strength of judges in SC to 38

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Monday introduced a Bill in the Lok Sabha to replace an ordinance that raised the sanctioned strength of judges in the Supreme Court from 34 to 38, amid concerns over mounting backlog of cases.

It seeks to replace the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026, promulgated in May, to increase the sanctioned strength of the court from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill amid protests by Opposition members, who raised slogans over alleged NEET examination paper leak and claims of 'theft' of donations made to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The statement of objects and reasons attached to the Bill states that the court



Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced the Bill amid protests by Opposition members in the Lok Sabha. SANSAD TV

had 92,101 pending cases as of January 1, underscoring the need to expand its strength of judges. It adds that the court has been functioning with nearly its full sanctioned strength of 34 judges since 2019.

Rising pendency However, the number of fresh cases filed has continued to be higher than that of disposals. In 2025, the court registered 75,410 new cases while disposing of 65,615 matters, adding to the pendency.

The Bill states that the persistent gap between the institution and the disposal of cases has made docket management increasingly difficult, particularly in relation to older pending matters and cases requiring adjudication by larger Benches.

It said augmenting the court's strength was among the most effective measures to reduce the backlog of cases. It added that the increase in strength would enable the Chief Justice of India to

constitute Constitution Benches more regularly to hear cases involving substantial questions of law.

Cost estimates A Financial Memorandum accompanying the Bill estimates that creating four additional posts of judges, along with the required supporting staff, will entail an annual recurring expenditure of approximately ₹10.56 crore. Also, a sum of ₹3.47 crore is expected to be incurred as one-time expenditure on official vehicles, furnishing official residences, and other related expenses, taking the total initial cost to about ₹14.04 crore.

In May, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal to increase the top court's sanctioned strength, following which the President promulgated an ordinance.

After the ordinance came into effect, four judges were appointed to the Supreme Court against the enhanced sanctioned strength.

Govt. gets four weeks to confer award on former police officer

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court expressed displeasure with the Union government on Monday over the repeated delay in conferring the President's Gallantry Award on a former Madhya Pradesh police officer Vivek Singh Chouhan, who gunned down two dreaded dacoits in an encounter over two decades ago.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and R. Mahadevan, hearing an application filed by Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, granted the Centre time till July 29 to comply with the Madhya Pradesh High Court's direction to confer the award

on Mr. Chouhan. "This concerns a police officer who risked his life in service. The High Court has directed the award to be conferred. What is the justification for seeking further time now?" it asked.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, informed the Bench that the government had filed a review petition against the Supreme Court's March 25 order affirming the High Court's direction.

The Bench granted the Centre four weeks as the "last and final opportunity" to comply with the direction and warned that any further non-compliance would invite serious consequences.

HC rejects Trinamool plea to operate three frozen bank accounts

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday refused the plea of the Trinamool Congress seeking permission to operate three bank accounts containing around ₹440 crore that were frozen by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case.

The case involved the alleged transfers of party funds for the purchase of an aircraft and a helicopter.

The Bidhannagar police had earlier frozen the same three accounts on June 19, in response to an FIR lodged by MLA Sandipan Saha, who now belongs to the Ritabrata Banerjee-led

faction of the Trinamool Congress. In the FIR, he alleged illegal fund diversion from those accounts.

However, on July 9, a Bench led by Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya had directed the police to let the Mamata Banerjee-led faction use money from the accounts for daily administrative purposes under the supervision of a special judicial officer.

Monday's order came in response to another plea filed by the Mamata Banerjee-led faction on July 10, challenging the ED's decision to freeze the same accounts following a fresh FIR registered by the agency on July 8. The matter has been listed for further hearing on August 26.

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned six times on Monday, with the Opposition demanding action against those guilty in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) question paper leak case.

The day's proceedings began with Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan administering oath to nine newly elected members including three who recently switched from the Trinamool Congress to the BJP — Prakash Chik Baraik, Sushmita Dev, and Sukhendu Sekhar Ray. The Opposition shouted slogans

Nine newly elected members took oath on the first day of the Monsoon Session amid sloganeering

when they took oath. Congress members heckled BJP leader Mahesh Kewat, the newly elected member from Madhya Pradesh, where the candidature of Congress's Meenakshi Natrajan was disqualified.

BJP member Satish Poonia from Rajasthan, Congress member Pawan Kherra from Karnataka, Mukeshbhai J. Rathwa (BJP-Gujarat), James Sangma (National People's Par-

ty-Meghalaya), and Khiangte Lalitluangkima (Zoram People's Movement -Mizoram) were the others who took oath.

After the oath-taking and customary laying of papers, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge flagged the recent paper leak, drawing the government's attention to the police action at Jantar Mantar.

'Suppressing issue' "Thousands of students have reached Jantar Mantar (where the protest is on), and they were lathi-charged," he said. "The government is trying to beat them down and suppress

the issue," Mr. Kharge said, as Opposition members shouted "shame, shame".

Amid the uproar, the Chairman adjourned the House till noon.

The proceedings were adjourned for the second time till 12.30 p.m. It was adjourned further till 12.50 p.m. and then again till 2 p.m. As the Opposition members continued to raise slogans when the House reassembled, Deputy Chairman Hariwansh urged them to maintain decorum.

When the members refused to relent, he adjourned the House for half-an-hour till 2.30 p.m. and then for the day.

Office Chief Medical & Health Officer and Member Secretary.
District Health Society Deeg (Rajasthan)

Sr.No. Acct/2026-27/55
Date:-14.07.26

NIB :- 01/2026-27

Bids for "MAN POWER SUPPLY" through service provider" are invited from interested bidders upto 5:00 PM dated 02/08/26. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>) and <http://eproc.Rajasthan.gov.in> the state.

Estimated Cost:- 510 lakhs

UBN Code :- MHS26275LOB02514

NIB No :- MHS2627A1876

(Dr. Vijay Kumar Singhal)
C. M. & H. O. and Member Secretary,
Dist. Health Society Deeg (Rajasthan)

DIPRC/12553/2026

PUNJAB STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION
SCO 74-75, BANK SQUARE, SECTOR-17B CHANDIGARH
PBX: 0172-5197847, 5197846

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

PSWC invites online tenders through GeM Portal for creation of 0.45 LMT godown capacities at 03 locations in the State of Punjab for guaranteed lease of 10 years on Build, Own and Operate/Lease basis for storage requirements of FCI under two bid system 'Technical Bid' and 'Financial Bid'.

NIT (alongwith GeM Bid IDs) is available on Department's website i.e. <https://pswc.in>

PSWC reserves the right to scrap the tender at any stage without assigning any reason and PSWC will not be held liable for any costs and consequences incurred by the intending bidders.

Note: Any corrigendum(s)/Notification(s) to this Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be published Department's website & GeM Portal.

1004/12/2026-27/13438

Managing Director, PSWC

MAHATRANSCO
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INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2656/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001572) (1st Call)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Establishment of 220/22kV GIS Substation at Balewadi, Tal. Haveli Dist. Pune alongwith lines on turnkey basis under Pune Zone, MSETCL, Maharashtra."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. <https://srmetender.mahatransco.in>

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from **16.07.2026**.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

APPOINTMENT

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ
(An Organisation of the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030

National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj an Autonomous organization under the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India is country's apex organisation for undertaking training and research in various aspects of Rural Development. NIRD&PR invites applications for the following post on deputation basis:

Name of the Post	Pay Matrix Level	Age limit	No. of Posts	Place of posting
Accounts & Finance Officer	Pay Level - 8 (Rs.47,600- Rs.1,51,100)	56 years	1	North Eastern Regional Centre, Guwahati

For Job Profile, eligibility Criteria, remuneration and submission of application, please visit: <http://career.nirdpr.in/>
Last date for submission of online application is 20.08.2026.
Advt.No.14/2026
File No: NIRDPR/Admin
/Section-1/2023/36
Comp. no. 15362
Sd/-
Assistant Director
Administration (Section-I)

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI
MARKETING DEPARTMENT e-Procurement Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited for supply of 1) 30,000 Nos of pattu Sariga Dupattas (Silk X Silk) 2) 60 Nos of Melchat & Uttariyam Vasthram sets (Pure Zari) 3) 40,000,000 Nos of Paper Food Bowls 4) 1,50,00,000 Nos of bio-compostable laddu carry covers 5) 20,00,000 Nos of Paper cups 150ml 6) 30,00,000 Nos of Leaf Food Bowls through e-tenders to the Marketing Department, T.J.Devasthanams. For tender notice and tender details log on to the web site <http://www.tirumala.org> and <https://tender.appeprocurement.gov.in>. For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555, FAX No:0877-2264554.

TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.119) Date:20-07-2026

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

एजन्सियन घरेलू प्राधिकरण
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Tel:-0141-2615648/40 Email: rhppa.jalpur@gmail.com

ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 23/2026-27

निम्नलिखित कार्यों के लिए पंजीकृत अनुमती संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

क्र. सं.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (₹.)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	Development work for Tribal Destination at Mangarh Dham district Banswara (Rajasthan) UBN is: HPP2627WSOB00045	349.41 Lakh	12 Months
2	Construction of Adivasi Panorama at Dausa (Raj.) UBN is: HPP2627WSOB00046	318.83 Lakh	15 Months

निविदा से संबंधित समस्त विवरण वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> एवं <http://sppp.raj.nic.in> पर देखा जा सकता है। इच्छुक निविदादाताओं को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाइट <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> से रजिस्ट्रर करवाना आवश्यक है।

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मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी

TRUST FACTOR

We always believed in ourselves and our football, says Torres



AFP

Ferran Torres dedicated the World Cup triumph to his compatriots. “The goal belongs to 47 million people. When you are up against Lionel Messi, there is nervousness, but we always believed in our football and in ourselves.” Torres joined Mario Gotze as the only substitutes to score the winner in a final (both against Argentina).

PERFECT COMEBACK

My journey is a lesson in overcoming adversity: Rodri



AFP

It feels like the perfect script. I certainly did not expect this. I would love for the younger generations to see that a player who touches the heaven, then descends into hell, can come back. It is a lesson in overcoming adversity — Spain captain and midfielder Rodri after winning the World Cup Golden Ball.

MAKING IT A HABIT

Yamal becomes first teenager to do the Euro-World Cup double



GETTY IMAGES

Lamine Yamal became the first teenager to win both the European Championship and World Cup as Spain stretched its unbeaten record across all competitions to 38, a new milestone in men’s football surpassing Italy. Coach Luis de la Fuente has remained unbeaten in 15 games at major tournaments.

DOUBLE DELIGHT

Rodri, Simon and Cubarsi walk away with individual honours



AP

There was double delight for three Spanish players as they walked home with individual honours. Captain Rodri bagged the Golden Ball, goalkeeper Unai Simon won the Golden Glove and Pau Cubarsi was named the Best Young Player. France’s Kylian Mbappe secured the Golden Boot, while the Netherlands received the Fairplay prize.

Torres the hero as Spanish Armada sinks Argentina

The substitute breaches the defending champion’s dogged defence in extra-time to win a second global crown for *La Roja*; Emiliano’s heroics not enough to save the day for the South Americans

FIFA WORLD CUP

Avon Sengupta
NEW YORK

There are defeats that arrive in a single devastating blow. Others unfold so gradually that the victim barely notices the danger until the escape is no longer possible.

For more than two hours inside the MetLife Stadium on Sunday, Luis de la Fuente’s side tightened its grip around Argentina as every ball seemed to reach only the men in red. Playing this Spanish team must feel like being trapped in the coils of a Burmese python. Each time an opponent exhales, the grip tightens a little more, steadily squeezing away space, options and hope. Every unguarded patch of grass is occupied and every passing lane narrowed until the opposition is starved of air and ideas alike.

In the final, Spain was quick to strike the rhythm that had carried it through this World Cup. Rodri and Fabian Ruiz monopolised possession, forcing Argentina deeper into its own half as Lamine Yamal and Dani Olmo began probing for openings. Within minutes, Yamal had slipped a deflected pass towards Olmo, whose return ball released the Barcelona winger, but Emiliano Martinez was alert enough to smother the effort.

Argentina struggled to escape Spain’s suffocating press and looked instead for moments in transition. Julian Alvarez’s early through ball briefly released Lionel Messi behind Spain’s high defensive line,



Worthy winner: Spain didn’t give Argentina an inch, dominating the summit clash from start to finish. GETTY IMAGES

but Unai Simon sprinted out from his goal to snuff out the danger before the Argentine captain could reach its end.

The pressure forced Lionel Scaloni into an early reshuffle. Lisandro Martinez, already booked and struggling physically after repeatedly stretching to contain Spain’s fluid movement, made way for Nicolas Otamendi as Argentina searched for greater stability at the heart of its defence.

The first half unfolded entirely on Spain’s terms. Argentina failed to muster a single effort on goal or register a touch inside the Spanish penalty box. Yet for all its command of possession and territory, Spain failed to translate its superiority into clear-cut chances. It had controlled the contest but the scoreline did not reflect it.

THE RESULT

Final: Spain 1 (Torres 106) bt Argentina 0 aet.

Spain’s incursions into the Argentine penalty area increased as the game progressed. The players in blue and white, who had fought for every minute of this showpiece, were now surviving through sheer will, stretching every sinew to keep Spain at bay while clinging to the belief that a chance would eventually come their way.

Ferran Torres, introduced alongside Mikel Merino to sharpen Spain’s attack against Argentina’s reshaped defence, soon met a Yamal cutback with a glancing header that Emiliano gathered gratefully, having spilled the previous two strikes that had come his way.

With its back against the

wall, Argentina defended with every man available. But it could find no route through Spain’s relentless press and no opportunity to launch the swift counterattacks that had carried it through much of the tournament.

The defending champion’s task became harder when Enzo Fernandez was sent off for a second bookable offence. Yet Argentina continued to resist. Emiliano flung himself to his left to keep out a curling Yamal free-kick and drag the contest into extra-time.

The goalkeeper, whose saves had crowned Argentina World champion four years earlier, was once again refusing to surrender the trophy. He tipped Nico Williams’s header onto the post before the Athletic Bilbao winger thought he had finally beaten him, only for the celebrations to be cut

short by a foul from Merino in the build-up.

But even Martinez could only delay the inevitable. His moment of indecision, the first of an otherwise magnificent evening, allowed Williams to cushion a header back across goal and Torres crashed his finish beyond the stranded goalkeeper in the 106th minute.

At last, Spain had found the opening it had spent nearly two hours creating.

This was only the second World Cup meeting between two countries whose histories have long intertwined. The Atlantic, for generations, has carried language, literature and football between Spain and Argentina. But inside the MetLife Stadium there was no room for romance as Spain allowed Argentina neither space nor sentiment.

Messi leaves the World Cup as its most enduring presence

Avon Sengupta
NEW YORK

For 120 minutes, Spain did what no other team at this World Cup had managed.

It found a way to keep Lionel Messi quiet.

The plan was simple in theory but brutally difficult in practice. Every time the 39-year-old drifted towards the right flank, another red shirt arrived. His every passing lane closed and every familiar slalom towards his left foot was met by bodies rather than space.

“The first idea was to keep Messi at bay,” Spain coach Luis de la Fuente admitted afterwards. He had learned his lesson when a 16-year-old Messi had terrorised his Sevilla team in an under-19 match in 2004.

But here, rather than man-marking the Argentine talisman, the Spanish coach looked at cutting the supply and isolating Messi. The Argentine captain managed only 15 touches in the first half and 54 across the entire final. There was no trademark curling finish, no defence-splitting pass, no decisive intervention.

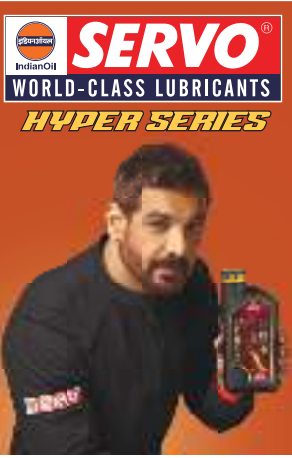
It was here in MetLife in 2016, when Messi had missed in the Copa America final shootout against Chile and announced his international retirement before making a comeback 47 days later to complete his redemption arc.

Ten years later, he returned to the same stadium seeking one final crown, only for it to deny him again.

As Spain celebrated at



Fabled: No one can take away the imprint Messi has left on this tournament. GETTY IMAGES



the centre circle, Messi and his teammates walked towards the Argentina supporters gathered behind the southern goal. The applause that greeted them was as loud as anything heard all evening. Spain’s players, too, understood the moment.

Several, including Lamine Yamal, crossed the pitch to embrace Messi after the final whistle. Later, as Argentina climbed the podium to collect its runner-up medals, the new

world champion formed a guard of honour. A few patted him on the back, Messi tried to smile, but the disappointment was hard to contain.

One match, however, cannot rewrite a career.

Messi leaves the World Cup as its most enduring presence with 34 appearances, 23 victories, 21 goals, 27 matches as captain, seven goals from outside the penalty area, 10 knockout-stage assists and, above all, the man who finally completed football’s greatest story by lifting the trophy in 2022. He remains the only player to score in every knockout round of a World Cup-winning campaign.

Spain may have denied him one final triumph, but no one can take away the imprint he has left on this tournament.

For generations to come, the World Cup’s story will be retold through many champions, but few names will echo as deeply as that of Lionel Messi’s.

De la Fuente’s Spain keeps its ‘appointment with history’

Avon Sengupta
NEW YORK

Head coach Luis de la Fuente hailed his players after Spain defeated Argentina 1-0 in extra-time to win the World Cup on Sunday, saying that the triumph belonged to a generation that embraced collective sacrifice and wrote its place in football history.

“I never thought of anything like this,” de la Fuente said. “I always just wanted joy in moments. When you look back at this process, I would not have achieved anything without these players. The journey with this raw material, this talent... Spanish footballers, the way they compete. These players are amazing.”

The 65-year-old dedicated the victory to his squad and coaching staff, insist-



De la Fuente. GETTY IMAGES

ing that the players were the true architects of Spain’s second World Cup triumph. “First of all, I would like to thank the staff and everyone else who worked with us. The players are the true protagonists. We feel satisfaction, pride. It’s such an honour to be the coach of these amazing players.” Before kick-off, de la

Fuente reminded his squad of the occasion awaiting them. “I said, ‘Gentlemen, we have an appointment with history, and we want to be there first.’”

The Spain manager also singled out teenage star Lamine Yamal for praise, highlighting his willingness to put the team above individual glory. “I’d like to express my sincere gratitude to Lamine for becoming a great footballer. He’s really sacrificed for the collective good. In my opinion, he played a great World Cup.”

Asked what remained for a team that has now conquered Europe and the world, de la Fuente smiled. “Once we finished the game, there were footballers who said, ‘Now what else is there to win?’ The answer is the next match in September. This team is relentless.”

Spain was better and we accept it, says Argentina coach Scaloni

Avon Sengupta
NEW YORK

Lionel Scaloni admitted Spain deserved to be crowned the world champion but said he could not have asked for more from his Argentina players after their 0-1 extra-time loss in the World Cup final.

“I feel sad,” Scaloni said on Sunday. “They were better, that’s true, but I will have tremendous memories of what my players achieved. We are great in victory and must be so in defeat as well. We showed that we know how to lose. We lost, and we accept it.”

The Argentina coach thanked the squad that had carried the nation to a second successive World Cup final after another remarkable tournament. “Endless thanks to these players who once again took us to



Scaloni. REUTERS

the final. If they give everything the way they did, it sets a great example for the people and for our country.”

Scaloni also paid tribute to Lionel Messi. “He’s 39 years old now. It was crystal clear for me that he was going to play until he decides not to,” Scaloni said.

“I hope everyone feels proud of him because he’s the best football player ever to set foot on a pitch.

▼ All-time WC leading scorers

- 22 Mbappe (Fra, 22 matches)
- 21 Messi (Arg, 34)
- 16 Klose (Ger, 24)
- 15 Ronaldo (Bra, 19)
- 14 Muller (Ger, 13) & Kane (Eng, 18)

What he did during this World Cup was incredible.”

The 48-year-old then became visibly emotional while discussing his own future, with his contract due to expire later this year. “I will talk to the president. I think it’s only fair that I take this time for myself. In order to continue, you need to reset your mind. Creating a group like this again is very difficult.”

Scaloni paused, apologised to reporters and walked out of the press conference in tears, bringing an emotional end to Argentina’s reign as world champion.

A legend built without its decorated kings

R.K. Arjun

Somewhere between Ferran Torres’ winner and the trophy lift, 12 club badges got to claim a piece of history. Spain’s World Cup title was stitched together by clubs, its academies and leagues spread across Europe, and the breakdown tells a story as interesting as the triumph itself.

LaLiga dominated the numbers, with 17 of the 26 players coming from the Spanish top division. The Premier League supplied seven, while the Bundesliga and Ligue 1 contributed one each, reflecting how Spanish football has kept its biggest talents close to home even as the English top flight’s financial gravity pulls them elsewhere.

Barcelona led the club representation with nine players, from Lamine Yamal and Pedri to Pau Cu-



Cucurella... it’s real! REUTERS

barsi, underlining a squad heavily shaped by La Masia’s production line.

Atletico Madrid, Athletic Bilbao, and Arsenal each sent three players.

Perhaps the most striking detail, though, was who was missing. For the first time in Spain’s World Cup history, not a single Real Madrid player featured in the squad. Marc Cucurella’s move to Real from Chelsea, confirmed during the tournament, added to the irony.

