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A person is seen from the side, sitting at a wooden desk in a modern office or home workspace. They are writing in a notebook with a pen. The desk is cluttered with various items: a laptop, several notebooks, a cup of coffee, and small potted plants. In the background, a large window offers a view of a city skyline at dusk or dawn. A lamp provides warm lighting. The overall atmosphere is one of productivity and focus.

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(Monday 14)
Plan day

Goals

6am - Workout
8am - Projects
12pm - Review
12pm - Strategy
2pm - Family

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Hi, how can we help

IN JANUARY, PRINCIPALS, HEAD EXAMINERS OF KENDRIYA VIDYALAYAS, NAVODAYA, TOP DELHI SCHOOLS TESTED SYSTEM

What CBSE ignored: Its own panel found glitches in dry run, said delay OSM by a year

After trial in Delhi in Jan 2026, two reports sent to Board, highlighted major problems, tech glitches, random increase, decrease in marks

Vidheesha Kuntamalla
New Delhi, June 2

- THE CBSE's new On-Screen Marking (OSM) system needs at least a year's trial and rectification before being implemented.
- The OSM system depends heavily on well-equipped evaluation centres and highly trained evaluators.
- Improved training is essential for fair, transparent, and error-free marking of answer scripts. This needs time to be done properly.
- The OSM system is glitchy, and it is unable to resolve these glitches speedily.

These are some of the problems with the digital evaluation system that were explicitly flagged to the CBSE by participants in an evaluation dry run carried out by the Board less than a month before this year's Class 12 examinations began on February 17.

The CBSE pushed through the system anyway. Instead of paper booklets, examiners used computers to evaluate digitally scanned copies of answer scripts submitted by the examinees, which the CBSE put on a secure online platform.

Students started complaining about their marks almost

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

● THE EARLY WARNING

Glitches flagged during dry run

- Score increases by additional head examiners reportedly reflected as deductions.
- Marks showed on-screen didn't always align with official marking.
- In some cases, marks for one sub-part of a question reflected.
- System reportedly allowed or forced 0.5-mark award not permitted under marking scheme.
- Evaluators reported that the platform would freeze.
- Evaluation progress reportedly not being saved automatically.
- Marks could reportedly be entered against blank pages, unattempted questions.



CBSE claims to have fixed

- 'Save' option added to evaluation interface.
- Mark deletion process simplified.
- Static IP issue fixed before actual evaluation.
- Marks' display repositioned to avoid obscuring answers.
- AHE/HE review process revised to allow answer-book review irrespective of daily evaluation percentage.
- Server capacity enhanced to address internet speed.

RELATED REPORTS
PAGES 3,5

Rahul Singh: CBSE Chairman who failed board test

Board's portal for re-evaluation faces cyberattacks

CBSE Chairman, Secretary moved out, OSM service procurement to be probed

Harikishan Sharma & Abhinaya Harigovind
New Delhi, June 2

WITH THE Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) under fire over glitches in the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system for its Class 12 board exam, the Centre Tuesday moved out CBSE Chairman Rahul Singh and Secretary Himanshu Gupta and named their replacements.

The government also set up a one-member committee to look into the procurement of services for the OSM system. To be chaired by S Radha Chauhan, Chairperson, Capacity Building Commission, it has been asked to submit its report

to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) within a month.

The announcements came on the day official sources confirmed that the issue flagged in a May 31 post on X by Nisarga Adhikary — a 19-year-old ethical hacker, he had also posted a picture to indicate that he could access the scanned answer sheets — had been verified, resulting in the Board acknowledging "vulnerabilities" in the OSM portal.

"The vendor had a security audit certificate, and the Board didn't do an audit of the vendor's systems," the sources said.

Lokhande Prashant Sitaram

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Cong. targets Modi over silence on Israel's actions

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of maintaining "complete silence" over Israel's military offensive in Lebanon, even though Israeli aggression is undermining efforts to secure a U.S.-Iran agreement aimed at ending hostilities in West Asia.

Congress general secretary-in-charge of communications Jalaram Ranesh said negotiations between the U.S. and Iran to halt the conflict held significant implications for India.

A successful agreement would lead to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and ease downward pressure on global oil prices, both of which were "tremendous stakes" to India, he said on X.

"Many countries have been condemning Israel's offensive in Lebanon. The one head of government who has kept silent is PM Narendra Modi," he added.

FRA, PESA task force in Chhattisgarh weakens statutory bodies: activists

New working group set up to fast-track implementation of forest and panchayat laws, the move, modelled after a similar structure in Madhya Pradesh, is a way to institutionalise the role of Sangh Parivar-linked outfits, says civil society collective

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The constitution of a task force in Chhattisgarh to fast-track the implementation of laws such as the Forest Rights Act, 2006 and the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, has led to fresh controversy.

Forest and tribal rights activists and the Opposition Congress allege that this undermines statutory bodies set up under these laws and institutionalises the role of Sangh Parivar-linked outfits in the implementation of these laws in tribal-dominated areas.

The Chhattisgarh government, on May 6, notified the task force, comprising an 18-member apex body headed by the Chief Minister and a 12-member implementation body headed by the Chief Sec-



Tribal women on their way to collect forest produce in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, P.E. PHOTU

etary of the State. This task force is meant to map pro-grammatic areas for conservation of forest resource rights claims under the FRA, re-organise forest claims, design strategies for PESA-related matters, and assist district authorities with implementation of the FRA.

The Campaign for Fair Voice and Dignity (CFVD), a

structure is likely to be constituted in Odisha as well.

The CFSD has asserted that these task forces are a way to include representatives of Sangh Parivar-linked organisations such as the Jangal Suraksha Manch (JSM) and the Akhil Bharatiya Vanraj Kalyan Parishad (ABVKK) in the process for implementing these laws.

"Gold standard"

Interestingly, on May 24, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had addressed a public meeting organised by the ABVKK and the JSM in New Delhi and lauded Madhya Pradesh's "model of forest rights" as the "gold standard", adding that BJP-led state governments across the country are preparing to follow in its footsteps.

One of the key demands of the JSM and the ABVKK

leadership at this event was to ensure that Gram Sabhas under the PESA in time before the expiry of the said period of 180 days "in case they want to stay beyond the visa period, according to changes in the Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2020 notified by the Home Ministry. The new provision, notified on Monday, will replace the previous rule that required the registration within 14 days after the expiry of one hundred and eighty days of arrival in India."

The foreigners coming to India on a visa for 180 days or less will now have to register themselves "any time before the expiry of the said period of 180 days" in case they want to stay beyond the visa period, according to changes in the Immigration and Foreigners Rules, 2020 notified by the Home Ministry. The new provision, notified on Monday, will replace the previous rule that required the registration within 14 days after the expiry of one hundred and eighty days of arrival in India."

The foreigners on a visa for more than 180 days will not need to register "each stay shall not exceed 180 days" and wish to stay in India at a later stage, period on any single occasion to renew the visa in a calendar year shall have to register "anytime before the expiry of 180 days, the notification published in

Home Ministry changes foreigner registration rules

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

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the gazette said. The new rule has now made it clear that such registration will be granted "only in exceptional circumstances".

Case of newborns

Previous rules stipulated that upon the birth of a child, parents had to electronically intimate the registration officer within 30 days for availing visa services, including the grant of new visa and exit permission on the designated online portal or the mobile application.

According to the notification, this sub-rule shall not apply in cases where either of the parents is an Indian citizen and the parent wishes to retain the Indian citizenship of the child. It says that if the child acquires citizenship of a foreign country while in India at a later stage, either of the parents shall intimate the position to the registration officer within thirty days of acquiring the citizenship of the foreign country by the child.

Venezuela Acting President's five-day visit to India likely to prioritise energy cooperation

Rahul Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Around five months after Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro was abducted in a dramatic raid by the United States military, the country's Acting President Delcy Rodriguez will pay a visit to India from June 3 to 7, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced here on Tuesday.

"Her Excellency Ms. Delcy Rodriguez, the Acting President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela who was earlier scheduled to visit India to participate in the International Big Cats Alliance summit on June 1, which has been deferred, will pay a working visit from June 3 to 7," MEA spokesperson Ranshit Jaiswal said.

Ms. Rodriguez will be accompanied by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Economy and Finance, Science and Technology, Communica-



Delcy Rodriguez

tion and Information and Transportation.

During the visit, the Acting President will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Jaiswal said.

Ms. Rodriguez has visited India in the past and this will be her sixth trip to the country. She visited India earlier re-

presenting the Maduro government as Foreign Minister in 2018 and as Vice-President in 2018, 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Officials stated, that apart from New Delhi, Mr. Rodriguez who has been playing a balancing role between the United States and the hawks in her country, will visit spiritual centres associated with the ayyaz sai bhava movement and also interact with journalists and representatives of oil and gas majors.

India was once a major processor of Venezuelan heavy crude, importing more than 4,00,000 barrels per day at peak levels, until sweeping U.S. sanctions in 2019, which compliance risks heavily shut down purchases in 2020. New Delhi started purchasing crude oil from Venezuela after the sanctions were lifted following Mr. Maduro's capture.

(With PTI inputs)

Indigenous air-to-surface RudraM-II missile clears flight trials; Rajnath praises team

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

C.J. Surya Kant administers the oath of justice to Mohana as a judge of the Supreme Court, in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Five new judges join SC following increase in sanctioned strength

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday got five new judges, taking its strength to 37, with only one position remaining vacant.

The appointments come shortly after the Centre increased the court's sanctioned strength from 33 to 37 judges, excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI), through the Supreme Court (Dum-

ber of Judges Amendment Ordinance, 2020.

C.J. Surya Kant administered the oath of office to former Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Shiv Nago, former Chief Justice of Bombay High Court Shree Chandrasekhar, former Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court Sanjeev Sachdeva, former Chief Justice of High Court of J&K and Ladakh Arun P.S., and senior advocate V.S. Mohana.



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Indigenous air-to-surface RudraM-II missile clears flight trials; Rajnath praises team

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Tuesday said its indigenous air-to-surface missile RudraM-II has successfully cleared flight tests in the Indian desert.

The missile, which is designed to assist in India's efforts to strengthen its precision strike capabilities and advance self-reliance in defence technology.

According to the Home Ministry, the missile was test-fired from an air-launcher platform under extreme release conditions, with the trials designed to validate the performance including Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HMR), Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), and ITR.

The programme also re-



RudraM-II missile

ceived significant support from developer-cum-production partners, along with agencies such as Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Regional Centre for Military Applications, Air Weapons, Missile System Quality Assurance Agency, and a number of Indian defence institutes.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO and defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs), industry partners and all stakeholders.

Rabri Devi must vacate the bungalow, says Bihar CM

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Sarbananda Chowdhury on Tuesday said Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Rabri Devi would have to vacate the bungalow she occupies, amid an ongoing dispute over the government residence.

He asserted that there could not be a monarchy in which the mother, wanted one house, and the son desired another. "Some people think their house will not be vacated. It will definitely be vacated," the Chief Minister added.

On May 29, the Building Construction Department (BCD) issued a second notice to Ms. Devi to vacate the 10, Circular Road bungalow. On May 31, the BCD gave her a 15-day ultimatum to vacate. It has allotted 10, Harding Road bungalow to Ms. Devi, who has challenged the state government to evict her using police force.

Demography panel may study SIR exclusions, seeks details from govt.

Vidisha Mishra
PATNA

The demography panel led by a retired Supreme Court judge is likely to study the exclusions of names from the voters' list following the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise conducted in 13 States and Union Territories, as per a senior government official told The Hindu.

The High Level Committee on Demographic Changes arising from the SIR exercise by the Union Home Ministry on Tuesday held its first meeting on Tuesday.

The panel has asked for documents from several government departments, the official said. Its mandate is to study the demographic changes arising from SIR and other abnormal reasons and recommend an appropriate institutional mechanism for "population addition".

The SIR deleted around 6.5 crore names from elec-



In West Bengal, around 27 lakh people had challenged the removal of their names from the voter rolls.

toral rolls, around 1%, that number added as 56.88 crore in the 13 States and UTs. SIR is a document-based process that adds the burden of proof to the elector. The deleted names include the dead and those who have migrated.

Around 27 lakh out of 91 lakh people deleted from the voter rolls in West Bengal had challenged the removal of their names from the voter rolls.

On May 27, the Supreme Court, while upholding the SIR exercise in Bihar, said that the Election Commission should verify the authority to verify citizenship to the limited extent of determining inclusion or exclusion from the electoral roll. The last set of SIR was part of the 2003 electoral roll but were purged in the Bihar SIR on the grounds of being non-cit-

izens to the Centre for adjudication by a competent authority under the Citizenship Act.

The official said the exclusions of names and the circumstances under which they will be studied by the panel. The Ministry's notification said the panel will also recommend "a permanent operational system for the legal, fair and time-bound identification, de-duplication and verification of illegal immigrants already residing in the country."

The panel is headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Prakash Narayan, retired IAS officer Durga Shanker Mishra, retired IPS officer Rajendra Varma, and Shantilal Patel, who is part of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, are the members of the committee. The last secretary, Dr. Praveen Kumar, is a member secretary of the committee.

Congress is merely using Telangana as its 'ATM', says BJP chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday accused the Congress government in the State of using Telangana as its "ATM".

It can be said that Telangana has so far been used merely as an ATM by those in power... the hard-earned levy of the people of Telangana is today being used for the service of the Congress leadership," Mr. Gadkari said at an event organised on Telangana State Formation Day.

"significant role"

"The creation of Telangana, determined destiny of the people, the struggles and sacrifices of the people of Telangana played a significant and consistent role throughout the history of the State... the historical resolution supporting a separate State of



Nitin Gadkari

Telangana," he said. The resolution was not merely a political declaration, it was the party's commitment to the development and prosperity of the people of Telangana.

"Telangana, carved out of Andhra Pradesh, became a State on June 2, 2014.

"If we are to build the developed India of 2047 envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we need the commitment to make Telangana fully prosperous and comprehensively developed," he said.

Will continue to fight BJP till it is defeated, says Mamata

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a protest meeting in Kolkata on Tuesday, declaring that she would continue to fight the BJP till it is defeated. Mr. Banerjee led the West Bengal Assembly election to the BJP a month ago.

Ms. Banerjee said it was unprecedented that she was facing protests outside her home. She stressed that former Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee never had to deal with agitators at their homes after losing elections. The party of Banerjee, criticised by the BJP, wants to do of a heart attack. But it will not till it defeat you," the 71-year-old Trinamool Congress leader said.

Ms. Banerjee said that she would not abandon Trinamool Congress workers in their hour of trial.

Indigenous air-to-surface RudraM-II missile clears flight trials; Rajnath praises team

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) have successfully conducted flight-tests of the indigenous RudraM-II air-to-surface missile, marking a significant milestone in India's efforts to strengthen its precision strike capabilities and advance self-reliance in defence technology.

According to the Defence Ministry, the missile was test-fired from an airborne platform under extreme release conditions, with the trials designed to validate the performance of all critical subsystems and flight parameters.

Data captured through a network of tracking and monitoring instruments deployed by the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, confirmed the missile's performance and the



DRDO and the IAF flight-tests RudraM-II missile from an airborne platform on Tuesday. ANI/MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

success of the trials.

RudraM-II was developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, the nodal DRDO laboratory for the programme, in collaboration with other DRDO establishments, including Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL), Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), and ITR.

The programme also re-

ceived significant support from development-cum-production partners, along with agencies such as Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Regional Centre for Military Airworthiness, Missile System Quality Assurance Agency, and a number of Indian defence industries.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the DRDO, the IAF, defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs), industry partners and all stakeholders.

Aspect

Missile Name

Type

Developed By

User

Test Status

Launch Platform

Purpose

Significance

Developed At

Testing Location Monitoring

Defence Minister

Strategic Importance

Details

RudraM-II

Air-to-Surface Missile (ASM)

Defence Research and Development Organisation
(DRDO)

Indian Air Force (IAF)

Successfully cleared flight trials

Airborne fighter aircraft

Precision strikes on enemy ground targets

Enhances India's indigenous precision strike capability

Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad

Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha

Rajnath Singh

Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing

Aspect	Details
Missile Name	RudraM-II
Type	Air-to-Surface Missile (ASM)
Developed By	Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
User	Indian Air Force (IAF)
Test Status	Successfully cleared flight trials
Launch Platform	Airborne fighter aircraft
Purpose	Precision strikes on enemy ground targets
Significance	Enhances India's indigenous precision strike capability
Developed At	Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad
Testing Location	Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha
Monitoring	
Defence Minister	Rajnath Singh
Strategic Importance	Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing

Laboratory

Major Role

Research Centre Imarat (RCI)

Lead laboratory

Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL)

Missile technologies

High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL)

Propulsion and explosives

Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE)

Warhead systems

Integrated Test Range (ITR)

Testing and evaluation

Variant	Role
RudraM-I	Anti-Radiation Missile (Radar destruction)
RudraM-II	Air-to-Surface Precision Strike Missile
RudraM-III (under development)	Longer-range strike capability

How land pooling solves acquisition woes

Karnataka has recently announced the State's first land pooling scheme. The government is optimistic that the scheme will help with land acquisition and deliver the land needed for roads, infrastructure, and development activities. Other States, too, are either actively thinking of implementing land pooling schemes. While States such as Gujarat and Maharashtra have found success, much will depend on localised innovation and institutional flexibility.

Urban infrastructure projects in India have historically relied on land acquisitions. This process has become increasingly complex and financially burdensome, particularly after the enactment of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. The limitations of land acquisition are both structural and procedural. Even before the 2013 acquisition processes were time-consuming and often contentious. Post-2013, the inclusion of rehabilitation and resettlement provisions have further increased financial obligations, making large-scale acquisitions for urban infrastructure increasingly unviable. This has resulted in a growing gap between planned infrastructure and its implementation. Plans are often under-executed due to the inability to mobilise land.

While States have used different mechanisms, especially Town Planning (TP) schemes, have emerged as a viable alternative. In a land pooling model, landowners voluntarily contribute land for infrastructure development and receive a portion of the serviced land in return. This method reduces the need for compulsory acquisition and distributes development benefits among stakeholders.

The TP scheme, widely implemented in Gujarat and Maharashtra, is among the most successful land pooling models in India. Under this model, landowners voluntarily contribute about 25-40% of their land to provide infrastructures such as roads, parks, public amenities, and housing for economically weaker sections. The remaining land (60-75%) is returned to them as reconstituted plots that are better shaped, serviced, and more valuable. This method bypasses land assembly, infrastructure provisions, and cost recovery. A key strength of the TP scheme is its participatory, people-centric approach. It is also financially self-sustaining, as incremental charges are recovered during development rather than up front. Compared with land acquisitions, TP schemes reduce displacement, ensure equitable benefit-sharing, and enable faster urban development while preserving environmentally sensitive areas. Recognising its potential, the Government of India has implemented TP schemes since 2010.

Land pooling is, however, not a one-size-fits-all solution. In Karnataka, it was introduced almost 50 years back and formalised under the Gujarat Town Planning and Urban Development Act, 1976. And over time, in Gujarat, more than 1,000 sq. km across Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Vadodra, and Gandhinagar have been planned through TP schemes. But unlike Gujarat, Maharashtra failed to update its statutory provisions for enabling TP schemes over time. However, Pune and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Corporation have recently adopted this model again to provide infrastructure and serviced land in the city's peripheral areas.

While other States have tried to implement the model, it has not gained wide traction. In Chandigarh, even though the Chandigarh Metropolitan



Anil Kishore
An urban planner who has advised various state governments on town planning schemes

Development Authority Act, 1983 included provisions for the preparation and implementation of development schemes, it lacked clarity on critical aspects, such as the process for land appropriation and institutional roles. An equally significant challenge was the absence of digitised land records; land records in Chandigarh were maintained manually. Additionally, discrepancies were observed between revenue records and ground conditions.

To address this, rather than conducting time-consuming joint measurement surveys, the existing map was retained as is, and final plot allocations were based on the land areas specified in the revenue records. This significantly reduced the time required to prepare the scheme. Reducing landowner's contribution was another key decision to make the scheme more acceptable. Private landowners were asked to contribute only 12.5% of their land, compared with the usual 30-40%. This was primarily used for road infrastructures.

In Rajasthan, land pooling had already been recognised in the statutory provisions since 2016. However, they were handicapped by a lack of experience. Now, modifications are being made to the land-value calculations in the state to ensure that the crucial burden on landowners remains manageable. The government has also adopted a portion of the cost, reducing the scheme more equitable and attractive.

Issues that are just about to surface into land pooling, such as Tendli Nadi, Madhya Pradesh, and Delhi, also have to go beyond conventional approaches. The challenge is to first convince landholders, communities, the benefits, and contextualise the approaches. Particularly, factors such as legislation on land-pooling requirements, articulated land-contribution mechanisms, and equitable shared models will collectively determine the success of TP schemes.

Compared with land acquisitions, town planning schemes reduce displacement, ensure equitable benefit-sharing, and enable faster urban development

Need to strengthen existing health facilities

The famed public healthcare model of Kerala is under tremendous stress

STATE OF PLAY

K. S. Nishi

It is barely seven months in United Democratic Front (UDF) government in Kerala but the state has announced its intention of setting up two more medical colleges in the State, one in Thiruvananthapuram, which already has a medical college, and another one in Harappad, in Alappuzha.

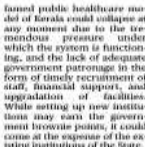
UDF leaders view the second medical college project in Thiruvananthapuram, which was originally launched during the tenure of Congress Chief Minister Changan Chandy, as a prestige issue as the subsequent governments of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) shot the plan down for political reasons. The Congress, which has been in power in the state after a decade, is bent on resurrecting its lost dream, which it believes would increase its public approval and political stature in the capital city, K. Bharadwajan, the State Health Minister, has made it clear that nothing could prevent the UDF government from creating two more medical colleges in the state to ensure that the backlog of students which were stranded there is little scope for expanding the facilities at the existing Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha colleges. The UDF is keen to revive the idea of converting existing hospitals into tertiary care and tertiary care centres. They say, interestingly, the second medical college in Thiruvananthapuram, which would be set up by developing the General Hospital, is located in the Vattiyookkavu Assembly constituency, which is represented by M. Bhaskaradasan, similarly, Harappad, the seat of the proposed second med-



ical college is represented by Home Minister Ramnath Changan Chandy. The second-in-command in the State cabinet.

Like in Thiruvananthapuram, the proposed medical college in Harappad could well be considered as the second such institution in the coastal district of Alappuzha, as the first one is functioning at Vandanam, located about an hour away from the constituency of the Home Minister.

Desperate conditions Kerala, along with other States, had launched a campaign of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare a few years ago to have new medical colleges in all its districts. It appears that nothing could prevent the UDF government from creating two more medical colleges in the state to ensure that the backlog of students which were stranded there is little scope for expanding the facilities at the existing Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha colleges. The UDF is keen to revive the idea of converting existing hospitals into tertiary care and tertiary care centres. They say, interestingly, the second medical college in Thiruvananthapuram, which would be set up by developing the General Hospital, is located in the Vattiyookkavu Assembly constituency, which is represented by M. Bhaskaradasan, similarly, Harappad, the seat of the proposed second med-



ical college is represented by Home Minister Ramnath Changan Chandy. The second-in-command in the State cabinet.

Like in Thiruvananthapuram, the proposed medical college in Harappad could well be considered as the second such institution in the coastal district of Alappuzha, as the first one is functioning at Vandanam, located about an hour away from the constituency of the Home Minister.

Desperate conditions Kerala, along with other States, had launched a campaign of the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare a few years ago to have new medical colleges in all its districts. It appears that nothing could prevent the UDF government from creating two more medical colleges in the state to ensure that the backlog of students which were stranded there is little scope for expanding the facilities at the existing Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha colleges. The UDF is keen to revive the idea of converting existing hospitals into tertiary care and tertiary care centres. They say, interestingly, the second medical college in Thiruvananthapuram, which would be set up by developing the General Hospital, is located in the Vattiyookkavu Assembly constituency, which is represented by M. Bhaskaradasan, similarly, Harappad, the seat of the proposed second med-

famed public healthcare model of Kerala could collapse at any moment due to the tremendous pressure under which the system is functioning, and the lack of adequate government patronage in the form of timely recruitment of staff, financial support, and upgradation of facilities. While setting up new institutions may ease the government's pressure, it could come at the expense of the existing institutions of the State.

It is also time for the State government to ponder why the younger generation of doctors are turning away from medical colleges. Besides the comparatively poor pay, lack of modern research and medical facilities, and the uncertainties of transfers and political interventions in the service, might be acting as a deterrent for such youngsters.

The medical and the non-medical staff are being overworked in these hospitals, which has hit the efficiency and quality of the services offered to the general public. During the second term of the LDF government, it was the Health Ministry that came under severe public criticism for its handling of COVID-19. Doctors taking to social media to vent out their despair regarding the absence of essential facilities including surgical materials for performing critical surgeries, shortage of medicines, nursing staff, and a large number of patients, some of the medical colleges in the less developed regions of the State need support desperately.

The government's move to have one more medical college in the two districts seems to be a case of misplaced priorities with respect to public health. Several public health experts have been sounding the alarm that the

The finish line is still far for Indian sprinting

Gurindervir Singh's national record, 10.09s, ranks 52/110 on the all-time list, only 39 countries have broken the 10-second barrier

DATA POINT

Devyanshi Bhatnagar

By the time the men's 100m final began at the Fedex Indian Cup in Ranchi on May 23, 2020, India's national record had already changed hands twice within that tournament — a first in Indian sprinting. A day earlier, Gurindervir Singh had lowered the national record to 10.17 seconds in the first semifinal. Minutes later, Animesh Kumar reclaimed it with 10.18 seconds in the second semifinal. Gurindervir seized the opportunity the final offered. His time of 10.09 seconds not only restored the record to its name but also made him the first Indian to break the 10-second barrier.

The achievement marked the latest chapter in a heroic story of transforming Indian sprinting. Anil Kumar's national record of 10.21 seconds had remained unbeaten since 2000. By clocking 10.18 seconds, Animesh not only broke that in July 2020, but became the first Indian to cross the 10.2-second barrier.

While it took 20 years for Indian men's sprinting to breach the 10.2-second barrier, it has seen a dramatic leap forward since then. With Gurindervir's 10.09 seconds, followed by Animesh's 10.15 and 10.18 seconds, and Manikanta Hobildar's 10.19 seconds, four of the five fastest 100m sprints by Indian men have been recorded in the last two seasons, but where does India's fastest-ever sprinter stand in the global arena?

An analysis of World Athletics' all-time men's 100m list shows both the significance of Gurindervir's breakthrough and how far India remains from sprinting's elite. On the global all-time list, Gurindervir's record ranks only 52/110.

At the very top, the sprint remains remarkably concentrated. Ten of the top 11 performers belong to sprinters from just two countries — Jamaica and the U.S.

Jamaika's Usain Bolt holds the world record at 9.58 seconds. American Tyson Gay shares the second fastest time in history at 9.69 seconds. The only exception is Kenya's Fredrick Koranyo, whose 9.77-second run shares the 10th place (Chart 1).

The sub-10-second barrier remains one of athletics' most exclusive benchmarks. More than half a century after electronic timing became the standard in 1968, only 39 countries have produced athletes with 100m runs recorded under 10 seconds (Chart 2).

Martin Owens, Animesh's coach, told *The Hindu* that breaking that barrier requires far more than raw speed. "You need natural talent. You need good facilities. You need good recovery and medical backup. You need an intelligent programme," Mr. Owens said, adding that coaching from an early age, financial support and international exposure are also crucial.

When every country's fastest man ever is compared, India sits at around 65th among 162 nations. Several nations with populations under 1.5 crore rank ahead of India, including Trinidad and Tobago, Botswana and Namibia.

It is notable that the fastest sprint performances are usually recorded with a helping breeze. An analysis of the best performances from these 162 nations shows that 130 were achieved with tailwinds between 0.1 and 2 metres per second, while only 17 came while facing headwinds (Chart 3). Even slight wind assistance matters in an event decided by hundredths of a second.

Four of India's top five performances, including Gurindervir's, were recorded with tailwinds. However, his national record came with a relatively modest breeze of 0.3 metres per second, indicating scope for faster performances under more favourable conditions.

Gurindervir, after setting the new record, said the medals that the world would soon see Indians running below 10 seconds.

Off and running

The data for the charts were sourced from World Athletics, the international governing body for the sport of athletics

TABLE 1: The top five Indian men's 100m performances

Rank	Name	Time (s)	Wind (m/s)	Date
1	Gurindervir Singh	10.09	0.3	May 23, 2020
2	Animesh Kumar	10.15	0.3	May 22, 2020
3	Animesh Kumar	10.18	0.6	September 1, 2020
4	Arvind Kumar	10.21	0.2	July 5, 2000
5	Samir Das	10.52	0.0	August 10, 1973

CHART 1: The all-time top 100 men's 100m performances

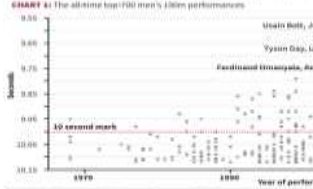
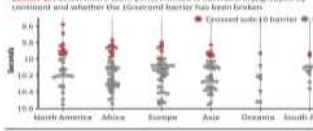


CHART 2: Top five men's 100m performances of each country, grouped by wind direction



Strong tailwinds helped Gurindervir Singh beat the best of the best, which used "back wind" of 0.3 m/s to clock 10.09s

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Cyclone of India

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 3, 1970

Cyclone brings heavy rain to Bombay

Bombay, June 3: Bombay and suburbs were lashed by heavy rain and gusty winds since the early hours of this morning. A spokesman of the Colaba Observatory told THE HINDU that the rains were due to the influence of the cyclone centre, 180 km in the Arabian Sea west of Bombay.

The rain abated this afternoon and this came as a relief to thousands of commuters anxious to reach home. Between 2 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. today Colaba recorded 35.2 mm of rainfall. Santacruz 2.8 mm and Worli 18 mm — POC.

Rainfall reports: The movement of ships in and out of Bombay harbour was affected and all communications slightly disrupted following heavy rain. The train started running behind schedule following the snapping of overhead cables at a point near Andheri. There was no disruption of traffic on Central Railway. The Colaba Observatory in a late night bulletin said "very high to phenomenal" seas were likely and a storm surge six metres above the normal astronomical tide might also prevail. The storm was likely to move in a north-northeast direction along the South Gujarat coast.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 3, 1920

League Council on opium

Geneva, June 2: "Britain is poisoning the world with his drugs," exclaimed Chu, the Chinese representative on the League's Advisory Committee on Opium.

Sir Malcolm Delevingne (Britain) had complained that 200 kilograms of morphine and heroin had been shipped to Shanghai from Ceylon, the Chinese Government certifying that those drugs were intended for medical purposes in Shanghai hospitals, whereas they were destined for other uses and, despite Britain's representations to this regard to the Chinese Government, the consignment had been released. This brought forth Chu's exclamation above mentioned. He protested emphatically against the alleged attack on his Government and asked that the anti-British feeling in China was increasing daily. M. Bourgeois (France), presiding, cut the lively incident short and announced tea interval.

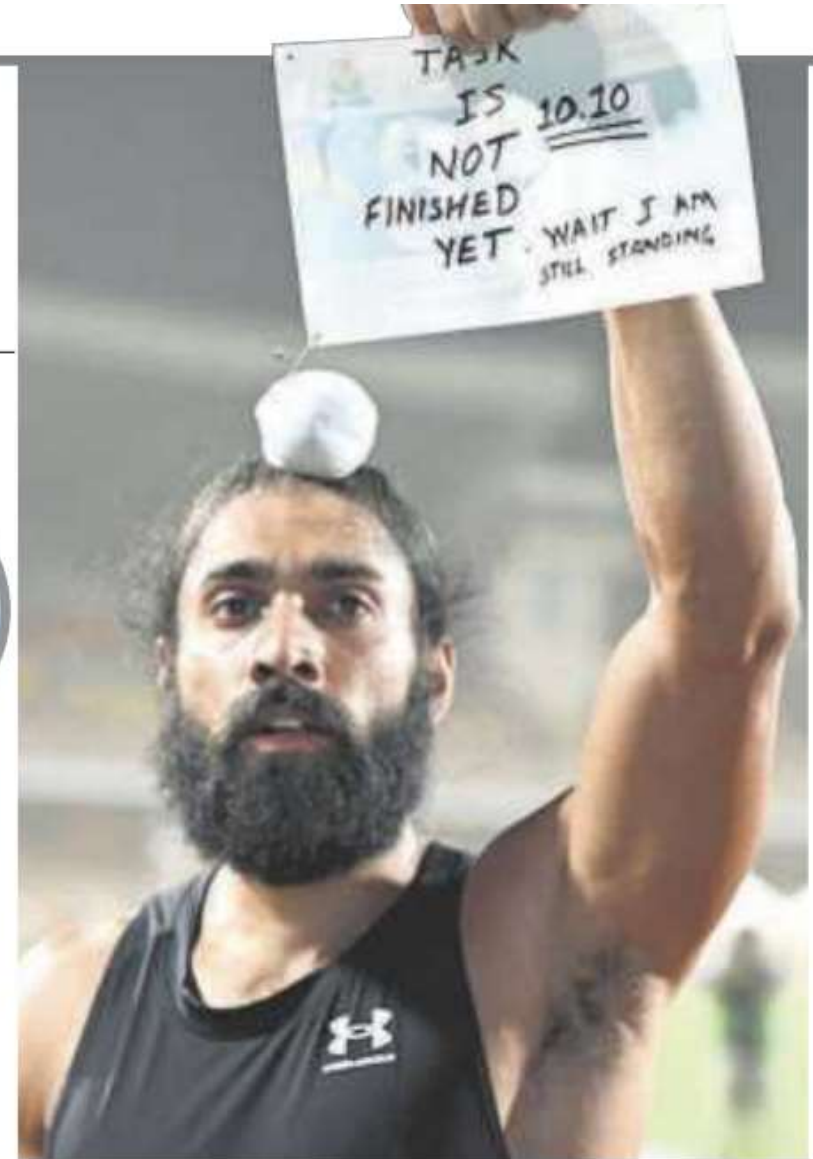
Off and running

The data for the charts were sourced from World Athletics, the international governing body for the sport of athletics

TABLE 1: The top five Indian men's 100m performances



India Rank	World Rank	Competitor	Time (in seconds)	Wind (in m/s)	Date of performance
1	524	Gurindervir Singh	10.09	0.3	May 23, 2026
2	878	Animesh Kujur	10.15	0.3	May 22, 2026
3	1180	Manikanta Hoblidhar	10.19	-0.6	September 28, 2025
4	1362	Anil Kumar	10.21	2	July 5, 2000
5	1480	Tamilarasu Senthilkumar	10.22	0.2	August 20, 2025



During his celebrations, Gurindervir Singh held up the back of his bib, which said, "Task is not finished yet." RITU RAJ KONWAR

CHART 1: The all-time top-700 men's 100m performances

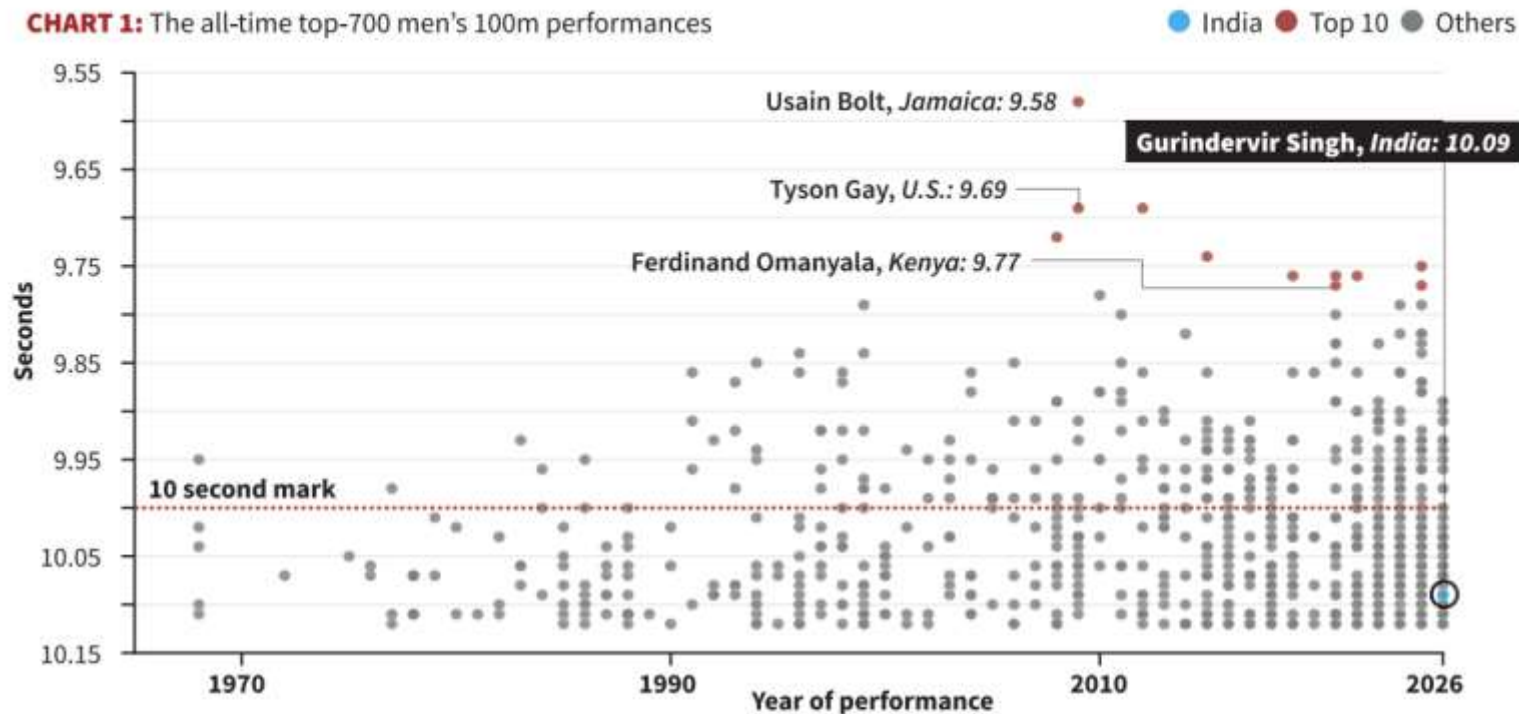


CHART 2: Fastest men's 100m performances of each country, grouped by continent and whether the 10-second barrier has been broken

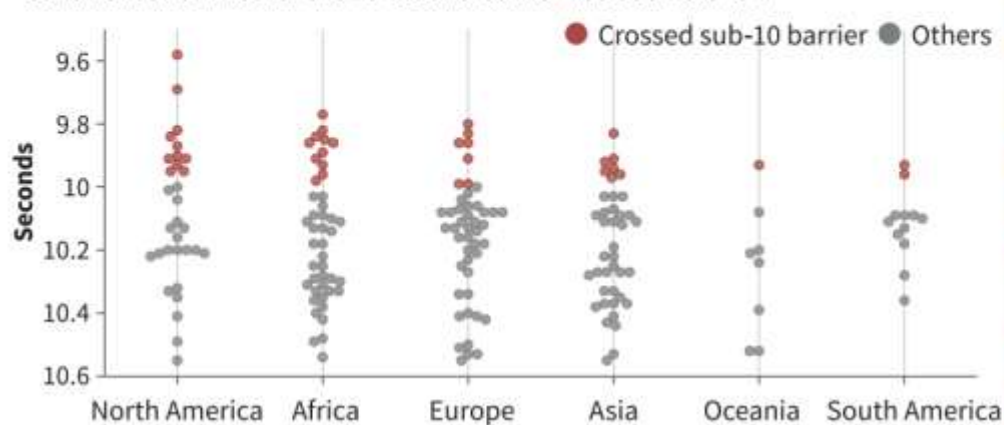
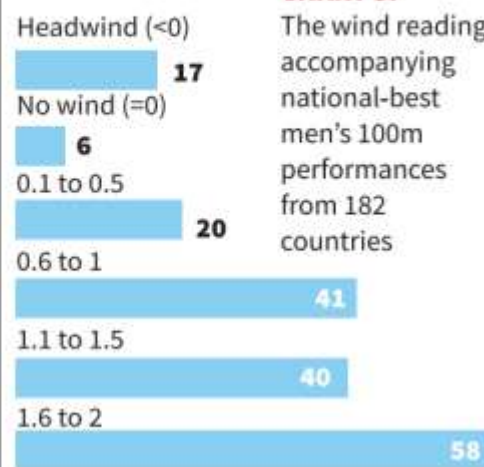


CHART 3:

The wind readings accompanying national-best men's 100m performances from 182 countries



IN BRIEF



Adani group companies post record \$16-billion capex

Adani group companies reported a record capital expenditure of \$1.83 billion over a three-month period in the all-time high EBITDA of \$94,634 crore (\$10 billion) in the 2025-26 fiscal year, underlining an accelerating infrastructure expansion cycle while maintaining leverage below its stated target. The investment programme lifted the portfolio's gross asset base to \$7.65 lakh crore, with nearly 80% of spending directed towards energy, utilities and logistics businesses.

Oyo-parent Prism gets SEBI nod to launch ₹6,650-cr IPO

Prism, the parent firm of global travel tech unicorn Oyo, has secured clearance from market regulator SEBI to raise ₹6,650 crore through its initial public offering (IPO), people familiar with the development said on Tuesday. The proposed public offering is expected to value the company at ₹7.8 billion, they added. Oyo's parent entity Prism filed the preliminary IPO paper with SEBI in December 2025 through the confidential route.

India slips to seventh in m-cap rankings; South Korea ahead

India's equity markets slipped to seventh place in terms of market capitalisation on Tuesday, heavy foreign selling, weak earnings growth and muted optimism among investors. South Korea's stock market managed to overtake it. South Korean stocks have rallied this year, driven by AI chipmakers, which have lifted the combined value of companies listed on KOSPI, KOSDAQ and KOSDAQ to \$4.21 trillion, surpassing the \$4.45 trillion value of firms on NYSE.

LPG consumption fell 19% in May; petrol, diesel increased

Consumption of petrol increased 2.8%, while that of diesel rose less than 1%, according to provisional govt. data; fall in LPG consumption attributed to increase in interim booking period

Saptaswaro Ghosh
NEW DELHI

In the third full month of the West Asia conflict, India's consumption of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) declined more than 19% in May this year in comparison to the same period last year, according to provisional government data.

Meanwhile, consumption of petrol increased 2.8% during the reported period, while that of diesel rose less than 1%.

The provisional data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) also pointed to a fall in consumption of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), also having dipped about 0.6% during the same period.

India consumed about 2.12 million metric tonnes (MMT) of LPG in May this year, which is about 18.2% less than 2.52 MMT it consumed in the same month last year, according to the provisional data.

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Shady gas: There has been no major structural shift in LPG usage, although PGC connections have been increasing. Saptaswaro Ghosh

Mr. Vaidhi also pointed to an additional factor behind the recovery in LPG supply maintenance orders - allocating 70% of commercial LPG to the automotive sector to ease pressure on LPG. Further, according to the fall in consumption is to do with the interim booking period being increased from 20 to 25 days in urban areas and up to 48 days in rural areas.

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Policy (CSTEP), the decline is primarily to do with supply disruptions.

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Govt. to replace WPI with Producer Price Index, new series from June 15

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre will phase out the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) over the next five years while simultaneously introducing a more detailed Producer Price Index (PPI), covering output, input and services prices, in a bid to offer a more realistic assessment of inflationary trends in the economy.

Speaking with reporters, Praveen Malik, Principal Economic Adviser to the Government and Ministry of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will release the revised series of WPI with base year 2022-23 on June 15, which would replace the existing series with base year 2014-15.

In addition, the department would release a new series of PPI from June 15. It will have three indices - Output PPI, Input PPI and Services PPI.

Initially, services PPI will have seven services - Banking, Securities Transaction, Insurance, Management of Pension Funds, Railways, Air (Passenger) and Telecom.

"Considering the wide usage of WPI in price escalation clauses, this index will be retained for five years from the date of release of the revised series along with PPI and will be discontinued thereafter," the ministry said in a statement.

(WPI inputs from PTI)

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(WPI inputs from PTI)

ED conducts searches at Vedanta premises

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (DE) has initiated a foreign exchange "violation" investigation against global mining conglomerate Vedanta. The company remains committed to compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

It is understood that the raids were launched against the business houses, presided by Intelligence and Agency, on Tuesday. "We are extending full cooperation to the authorities and are providing all the necessary information," the company remains committed to compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

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Extreme heat tests India's record milk production

NEWS ANALYSIS

Hindustan
NEW DELHI

During a summer of extreme heat with temperatures topping 40 degrees Celsius last year, much like northern India is currently experiencing, dairy farmer Neelam Bhandari watched one of his cows deliver a calf months early.

The newborn was tiny and almost hairless. People said it would not survive, but Bhandari's belief fed it milk until it slowly recovered.

Scientists say such pre-



Heat stress reduces feed intake and deters cows' energy.

mature births are part of a wider pattern of increasingly intense summers likely to climate change. Bhandari's small farm of six cows near Delhi is one of the world's biggest dairy

producer responsible for almost a quarter of global supply where most milk comes from farms with between 2-8 animals.

8% of GDP Dairy sector accounts for about 5% of India's GDP and supports more than 60 million farmers, rising incomes and population level mean demand for dairy is set to grow, the government estimates it could add nearly double by 2030.

But extreme heat means cows eat less, make less milk, struggle to conceive and produce fewer calves. Typical of millions in India, while farmers spend more

trying to keep animals cool and fertile. "Milk production falls by nearly 30% during extreme heat," Bhandari said.

Record output India's milk production reached a record 230 million tonnes in the 2023-24 fiscal year, up nearly 6% in a decade, according to government data.

But, researchers, dairy experts and farmers say rising heat is quietly eroding the vulnerabilities of that record. Scientists at the National Dairy Research Institute said heat stress reduces feed intake and diverts cows' energy

away from milk production and reproduction. Bhandari spent some ₹2 lakh modifying cattle sheds with tarpaulin covers and

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Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Centre will phase out the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) over the next five years while simultaneously introducing a more detailed Producer Price Index (PPI), covering output, input and services prices, in a bid to offer a more realistic assessment of inflationary trends in the economy.

Speaking with reporters, Praveen Mahto, Principal Economic Adviser in the Commerce and Industry Ministry, said that the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will release the revised series of WPI with new base year 2022-23 on June 15, which would replace the existing series with base year 2011-12.

In addition, the department would release a new series of PPI from June 15. It will have three indices – Output PPI, Input PPI and Services PPI.

Initially, services PPI will have seven services – Banking, Securities Transaction, Insurance, Management of Pension Funds, Railways, Air (Passenger), and Telecom.

“Considering the wide usage of WPI in price escalation clauses, this index will be released for five years from the date of release of the revised series along with PPI and will be discontinued thereafter,” the ministry said in a statement. The five-year period

DPIIT will release a new series with three indices – Output PPI, Input PPI, Services PPI

would give users sufficient time to switch from WPI to PPI. Mr. Mahto said that after five years, the PPI is expected to replace WPI.

The transition from WPI to PPI aligns with global best practices adopted by advanced economies and the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The availability of both Output PPI and Input PPI provides a better understanding of the price movements of output items vis-à-vis the input items used in an industry.

It also explains how inflation experienced by producers of input items is passed through to the output they produce.

Mr. Mahto said that the Service PPIs for seven services have been compiled in the first phase based on the availability of data from administrative sources/agencies. More services are planned to be added to the PPI basket of services in subsequent phases, subject to data availability.

The DPIIT informed that WPI and Output PPI are being compiled on a monthly basis and will be available for May 2026 (Provisional) along with the back series from April 2023 to April 2026 on June 15.

Aspect	Details
Announcement	Government to gradually replace WPI with PPI
Implementing Agency	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
Release Date of New Series	15 June
New Base Year	2022–23
Existing Base Year (WPI)	2011–12
Transition Period	5 years
New Indices Introduced	Output PPI, Input PPI, Services PPI
Objective	Better measurement of inflation across goods and services
International Alignment	Based on IMF recommendations and global best practices

Feature	WPI (Wholesale Price Index)	PPI (Producer Price Index)
Measures	Wholesale prices of goods	Prices received by producers
Coverage	Mainly goods	Goods + Services
Input Costs	Not included	Included
Services Sector	Excluded	Included
Inflation Analysis	Limited	More comprehensive
Global Usage	Declining	Widely used in advanced economies
Policy Relevance	Moderate	Higher

Three New PPI Indices

Index	Meaning
Output PPI	Prices received by producers for final output
Input PPI	Prices paid by producers for raw materials and inputs
Services PPI	Price changes in service sector activities

Initial Services Included in Services PPI

Sector

Banking

Securities Transactions

Insurance

Pension Fund Management

Railways

Air Passenger Services

Telecommunications

Why PPI is Better?

Advantage	Explanation
Tracks Cost Pressures	Measures changes in production costs
Covers Services	Reflects modern service-driven economy
Input-Output Linkage	Shows how input cost increases affect final prices
Better Inflation Analysis	Captures inflation at producer level before reaching consumers
Global Comparability	Aligns India with international standards

WPI and PPI During Transition

Period	Status
Next 5 Years	WPI and PPI both released
After 5 Years	WPI likely discontinued
Purpose	Allows comparison and smooth transition

India slips to seventh in m-cap rankings; South Korea ahead

India's equity markets slipped to seventh place in terms of market capitalisation on Tuesday as heavy foreign selling, weak earnings growth and limited exposure to AI-linked stocks allowed South Korea's chip-heavy market to overtake it. South Korean stocks have rallied this year, driven by AI chipmakers, which have lifted the combined value of companies listed on KOSPI, KOSDAQ and KONEX to \$5.01 trillion, surpassing the \$4.85 trillion value of firms on NSE. REUTERS

HOW THEY STACK UP

(\$ trillion)	Dec 31, 2025	June 1, 2026	YTD % change
US	72.14	79.47	10.16
China	13.40	15.09	12.61
Japan	7.68	8.63	12.37
Hong Kong	7.26	7.24	-0.19
Taiwan	3.27	5.15	57.71
South Korea	2.68	5.04	87.87
India	5.29	4.84	-8.40
Canada	4.22	4.53	7.36
UK	3.88	3.94	1.37
France	3.60	3.45	-4.00



Source:
Bloomberg

Don't take that puff: 'Herbal' cigarettes are not healthy alternatives to tobacco

Ritu Sharma

Ahmedabad, June 2

IN RECENT years, several supposedly "healthy" alternatives to cigarettes have been growing in popularity. Among these products are tobacco-free "herbal" cigarettes that market themselves as "safer", "natural" alternatives that can help you with everything from depression to anxiety to stress.

At first sight, this safety claim would appear to make sense. After all, the most harmful part of conventional cigarettes is the nicotine in its tobacco. So wouldn't a product made with herbal ingredients be less harmful? A recent study, however, has busted the claim that tobacco-free means risk-free.

Here's a look at what herbal cigarettes are, what the study found about their claims of safety, and how they are falling through the regulatory cracks in India.

What are herbal cigarettes?

Herbal cigarettes, unlike regular ones, do not use tobacco as fillers. They instead

use herbs and dried flowers — such as clove, basil, mint and cinnamon — that impart different flavours.

And while regular cigarettes use paper as wrappers, herbal cigarettes use *tendu* (ebony) leaves — just like *bidis*, India's most widely consumed smoking product. Herbal cigarettes are generally longer than a *bidi* but shorter and thinner than a cigar.

What did the study find?

The study, titled "The lure of 'Healthier Smoke': Comparative physical, chemical, and oxidative potential characterization of emissions from herbal and tobacco cigarettes", was published on May 17 in the *Journal of Hazardous Materials*, a peer-reviewed international journal.

Alok Kumar Thakur, the study's lead author who is currently pursuing post-doctoral research on air quality emissions at Colorado State University, told *The Indian Express* that several of the herbal cigarettes they tested were marketed with claims such as relieving cough, improving sleep

or easing anxiety. However, studies on their emissions and toxicological impacts have been limited, he pointed out.

This study compared emissions from two of India's highest selling tobacco brands and four popular herbal varieties containing combinations of basil, clove, cinnamon, mint, green tea, water lily and chamomile.

It found that emissions from herbal cigarettes were comparable to or exceeded those from tobacco cigarettes on nearly every metric measured. "That finding is important because many consumers associate nicotine-free products with reduced harm," said co-author Vishal Verma, an Associate Professor of Environmental Engineering in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

How did the study measure impact?

The researchers combusted each cigarette inside a sealed, two-chamber rig designed to replicate human inhalation. They then funnelled these emissions into instru-

ments and collected samples, whose oxidative potential they quantified as a proxy for toxicity. Oxidative potential refers to the capacity of a product to generate reactive oxygen species. These are aggressive molecules that drive inflammation, lung tissue remodelling and the vascular changes behind heart disease.

The particulate matter from herbal cigarettes recorded significantly higher oxidative potential than that from tobacco cigarettes. Leaf-wrapped herbal variants turned out to be the most hazardous. Their oxidative potential was roughly 49% higher than paper-wrapped versions.

Chemical analysis also revealed that one herbal cigarette, filled with basil, had the highest lead concentration, despite being marketed as "chemical-free with 100% natural filler for a healthy lifestyle".

The researchers found that herbal smoke emitted sub-500-nanometer particles — less than one-hundredth the width of a human hair — at approximately 20% higher concentrations in herbal smoke

than in tobacco smoke. These fine particles are increasingly linked to cardiovascular and respiratory disease.

Aside from the health impact, the study also found that the combustion produces pollutants such as particulate matter, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons.

Dr Harshal Ramesh Salve, Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS Delhi, told *The Indian Express* that herbal cigarettes are as hazardous to health as conventional ones, especially for youngsters who are their major targets. "From a public health aspect, all sorts of cigarettes are harmful. While tobacco cigarettes always have nicotine content, the other forms of e-cigarettes or herbal cigarettes, which are promoted as an alternative to traditional cigarettes, might develop carbon particles which are equally harmful," he said.

The regulatory gaps

Owing to the limited scientific evidence on long-term health impacts, herbal cigarettes often fall into regulatory grey areas.

India's Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003, regulates tobacco products through warning labels, advertising restrictions and public smoking rules. But products marketed as tobacco-free often fall outside these frameworks. Comparable regulatory gaps exist in other countries.

The researchers emphasised that the study does not make direct epidemiological claims about disease outcomes. Instead, it focuses on measurable properties of the emitted smoke particles and their potential biological reactivity.

"Combustion, fine particles, soot, trace metals, and the wrapper around them all matter more than what is written on the box," said co-author P S Ganesh Subramanian, who is a postdoctoral researcher at Washington University in St Louis.

"With the herbal cigarette category potentially attracting younger consumers and first-time smokers using wellness-oriented language, there is an urgent need to develop frameworks to regulate the marketing of tobacco alternatives," the study urged.

Aspect	Herbal Cigarettes	Tobacco Cigarettes	Key Finding
Main Ingredient	Herbs, dried flowers, basil, mint, clove, cinnamon, chamomile, etc.	Tobacco leaves containing nicotine	Herbal cigarettes are nicotine-free but not risk-free
Nicotine	Usually absent	Present	Lack of nicotine does not make herbal cigarettes safe
Wrapper	Often tendu leaves (similar to bidi)	Paper wrapper	Leaf-wrapped herbal variants were found more harmful
Marketing Claims	Natural, stress relief, better sleep, anxiety reduction	Generally no such wellness claims	Scientific evidence for these claims is limited
Smoke Emissions	Comparable or higher	High	Herbal smoke often equals or exceeds tobacco smoke toxicity
Fine Particulate Matter	About 20% higher	Lower than herbal in study	Increases respiratory and cardiovascular risks
Oxidative Potential	Up to 49% higher in leaf-wrapped varieties	Lower	Higher inflammation-causing capacity
Heavy Metals	Lead detected in some samples	Present in varying levels	One herbal sample had highest lead concentration

Oxidative Potential	Up to 49% higher in leaf-wrapped varieties	Lower	Higher inflammation-causing capacity
Heavy Metals	Lead detected in some samples	Present in varying levels	One herbal sample had highest lead concentration
Carbon Monoxide	Produced during combustion	Produced during combustion	Both are harmful
Hydrocarbons	Present	Present	Cancer-causing potential
Cardiovascular Risk	Significant	Significant	Similar health concerns
Respiratory Disease Risk	Significant	Significant	No clear safety advantage
Public Health Impact	Harmful	Harmful	"Smoke is smoke" principle

Finding

Study Title

Published In

Researchers Compared

Herbs Examined

Main Conclusion

Most Hazardous Variant

Highest Lead Content

Particle Size

Health Concern

Details

"The Lure of Healthier Smoke"

Journal of Hazardous Materials (May 2026)

2 leading tobacco brands and 4 herbal cigarette varieties

Basil, Clove, Cinnamon, Mint, Green Tea, Water Lily, Chamomile

Herbal cigarettes are not safer than tobacco cigarettes

Leaf-wrapped herbal cigarettes

Basil-filled herbal cigarette

Less than 500 nanometers (extremely small)

Particles penetrate deep into lungs and bloodstream



Aspect

Status

Main Law

Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003

Covers Tobacco Products

Yes

Covers Herbal Cigarettes

Often fall into grey areas

Warning Labels

Mandatory for tobacco products

Advertising Restrictions


Strong for tobacco

Herbal Product Regulation

Comparatively weaker

Concern

Wellness-oriented marketing may attract youth



Topic	Fact
WHO Full Form	World Health Organization
Largest Cause of Preventable Death Globally	Tobacco use
Tobacco-related Deaths Worldwide	Around 8 million annually
Active Smoking Deaths	~7 million annually
Passive Smoking Deaths	~1.2 million annually
Main Harmful Tobacco Chemicals	Nicotine, Tar, Carbon Monoxide
PM2.5	Particles smaller than 2.5 micrometers
ROS	Reactive Oxygen Species
Bidi Production	India is one of the world's largest bidi producers
Tendu Leaves	Widely used in bidi manufacturing

Word of the day

Quibble:

an evasion of the point of an argument by raising irrelevant distinctions or objections

Synonyms: complain, fuss, whine

Usage: *She quibbled over every detail of the plan.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/quibble

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kwɪbəl/

Word of the day

Renegade:

someone who rebels and becomes an outlaw

Synonyms: apostate, deserter

Usage: *The renegade legislator voted against the party whip.*

Pronunciation:

newsth.live/zZ86aY/renegade

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈrɛ.nəˌɡeɪd/

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