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INSIDE



CJP will work as pressure group for now: Dipke

MUMBAI The Cishmash Jagan Party (CJP) on Wednesday ruled out a political debut for now and announced it will extend support for the students protesting against examination issues in Jharkhand. **A meet**

Fear will not deter duty to people: Hasina

NEW DELHI Bangladesh's deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday addressed a press conference virtually here and said "fear" and "concerns of personal safety" will not prevent her from returning home. **A meet**

Rijiju meets Rahul to end Parliament logjam

No plan to hold Special Session to push through women's quota, delimitation Bills, says Minister

The LoP says that a statement by Shah on police action and 'donations theft' are non-negotiable

The Opposition has also warned that the Centre cannot bring the FCRA Bill in its present form

Rahul Gandhi
NEW DELHI

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju met Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday in an effort to break the deadlock in Parliament, with the two sides discussing the proposed delimitation Bill and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment (FCRA) Bill, 2020. Amid speculation that the government could convene a three-day session after Independence Day to push through the women's reservation Bill and the delimitation Bill, Mr. Rijiju told The Hindu that "there is no such proposal".

Sources said Mr. Rijiju did not raise any proposal to extend the ongoing Monsoon Session, nor were a Special Session during the nearly 80-minute meeting with Mr. Gandhi.

Instead, he sought to know the Congress's stand on the legislation, they said.

"Non-negotiable"

According to sources, Mr. Gandhi conveyed to Mr. Rijiju that a statement by Home Minister Amit Shah on the police action against students who protested against the NEET paper leak and a discussion on the alleged theft of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya were non-negotiable if the House was to function.

The meeting, held in Mr. Gandhi's Parliament office, was attended by Congress general secretary (organising) K.C. Venugopal, deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi and sources said Mr. Rijiju also reiterated their opposition to any extension of the session to carry out the delimitation exercise, sources added.



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, and others protest against the Centre at the Parliament complex on Wednesday. (P)

The government's outreach came on a day when the Opposition MPs held a symbolic march within the Parliament complex, questioning Mr. Shah's continued absence from the House.

Both Houses witnessed

repeated disruptions before being adjourned for the day. The Wednesday meeting was the second between Mr. Rijiju and Mr. Gandhi in the past 10 days. The Minister had spoken to the Congress leader over

the telephone on Tuesday night too as part of the government's efforts to secure the Opposition's cooperation for the re-convening of the Monsoon Session. Sources said Mr. Shah was expected to reply to

the debate when the FCRA Bill comes up for discussion and passage. "The LoP has made it very clear that they cannot bring the FCRA Bill in its form," Mr. Venugopal told reporters after the meeting.

"Now you see, the mood of Narendra Modi will change within a minute. If the Indian Opposition says something, he will not flinch, but this kind of shift is coming from foreign country, they will move," he added, when asked about U.S. Congressman Riley M. Moore's social media post criticising the FCRA Bill.

Contentious Bill

The Bill is considered contentious because it empowers a government-appointed authority to take over foreign-funded assets of organisations whose registration under the FCRA ceases, a provision that the Opposition says goes the

Centre sweeping powers over NGOs and religious institutions.

However, there was no clarity on whether the delimitation Bill would be introduced during the current session, which is scheduled to conclude on August 13. Sources also ruled out, for now, the possibility of a Special Session immediately after Independence Day.

Since the Monsoon Session began on July 20, the Lok Sabha has failed to transact Question Hour even once because of repeated disruptions. Five Bills have been passed without debate as the Opposition has pressed for discussions on the NEET paper leak, the police action against protesting students and the alleged theft of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

RELATED REPORTS ON PAGE 8

Monsoon rhythm



Children play on a waterlogged street in New Delhi after heavy rain left several roads submerged on Wednesday, disrupting movement in different parts of the city. The India Meteorological Department has forecast moderate rain on Thursday. **INDIAN EXPRESS**

Meta apologises for 'errors in operating platform' as govt. summons senior official

Nistala Reddy
ACCUSED
NEW DELHI

Meta chief executive officer Mark Zuckerberg conveyed his "apologies" for child sex abuse material (CSAM), deepfake content, and "errors in operating the platform", government sources said, after Jai K. Kaplan, the technology giant's global head of public policy, met with officials from the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on Wednesday.

"Meta will be called again," the sources said, indicating that further meetings are on the slate. The delegation led by Mr. Kaplan also met Union Information Technology Minister

Adhir Ranjan Mishra on behalf of Meta for the error restricting PM Modi's post." Mr. Kaplan later said in a statement.

The meetings follow heightened discussions around Instagram's role in amplifying the protests at Jantar Mantar last month, as well as the brief take-downs of Mr. Modi's post on Facebook.

Officials asserted that Meta was "not covered under intermediary definition" — a significant statement — since this would make the company liable in court for every single post by users.

The government also stressed down the company on a BBC report on advertisements appearing on Instagram promoting CSAM.

If the [Mr. Zuckerberg] fails to tender an unqualified apology within 3 days of receipt of this letter, the protection is immediately given under Section 73(3) of IT Act may be withdrawn and such an action against him as a publisher.

Mr. Kaplan had been summoned, among other things, to explain why Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first video message to the youth posted on July 23 was temporarily removed from Facebook. The company had attrib-

uted it to an error. The government had insisted on full accounting of the error and a personal apology from Mr. Zuckerberg. The informal meeting of the meeting did not include a specific reference to that post's takedown.

"I apologised to the Mi-

Having majority no reason for lawmakers to defy party: top court

Krishnakumar Hanugopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court made it clear on Wednesday that a group of MLAs or MPs cannot override the official directives of the parent political party merely for the reason that they hold a majority among the elected members.

Justice Krishnaiah Bagchi, part of a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, said the maturity of a democracy was measured by the constancy of political parties and their members to their ideology. The court was hearing a dispute between the Shiv Sena factions led by Uddhav Thackeray and current Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde over who was the real party and the rightful

bearer of the party symbol. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Thackeray, said "mergers" undertaken by a faction of MLAs/MPs was not dictated by democratic or ideological powers, but a naked pursuit of power. "You are carrying this shenanigan to an absurd level where the entire electoral process becomes a farce because the electoral symbol can be changed through manipulation and defection, the government that comes in to existence is not the government that the people voted for. This has huge repercussions," he said.

The court also indicated the striking of a balance between the electorate's decision to vote a party to power and the individual representatives' liberty to express disagreement with

The control of the political party subsists over the legislative party. Any valid decision of the political party has to prevail over the will of the majority of the legislative party.

The dispute being heard by the court dated back to 2012 when the Shiv Sena had split into two rival camps. The Thackeray government was toppled as Mr. Shinde, backed by 40 out of 80 party MLAs, teamed up with the Bhavnagar faction led BJP side and formed the government. The Election Commission later concluded that Mr. Shinde's was the "real" Shiv Sena and

gave it the party symbol. The senior advocate said it was time the Supreme Court examined the "trend" of "coordinated and unilateral" shift of loyalties by legislators of one political party to another, leading to the overthrow of elected governments in multiple States. He asked whether a few legislators could unilaterally decide a "merger" with another party without the knowledge of the par-

ty's decisions. The dispute being heard by the court dated back to 2012 when the Shiv Sena had split into two rival camps. The Thackeray government was toppled as Mr. Shinde, backed by 40 out of 80 party MLAs, teamed up with the Bhavnagar faction led BJP side and formed the government. The Election Commission later concluded that Mr. Shinde's was the "real" Shiv Sena and

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RBI panel keeps repo rate steady at 5.25%

Lalotosh Mishra
MUMBAI

The Monetary Policy Committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) voted unanimously on Wednesday to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 5.25%.

Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate remains at 2% and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate remain at 5.5%.

The MPC also decided to continue with the neutral stance.

FULL REPORT ON PAGE 4

Having majority no reason for lawmakers to defy party: top court

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court made it clear on Wednesday that a group of MLAs or MPs cannot override the official directives of the parent political party merely for the reason that they hold a majority among the elected members.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, part of a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, said the maturity of a democracy was measured by the constancy of political parties and their members to their ideology. The court was hearing a dispute between the Shiv Sena factions led by Uddhav Thackeray and current Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde over who was the real party and the rightful

bearer of the party symbol.

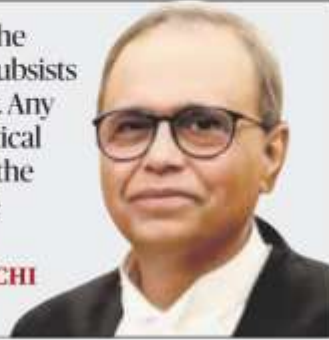
Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Thackeray, said “mergers” orchestrated by a faction of MLAs/MPs was not dictated by democratic or ideological powers, but a naked pursuit of power. “You are carrying this shenanigan to an absurd level where the entire electoral process becomes a farce because the electoral verdict can be changed through manipulation and defection. The government that comes into existence is not the government that the people voted for. This has huge repercussions,” he said.

The court also indicated the striking of a balance between the electorate’s decision to vote a party to power and the individual representatives’ liberty to express disagreement with



The control of the political party subsists over the legislature party. Any valid decision of the political party has to prevail over the will of the majority of the legislature party

JUSTICE JOYMALYA BAGCHI
in oral observation



the party’s decisions.

The dispute being heard by the court dated back to June 2022 when the Shiv Sena had split into two rival camps. The Thackeray government was toppled as Mr. Shinde, backed by 40 out of 55 party MLAs, teamed up with the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP side and formed the government. The Election Commission (EC) later concluded that Mr. Shinde’s was the “real” Shiv Sena and

gave it the party symbol.

The senior advocate said it was time the Supreme Court examined the “trend” of “coordinated and unilateral” shift of loyalties by legislators of one political party to another, leading to the overthrow of elected governments in multiple States. He asked whether a few legislators could unilaterally decide a “merger” with another party without the knowledge of the pa-

rent political party.

“The control of the political party subsists over the legislature party. Any valid decision of the political party has to prevail over the will of the majority of the legislature party,” Justice Bagchi observed orally.

“Suppose a set of legislators of a political party, merely because they are in the majority, pass a resolution seeking to remove the office-bearers of the political party and, in furtherance of that, undertake a series of coordinated acts. They cannot remove the office-bearers of the political party. Those very acts amount to voluntarily giving up the membership of the political party. As this court has held, voluntary giving up of membership is determined from the con-

duct of the individual; nothing more is required,” Mr. Sibal submitted.

He, quoting an earlier judgment of the Supreme Court in the Shiv Sena case, said rebel legislators cannot be allowed to “conflate” the political party with the legislative party.

“If this is allowed, you can topple any government at any point in time. Legislators can switch over, form a new government and not bother about the political party,” he argued.

Mr. Sibal said the EC’s decision was erroneously based on which faction had the majority in the legislature party.

He argued that the concept of a ‘split’ in the legislature party under the Tenth Schedule was unknown. There was no concept of a majority within a

legislature party. A split, as a defence against the charge of defection under the Tenth Schedule, while it was in existence, only related to the political party.

A 2023 Constitution Bench judgment in *Subhash Desai versus Principal Secretary, Governor of Maharashtra*, confirmed that the ‘original political party’ and the ‘legislature party’ were “distinguishable concepts” under the Tenth Schedule.

The judgment said the Tenth Schedule recognised the independent existence of a legislature party only to the limited extent of presenting a defence for Members, who back a merger or split (the latter was omitted as a defence in 2003) initiated by the original political party, against bulk disqualification action.

Background of the Case

In **June 2022**, Maharashtra witnessed a major political crisis.

Original Situation

- **Uddhav Thackeray** was the Chief Minister.
- Shiv Sena was part of the **Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA)** government along with NCP and Congress.

Rebellion

Senior Shiv Sena leader **Eknath Shinde** led a rebellion.

Out of **55 Shiv Sena MLAs**, about **40 MLAs** supported him.

Because of this:

- Uddhav Thackeray resigned.
- Eknath Shinde formed the government with BJP support.

Later,

- Election Commission (EC) recognised Shinde's faction as the "real Shiv Sena".
- Shinde received the **party name** and **bow and arrow symbol**.

This decision is still under judicial scrutiny.

What was the Supreme Court hearing?

The Court is deciding:

Can a majority of MLAs take control of a political party?

Or

Does the original political party continue to control its legislators?

What Justice Joymalya Bagchi observed

Justice Bagchi made several important oral observations.

1. Majority inside Legislature does NOT mean ownership of the party

He said:

Merely because most MLAs support one faction does **not** mean they become the real political party.

The political party exists independently of the legislature party.

Example

Suppose Party XYZ has

- National President
- National Executive
- Constitution
- Crores of workers

If 70% of its MLAs rebel,

they cannot automatically claim ownership of

- party
 - symbol
 - organisation.
-

2. Political Party controls Legislature Party

Justice Bagchi said

| The control of the political party subsists over the legislature party.

Meaning

The elected MLAs must obey

- party constitution
- authorised leadership
- official whip.

Not the other way around.

3. Democracy requires party discipline

The Court observed

Democracy is not simply counting heads.

It also depends upon

- ideological commitment
- party discipline
- respecting voter mandate.

People vote not only for an MLA,

they also vote for

- party ideology
- election manifesto
- leadership.

4. Why majority cannot become supreme

Justice Bagchi gave a hypothetical example.

Imagine

70 legislators become majority.

Then they decide

- remove party president
- remove office bearers
- change party ideology.

If such acts are allowed,

then MLAs would effectively "capture" political parties.

The Court questioned this logic.

Kapil Sibal's arguments (for Uddhav Thackeray)

Senior Advocate **Kapil Sibal** strongly argued that:

1. This is manipulation of democracy

He said

If legislators can change governments simply because they become majority,

then

Election results lose meaning.

Governments can be overthrown repeatedly.

2. Political party cannot be defeated from inside

He argued

The legislature party is only a part of the political party.

It cannot become bigger than the parent organisation.

3. Mergers cannot happen secretly

He questioned

Can some MLAs

without permission of

- party president
- party executive

merge the party into another political party?

According to him

No.

4. Dangerous precedent

Sibal warned

If this principle is accepted,

then every government in India becomes unstable.

Whenever enough MLAs gather,

they could

- switch sides
- topple governments
- form new governments.

Main Constitutional Issue

The dispute revolves around the **Tenth Schedule (Anti-Defection Law)**.

The Court is interpreting

| What is more important?

Option A

Majority inside Legislature Party

OR

Option B

Original Political Party

The Court's observations clearly favour **Option B**.

What is Legislature Party?

A legislature party means

All MLAs or MPs elected from one political party inside the Assembly or Parliament.

Example

If BJP wins 240 MPs

Those 240 MPs form the BJP Legislature Party.

But BJP organisation consists of

- President
- National Executive
- State Units
- Crores of members

These are separate.

Political Party vs Legislature Party

Political Party	Legislature Party
Registered with Election Commission	Group of elected MLAs/MPs
Has constitution	Exists only inside Legislature
Has organisational structure	Has elected representatives
Runs across the country	Limited to Assembly or Parliament
Controls party decisions	Must normally follow party decisions

What did the 2023 Constitution Bench say?

The newspaper refers to an earlier Constitution Bench judgment.

It held that

Political Party and Legislature Party are two different constitutional entities.

The legislature party exists only for limited purposes under the Anti-Defection Law.

It **cannot replace** the original political party.

- **What is Anti-Defection Law?**
- Introduced through the:
 - **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985**
 - Added the **Tenth Schedule** to the Constitution.
- Purpose:
 - Prevent political defections.
 - Ensure stable governments.
 - Reduce horse-trading and corruption.
- An MLA/MP can be disqualified if they:
 - Voluntarily give up party membership.
 - Vote against the party whip without permission.

Split vs Merger

Earlier

A split by **one-third** of legislators could avoid disqualification.

However,

the **91st Constitutional Amendment (2003)** removed this provision because it was widely misused.

Now, only a **merger** is recognised, and it requires strict constitutional conditions. A simple majority within the legislature party is **not**, by itself, enough to establish that the original political party has changed.

Why is this case important?

This case will determine:

- Whether elected representatives are supreme over political parties.
- The scope of the Anti-Defection Law.
- How future rebellions within political parties will be treated.
- The balance between internal party democracy and government stability.
- How the Election Commission should assess claims to a party's name and symbol in similar disputes.

IN BRIEF

Bengaluru to host 16th edition of Aero India in February

Come February next year, the Surya Kiran and the Barage will once again dance the Bengaluru skies as the 16th edition of the biennial Aero India show will be held at the Air Force Station in Yelahanka. A meeting between senior Indian Air Force (IAF) officers and Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on August 4 has put to rest speculation whether Bengaluru would continue to be the host city for the five-day event. Sources said *The Hindu* that the dates of the event would be announced by the Defence Ministry.

7 held in connection with tiger killing in A.P. reserve

Four days after a tiger carcass was found in the Nagarjuna Nagar Wildlife Tiger Reserve (NNTWR) in Andhra Pradesh, authorities arrested seven persons suspected of poaching at Giddalur in Markapuram district on Tuesday. The carcass of an adult tiger was found in Racherla forest beat under Giddalur division on July 31. The officials recovered seven tiger skins, lion's bones, and a country-made fire arm from the accused.

Kerala Minister apologises for remark on free bus scheme

Kerala Transport Minister C.P. John apologised on Wednesday for appearing to suggest that women failed priority to avail free-of-charge travel on Kerala State Road Transport Corporation buses under the United Democratic Front government's flagship Prayashasini free travel scheme. "I was not aware of the context of the conference... I should not have said what I said, and if anyone felt offended, I apologise to them publicly. I have no false ego," Mr. John said.

Kerala slams T.N. Budget proposal on Mullaperiyar

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala will never agree to raising the water level in the Mullaperiyar Dam in Idukki district, Minister for Water Resources Joseph said in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. Mr. Joseph said he reacted strongly to the announcement in the Tamil Nadu State Budget 2026-27, presented on Wednesday, regarding Tamil Nadu's plan to "pursue" the raising of the water level in the Mullaperiyar Dam. The Kerala government sticks to its declared stand that the dam has to be built in Mullaperiyar to replace the existing structure which is 134 years old, Mr. Joseph said.

New dam
Following the Tamil Nadu Budget announcement, Mr. Joseph chaired a high-level meeting in Thiruvananthapuram and also held discussions with Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan. "Kerala's stand is very clear on this issue. The statutory requirement is a new dam in Mullaperiyar. The State has put forward a suggestion that guarantees the safety of the people of Kerala and water for Tamil Nadu," Mr. Joseph said. The Supreme Court has so far accepted an approach where the water level is maintained at 100 ft. When Tamil Nadu pressed for raising the level, the court had recommended an examination of issues related to the safety of the dam. But Tamil Nadu (which operates the dam) is yet to carry out the comprehensive dam safety evaluation, which has been completed by December 31, 2026, the Minister said.

Kerala govt. to give ₹8 lakh to families of flood victims

Toll from rain-related incidents rises to 26, four still missing. Cabinet decides to increase the compensation for fully damaged houses from ₹4 lakh to ₹6 lakh, says Chief Minister Satheesan

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Cabinet on Wednesday announced ₹8 lakh each as financial assistance to the kin of those killed in the torrential rainfall and floods that ravaged large parts of the State over the past week.

The death toll has risen to 26 even as four people are still missing. Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan told a post-Cabinet briefing in Thiruvananthapuram.

Across districts, 27,048 people are lodged at 462 relief camps. The highest number of camps are in Pathanamthitta (187), Kottayam (184), and Alappuzha (183) districts.

As part of the relief mea-



Rising waters: The Kanjibath Thiruvananthapuram road was inundated following heavy rain in Kottayam on Monday. (A. K. Suresh)

sures, the Cabinet decided to increase the compensation for "fully damaged" houses from ₹4 lakh to ₹6 lakh and that for loss of both land and house, from ₹10 lakh to ₹12 lakh. Of the ₹8 lakh announced to kin of the deceased, ₹4 lakh

will be drawn from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and ₹2 lakh each from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) and the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF).

Mr. Satheesan on Wednesday said the govern-

ment had begun work on creating an "effective" long-term disaster resilience programme for the State. Announced in the United Democratic Front (UDF) government's Revised Budget for 2026-27, the Kerala Disaster Resilience Programme will serve as a model for the country," he added.

Crop loss
A preliminary assessment has pegged losses to the State's farm sector at ₹77.44 crore. Crop damage has been reported in 1,862 hectares, affecting 23,537 farmers, the Chief Minister said, adding that the losses are likely to be slightly higher when the final figures are out.

Telangana CM seeks talks on key barrage

M. Rajeev
HYDRABAD

Telangana Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu called on Union Jal Shakti Minister C.K. Patel in New Delhi on Wednesday to convince the Maharashtra government to allow an increase in the height of Tummidihatti barrage on the Pravara River.

The Chief Minister reiterated that Telangana and Maharashtra had reached an agreement over construction of a barrage at 144 metres. Limiting the height to 148 metres would not help release water in sufficient quantities and hence, the Centre should convince Maharashtra to allow an increase in the height of Tummidihatti barrage on the Pravara River.

Gas leak at Karnataka pharma plant kills 3

The Hindu Bureau
BANGALURU

Three labourers were killed and two sustained severe injuries after a deadly gas leak at a pharmaceutical factory in Yagchi district of Karnataka on Wednesday.

The incident occurred at CIL Laboratories Private Ltd, located in the Kadu, Chikmagalur district of Karnataka. The leak happened at approximately 3 a.m. while the victim was on duty. The deceased have been identified as Vikram Singh and Sanjay Singh, both residents of Kadu district in Karnataka. The third victim, a native of Alampally village in Mahabubnagar district of Telangana.

Dry spell



Drying rain: The Virajpet handpump in Virajpet is dry after a prolonged period of deficient rainfall. Local people note that this is a rare occurrence, as the historic temple tank seldom runs dry during the monsoon. (A. K. Suresh)

'20% of Karnataka electors to be dropped from draft rolls'

The Hindu Bureau
BANGALURU

As many as 20.03% of electors marked under the alien, shifted, duplicate, dead and others (ASDDO) category will be removed from the draft electoral roll, Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) N. Anbu Kumar said on Wednesday. He added that voters wrongly marked as absent or shifted can have their names restored only by approaching their Booth Level Officer (BLO), proving that they reside at the same address and obtain an endorsement from the BLO, or later by submitting their names in a declaration form. The CEO said that 34.17

lakh electors categorised under "unmapped entries" will receive notices as they submitted enumeration forms without furnishing details from the 2002 electoral roll. "Moreover, those who have provided 2002 details, and if those details are wrong, it will result in mismatches; such people will also receive notices," he said.

No extension

"The ASDDC list has been made public. Anyone who wants to be added or shifted can get it corrected till August 8. After that, we will not accept any extension as the exercise had been carried out well before the deadline. The deletion in the draft rolls will be particularly significant in Bengaluru."

The Hindu Bureau
HYDRABAD

The Telangana Police launched what it called an artificial intelligence-driven platform aimed at making emergency assistance faster and more coordinated across the State when citizens dial 112. The system was inaugurated by Director-General of Police C.V. Anand at the Telangana Integrated Command and Control Centre in Hyderabad on Wednesday.



Police personnel monitor calls with the new 112 Control Centre. (S. Suresh)

A police officer explained how the platform works by bringing together Police, Fire Services, Ambulance, Women Safety, Child Protection and Disaster Response under the in-

Cabinet composition goes against values of equality, democracy, enshrined in our Constitution, AIJWS

The decision to exclude women from the Cabinet, despite women constituting 32% of the State's electorate, reflected a deliberate attempt to keep them out of the political decision-making process. "The total number of women MLAs elected in the 2023 Assembly election is 10, out of which four belong to the Congress. At a time when constitutional values of equality and democracy are being fought for the immediate implementation of 33% reservation for women in

Parliament and State Assemblies, not giving a single woman a place in the Karnataka Cabinet is a move that goes against women's political empowerment," the statement said.

Open letter to CM
Narasimhaiah, a network of feminist and women's organisations, wrote an open letter to the Chief Minister, strongly condemning the complete exclusion of women from the Cabinet. "An all-male Cabinet is not an oversight. It is a political choice. It sends an unmistakable message that women and women's business remain dispensable when it comes to the exercise of State power," it read.

Two women receive M.S. Swaminathan award for their work

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Two women - P. Pochamma, who has pioneered in ghost gear collection from Ramanathapuram, and Govindammal who has championed sustainable agriculture from Villupuram - were honoured with Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2026 on Wednesday. They brought about changes in their communities.

"Commendable efforts" Virendra Thurai, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, who presented the awards, said that it was important to strike a balance between development and biodiversity, sustainable agriculture practices and keeping the environment free from unsustainable efforts.

The women who received the awards were immensely grateful to the foundation for assisting their communities in contributing towards environmental protection. "They (the communities) couldn't believe that I will get an award for just having soil

lected wastes like old nets, nylon ropes, and other plastics from the shore," said Ms. Pochamma. From a small farmer, who depended on the share for water and got a few bags of produce, Ms. Govindammal said she had risen to being a member of a Farmers Producer Company. "We were all like that, dependent on the rain. But now we get good seeds and good rates for produce," she said.

Swarnam Swaminathan, chairman, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, thanked Rotary Club of Madras East (B District 3234), and Cavinkare Pvt. Ltd, for taking the effort to present the awards.

"Risky businesses" she said that from last year a decision had been taken to award people from the grassroots. "Bully, fishing and agriculture are risky businesses which we don't realise because we get our grocery from stores. The women do it because it is the right thing to do."

D. Suresh Jain, District Governor of B District 3234 and Club president Radhika Sathyanarayana were

Women's groups criticise all-male Karnataka Cabinet

The Hindu Bureau
BANGALURU

Several women's rights organisations have voiced strong objections to Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar's all-male Cabinet, questioning the complete exclusion of women from the Cabinet, despite women constituting 32% of the State's electorate, reflected a deliberate attempt to keep them out of the political decision-making process. "The total number of women MLAs elected in the 2023 Assembly election is 10, out of which four belong to the Congress. At a time when constitutional values of equality and democracy are being fought for the immediate implementation of 33% reservation for women in

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Telangana rolls out AI-driven helpline 112 aimed at slashing response time

The Hindu Bureau
HYDRABAD

The Telangana Police launched what it called an artificial intelligence-driven platform aimed at making emergency assistance faster and more coordinated across the State when citizens dial 112. The system was inaugurated by Director-General of Police C.V. Anand at the Telangana Integrated Command and Control Centre in Hyderabad on Wednesday.



Police personnel monitor calls with the new 112 Control Centre. (S. Suresh)

A police officer explained how the platform works by bringing together Police, Fire Services, Ambulance, Women Safety, Child Protection and Disaster Response under the in-

tegrated command and control system. The platform uses location-based identification, incident prioritisation, and real-time monitoring and dispatching. Genuine emergencies are then prioritised by using AI algorithms and are routed to the correct nearest police station. A single window interface shared by call takers and dispatchers.

Caller's location
Using the precise technology of locating the caller, the system uses location-based services and Geo-tags to pinpoint the caller's location. It then identifies and recom-

mends the nearest available patrol vehicle from a fleet of 1,000 digitally integrated vehicles across all 31 police units, ensuring quicker dispatch and continuous monitoring of the response until the case is closed. The processing time has been cut sharply from 100 to 60 seconds, and dispatcher time from 90 to 60 seconds, bringing total call-centre processing time down by nearly 30%, according to an official. The State's average emergency response time is currently at 10 minutes 30 seconds, compared with a national average of roughly 18 minutes. The Centre will operate 24/7 with 164 trained staff.



Working for a cause: Winners of the Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2026 with dignitaries at the event in the city on Wednesday. R. RAGU

Two women receive M.S. Swaminathan award for their work

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Two women – P. Pechiyammal, who has pioneered in ghost gear collection from Ramanathapuram, and Govindhammal who has championed sustainable agriculture from Villupuram – were honoured with Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2026 on Wednesday. They brought about changes in their communities.

'Commendable efforts'
Virendra Tiwari, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority, who presented the awards, said that it was important to strike a balance between development and biodiversity. Sustainable agriculture practices and keeping the sea plastic-free were commendable efforts.

The women who received the awards were immensely grateful to the foundation for assisting their communities in contributing towards environmental protection. "They (the communities) couldn't believe that I will get an award for just having col-

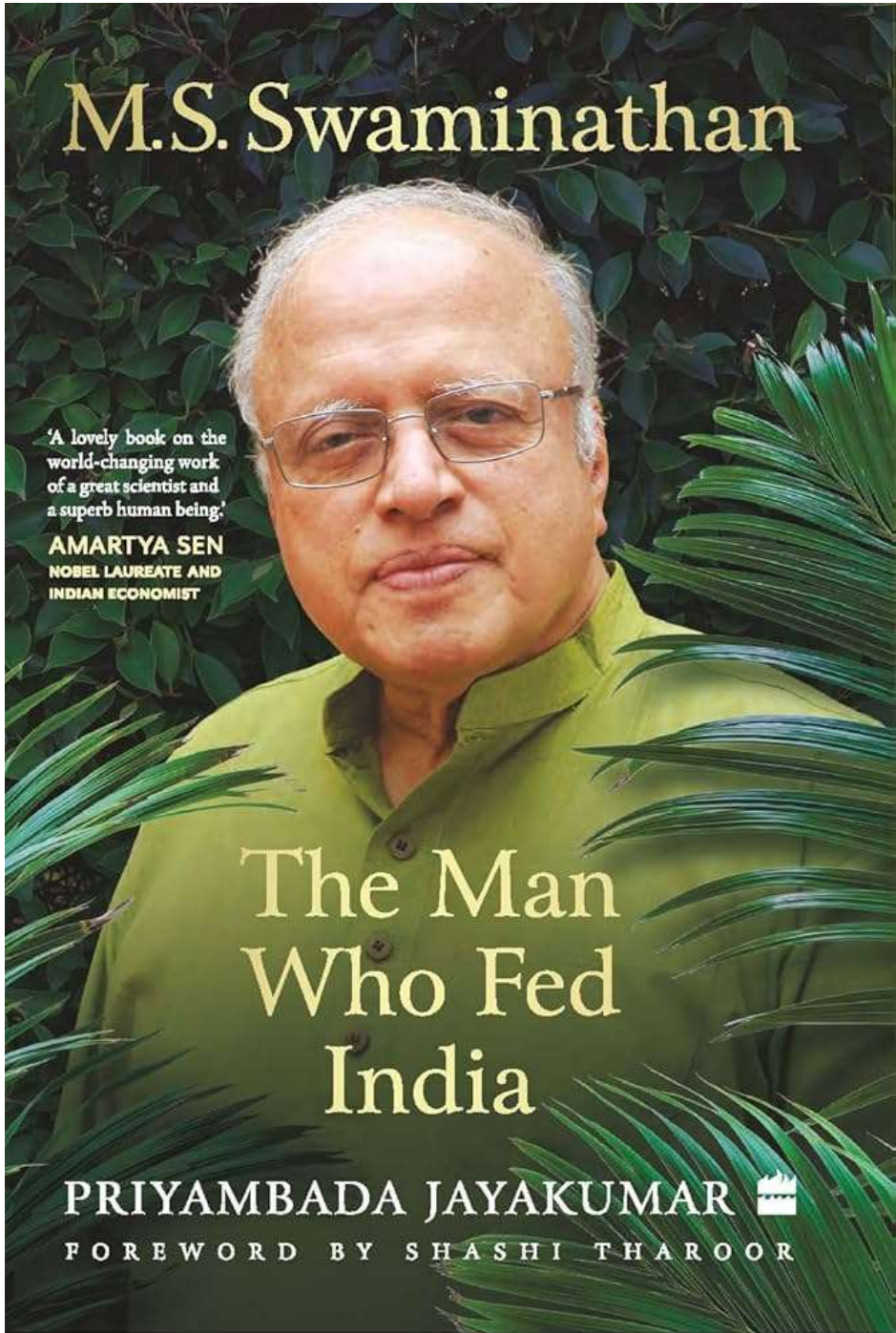
lected wastes like old nets, nylon ropes, and other plastics from the shore," said Ms. Pechiyammal. From a small farmer, who depended on the skies for water and got a few bags of produce, Ms. Govindhammal said she had risen to being a member of a Farmers Producer Company. "We were all like that, dependent on the rains. But now we get good seeds and good rates for produce," she said.

Soumya Swaminathan, chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, thanked Rotary Club of Madras East (RI District 3234), and CavinKare Pvt. Ltd, for taking the effort to present the awards.

'Risky businesses'

She said that from last year a decision had been taken to award people from the grassroots. "Both fishing and agriculture are risky businesses which we don't realise because we get our grocery from stores. The women do it because it is the right thing to do."

D. Suresh Jain, District Governor, RI District 3234, and Club president Radhika Sathyanarayana were present.



M.S. Swaminathan

'A lovely book on the
world-changing work
of a great scientist and
a superb human being.'

AMARTYA SEN
NOBEL LAUREATE AND
INDIAN ECONOMIST

The Man Who Fed India

PRIYAMBADA JAYAKUMAR 

FOREWORD BY SHASHI THAROOR

Particular	Details
Award	Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Award for Environment Protection 2026
Presented At	Chennai
Presented By	Virendra Tiwari, Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)
Organised By	M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)
Supported By	Rotary Club of Madras East (RI District 3234) & CavinKare Pvt. Ltd.
Awardees	P. Pechiyammal and Govindammal
Theme	Environmental Protection & Sustainable Livelihoods

Who was Dr. M.S. Swaminathan?

Full Name

Dr. Monkombu Sambasivan Swaminathan (1925–2023)

Often called the:

Father of India's Green Revolution

Contributions

- Introduced high-yielding wheat and rice varieties.
 - Helped India become self-sufficient in food production.
 - Promoted sustainable agriculture.
 - Focused on protecting biodiversity while increasing productivity.
 - Founded the **M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)** in Chennai.
-

Awardee 1: P. Pechiyammal

Where is she from?

Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

A coastal district famous for:

- Fishing
 - Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve
 - Rich coral reefs
-

What was her contribution?

She pioneered the collection of "**Ghost Gear**."

What is Ghost Gear?

Ghost gear refers to **abandoned, lost or discarded fishing equipment** that continues to pollute oceans.

Examples include:

- Fishing nets
- Nylon ropes
- Fishing lines
- Plastic floats
- Traps
- Buoys

Awardee 2: Govindammal

Where is she from?

Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu

What did she promote?

She became a champion of:

- Sustainable agriculture
 - Farmer cooperation
 - Better farming practices
-

Her Journey

She was previously a small farmer.

Problems faced:

- Rain-dependent farming
- Low productivity
- Poor market prices

Later she joined a:

Farmers Producer Company (FPC)

Why Agriculture and Fishing are "Risky Businesses"

Soumya Swaminathan noted that people often overlook the risks faced by those working in farming and fishing because consumers simply buy food from stores.

Risks faced by farmers

- Drought
- Floods
- Pest attacks
- Climate change
- Price fluctuations
- Rising input costs

Risks faced by fishermen

- Cyclones
- Rough seas
- Declining fish stocks
- Marine pollution
- Fuel costs
- Changing weather patterns

She appreciated that many women continue this work because they believe it is the right thing to do for their families and communities.

Fear, personal safety can't decide my duty to the people: Sheikh Hasina

The former Prime Minister of Bangladesh signals return to her country in December despite risk of arrest; demands that ban on Awami League be lifted; she terms India a country that has 'always been a friend, especially in 1971 and 1975'

Kabir Bhattacharya
NEW DELHI

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was deported in August 2024 following protests, on Wednesday said she would dress a press conference here, and said "fear" and "concerns of personal safety" will not prevent her from returning home. In an audio-only broadcast, she said the members of her party, Awami League, have been persecuted and killed, and called for lifting the ban on the party, the banned India a country that has "always been a friend" and supported Bangladesh when it faced difficulties in 1971 and 1975.



Sheikh Hasina addresses a virtual press conference by audio in New Delhi on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Anwar Hossain)

Hasina indicated that she may return to the country in December 2026. "You will get to know when I decide to go," she said. Hasina, who was asked about the date of her return, said she will take permission from the Indian authorities. She said she will take permission from the Indian authorities before starting her journey. She said she will take permission from the Indian authorities before starting her journey. She said she will take permission from the Indian authorities before starting her journey.

Bangladesh govt. 'outraged'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bangladesh government said it was "outraged" by the news of the former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's return to India. Foreign Affairs said, "Bangladesh is deeply concerned about the return of its former Prime Minister to India. Bangladesh has not yet received any response from the Indian government regarding this matter."

On Tuesday, authorities in Bangladesh had urged news outlets to avoid telecasting the speech and the interview. That was heeded live on social media.

2019 marked a new chapter for J&K and Ladakh, says Modi

Narabab Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the revoking of Articles 370 and 35A seven years ago marked a decisive new chapter in the journey of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. He said the vision championed by the Modi government was to ensure that the regions have witnessed a wide-ranging, transformative change since the constitutional provisions were revoked on August 5, 2019.

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Parties stage protests across J&K on anniversary of Article 370 dilution

Ekmeada Ashish
SRINAGAR



Protest by top National Conference leaders and supporters during a protest in Srinagar on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Anwar Hossain)

Several NC leaders and legislators held protests in their respective constituencies across the Union Territory.

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RBI panel keeps repo rate steady at 5.25%; real GDP growth pegged at 6.7%

Lalatesh Mishra
MUMBAI

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept the repo rate steady at 5.25% on Wednesday. The MPC also decided to continue with the 10-year yield curve unchanged at 5.25%, after a detailed assessment of the evolving macroeconomic and financial developments.

Indian economy remains resilient amid escalating global headwinds, says RBI Governor

Private consumption remained robust, investment continued to be resilient, as suggested by various indicators. The MPC also decided to continue with the 10-year yield curve unchanged at 5.25%, after a detailed assessment of the evolving macroeconomic and financial developments.

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Cabinet and Home Secretaries get extension

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Cabinet Secretary T.V. Somanathan and Union Home Secretary Gopal Mohan's tenures have been extended for another year according to a government order issued on Wednesday.

'Police modernisation scheme awaits Finance Ministry's nod'

Aaratrika Thammiah
NEW DELHI

The Union government informed the Supreme Court on Wednesday that a proposed scheme for the modernisation of police stations in the country had been sent to the Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Finance.

The Centre made the submission before the SC in a hearing on non-functional CCTV cameras at police stations

and Union Territories while reviewing the implementation of its 2021 judgment in *Pradeep Singh Chauhan v. Union Territory of Chandigarh*, which directed the installation of CCTV cameras at key locations within police stations.

The Bench that the scheme was intended to cover the modernisation of the police force as a whole. Describing the development as "significant progress", the Bench directed the Centre to place details of the proposal on record within two weeks, and posted the matter for further hearing on September 1.

Central team to help tackle Chandipura virus flare-up

The Hindu Bureau

The Union Health Ministry has deployed a national team to Gujarat and Rajasthan to strengthen the response to the ongoing and potential Chandipura virus outbreak.

Misri urges Sri Lankan govt. to conduct provincial elections

Mesha Srinivasan
COLOMBO



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayake in Colombo on Wednesday. (AP Photo/Anura Kumara Dissanayake)

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Wednesday urged the Sri Lankan leadership to hold the long-delayed election to strengthen the response to the ongoing and potential Chandipura virus outbreak.

The team will work closely with State health departments to review the on-ground response and submit recommendations to the Ministry after completing its field assessment.

SC asks civic bodies to take action against illegal constructions

Aaratrika Thammiah
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday pulled up civic bodies in India for failing to take action against illegal constructions and others alleged to have used the court's orders to delay the process of demolishing illegal structures.

SC asks civic bodies to take action against illegal constructions

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RBI panel keeps repo rate steady at 5.25%; real GDP growth pegged at 6.7%

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) voted unanimously on Wednesday to keep the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 5.25%, after a detailed assessment of the evolving macroeconomic and financial developments.

Consequently, the standing deposit facility (SDF) rate remains at 5%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate remain at 5.5%.

The MPC also decided to continue with the neutral stance.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, in his monetary policy statement, said the Indian economy has remained resilient amid persisting global headwinds.

Robust consumption

"High-frequency indicators available so far point towards steady domestic demand in Q1: 2026-27.

Indian economy remains resilient amid persisting global headwinds, says RBI Governor

Private consumption remained robust. Investment continues to be resilient, as suggested by various indicators related to construction, capital goods and bank credit," he said.

"External demand also sustained, as healthy expansion in services exports was complemented by a rebound in merchandise exports," he stated.

Looking ahead, he said, the turbulent global economic environment would have some bearing on domestic economic activity.

"Energy prices and supply chain pressures remain elevated and uncertain. The adverse impact is being contained with various supply-side measures. Even though the situation is still evolving, a deficient and uneven south-west

monsoon amidst El Niño conditions poses some risks to the agriculture sector's outlook and rural demand," he emphasised.

Taking various factors into consideration, real GDP growth for 2026-27 is projected at 6.7% which is 10 bps higher than the earlier projection, with Q1 at 7.0%; Q2 at 6.4%; Q3 at 6.5%; and Q4 at 6.8%. Real GDP growth for Q1:2027-28 is projected at 7.3%. The risks are evenly balanced.

CPI increased to 4.4%

Mr. Malhotra said that while CPI inflation increased to 4.4% in June 2026 after remaining below the target for 16 consecutive months, it turned out to be lower by 30 basis points (bps) than what was earlier projected for Q1:2026-27.

"The increase in June was primarily due to higher food and fuel inflation. Fuel inflation also rose, driven by revision in retail prices, following the spike in international energy prices," the Governor said.

Parameter	Latest Decision
Repo Rate	5.25% (Unchanged)
Standing Deposit Facility (SDF)	5.00%
Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)	5.50%
Bank Rate	5.50%
MPC Decision	Unanimous (6-0)
Policy Stance	Neutral
Real GDP Growth (FY 2026-27)	6.7%
CPI Inflation (June 2026)	4.4%

Quarter	Growth Forecast
Q1	7.0%
Q2	6.4%
Q3	6.5%
Q4	6.8%
Full Year	6.7%

- **Inflation Situation**
- **Current CPI Inflation**
- **4.4% (June 2026)**
- Although inflation increased compared to earlier months, it remains within the RBI's target band.
-
- **Why did inflation rise?**
- Governor Malhotra identified:
- **Food Inflation**
- Higher food prices.
- **Fuel Inflation**
- Increase in retail fuel prices following higher international energy prices

Risks Identified by RBI

1. Global Economic Slowdown

Weak international demand may affect exports.

2. High Energy Prices

Oil and gas prices remain volatile.

Higher energy costs increase:

- Transport costs.
 - Manufacturing costs.
 - Inflation.
-

3. Supply Chain Disruptions

Global trade tensions can affect imports of raw materials and components.

4. Monsoon Concerns

The Governor warned that **El Niño conditions** could weaken the southwest monsoon.

This may affect:

- Agricultural production.
- Rural incomes.
- Food inflation.

Rate

Repo Rate

Reverse Repo (currently replaced operationally by SDF)

Standing Deposit Facility (SDF)

Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)

Bank Rate

Purpose

RBI lends money to banks

Banks park excess funds with RBI

Banks deposit money with RBI without collateral

Emergency overnight borrowing by banks

Long-term lending rate used for certain policy purposes

What is Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)?

The **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** decides India's monetary policy.

Established

- 2016
- Under the RBI Act (amended in 2016)

Members

RBI Members

RBI Governor (Chairperson)

RBI Deputy Governor (Monetary Policy)

One RBI Executive Director

Government Nominees

Three external economists appointed by the Central Government

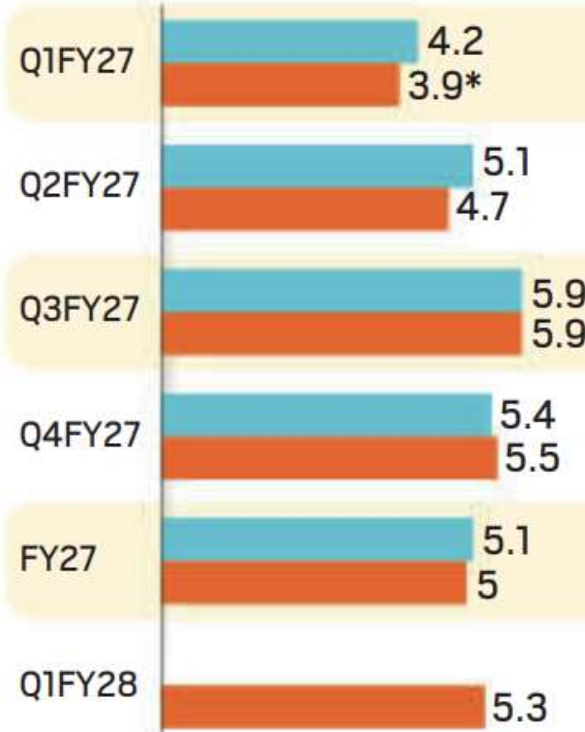
The MPC has **6 members**.

Decisions are made by majority vote.

WAIT AND WATCH



Retail inflation (% y-o-y)

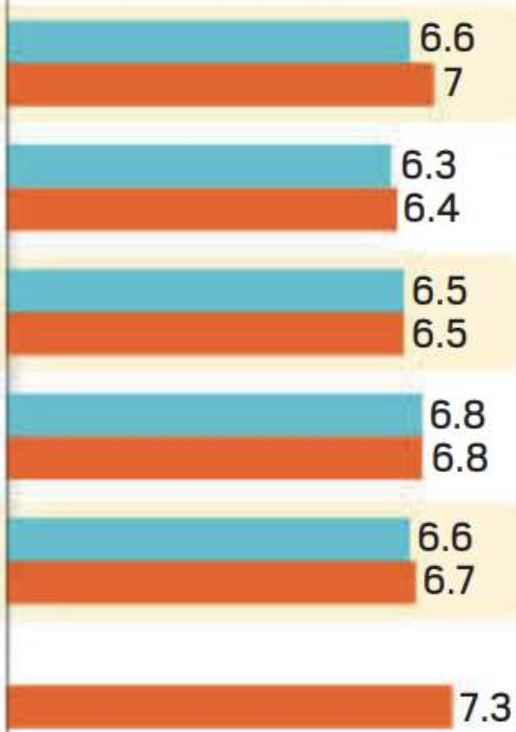


* Actual

■ June 5, 2026

■ August 5, 2026

GDP growth (% y-o-y)



Source: RBI

SANJAY MALHOTRA, GOVERNOR, RBI

We are neither dovish nor are we hawkish. This is the right policy rate for the given growth-inflation dynamics

India's cancer focus must shift to early detection

Every day, oncology clinics across India confront the same heartbreaking reality. More than 70% of patients present with advanced-stage cancer, when treatment is more complex, more expensive, and far less likely to achieve a cure. Over the past two decades, India has invested substantially in building world-class tertiary cancer centres and has expanded access to sophisticated surgery, radiation therapy, and systemic treatments. Yet these advances have not delivered their full potential because most patients arrive too late.

The solution to this challenge lies upstream. Cancer in India is still diagnosed predominantly after symptoms become severe enough to disrupt daily life. By then, opportunities for curative treatment have often been lost. The consequences extend far beyond health. More than three-quarters of cancer-affected households experience catastrophic healthcare expenditure. Late diagnosis is therefore not only a medical problem — it also drives poverty.

Moreover, five-year survival for lung cancer in India is only about 8%, compared with nearly 35% in Japan. Similar gaps exist across several common cancers, reflecting differences not merely in treatment quality but in the stage at which patients enter the healthcare system. A delayed diagnosis is thus a poor outcome on all fronts.

Need for fundamental change
The scale of the challenge continues to grow. India recorded an estimated 1.96 million new cancer cases and over 874,000 cancer deaths in 2024. The lifetime risk of developing cancer has now reached approximately 15% nationally and exceeds 25% in some northeastern States. As the population ages and lifestyles change, this burden will continue to rise unless our national strategy changes fundamentally.

The first step is to redefine prevention as a lifelong public health priority rather than an occasional awareness campaign. Nearly half of all cancers are preventable. However, efforts to spread awareness among adults give poor results as lifestyle wiring happens at an early age. Once habits are coded, it is extremely difficult to course correct them through awareness campaigns. Health education must therefore begin in schools, where "life skills" should receive the same importance as other mainstream subjects such as mathematics or social sciences. These life skills would not only help in cancer prevention but also other major health issues such as cardiac, neurological, vascular, and bowel diseases. Such education would comprehensively cover all aspects related to physical, mental and social health, addictions, diet, vaccinations, financial literacy, and responsibilities towards the family, society, and nation.

The second step is the need to encourage earlier diagnosis. Public awareness about the fact that persistent symptoms lasting more than three weeks deserve medical evaluation can substantially reduce diagnostic delays. However, symptom awareness alone is insufficient. Screening remains our most powerful tool for identifying cancer before symptoms appear. Until recently, organised screening was largely confined to cancers such as cervical, breast, and prostate cancer. Scientific advances are now expanding these possibilities. Blood-based Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCEDE) tests have the potential to detect biological progress in cancer care solely by the application of treatments to cervical, breast, and prostate cancer. Scientific advances are now expanding these possibilities. Blood-based Multi-Cancer Early Detection (MCEDE) tests have the potential to detect biological progress in cancer care solely by the application of treatments to cervical, breast, and prostate cancer.

While these technologies still require careful evaluation for population-wide implementation, they represent one of the most promising frontiers in cancer prevention and deserve focused Indian validation.

research and deserve focused Indian validation.

Future plan for India
India must also develop solutions aimed at its own realities. A single centralised screening programme cannot effectively serve a country of 1.4 billion people with enormous geographical and socioeconomic diversity. Instead, we need a layered model centred on the community health workers, digital risk assessment, AI, mobile diagnostic services, and strong referral pathways linking primary care with cancer centres. Encouragingly, important foundations are already being laid. NITI Aayog is supporting the development of a large imaging hubspan comprising more than 20,000 cancer patient profiles. Such datasets can accelerate the development of AI tools capable of assisting frontline healthcare workers in identifying suspicious lesions and prioritising patients who require specialist evaluation.

The draft National Health Research Policy 2026 provides an opportunity to accelerate this transformation. By prioritising diseases that contribute the most to India's health burden and organising research with measurable impact, the policy signals a clear vision for cancer research. The draft National Health Research Policy 2026 provides an opportunity to accelerate this transformation. By prioritising diseases that contribute the most to India's health burden and organising research with measurable impact, the policy signals a clear vision for cancer research.

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YSRCP's search for political momentum

The YSRCP chief is desperately trying to regain his foothold in Andhra politics

STATE OF PLAY

Somjit Bhattacharjee

Two years after suffering one of the most severe electoral setbacks in its history, the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) appears to be crying out for a beach the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) fortress and once again join a strong hold in Andhra politics. However, it is primarily because, as political scientists point out, the YSRCP cadre base is in disarray, and has failed to capitalise on pertinent issues that have been hitting the road quite often after a hiatus of about a year following the election debacle, which could serve as a motivating factor for his party leaders and cadre.

Mobilising efforts
Mr. Reddy began his comeback trail by opposing the State Government's proposal to develop at least 10 of the 17 medical colleges under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode. However, as per analysts, the YSRCP chief could only partly convince the NDA on the issue as the government, to a large extent, was successful in changing public opinion by arguing that the PPP mode would reduce the financial burden on the State and become operational faster without placing the entire advanced stage. And that stage, whose finances had allegedly been weakened by the YSRCP government. The NDA government has consistently maintained that private invest-

Andhra Pradesh

ment is essential for completing unfinished infrastructure projects, improving facilities, and expanding access to specialised healthcare services.

Additionally, with the success of the Cockerham Janta Party (JCP) protests in New Delhi, the YSRCP had been trying hard to scale up its protest over alleged irregularities in the District Selection Committee (DSC) recruitment, but has, so far, not been able to garner that kind of mass response or participation. The State government has rejected such allegations in the DSC recruitment process and insisted that the exercise was conducted fairly and transparently. The government not only countered every allegation with proof for its claim, it is also basking in the glow of successful conduct of the long-pending election and recruiting close to 6,000 teachers.

Falling back on farmers
The 2024 election results have certainly denied the YSRCP's hopes of regaining power. Known for his resilience, 65 late, he has been working to highlight the issues plaguing farmers, especially those related to minimum support prices and the alleged unfulfilled promises of the ruling coalition. He began his campaign by organising a farmers' protest in February this year, when he visited Chilli Yael. He demanded

that the State Government work out a remunerative price and also flagged the sharp drop in stub prices. Here again, the State government was quick to address the issue through a multi-pronged strategy involving market interventions, financial aid, average management, and strict quality control measures.

Farmers constitute a huge chunk of the electoral mandate and play a decisive role in election outcomes. Mr. Reddy's father, Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, had also focused on farmers' welfare, which catapulted him to power as Chief Minister of undivided Andhra in 2004. He is still regarded as the farmers' Chief Minister. Mr. Reddy's every visit has been rife in some controversy, and at times the YSRCP has alleged police excesses. In almost every visit, there has been a scuffle with the police, including the one in Bhargavapalem, where he had gone on July 9, 2025, to meet mango farmers, and in Srikalakota, where he had gone on July 30, 2025, to meet his former minister, Bessidi Appalaraju. Some of his visits have also been controversial such as the recent one in which he visited Mr. Appalaraju. The former minister is in jail for allegedly screening evidence in an accident case involving his son. The NDA was quick to latch onto the issue and accused Mr. Reddy of visiting the accused while not caring to visit the family of the deceased.

In all this, the larger challenge before him, Reddy is to transform the current momentum into a lasting political advantage. Protests and demonstrations may generate immediate attention, but only a coherent policy alternative can sustain public confidence. *sumit.bhattacharjee@rediffmail.com*

Did abrogating special status for J&K make a difference?

Analysis of data show that the Union government has not delivered on its promise of wide-ranging transformation in Jammu and Kashmir

DATA POINT

Somajit Parthasarathy,
Eenayashita B.A.,
Sachin Swaraj

Since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) introduced legislation in Parliament to implement its long-standing objective of stripping the special status accorded to the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by Article 370 of the Constitution. Through these legislations, the Union government not only abrogated the special status, but also took direct control of the state's administration by introducing it into two Union Territories — J&K and Ladakh.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who introduced the legislation, in both Houses, projected them as a panacea for J&K's woes. Attributing the state's poor health, care, poverty and slow economic growth to the special status, he argued that Article 370 prevented J&K's economic development while breeding terrorism.

Data gaps after the bifurcation make meaningful comparison difficult on several socio-economic indicators. For instance, the annual finance and revenue reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) note missing data in many sections.

Data shows that J&K's economy contracted by 1% in real terms in 2019-20 and shrank further during the pandemic in 2020-21. It rebounded subsequently, partly on a low base, but growth dropped sharply in 2023-24 (Chart 1). Capital outlay for J&K, according to the state's finance accounts reports, did not increase significantly and in fact contracted in the two years since 2019 (Chart 2).

On the education front, higher education enrolment in J&K and its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) declined in 2022-23 and 2023-24 — the latest year for which All India Survey on Higher Education reports are available. The drop in enrolment was particularly sharp in 2023-24 (18%) (Chart 3). The Periodic Labour Force Survey reports show that while the unemployment rate did not improve noticeably for men, a rise for women, particularly in 2023-24 (Chart 4). RII data shows that the number of factories in J&K dropped marginally between 2019-20 and 2022-23, though a Lok Sabha reply this week stated marginal improvements in the number of small companies and start-ups.

Though curbing terrorism was a key objective of the 2019 legislations, the number of incidents and deaths of civilians and soldiers have not dropped below 2012-2016 levels (Chart 5). Meanwhile, cases registered under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the number of undertrials have increased. J&K's Freedom House score for civil liberties and political rights has also declined since 2019 (Table 1).

Undelivered promises

The data for the charts were sourced from the RBI, Freedom House, the ICRP, Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC) and South Asia Foundation Panel. With inputs from Jammu Bheem and Moudhali. The Union and Jammu Division interviewed with The Hindu.

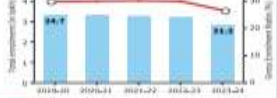
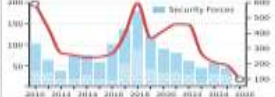
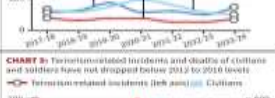


Table 1: Number of incidents of terrorism, deaths, undertrials, and political rights in J&K and Ladakh (2019-20 to 2023-24)

Year	Incidents	Deaths	Undertrials	Political rights
2019-20	16	32	10	10
2020-21	16	32	10	10
2021-22	16	32	10	10
2022-23	16	32	10	10
2023-24	16	32	10	10



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 6, 1976

More students fancy snuff

Madras, August 5: Snuff, a snuff of which is said to drive dreaminess away, is spreading its way in the country.

A survey of the snuff industry in Madras, the biggest snuff production centre in the country, revealed, however that fashions and fads, like the consumption use of ornate snuff boxes that attended the advent of snuff, are passing away. There were but a dozen manufacturers in the city till 40 years ago. Their number now exceeds 100 and production has gone up to 2,367 tonnes a year.

The city gets its raw material, tobacco, from Andhra Pradesh. Snuff is produced in Gujarat, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh also, but they account for only a fraction of the country's total production. Snuff users are predominantly villagers, especially along the coastal regions stretching in a great arc from Gujarat to West Bengal, the demand being the greatest along the Kerala coast. Mr. M.V. Ranga Rao, Secretary of the Madras State Tobacco Merchants Association, says snuff has found growing popularity among students.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 6, 1926

A military revolt in Goa

Goa, August 5: A small military revolution broke out here on Sunday but it was short-lived. Three Garrison Commanding Officers waited on the Acting Governor, Commander Moraes on Saturday the 1st August and demanded the suspension of the New Officers Pay Act. Commander Moraes referred the matter to the Lisbon Government simultaneously requesting his dismissal from the Governor's charge. If the suspension was granted, before Lisbon had answered, the Officers instigated Commander Moraes on Monday that he must withdraw from the Government. He refused, whereupon they took him to Cabo Palace and detained him there. Col. Sequeira assumed the Government. The Lisbon Government did not recognise the military Government and ordered that the three officers be dismissed from their charges and their immediate embarkation to Lisbon. Commander Moraes resumed his duty last evening and dismissed the three officers. Then he transferred his powers for reasons of health to the Attorney General. The new Governor-General is expected within a fortnight.

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy
Pon Vasanth B.A.
Sachin Swaraj

Seven years have passed since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) introduced legislations in Parliament to implement its long-standing objective – stripping the special status accorded to the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by Article 370 of the Constitution. Through these legislations, the Union government not only abrogated the special status, but also took direct control of the State's administration by bifurcating it into two Union Territories – J&K and Ladakh.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who introduced the legislations in both Houses, projected them as a panacea for J&K's woes. Attributing the State's poor healthcare, poverty and slow economic growth to the special status, he argued that Article 370 prevented J&K's economic development while breeding terrorism.

On August 5, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X, "Seven years ago, on this day, articles 370 and 35(A) became history, marking a decisive new chapter in the journey of Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh." He said lives had been transformed by growing opportunities in education, healthcare, entrepreneurship and sports.

An analysis of available data shows that while many of Mr. Shah's 2019 contentions about J&K's backwardness in health and education were misleading, the Union government has not delivered on its promise of wide-ranging transformation – be it in the economy, on terrorism or civil liberties. J&K was in fact a relatively better-performing State before 2019 on indicators such as life expectancy, poverty, infant mortality, government doctors per capita, and human development index.

Data gaps after the bifurcation make meaningful comparison difficult on several socio-economic indicators. For instance, the annual finance audit reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) note missing data in many sections.

Data shows that J&K's economy contracted by 1% in real terms in 2019-20 and shrank further during the pandemic in 2020-21. It rebounded subsequently, partly on a low base, but growth dropped sharply in 2024-25 (Chart 1). Capital outlay for J&K, according to the CAG's finance accounts reports, did not increase significantly and in fact contracted in the two years since 2019 (Chart 2).

On the education front, higher education enrolment in J&K and its Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) declined in 2022-23 and 2023-24 – the latest years for which All India Survey on Higher Education reports are available. The drop in enrolments was particularly sharp in 2023-24 (-11%) (Chart 3). The Periodic Labour Force Survey reports show that while the unemployment rate did not improve noticeably for men, it rose for women, particularly in 2023-24 (Chart 4). RBI data show that the number of factories in J&K dropped marginally between 2019-20 and 2023-24, though a Lok Sabha reply this week stated marginal improvements in the number of small companies and start-ups.

Though curbing terrorism was a key objective of the 2019 legislations, the number of incidents and deaths of civilians and soldiers have not dropped below 2012-2016 levels (Chart 5). Meanwhile, cases registered under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the number of undertrials and detainees have increased sharply. J&K's Freedom House score for civil liberties and political rights has also declined since 2019 (Table 1).

Importantly, the government's promise of restoring J&K's Statehood remains unfulfilled.

Undelivered promises

The data for the charts were sourced from the RBI, Freedom House, the NCRB, Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC) and South Asia Terrorism Portal. With inputs from Gandia Sneha and Nivedha M. The two and Sachin Swaraj interned with The Hindu

CHART 1: Gross State Domestic Product and rate of growth (in constant prices) for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh over years

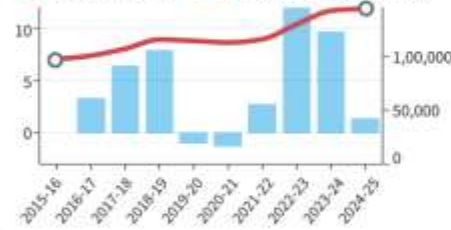


CHART 2: Capital outlay (in ₹ crore) and change in outlay per year (in %)



CHART 3: Total enrolments in higher education and Gross enrolment ratio (GER) for J&K and Ladakh

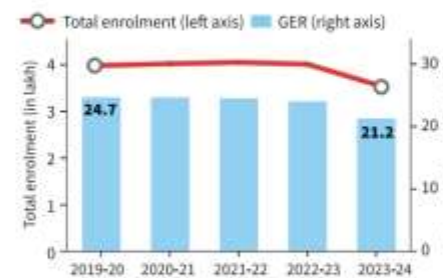


TABLE 1: Number of Internet shutdowns, undertrials, detainees and UAPA cases. Values not available for cells left blank

State/UT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Internet shutdowns	10	32	65	55	116	79	43	14	3	12	4
Civil liberties		28	27	27	20	20	20	20	20	21	21
Political rights		22	22	22	8	7	7	7	6	17	17
UAPA cases	161	156	245	255	287	289	371	178	215		
No. of detainees	432	212	283	404	228	252	546	632	667		
No. of undertrials	1959	2181	2568	3075	3738	4547	4613	4610	4593		



CHART 4: Unemployment rate per thousand persons for Jammu and Kashmir

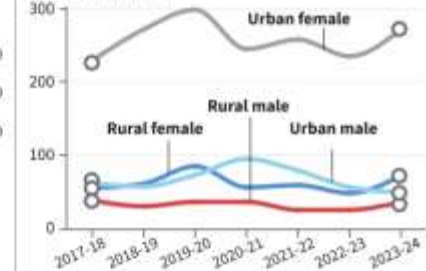
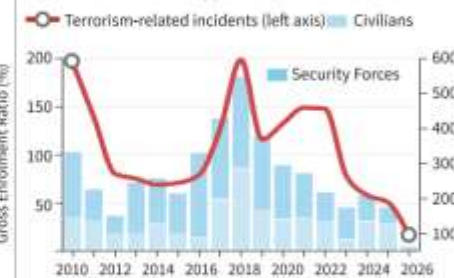


CHART 5: Terrorism-related incidents and deaths of civilians and soldiers have not dropped below 2012 to 2016 levels



- On **5 August 2019**, Parliament passed legislation to:
 - Revoke the special status of Jammu & Kashmir under **Article 370**.
 - Remove the special provisions under **Article 35A**.
 - Reorganise the former State into two Union Territories:
 - **Jammu & Kashmir**
 - **Ladakh**
- The Union Government argued this would improve:
 - Development
 - Investment
 - Employment
 - Security
 - Governance

Key Findings

1. Economic Growth

The chart shows:

- J&K's economy contracted during the pandemic (2019–20 and 2020–21).
- It recovered later, but growth slowed again in 2024–25.

The article suggests that public investment did not increase substantially enough to transform the economy.

2. Capital Expenditure

Capital outlay (government spending on long-term assets such as roads, schools, hospitals, and infrastructure) rose in some years but fluctuated rather than showing a steady upward trend.

3. Higher Education

The article reports:

- Decline in total higher education enrolment.
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) fell from about **24.7%** to **21.2%** over the period shown.

Possible contributing factors include demographic changes, migration, or educational access, though the article does not establish a single cause.

4. Employment

The unemployment chart indicates:

- Limited improvement for men.
- Higher unemployment among women, particularly urban women, in the data presented.

Employment remains a significant challenge.

5. Terrorism

The chart indicates that:

- Terror-related incidents have generally declined compared with the peak years before 2019.
- Civilian and security force deaths have also reduced over time.

However, the article notes that terrorism has **not disappeared** entirely.

6. Civil Liberties

The article points to concerns over:

- Internet shutdowns.
- Detentions.
- Cases under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

It cites these as indicators of continuing restrictions on civil liberties.

Undelivered promises

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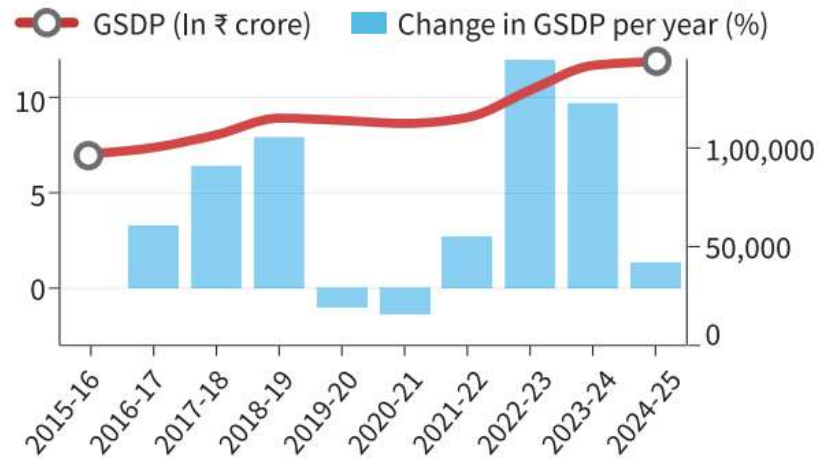


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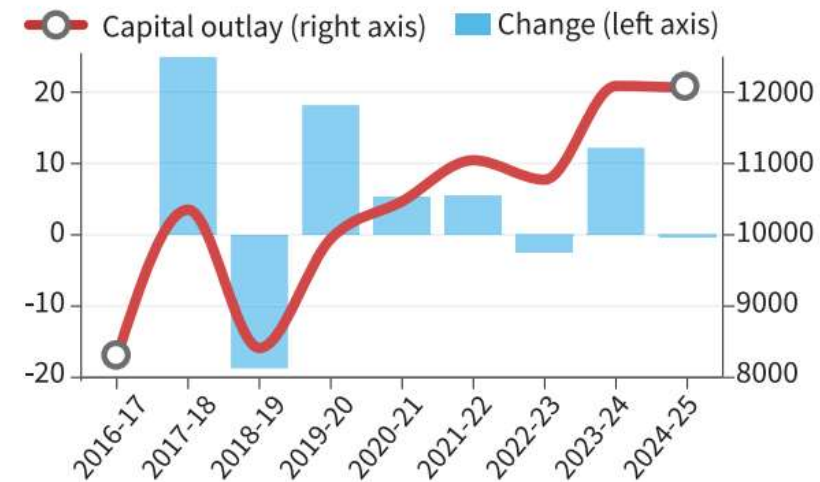


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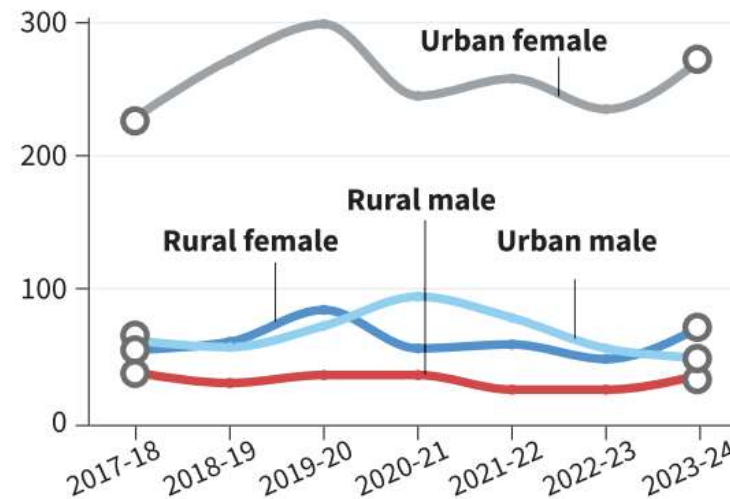


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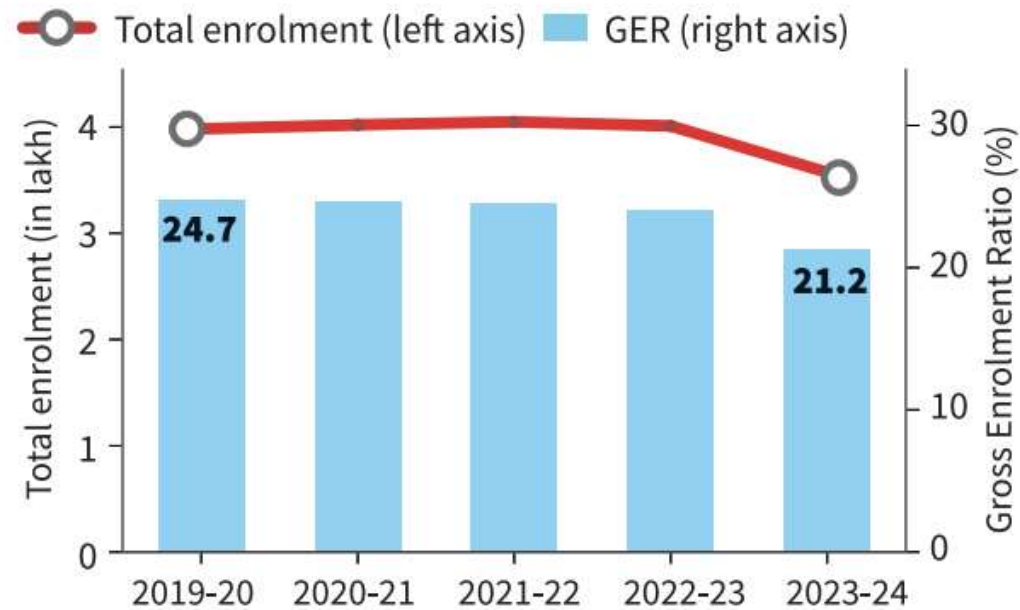


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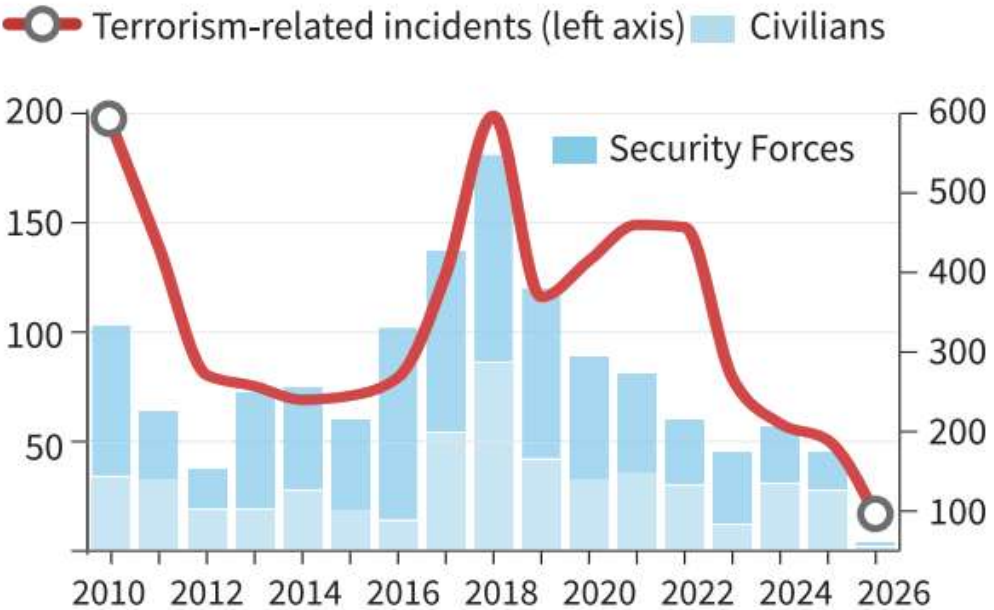


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OFS FOLLOWS INSURER'S RECENT BONUS SHARE ISSUE

LIC stake sale garners around ₹31,552 crore

FE BUREAU
New Delhi, August 5

BACKED BY STRONG institutional demand, the Centre on Wednesday successfully concluded the offer for sale (OFS) of a 6.5% stake in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), raising around ₹31,552 crore, making it India's largest public offering ever. With the LIC OFS, the government has mobilised about ₹52,700 crore through disinvestment so far in the current financial year, the highest since FY19.

The two-day OFS closed with bids for 113.16 crore shares against the offer size of 82.22 crore shares, including the greenshoe option, resulting in an overall subscription of 1.38 times.

"A total of 82,23,33,558 shares have been allocated for an amount of ₹31,552 crores, making it India's largest public

STRONG INSTITUTIONAL DEMAND

■ With the LIC OFS, the govt has mobilised about **₹52,700 cr** via disinvestment so far in FY27, the highest since FY19

■ The 2-day OFS closed with bids for **113.16 cr** shares against the offer size of **82.22 cr shares**

■ Latest stake sale enables LIC to meet the Sebi requirement of achieving **10% public shareholding** by May, next year

■ The govt has set a target of raising around **₹80,000 cr** in FY27 via stake sales



offering ever," department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) secretary Arunish Chawla said.

The institutional portion was subscribed 1.45 times, receiving bids for 107.4 crore shares against an offer of 74 crore shares. The retail portion attracted bids for 5.76 crore

shares against 8.22 crore shares, translating into a subscription of 0.7 times.

The latest stake sale also enabled LIC to meet the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) requirement of achieving 10% public shareholding by May 16, 2027, ahead of schedule.

The government had listed LIC in May 2022 by selling a 3.5% stake, raising ₹20,516 crore. It plans to gradually increase the insurer's public float to meet the 25% minimum public shareholding requirement.

The OFS followed LIC's recent 1:1 bonus share issue, which lowered the effective per-share price and made the offer more affordable for a wider pool of investors. The proceeds will provide a boost to the Centre's disinvestment receipts.

The government has set a target of raising around ₹80,000 crore in FY27 through stake sales in public sector enterprises and other companies where it holds minority stakes. These non-tax revenues are particularly important this year amid fiscal pressures, including the potential increase in the fertiliser subsidy bill due to the US-Iran war.

Particular	Details
Company	Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)
Seller	Government of India
Stake Sold	6.5%
Amount Raised	₹31,552 crore
Mode	Offer for Sale (OFS)
Total Bids	113.16 crore shares
Shares Offered	82.22 crore shares
Overall Subscription	1.38 times
Institutional Subscription	1.45 times
Retail Subscription	0.70 times
FY27 Disinvestment Collection	₹52,700 crore (so far)
FY27 Target	₹80,000 crore

What Happened?

The Government sold **6.5% of its ownership in LIC** through the stock market using the **Offer for Sale (OFS)** mechanism.

Result

- Government received **₹31,552 crore**.
 - It became **India's largest public equity offering** by value.
 - The issue witnessed **strong institutional investor demand**.
-

What is an Offer for Sale (OFS)?

An **Offer for Sale (OFS)** is a mechanism through which existing shareholders (such as the Government or company promoters) sell their shares to the public through the stock exchange.

Features

- Only existing shares are sold.
 - The company does **not** issue new shares.
 - The sale proceeds go to the selling shareholder (here, the Government), **not** to the company.
-

Example

Suppose the Government owns **80%** of a PSU.

If it sells **5%** through OFS:

- Government ownership reduces to **75%**.
- The company receives no new funds.
- The Government receives the sale proceeds.

What is Disinvestment?

Disinvestment means the Government sells part or all of its stake in public sector enterprises (PSUs).

Objectives

- Raise revenue.
 - Reduce fiscal deficit.
 - Increase public participation in PSUs.
 - Improve efficiency through wider ownership.
 - Meet minimum public shareholding norms.
-

Why did the Government sell LIC shares?

1. Raise Revenue

The Government raised **₹31,552 crore**, contributing to its FY27 disinvestment receipts.

2. Achieve Public Shareholding Norms

SEBI requires listed companies to maintain a minimum level of public ownership.

For LIC, the target is:

- **10% public shareholding by May 16, 2027.**

The latest OFS helps LIC move closer to this requirement **ahead of schedule**.

Bids Received

113.16 crore shares

Since bids exceeded the shares on offer:

The issue was **oversubscribed**.

Overall subscription:

1.38x

Institutional Investors

Offered

74 crore shares

Bid Received

107.4 crore shares

Subscription:

1.45x

This indicates strong confidence from large investors such as:

- Mutual funds.
- Insurance companies.
- Pension funds.
- Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs).
- Banks.

Retail Investors

Retail investors bid for:

5.76 crore shares

against

8.22 crore shares offered.

Subscription:

0.70x

This means the retail portion was **undersubscribed**.

Possible reasons include:

- Market volatility.
- Investors waiting for lower prices.
- Preference for other investment options.

Connection with LIC Bonus Issue

The article notes that the OFS followed LIC's **1:1 bonus share issue**.

What is a Bonus Share?

A **bonus issue** is the distribution of additional shares to existing shareholders **free of cost**.

In a **1:1 bonus issue**:

- A shareholder receives **one additional share for every one share already held**.

Example

Before:

100 shares

After a 1:1 bonus:

200 shares

The total investment value generally remains the same immediately after the bonus because the share price adjusts accordingly.

Why was the Bonus Issue Important?

The bonus issue:

- Reduced the market price per share.
- Made LIC shares more affordable.
- Increased participation from a wider range of investors.
- Improved the attractiveness of the OFS.

LIC IPO Background

Particular	Details
IPO Year	May 2022
Stake Sold	3.5%
Amount Raised	₹20,516 crore

At that time, the Government retained the majority of LIC's ownership and planned to gradually increase public shareholding over the following years.

Why is Disinvestment Important?

Benefits

1. Generates Non-Tax Revenue

The Government raises funds without increasing taxes or borrowing.

2. Reduces Fiscal Deficit

Higher non-tax revenue lowers borrowing requirements.

3. Improves Corporate Governance

A broader shareholder base often increases transparency and accountability.

4. Enhances Market Efficiency

More publicly traded shares improve liquidity and price discovery.

Feature	OFS	IPO	FPO	Bonus Issue
New Shares Issued?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes (from reserves)
Money Goes To	Selling shareholder	Company	Company	No fresh cash raised
Purpose	Stake sale	Raise fresh capital and list	Raise additional capital	Reward existing shareholders
Ownership Dilution	Government/promoter stake reduces	Yes	Yes	Proportionate ownership remains unchanged

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Instructor: Dilkhush Kumar

Start Date: 10 August, 2026

Duration: 45 days

Validity: 6 months

Course level:

Language:

A quiz on the tragic atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki August 6 and 9, 81 years ago

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1

What were the nicknames of the bombs dropped on the two Japanese cities?

QUESTION 2

What were the core nuclear materials used in the two bombs?

QUESTION 3

Apart from the two unfortunate cities that bore the brunt of the dastardly attack, which other three cities were in the initial list?

QUESTION 4

Name the two intended

aim points in both the cities that were not hit because of weather conditions.

QUESTION 5

Which flower became the official flower of Hiroshima because it was the first plant to bloom on the scorched earth following the atomic bombing?

QUESTION 6

Which legendary scientist remarked, "Had I known that the Germans would not succeed in developing an atomic bomb, I would have done nothing for the bomb"?



Visual Question:

This is Tsutomu Yamaguchi, a 'hibakusha'. What is his unique claim to fame as regards the survivors? AP

Word of the day

Axiomatic:

evident without proof or argument

Synonyms: obvious, unmistakable,
apparent

Usage: *It is axiomatic that clean water is essential for life.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/axiomatic

International Phonetic Alphabet: /æksiəmætɪk/

Word of the day

Capricious:

determined by chance or impulse rather than necessity or reason

Synonyms: impulsive, whimsical

Usage: *She displayed a capricious disposition, shifting from warmth to aloofness in moments.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/capricious

International Phonetic

Alphabet: /kə'prɪʃəs/



Thank you 😊

