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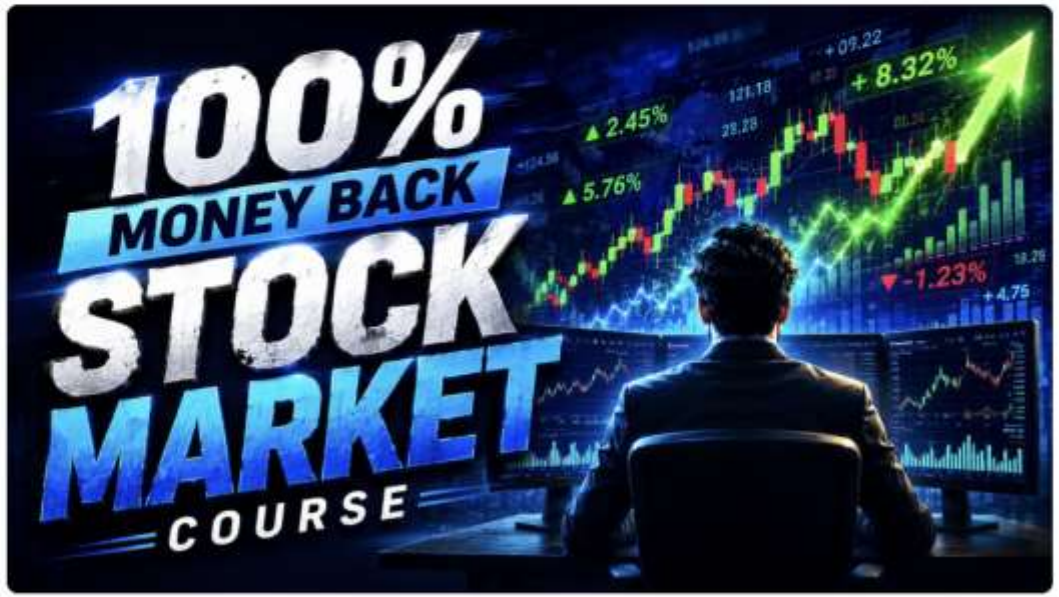

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SUNDAY
August 9, 2026
INTERNATIONAL EDITION
24 Pages

THE HINDU ON SUNDAY
INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

www.thehindu.com
Vol. 4 - No. 32

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INSIDE

'Strait won't open until U.S. corrects its behaviour'

DUBAI
Iran's politburo-like body, known as the Supreme National Security Council, said on Saturday that the Strait of Hormuz will not open until the United States "corrects its behaviour," issuing new demands that could shake up talks on a deal to manage the waterway and traffic on it. » PAGE 12

NALSAR students don't want CJI at convocation

HYDERABAD
A large section of students of the outgoing 2026 batch at the NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad, do not want Chief Justice of India Surya Kant as the chief guest at their convocation ceremony. The university is yet to announce the date or confirm the chief guest's presence. » PAGE 3

Jharkhand exam row: CID summons three

PATNA
Amid protests by aspirants alleging irregularities in the conduct of competitive examinations in Jharkhand, the State Crime Investigation Department (CID) has issued summonses to three serving members of the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC). » PAGE 3

Two killed as Kerala RTC bus overturns

BENGALURU
Two people were killed and 20 injured after a Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus bound for Bengaluru toppled after ramming a signboard on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Highway near Avaragere Gate in Bengaluru South district on Saturday. » PAGE 3

IAF officer held for 'leaking sensitive data'

NEW DELHI
An Indian Air Force Wing Commander was arrested in May for allegedly sharing sensitive defence-related information with a Pakistani intelligence operative after he was allegedly honey-trapped through social media, officials said on Saturday. » PAGE 3

More than 1.5 crore names off poll rolls in latest phase of SIR

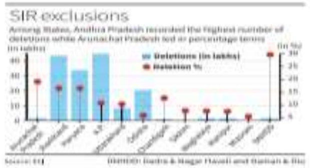
Third phase of SIR ongoing in 16 States and three UTs; Andhra Pradesh has highest deletions at 44.89 lakh while Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu had the highest proportion of deletions; enumeration phase extended in some States

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

More than 1.5 crore names have been deleted so far from the existing voter lists in the ongoing third phase of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls conducted by the Election Commission.

Of the 16 States and three Union Territories in which 'SIR 3.0' is being conducted, draft lists have been published for 12.

According to an analysis of data shared by the EC, the total voters in the 12 States where draft lists have been published were 13,77,27,807 out of which 1,58,59,834 (11.51%) stand deleted on account of absent/shifted/dead voters.



The numbers in the final voter lists could increase as the EC provides a window for people to submit claims and objections for additions and deletions from the draft as well as registration of new voters.

Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu have the highest proportion of deletions at 29.64% followed by Arunachal Pradesh (19.09%), Haryana (16.38%) and Chandigarh (12.8%). Mizoram has the least proportion of deletions (5.2%).

In absolute numbers, Andhra Pradesh has the highest deletions at 44.89 lakh followed by Jharkhand (43.62 lakh), Haryana (33.83 lakh) and Odisha (20.12 lakh). Sikkim has the least deletions at 37,724 (8%) followed by Mizoram at 46,162.

In Manipur, 7.5% have been deleted, Meghalaya 7.67%, Uttarakhand 10.39% and Chandigarh 12.8%.

The door-to-door verification phase has been extended in Delhi, Punjab, Telangana, Karnataka, Maharashtra and thus their draft lists along with those of Tripura and Nagaland are yet to be published.

In Andhra Pradesh, which has the highest deletion in absolute numbers, 44.89 lakh (10.78%) names have been deleted with the draft now shrinking to 3.71 crore from 4.16 crore electors.

Among the deletions, 22.30 lakh accounted for shifting or being absent at the address while 15.22 lakh were reported dead and 7.37 lakh were enrolled at multiple places.

The SIR exercise has already been conducted in Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

In Assam, due to legalities of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a "special revision" was conducted.

Fatal plunge

Hillside horror: People gather after a private bus overturned and plunged onto a lower road in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh on Saturday. At least seven passengers were killed and 11 injured. PTI REPORT: PAGE 11

Manipur CM reopens NH to allow free movement

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Manipur government on Saturday announced the immediate reopening of the National Highways (NH) for the free movement of people from all communities. Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh, Deputy Chief Minister Nemcha Kipgen, and Saitu MLA Haokholet Kipgen jointly announced the reopening of highways during a visit to Kangpokpi, a Kuki-majority district.

FULL REPORT
» PAGE 3

Youth must keep questioning, seek solutions, says PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets the gathering during the 57th Convocation Ceremony of IIT-Delhi on Saturday. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Days after a massive youth protest forced the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as Union Education Minister, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that "the youth should question things that are accepted without a thought, but don't just stop at questioning, have the courage to also find their solutions."

He was addressing new graduates at IIT-Delhi's 57th convocation ceremony. Their degrees, Mr. Modi said, represent much more than academic success, serving also as a mandate to contribute to the nation. During the ceremony, degrees were conferred on over 3,000 graduating students, including 587 Ph.D. scholars.

Since mid-July, Mr. Modi has increased his outreach to youth, even as student protests continue in various parts of the country, seeking education reforms, particularly regarding paper leaks in competitive examinations.

Addressing the shifting geopolitical and strategic global landscape, he identified the relentless speed of technological advancement as the primary catalyst for these global transformations. He framed this era of rapid change as a dual landscape of unprecedented challenges and vast new opportunities. "The one who continuously learns is the one who will win," Mr. Modi said.

He presented honours to students, including the President's Gold Medal, Director's Gold Medal, Shankar Dayal Sharma Gold Medal, and Perfect Ten Gold Medals to meritorious students. He also remotely inaugurated Param Pragya, an AI-powered high-performance supercomputing facility established at IIT-Delhi's Sonipat campus.

As U.S. Senate clears Bill, 100% tariff threat looms

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Senate has passed, with overwhelming majority, a Bill that could once again see massive tariffs of up to 100% being levied on India for its import of Russian oil.

The Senate voted 86-11 to pass the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026. The Bill will now need to pass in the House of Representatives before it becomes law.

According to Senate documents, the bipartisan Act "is designed to deprive Vladimir Putin of the revenue financing Russia's war against Ukraine" by imposing sanctions on Russia's

political leadership, financial institutions, energy sector, and sanctions-evasion networks.

As per the Bill, the U.S. would after 30 days of its passage impose a tariff of 100% on the import of goods originating in a country that met one of two broad criteria. India runs the risk of qualifying under at least one of the criteria. First, the tariffs would apply on a country that was among the five largest importers, by total volume, of crude oil or natural gas originating from Russia during the 12 months preceding the date of the enactment of the Act, and that then proceeds to import oil or gas from Russia after 30 days of the Act's enactment.

Leading importers

This is the criteria that could impact India. China and India are the top two importers of Russian crude oil. Further, Russian crude accounted for more than 40% of Indian crude oil imports in May 2026 and more than 50% in June.

Scaling this back drastically within 30 days at a time when passage through the volatile Strait of Hormuz is still constrained would be very difficult for India.

The second criterion for the tariffs is if a country was among the top five nations "facilitating Russian oil sanctions evasion during the 12 months preceding the date of the enactment of the Act". India runs a much lower risk of qualifying for tariffs under this criterion as Indian oil marketing companies have repeatedly said that all their purchases have been made without violating sanctions.

If the 100% tariffs were levied, this would be the highest tariff level so far that India would have had to face during Donald Trump's presidency. This would come on top of a 10% tariff that the U.S. currently imposes on imports from India.

Youth have worked to light a lamp in the darkness, says Rahul

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Saturday said India's youth are the country's greatest strength, and their potential is unparalleled in the world. Speaking in Prayagraj, he added that the youth of the country have worked to light a lamp in the darkness.

"This evening I want to speak to you about *dard* (pain), data, and *daulat* (wealth). The youth of India have faced fear and worked to change the country. The culture of India is one of truth and non-violence. No student should have hatred in their heart, only love. We have to end this corrupt system with love and affection. I stand with all the youth who are fighting for their rights," Mr. Gandhi said while addressing the 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' interaction programme.

The Congress leader alleged that while families spend millions of rupees on education, the system just issues certificates without providing employment. "India's youth have all the potential, but the system has trapped them in a maze. Only 12 out of 1,000 people get permanent jobs. People's data is snatched from them and given to big companies. Then you're told to create reels and content. Young people are told to work for Blinkit, Uber, or do labour work, but you can't get a job in this country," he said.

Mr. Gandhi also emphasised that in the 21st century, progress relies on youth potential and data.

As U.S. Senate clears Bill, 100% tariff threat looms

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Burning issue

U.S. Senate passes Bill aiming to cut off funding for Russia's war in Ukraine

- Bill proposes **100% tariffs** on countries 'heavily' importing Russian oil and gas
- Russian crude accounted for more than **50% of Indian imports** in June 2026
- China and India are the **top two** importers of Russian crude oil
- The legislation **awaits approval** from the U.S. House of Representatives

As per the Bill, the U.S. would after 30 days of its passage impose a tariff of 100% on the import of goods originating in a country that met one of two broad criteria. India runs the risk of qualifying under at least one of the criteria. First, the tariffs would apply on a country that was among the five largest importers, by total volume, of crude oil or natural gas originating from Russia during the 12 months preceding the date of the enactment of the Act, and that then proceeds to import oil or gas from Russia after 30 days of the Act's enactment.

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Point	Details
Legislation	**Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026**
U.S. Senate vote	**86–11 in favour**
Main objective	Reduce the revenue available to Russia for financing its war in Ukraine
Key weapon	Potential **100% tariff** on goods imported into the U.S. from certain countries dealing heavily in Russian oil/gas
India affected?	**Potentially yes — significantly**
Is it law already?	**No**
Next stage	It must pass the **U.S. House of Representatives**
After that	Presidential approval/signature would be required before it becomes law
Implementation mentioned	Tariff provisions could operate after a **30-day window**, subject to the bill's final enacted text

- **Why is the U.S. proposing such a huge tariff?**
- The bill's logic is:
- **Russia sells oil/gas → Russia earns export revenue → revenue helps finance the Russian state and its war → pressure major buyers of Russian energy → reduce Russia's revenue.**
- Instead of merely imposing additional sanctions directly on Russia, the legislation threatens countries that continue to buy large quantities of Russian energy.
- This is effectively a form of **secondary economic pressure**.
- The Senate document quoted in the article says the legislation is intended to deprive Vladimir Putin of revenue financing Russia's war against Ukraine by targeting areas including:
  - Russian political leadership
  - financial institutions
  - energy sector
  - sanctions-evasion networks

Indicator mentioned in article	Position
World's major Russian crude buyers	**China and India are top two**
Russian share of India's crude imports — May 2026	**More than 40%**
Russian share — June 2026	**More than 50%**
Therefore	India could satisfy one of the bill's main criteria

- **Why India is particularly exposed**
- India's vulnerability comes primarily from **how much Russian crude it buys**.
- That **50%+ figure is particularly important**.
- It shows how dramatically India's oil relationship with Russia has changed compared with the period before the Ukraine war.

TOP CRUDE SUPPLIERS TO INDIA

(April - November 2024)

Rank	Country	2026 position / significance
1	RU **Russia**	By far the largest; **~52% of India's crude imports in June 2026**, about **2.6 million bpd**
2	IQ **Iraq**	Traditionally India's No. 2 supplier; volumes fell during the 2026 disruption
3	AE **UAE**	Major Gulf supplier; volumes increased strongly during parts of 2026
4	SA **Saudi Arabia**	Traditionally top-3, but 2026 volumes have been disrupted/reduced
5	US **United States**	Increasingly important alternative supplier

Rank	Country	LNG supplied in May 2026
🥇 1	US **United States**	**0.9 million tonnes**
🥈 2	NG **Nigeria**	**0.5 mt**
🥉 3	OM **Oman**	**0.3 mt**
4	AO **Angola**	**0.3 mt**
5	AE **UAE**	**0.1 mt**
—	QA Qatar	**0** in May

DUE RECOGNITION

Head edges Carey to bag the Allan Border Medal

CRICKET AUSTRALIA

Star batter Travis Head won Australia's top cricketing honour for the second year in a row, edging Alex Carey to claim the Allan Border Medal. The 32-year-old Head polled 153 votes, one more than wicketkeeper and South Australia teammate Carey, and three clear of fast bowler Mitchell Starc.

BIDDING ADIEU

Flintoff steps down as England Lions head coach

GETTY IMAGES

Former England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff has stepped down as head coach of the England Lions, leaving the 49-year-old to focus on his role at Sydney Thunder in the Big Bash League. Mike Yardy will take charge of the Professional County Club Select XI for Pakistan's four-day warm-up match at Beckenham from Tuesday.

VALUABLE ASSET

Atletico will not sell Alvarez, says chief coach Simeone

REUTERS

Atletico Madrid will not allow forward Julian Alvarez to leave the club during the current transfer window despite interest from Barcelona, manager Diego Simeone said. "The club has made a decision that Miguel Angel Gil Marin (CEO) has explained very well. We are very happy to have a footballer like Julian," Simeone said.

HIGH-PROFILE SWITCH

Arsenal completes the signing of Newcastle captain Guimaraes

AGANSENAL

Premier League champion Arsenal has completed the signing of Newcastle captain Bruno Guimaraes for a reported fee of £75 million, the two clubs announced on Saturday. The Brazil international, who spent four-and-a-half seasons with Newcastle, has signed a "long-term contract" with the Gunners.

Padikkal hammers century, in pole position for No. 3 spot

The left-hander's knock laced with 18 fours, and his partnerships with Rahul and Jadeja power India's reply; Suthar also impresses with the willow for the visiting side; southpaws Jaiswal and Pant fail to get going; Jurel too, falls cheaply

INDIA IN SRI LANKA

Press Trust of India
COLOMBO

Devdutt Padikkal almost assured himself of a spot in India's playing XI for the opening Test with a stylish century on the second day of the warm-up match against Sri Lanka Cricket XI, while Rishabh Pant and his understudy Dhruv Jurel failed to make the most of favourable batting conditions.

At the end of the second day, India finished its first innings at 337 for eight in 90 overs.

Padikkal's unbeaten 142 (264b, 16x4) and a gritty 63 (retired hurt) by veteran Ravindra Jadeja were the highlights, while Manav Suthar (41) also impressed with the bat on his maiden overseas international assignment.

In full flow

The pitch had become much easier to bat on, and Padikkal took full advantage, hitting 18 boundaries to show that he is ready to reclaim his place now that first-choice No. 3 batter B. Sai Sudharsan has been ruled out of the series after failing to recover in time from his big toe injury.

With Yashasvi Jaiswal falling off the second delivery of the day for a duck while attempting to flash at left-arm seamer Vishwa Fernando (one for 42), K.L. Rahul (40) and Padikkal added 96 for the second wicket. While Rahul played himself in, the sinewy Padikkal was a treat to watch, opening with a couple of cover drives off fuller deliveries before unleashing some delectable cuts both in front of and behind point. He was particularly severe on right-arm pacer Ishitha Wijesundara who was hit for multiple boundaries.

A pull shot off off-spinner Ramesh Mendis brought up his ton off 121 balls before he was asked to retire.

By then, he had added 72 runs for the third wicket with Jadeja, who again showed why he is a valuable asset as a middle-order batter overseas even as his spin bowling stocks has depleted quite considerably.

Indiscreet shot

The biggest disappointment of the day was certainly Rishabh Pant (two) who once again played an indiscreet shot against off-spinner Mendis (two for 77) trying to hit him against the turn over long-on. The leading edge flew to long-off.

Dhruv Jurel's (one) technical ineptitude against off-spinners was exposed once again after the South Africa Test series.

A forward defensive prod and the inside-edge flew to short-square-leg fielder who caught it on the second attempt. Towards the end, Padikkal once again came out to bat and added four more boundaries in the company of Sarmah Jain (22 retired hurt).

The score: Sri Lanka Cricket XI 353/8 vs India 337/8 in 90 overs (Rahul 40, Padikkal 142 n.o., Suthar 41).

Classy: Padikkal hit top form in the practice match, with an array of brilliant strokes. GETTY IMAGES

Sai Sudharsan to miss Lanka Test series

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Top-order batter B. Sai Sudharsan was on Saturday ruled out of the two-Test series against Sri Lanka after failing to recover from a toe injury sustained during India-A's tour of the island nation last month.

Sai Sudharsan, who struck two centuries in the two 'Tests', was hit during the second game against Sri Lanka A and has since then been in rehabilitation at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru. "Doctors have advised more time for healing. There is significant improvement, but it is not yet sufficient for a safe return to Test cricket," reckoned the Sports Science team monitoring his rehabilitation.

It also conveyed the same to the team management and National selection committee.

The medical-cum-fitness advice for Sai Sudharsan reads: "Rehabilitation, strength & conditioning, and cricket-specific loads should be increased gradually and under close monitoring."

Sai Sudharsan. FILE PHOTO

Vital aspect: Having enough overs under one's belt is key to avoiding injuries, feels Srinath. R SRINIVASAN

Srinath stresses the need for a pace battery

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

During his playing days, Javagal Srinath often had to wage a lone battle as the pace spearhead and lacked support from the other end. Even though India's fast bowling fortunes have changed for the better, constant injuries to the pacers have become a point of concern in recent times. As India looks to build the next core group of speedsters, Srinath stressed the importance of having a pack to share the burden.

"I always felt that fast bowling is about a group of bowlers together. It is about conservation of energy, and you will be able to build a good team. But if you are all alone, you will bowl 16-17 overs and become ineffective. So if you have three-four good quicks, your team is always effective, and the striking ability is far better," said Srinath at a panel discussion during the Events and Entertainment Management Association conclave here on Saturday.

The Mysore Express, as he was called during his playing days, felt that having enough overs under one's belt is key to avoiding injuries.

"If you don't bowl enough and all of a sudden if you are bowling the third spell, that is around 3.30 p.m., you end up pulling a muscle or probably tearing your ligament or hamstring or whatever. So it is important that you play enough, which means good 1000-1600 overs a year that will keep you in good shape," he said.

Srinath was a key part of the national side's graph going up in the new millennium after the match-fixing scandal, and the Karnataka pacer praised Sourav Ganguly's leadership during that phase.

"Post the match-fixing scandal, a lot of things came good to us. I think there was a bit of a resolutenss in every player to really put that image back and prove to the world that cricket was clean. Every individual showed leadership. Then the team started winning not only in India, but also abroad," said Srinath. The 56-year-old is currently serving as an ICC Match Referee and has officiated in more than 500 games.

BCCI secretary to meet Laxman to take stock of players' injury issues

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Concerned with the spate of injuries that has rocked Indian team of late, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia will meet Head of Cricket V.V.S. Laxman on Sunday to take stock of the rehabilitation management programme at the Centre of Excellence (CoE).

India will be missing the services of Jasprit Bumrah (knee swelling), B. Sai Sudharsan (toe), Harshit Rana (hamstring), Nitish Kumar (hamstring) and Washington Sundar (quadriceps) due to various injuries.

Akash Deep (lower back stress fracture) has been out for the longest time, since Bengal's Ranji Trophy semifinal defeat.

Adding to that, whiteball specialists Hardik Pandya (quadriceps), Varun Chakravarthy (hamstring) and Prince Yadav (hamstring) are at the CoE, where the Sports Science team is overworked without a chief since the resignation of Nitin Patel in early 2025.

"Saikia will be in Bengaluru to take a stock of the situation along with Laxman. There is a meeting scheduled. It is not known whether head coach of the national team, Gautam Gambhir, or chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar will join online," said a BCCI source.

Laxman. FILE PHOTO. B. MURALI KUMAR

Ashish opens India's medal account at the u-20 Worlds

ATHLETICS

Press Trust of India
EUGENE (USA)

Ashish Yadav won a silver in the men's javelin throw event to open India's medal account, while National senior record holder Pooja Singh qualified for the women's high jump final at the World Athletics under-20 Championships here.

Dharanidharan sixth

Ashish's third round throw of 74.09m fetched him silver while T. Dharanidharan, the other Indian in the men's javelin finals on Friday, finished sixth with 72.35m.

Ashish's effort was 40cm short of his personal best of 74.49m recorded during the Indian Open Throws Competition in Patiala in March.

The 19-year-old is now the second Indian, after two-time Olympic medalist Neeraj Chopra, to win a silver in the event.

Neeraj won gold and set the still-standing World junior record of 86.48m in 2016 in Poland.

Mohammed Ashfaq, who broke the u-20 National record during the men's 400m first round heat a day earlier with 45.81s, finished eighth, clocking 46.20s in the final.

Pooja qualified for the final round in the women's high jump event, sailing over 1.79m.

All 14 athletes across two qualification groups, who managed to clear 1.79m, were awarded places in the final.

Shahnavaz, Jithin shine

In the men's long jump, both Shahnavaz Khan and Jithin Arjuna made it to the finals after the qualification round.

Shahnavaz finished fourth in qualification tiroup A and fifth overall with a 7.73m jump in his third and final attempt.

Jithin also advanced, finishing 12th overall and taking the last available spot, with his 7.57m jump in his third and final attempt.

Poonam, however, failed to qualify for the women's javelin final after finishing eighth in her qualification group and 13th overall with a day's best throw of 48.48m.

Ashish. AGANSENAL

Ashmita defeats Rakshitha, reaches Korea Masters final

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
ASAN

Ashmita Chaliha extended her impressive run at the Korea Masters Super 300 badminton tournament, overcoming fellow Indian Rakshitha Ramraj 21-13, 16-21, 21-13 to reach her maiden BWF World Tour singles final here on Saturday.

The World No. 50 Ashmita, who trains under Park Tae-sang, will battle China's Han Qianxi for the title. Qianxi, ranked 35th and seeded fourth here, recorded a 22-20, 18-21, 21-14 win in her last-four duel.

Ashmita came out with aggression and quickly moved from 2-2 to 6-2 in the opener. She reeled off five straight points to establish a 13-6 lead before closing the game out with ease.

But Rakshitha, the 19-year-old Pullela Gopichand Academy trainee, bounced back by securing an 8-3 advantage in the second game.

A brutal smash from the left-handed Ashmita at 6-12 down was her first convincing shot in that phase. Another straight smash, a return of serve hitting the net and a long lift from Rakshitha meant Ashmita narrowed the gap to 12-13.

Rakshitha, however, held her nerve in the closing stages to take the match into the decider.

Ashmita surged to a 8-1 lead, courtesy three smashes from her and a few unforced errors by Rakshitha.

Leading by eight points at the halfway stage, the 20-year-old lost some momentum but managed to stay ahead.

Having earned nine match points, Ashmita squandered two before Rakshitha sprayed one wide to hand her the win.

Flying high: Ashmita overcame a wobble. BADMINTONPHOTO

DUE RECOGNITION

Head edges Carey to bag the Allan Border Medal

CRICKET AUSTRALIA

Star batter Travis Head won Australia's top cricketing honour for the second year in a row, edging Alex Carey to claim the Allan Border Medal. The 32-year-old Head polled 153 votes, one more than wicketkeeper and South Australia teammate Carey, and three clear of fast bowler Mitchell Starc.

Player	Votes	Difference from winner
Travis Head	**153**	Winner
Alex Carey	152	**1 vote behind**
Mitchell Starc	150	**3 votes behind**

What is the Allan Border Medal?

The Allan Border Medal is generally regarded as the **highest individual honour for an Australian male international cricketer**.

It is named after former Australian captain Allan Border.

It recognises performances across Australia's international cricket season rather than being limited to one particular format.

Why is Head's achievement important?

The important examination point is not simply that Head won it, but that he has now won it **two years consecutively**.

At **32 years of age**, according to the clipping:

Travis Head – 153 → Alex Carey – 152 → Mitchell Starc – 150

That extraordinarily narrow margin shows how competitive the award was.

MONDAY
August 10, 2026
INTERNATIONAL EDITION
20 Pages

www.thehindu.com

THE HINDU

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

Vol. 4 • No. 189

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RAHUL GANDHI WRITES

Either culpable or incompetent

Students were brutally attacked by forces which report to one man

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MEMORABLE TRIUMPH

Ashmita Chaliha wins Korea Masters title

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INSIDE

MP lists Bill on restricting social media for minors

NEW DELHI

Amid the debate over whether to impose a social media ban on children under 13 or 16, a private members' Bill listed in the Lok Sabha by BJP MP Baijayant Panda offers a glimpse of what such a measure could look like in legislative form. The Bill also comes amid the government's stand-off with Meta. The Safeguarding Healthy Internet Environments for Little Digital Natives (Shield) Bill, 2026 was listed on Friday but could not be tabled as House was adjourned early. » PAGE 3

Netanyahu rejects Trump's Gaza proposal

- Israeli military will not withdraw unless Hamas is 'genuinely disarmed', says Israeli Prime Minister
- Willing to challenge Trump, he says, while opposing the deal following pushback from right-wing allies
- Hamas is still committed to the proposal, wants America and mediators to put pressure on Israel

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday rejected a U.S.-led Gaza plan endorsed by Hamas, putting distance between himself and U.S. President Donald Trump as he tries to shore up his base ahead of coming elections.

After more than a week of gradually escalating criticism of the plan proposed by the Board of Peace, and despite receiving assurances that Israel would not need to start withdrawing from Gaza immediately, Mr. Netanyahu explicitly opposed the deal following pushback from his right-wing allies.

"Israel rejects the 15-point document," Mr. Netanyahu said, referring to the plan Hamas agreed to in late July. The Israeli military "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed, and will continue to thwart threats against our forces and our citizens", he told a Cabinet meeting.

Mr. Netanyahu described Mr. Trump, who had hailed the Gaza deal as a milestone for peace, as "our greatest friend in the White House", but quickly made clear he was willing to challenge him, saying Israel was raising its objections with the United States. "They have ideas, some of them are acceptable to us and some are not, and we know how to stand our ground on these matters," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, is running even or trailing in some polls ahead of October 27 elections, the country's first since the devastating October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas that sparked the war in Gaza.

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Difference of opinions

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What the plan says:

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Israeli Prime Minister

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Hamas in a statement said it was still committed to the plan.

"We expect the mediators and the American guarantor to pressure Mr. Netanyahu and his government to adhere to the road map, and not obstruct the process for internal political and electoral reasons," said Basem Naim, a member of Hamas's political bureau.

Hamas said it would surrender weapons to a nascent Palestinian governing body. The plan said Israel would begin pulling out forces in tandem with the disarmament, a timeline it adamantly rejected.

'Honour commitments'

After meeting Mr. Netanyahu last week, Mr. Trump's body implementing the deal, dubbed the Board of Peace, backtracked and said Israel would only need to withdraw after "complete" disarmament, but it was apparently not enough for Mr. Netanyahu.

"We are talking about real disarmament, not fictitious disarmament," he said on Sunday.

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The Israeli Army has reported five deaths in its ranks during the same period.

Almond season

Valley of plenty: Farmers collect almonds at a village in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Almond cultivation is a key agricultural activity in the Kashmir Valley, contributing to the livelihoods of thousands of families. ANSS NISAR

Jharkhand government cancels 3 examinations as protests continue

Suruchi Kumari
RANCHI

The Jharkhand government on Sunday agreed to cancel the 14th Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) preliminary examination and the JPSC backlog examinations held in 2023 and 2025 following discussions with protesting student groups.

The State's Technical and Higher Education Minister, Sudivya Kumar, said the government had accepted "98% of the demands" of the protesting groups. The government also announced an Enforcement Directorate probe into alleged financial irregularities in the JPSC exam.

However, the students remained firm on their demand for a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the alleged irregularities in the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination and said the agitation would continue, including a march to the State Assembly on Monday. The announcement came even as all three JPSC members resigned and Chief Minister Hemant Soren assured protesters that "Justice will be delivered with full transparency".

"The government has agreed with the demand for cancellation of the 14th JPSC and backlog examinations of 2023 and 2025," Mr. Kumar said, adding that the State cannot recommend a CBI probe "as we do not have jurisdiction regarding the JSSC-CGL exams that happened in line with High court and Supreme court directions".

A State government delegation with student representatives after the meeting on Sunday.

The groups, led by Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha (JLKM) and JPSC-JSSC Reforms Manch, said they wanted cancellation of the JSSC-CGL and all exams conducted by the TSR Data Processing Private Ltd., a blacklisted entity.

Responding to the demand over Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination, the government said a committee will be formed under a retired judge for a judicial probe and the CBI will investigate the criminal angle. It has not yet agreed to cancel exams conducted by the TDPL.

'WILL SAFEGUARD FUTURE'
» PAGE 4

Ladakh set to lead caste enumeration in India

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Ladakh, one of the two youngest Union Territories in the country, is set to lead the way in demonstrating how caste will be enumerated for the first time in independent India.

The second phase of the Census — the Population Enumeration (PE) — which starts on August 17 in Ladakh and other snow-bound areas, is likely to ask questions on 40 parameters and provide an open-ended column for caste enumeration. While this is India's first digital Census, officials are making an exception for Ladakh by printing a sufficient number of paper schedules.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 4

J&K group flags 'terrorism threat' against Pandits

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

A Kashmir organisation on Sunday expressed concerns over purported online threats issued by terrorists to Pandits living in the Valley and demanded a probe, saying that the threats had "forced many minority community employees" working in the region to "go on leave".

The Panun Kashmir, a Jammu-based organisation of Kashmiri Pandits, said the purported threat communication, dated August 7 and issued in the name of the United Liberation Council, "has specifically named members of the Kashmiri Pandit community and disclosed their telephone numbers".

Official sources said scores of Pandits working in Kashmir under the Prime Minister's rehabilitation package had left the Valley in the face of the fresh threat. They said department in "volatile and sensitive locations" in Kashmir had allowed Pandit employees to go on leave till August 20. However, there has been no official communication from the government.

A sense of fear has returned to Kashmir after terrorists killed one policeman and two non-local labourers in the past 20 days. PTI

Scores of Pandits working in Kashmir have left the Valley after the fresh threat, sources say

"The communication represented a serious escalation because it went beyond generic threats and appeared to identify individuals as potential targets while claiming access to information about their families, locations and places of work," said Agnishekhar, convener of Panun Kashmir.

Mr. Agnishekhar demanded an investigation into the authenticity of the claims made in the letter. He also urged J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha "to immediately direct the police and security agencies to undertake a comprehensive threat assessment of all persons named in the communication and their immediate families".

The Pandit organisation also sought appropriate security measures for the individuals identified in the communication and a review of the security of Kashmiri Pandit employees working in sensitive government departments.

Referring to the letter, Mr. Agnishekhar said it needed to be established whether the perpetrators actually possessed such information or were "attempting psychological warfare". "The authorities must investigate the source of the information, the digital trail behind the communication and whether any surveillance, profiling or reconnaissance of the targeted persons has taken place," he added.

A sense of fear returned to Kashmir after terrorists killed one policeman and two non-local labourers in south Kashmir in the past 20 days in two separate targeted killings.

According to police sources, a local Lashkar-e-Taiba militant could be involved in these targeted killings.

Jet premises searched

Meanwhile, the J&K Police on Sunday conducted coordinated searches at 28 locations across Sopore in north Kashmir in connection with cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against banned socio-religious organisation Jamaat-e-Islami (Jel).

"The searches were carried out at residential and other premises linked to the Jel leaders, members and activists across different areas of Sopore. During the searches, incriminating documents, literature and electronic devices were recovered and seized from various premises. The seized material is being examined as part of the ongoing investigation to ascertain further linkages and activities connected with the proscribed organisation," said the police.

The police said the operation forms part of sustained efforts to dismantle networks and ecosystems associated with proscribed organisations and separatist activities and to take firm action against activities "prejudicial to the security, sovereignty and integrity" of the nation.

Houthis strike Saudi Arabian oil facility, kill 11 in Yemen

Agence France-Presse
ADEN

At least 11 persons were killed in Houthi strikes in Yemen's port city of Mokha on Sunday while a drone salvo by the Iran-aligned rebels targeted a Saudi Arabian oil refinery on the Kingdom's Red Sea coast.

The attack in Mokha comes after a years-long truce in the civil war between the Houthis and the Saudi Arabia-backed internationally recognised Yemeni government appeared to collapse, as fighting between the rebels and the Kingdom flared in recent weeks. A source said three civilians and eight military personnel were killed in the attack.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 14

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The Israeli Army has reported five deaths in its ranks during the same period.

What happened?

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a **15-point U.S.-led Gaza proposal** that had reportedly been endorsed by Hamas.

The fundamental disagreement concerns **when Israel should withdraw its military forces from Gaza relative to Hamas's disarmament**.

The central disagreement

U.S.-led proposal:

Hamas disarms → Palestinian governing structure develops → Israeli forces progressively withdraw.

Netanyahu's position:

Hamas must first be **genuinely/fully disarmed** → only then should Israeli forces withdraw.

That sequencing dispute is at the heart of the article.

What did Trump's proposal envisage?

The article identifies two especially important components:

Component	Proposed arrangement
Hamas weapons	Hamas would surrender weapons to a nascent Palestinian governing body
Israeli forces	Israel would begin pulling out forces **in tandem with the disarmament process**

This is precisely where Netanyahu objects.

The U.S. framework appears to envisage a **parallel process**:

Hamas disarms progressively ↔ Israel withdraws progressively

Netanyahu wants a more sequential arrangement:

Complete/genuine Hamas disarmament → Israeli withdrawal

Why is Netanyahu challenging Trump?

This is politically interesting because Netanyahu has historically maintained a very close relationship with Donald Trump.

The article notes Trump's previous strongly pro-Israel actions, including moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, Netanyahu says Israel is prepared to disagree with Washington where Israeli security interests are concerned.

Domestic politics is important

Netanyahu is also facing pressure from his **right-wing political base and Cabinet allies**.

According to the clipping:

- polls suggest the U.S.-led Gaza plan is unpopular among Netanyahu's right-wing supporters;
- far-right members of his Cabinet have urged him to reject it;
- Israel is approaching elections;
- Netanyahu therefore has domestic electoral considerations in addition to security concerns.

So his decision has **three dimensions**:

Israeli security + relationship with Washington + domestic electoral politics.

U.S.-led framework

Disarmament and Israeli withdrawal can progress together

Hamas endorsed the framework

Designed to move toward ceasefire implementation

International mediation

Netanyahu's position

Hamas must genuinely disarm first

Netanyahu rejects the 15-point document

Israel wants stronger security guarantees

Israeli government retains freedom to respond to threats

Xi Jinping's doctrine for a self-governing party

Manoj Kewalramani
Chairperson, Geostrategy Programme, The Takshashila Institution

The July meeting of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China (CPC) ended with an announcement that the fifth plenary session of the 20th Central Committee will convene in Beijing in October.

The meeting said that the plenum would focus on major issues concerning comprehensive and strict self-governance within the party. This concept has been closely connected with the ruthless anti-corruption and conduct improvement campaign that China's President Xi Jinping has been carrying out ever since he first took charge in 2012.

The plenum's focus on it is indicative of an effort to further deepen Mr. Xi's control over the party ahead of the 21st Party Congress next year, where, in all likelihood, Mr. Xi will seek a fourth term as General Secretary.

The tables appear to have been set for precisely that outcome as there is no serious contender in sight, and much of the machinery that Mr. Xi has built over the past 13 years has been geared, in one way or another, towards ensuring that there is none.

Beyond scale

It is difficult to overstate the scale of Mr. Xi's anti-corruption campaign.

Between 2012 and 2025, some 7.011 million party members were disciplined or dismissed, among them 930 'tigers', or centrally managed senior cadres. The unprecedented reach of all this is underscored by a striking fact: that three members of the 20th Politburo – a body constituted only in October 2022 – have been sacked.

Additionally, alongside the anti-corruption wave, a sweeping campaign has been targeting the persistent issues of formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance within the party, which are the four ills that undermine party conduct, according to the central Eight-Point Regulation issued in 2012. By official accounting, roughly 1.5 million people have been caught in this crackdown since 2012. Mr. Xi has left little doubt that neither drive will ease. If anything, the message from Beijing is that the pressure will be sustained, and intensified.

Yet reading the comprehensive and strict party self-governance project through the anti-corruption lens alone misses its ambition.

Mr. Xi's party-building agenda is considerably more broader.

It is difficult to overstate the scale of Mr. Xi's anti-corruption campaign. Between 2012 and 2025, some 7.011 million party members were disciplined or dismissed

Strengthening the foundation

Earlier this year, Cai Qi, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and a close confidant of Mr. Xi, formally announced the establishment of 'Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building' – a branch of the wider canon of 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era'.

Chinese media commentary and policy discourse have since stressed the depth of its significance, emphasising that this is not merely a set of instructions on discipline, but rather a systematised body of doctrine that distils the laws governing how a long-term ruling Marxist party should build and govern itself.

In practice, this means an ideological and institutional edifice is being constructed to further entrench Mr. Xi's authority, and bind the CPC ever more tightly to his vision. Ideology supplies the frame, organisational control and incentive structures shape who rises, and discipline enforces loyalty. Together, they are the tools with which Mr. Xi is remaking the party in the image of his own reading of China's trajectory and policy goals, the future he believes the country must pursue, and the kind of cadre he believes must carry it there.

This mindset runs through a recent authoritative essay from the party's discipline inspection and supervision apparatus. There are three key takeaways from it, which are indicative of what one can expect in the months and years ahead.

First, there is unabashed praise for Mr. Xi. The essay attributes all the achievements of discipline work in the new era to Mr. Xi's "navigation and helmsmanship" and instructs cadres to mould themselves in Mr. Xi's "selfless and fearless" image. The goal of discipline, in other words, exists in no small part to put the chairman at ease.

Second, the essay repeatedly presses for institutional innovation to make compliance permanent, calling to "lock power in an institutional cage," to turn discipline into "a genuinely electrified high-voltage line," and to build a "digital" inspection system that harnesses big data to detect and pre-empt wrongdoing.

And third, the animating purpose of discipline is not just loyalty to Mr. Xi but also to the cause that he has outlined. So inspectors are called to ensure that "what the Party Central Committee advocates is resolutely responded to, what it decides is resolutely carried out, and what it forbids is resolutely not done", and to "clear obstacles and provide escort" for the goals and tasks of the 15th Five-Year Plan.

Moulding a political class

In essence, the goal of the Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building and comprehensive and strict party self-governance is not simply to punish wrongdoing.

Rather, the aim is to produce a political class that is, by design, composed of believers and adherents. Of course, this is much easier said than done, as evidenced by the fact that the anti-corruption campaign seems to be an endless affair for a leader who has been in power for 13 years.

The solutions he continues to offer are more of the same pursued with greater intensity, and now dressed in the permanence of doctrine and institution.

Mediating Telangana's inter-State issues

The Centre must act decisively to amicably resolve issues between States

STATE OF PLAY

M. Rajeev

The Telangana Government is gearing up to present its views against the unauthorised projects taken up by the neighbouring State of Karnataka across the river Krishna to the Central Government.

The State is focusing on raising the disputes under Section 3 of the Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 which allows it to complain to the Union Government in the event of river water disputes arising with neighbouring States. Telangana is firming up plans to furnish its views at the 31st Southern Zonal Council (SZC) meeting scheduled to be held at Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu on August 20.

The Union Government has invited Telangana to attend the SZC meeting, claiming that it provides an excellent forum for deliberating upon and amicably resolving issues of mutual interest between the Centre and the States as well as among the States themselves. According to the agenda approved tentatively by the Union Home Ministry, the State Government will insist on its demand for conferment of national project status to the Kaleshwaram and Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Projects. Interestingly, the agenda of the meeting indicates that the Karnataka Government is also planning to complain to the Centre about the new projects being taken up by Telangana.

The Karnataka Government has maintained that the liberty to use the remaining water in the Krishna river mentioned in the final order of the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II is not devolved upon Telangana and that the State could not take up any permanent construction to utilise the surplus waters.

Given the firm stances adopted by the two neighbouring States, the zonal council meeting is likely to witness heated arguments between the two sides if river water sharing forms part of the final agenda.

Slow progress

The Telangana Government is preparing detailed notes to present a strong case in support of its stand on major projects at the SZC meeting, which will be chaired by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Home Secretary. The planning department of the State has been directed to identify key inter-State and regional issues that require deliberations at the SZC meeting while the other departments have been instructed to prepare a list of pending issues so that inter-State issues can be put on fast track mode.

The departments are accordingly finalising Telangana's agenda; the recommendations to be made at the council, and the State's submissions regarding pending matters that require the Union Home Ministry's approval.

Senior officials are however sceptical about the outcome of the SZC meetings as the resolution of pending issues has been relatively slow. Officials say that the focus of the previous meetings was on resolving the issues connected to the Central Government rather than issues pertaining to individual States. While the issues raised by Telangana in the past have been deliberated in the meetings of the standing committee, they were subsequently dropped.

For instance, the issue over a subsidy from the Centre between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh remains unresolved till date. The subsidy amount, which was due to both the States, was credited to the account of Andhra Pradesh. Telangana has been claiming a refund of its share which was considered positively by the SZC which directed Andhra Pradesh to credit the amount to Telangana. The latter is yet to release the amount along with the applicable interest to Telangana.

A similar conundrum is seen with the division of assets pertaining to institutions not listed anywhere in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. Telangana is firm that only cash balances should be shared between the two States while institutions should be apportioned on a location basis. However, Andhra Pradesh, referring to Section 66 of the Act, is insisting that some of these institutions be included in Schedule IX or X.

It is better for the Union Home Ministry to take a serious view on addressing the issues raised by States so that they will be motivated to raise their issues at the national level rather than prolonging them. The Centre's intervention for the speedy resolution of pending issues will go a long way in helping the States focus on issues which need immediate attention.

[illegible]@thehindu.co.in

The cost of unconditional cash transfers

Data show that an overemphasis on cash transfer schemes is bound to eat into investments needed for other public service sectors such as education

DATA POINT

Dipa Sinha
Vijay Ram S.

On August 1, the Delhi Chief Minister launched the Lakshmi Yojana which will provide eligible women with an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) of ₹2,500 per month, fulfilling one of the ruling party's central promises during the Assembly elections. With this, Delhi joins the list of States/UTs which now have such a UCT scheme for women.

Over the last two years, many studies, including the Economic Survey and the 16th Finance Commission (FC) report have raised concerns over the increasing fiscal burden of such schemes. Recent reports show that in States such as Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, the number of beneficiaries has been reducing in the name of rationalisation. In Delhi, even before the scheme has been rolled out, restrictive criteria such as requiring a recommendation from the local MLA or MP have been included, plausibly to keep the numbers in check. Evaluations of these schemes show that the money received by women is mostly spent on useful expenditures such as food, health and education. The usual barriers to access such as lack of documents, access to banks, and errors in digital records also remain. The question to be asked going forward is whether the finances for these schemes are coming at the cost of other investments in public services such as education and health. **Chart 1** shows the expenditure of these schemes relative to total expenditure and the expenditure of these sectors for some major States.

As a proportion of total State expenditure, expenditure on these UCT schemes range from over 10% in Jharkhand to less than 0.3% in Himachal Pradesh. According to the 16th FC report, almost 44% of State expenditure is tied up in interest payments, pensions and salaries; this indicates that States do not have much space to manoeuvre towards financing new initiatives or investing in necessary infrastructure. The 16th FC also shows that the States' social sector revenue expenditure as a proportion of total revenue expenditure has remained stable since 2011-12. However, as a proportion of GDP they show a declining trend since 2020-21, indicating that there has been no commensurate increase in spending on these sectors with the increase in spending capacity.

In Jharkhand, Karnataka and West Bengal, which happen to have the largest UCT schemes, the spending on UCTs is more than half the entire spending on education **(Chart 2)**. Further, in Jharkhand, Karnataka, West Bengal, and Maharashtra, the spending on these schemes exceeds the entire State spending on health **(Chart 3)**. This shows that household benefits notwithstanding, there is a need for informed discussions on what the long-term implications of such schemes might be.

As these schemes expand, they increase the fiscal burden on States, which is likely to generate pressure on other forms of social sector spending, including existing expenditures towards providing health and education services. Given the resource-constrained position of State governments, this is not an unreasonable apprehension. Over time, the implications of underfunded public services must be considered.

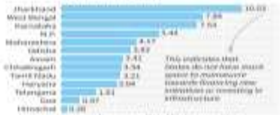
Some scholars have been arguing that such cash transfers are a 'compensation' for the failure of the state to create opportunities for all. The timing of the cash transfers, immediately before elections, has also led many to call them a 'dole'. It could be argued that the recent protests demanding better facilities and greater accountability are an indication that people are no longer satisfied with only 'compensation' and demand a fair share in resources.

Burden or benefit?

Data were sourced from the Reserve Bank of India. Dipa Sinha and Vijay Ram S are affiliated with the Centre for the Study of the Indian Economy, Azim Premji University. Views expressed are personal

Cost of welfare: Women receive the Pongal gift items, along with ₹1,000 provided by the Tamil Nadu government in Madurai in January 2023

Chart 1: Expenditure of UCT schemes as a share of total expenditure for select States (in %)



Percentage (%) of State expenditure

Chart 2: Expenditure on UCTs as a % of State expenditure on education for select States

Percentage (%) of education budget

Table 1: A Statewise list of unconditional cash transfer (UCT) schemes, which have increased since 2023

State	Scheme name	Monthly amount (₹)	Year of introduction
Goa	Griha Aadhar Scheme	₹1,500	2016 (renewed in 2023)
Sikkim	Sikkim Aama Sashaktikaran Yojana	₹40,000 (per year)	2022 (expanded in 2023)
Karnataka	Gruha Lakshmi Scheme	₹2,000	2023
M.P.	Ladli Behna Yojana	₹1,[illegible]	2023
T.N.	Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai	₹1,000	2023
Telangana	Mahalakshmi Scheme	₹2,500	2023
Maharashtra	Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana	₹1,500	2024
Jharkhand	Mukhyamantri Maiyo Samman Yojana	₹2,500	2024
Odisha	Subhadra Yojana	₹10,000 (per year)	2024
Chhattisgarh	Mahtari Vandan Yojana	₹1,000	2024
Assam	Orunodoi 3.0	₹1,250	2024
Himachal	Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi	₹1,500	2024
Haryana	Lado Lakshmi Yojana	₹2,100	2025
Kerala	Sthree Suraksha Scheme	₹1,000	2025
Punjab	Mukh Mantri Mawan Dheeyan Sathar Yojna	₹1,000 - 1,000	2026
Delhi	Lakshmi Yojana	₹2,500	2026 (replacing earlier scheme)
West Bengal	Annapurna Bhandar	₹3,000	2026 (replacing Lakshmir Bhandar (2021))

Chart 3: Expenditure of UCT schemes as a share of State expenditure on health for select States (in %)

Percentage (%) of health budget

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1976

12 gunny bags of watches seized

Bombay, August 9: The Bombay Customs to-day made a big haul of watches seizing 12 gunny bag loads of it from the rocky terrain adjoining the light house at Khar Danda near the northern suburb of Bandra.

The watches, both ladies and gents, were neatly packed in lots of 1,200 or 500 depending on their sizes in water-proof cellophane bags which were hidden in the gunny bags found ashore by the Marine and Preventive section of the Customs Collectorate.

Announcing this at a news conference, Mr. M.L. Wadhawan, Collector of Customs (Preventive), said the bags contained as many as 13,500 pieces, totally valued "at a little over Rs. 10 lakhs."

Mr. Wadhawan described it as "the biggest of the season" since July is a lean month for contraband because smuggling by sea during monsoon is rendered difficult by gusty winds and high waves. It would be very risky for the dhows to make the trip from West Asia to Bombay shores, it was stated.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1926

The Cauvery floods

Trichinolpoly, August 10: There has been a very slight rise in the Cauvery since yesterday. The reading at the Upper Anicut which was 10.9 at nine this morning rose to 10.97, at eleven and at Trichinopoly bridge, it is now eleven feet. The overflow at Konakarai still continues and this is due to a small breach near the toll gate where the water from the river rushes into the Konakarai area. Practically the whole road for about half a furlong from the Church of the St. Joseph's College to the Fort railway station including the station compound is still under water, the volume having increased since yesterday in this and other places.

The railway District Engineer and his staff are standing up either side of the line between the distant and home signals of the Fort railway station where water is nearer the line than at other places. The fierce wind and drizzling which still continue are believed to be the forerunners of more freshes, but the report received from Dhanagiri in Mysore shows that water is to-day 30.5 feet as against 30.7 feet yesterday with a tendency to fall.

Burden or benefit?

Data were sourced from the Reserve Bank of India. Dipa Sinha and Vijay Ram S are affiliated with the Centre for the Study of the Indian Economy, Azim Premji University. Views expressed are personal

Cost of welfare: Women receive the Pongal gift items, along with ₹1,000 provided by the Tamil Nadu government in Madurai in January 2023

Chart 1: Expenditure of UCT schemes as a share of total expenditure for select States (in %)

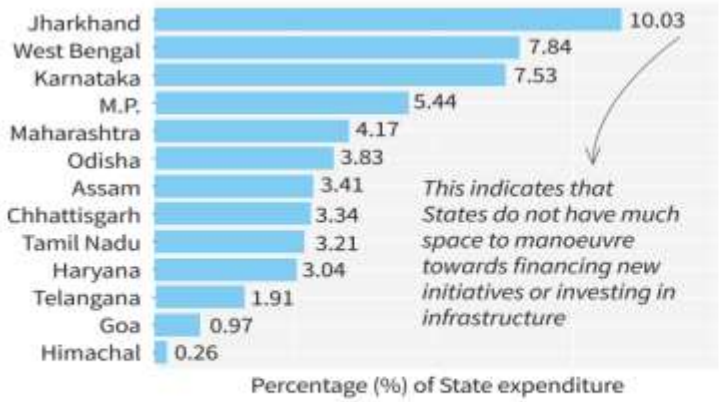


Chart 2: Expenditure on UCTs as a % of State expenditure on

Table1: A State-wise list of unconditional cash transfer (UCT) schemes, which have increased since 2023

State	Scheme name	Monthly amount (₹)	Year of introduction
Goa	Griha Aadhar Scheme	₹1,500	2016 (renewed in 2023)
Sikkim	Sikkim Aama Sashaktikaran Yojana	₹40,000 (per year)	2022 (expanded in 2023)
Karnataka	Gruha Lakshmi Scheme	₹2,000	2023
M.P.	Ladli Behna Yojana	₹1,500	2023
T.N.	Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai	₹1,000	2023
Telangana	Mahalakshmi Scheme	₹2,500	2023
Maharashtra	Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana	₹1,500	2024
Jharkhand	Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana	₹ 2,500	2024
Odisha	Subhadra Yojana	₹10,000 (per year)	2024
Chhattisgarh	Mahtari Vandan Yojana	₹1,000	2024
Assam	Orunodoi 3.0	₹1,250	2024
Himachal	Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi	₹1,500	2024
Haryana	Lado Lakshmi Yojana	₹2,100	2025
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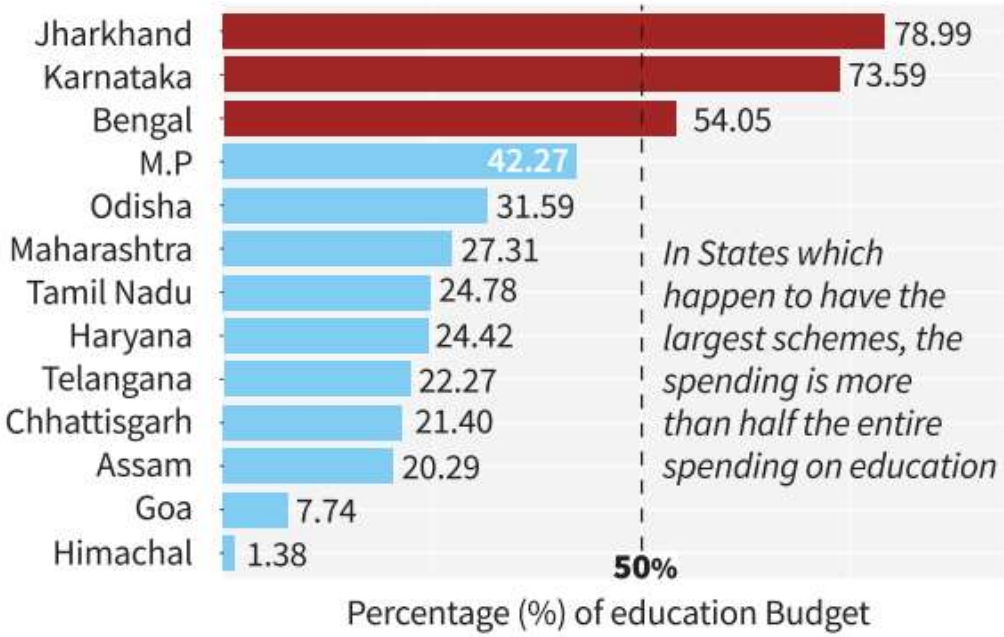
Delhi	Lakshmi Yojana	₹2,500	2026 (replacing earlier scheme)
West Bengal	Annapurna Bhandar	₹3,000	2026 (replacing Lakshmir Bhandar [2021])

Chart 2: Expenditure on UCTs as a % of State expenditure on education for select States



West Bengal | Bhandar | ₹3,000 | Lakshmir Bhandar [2021])

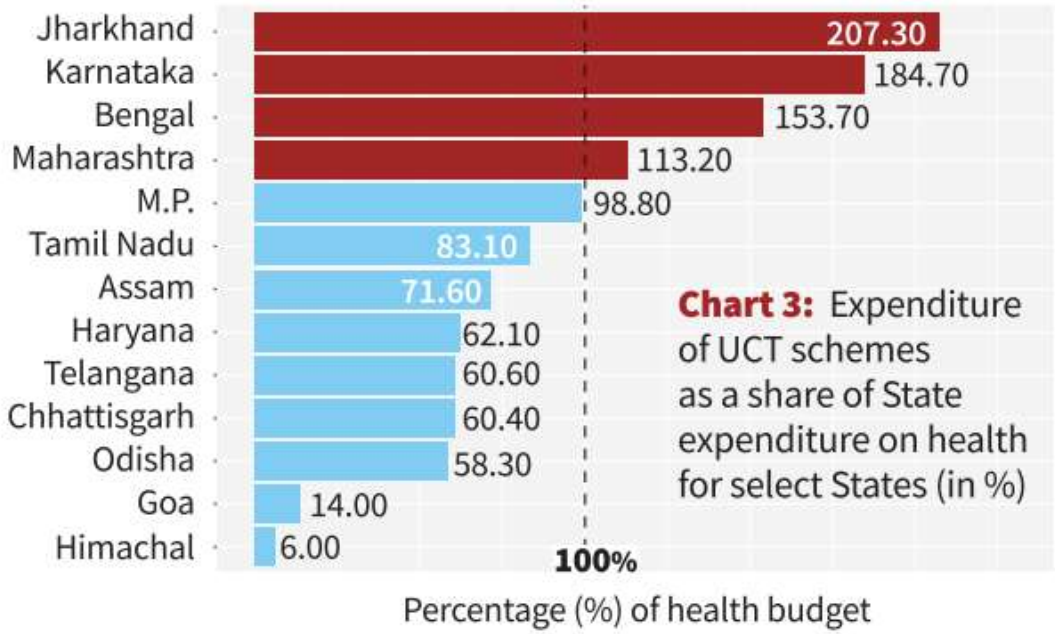


Chart 3: Expenditure of UCT schemes as a share of State expenditure on health for select States (in %)

Why governments favour these schemes

UCTs have several legitimate advantages.

Money transferred directly to women can be spent according to household priorities.

The article notes evaluations showing that cash received by women is commonly used for useful expenditure such as:

food + healthcare + education.

UCTs can consequently provide:

- greater financial autonomy for women;
- immediate support to low-income households;
- improved consumption security;
- easier access to essential goods;
- reduced vulnerability to sudden expenses.

There is also an administrative advantage: direct transfers can potentially reduce some layers of intermediary leakage compared with traditional in-kind delivery systems.

Problems still remain

Cash transfers do not automatically solve welfare-delivery problems.

The article identifies issues such as:

- lack of required documents;
- inability to access banking services;
- incorrect or incomplete digital records;
- exclusion of otherwise eligible women.

Interestingly, States such as **Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh** have reportedly been rationalising beneficiary numbers.

Delhi also introduced eligibility restrictions before rolling out its scheme.

This shows that identifying beneficiaries remains a significant administrative challenge.

The biggest concern: fiscal burden

This is the heart of the article.

Cash transfers represent a **recurring expenditure**.

Once millions of beneficiaries become entitled to ₹1,000–₹3,000 every month, governments have to fund that commitment every year.

Unlike building a one-time asset, these payments continually recur.

And State governments already have large committed expenditure on:

salaries + pensions + interest payments.

This leaves limited fiscal room.

The **16th Finance Commission**, as discussed in the clipping, points to these constraints.

State	UCT expenditure as % of total State expenditure
Jharkhand	**10.03%**
West Bengal	7.84%
Karnataka	7.53%
Madhya Pradesh	5.44%
Maharashtra	4.17%
Odisha	3.83%
Assam	3.41%
Chhattisgarh	3.34%
Tamil Nadu	3.21%
Haryana	3.04%
Telangana	1.91%
Goa	0.97%
Himachal Pradesh	**0.26%**

Most striking comparison

Jharkhand: 10.03%

versus

Himachal Pradesh: 0.26%.

That is a huge difference in the relative fiscal burden.

State	UCT spending relative to education budget
Jharkhand	**78.99%**
Karnataka	**73.59%**
West Bengal	54.05%
Madhya Pradesh	42.27%
Odisha	31.59%
Maharashtra	27.31%
Tamil Nadu	24.78%
Haryana	24.42%
Telangana	22.27%
Chhattisgarh	21.40%
Assam	20.29%
Goa	7.74%
Himachal Pradesh	1.38%

State	UCT expenditure as % of health expenditure
Jharkhand	**207.30%**
Karnataka	**184.70%**
West Bengal	153.70%
Maharashtra	113.20%
Madhya Pradesh	98.80%
Tamil Nadu	83.10%
Assam	71.60%
Haryana	62.10%
Telangana	60.60%
Chhattisgarh	60.40%
Odisha	58.30%
Goa	14.00%
Himachal Pradesh	**6.00%**

- **Why economists worry about this**
- The problem is **opportunity cost**.
- A State has finite revenue.
- Suppose it receives ₹100.
- It needs to distribute that money among:
- **health + education + roads + water + electricity + salaries + pensions + interest + welfare + infrastructure + other services.**
- If an increasingly large amount becomes permanently committed to cash transfers, the government has less flexibility to increase spending elsewhere.
- The article therefore asks:
- Are cash transfers coming at the cost of investment in public services?

WASHINGTON

Former U.S. President Joe Biden's cancer has spread further, says son

AP

Former U.S. President Joe Biden's prostate cancer has metastasised further, according to his son Hunter Biden, who shared the update in an interview with the BBC. Mr. Hunter said his father's disease has spread despite the treatment. "It's very painful, and it's very debilitating in many respects, but he's still out there," he said. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Mecca pact with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye 'purely defensive': Pakistan

AP

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Sunday the landmark Mecca Joint Defence Agreement his country signed with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye was not directed against any country and remained open to other nations in the region. In a post on X, Mr. Dar said the agreement was "purely defensive in nature". AP

DAMASCUS

Syria reaches understanding with Moscow on future of Russian bases

REUTERS

Syria and Russia have reached a memorandum of understanding on the fate of Russian bases at Tartous and Hmeimim after 18 months of talks. Syria's Foreign Ministry said on Sunday Damascus would take over management of civilian facilities, including Hmeimim airport and the commercial berth at Tartous port. REUTERS

BANGKOK

Thai teen school shooter watched violent content online, police say

REUTERS

The Thai teen behind a deadly school shooting on August 7 outside Bangkok had an air gun confiscated by a teacher last year and had watched violent content online, police said on Sunday, as the government promised new safety protocols for schools. Eight people died in Thailand's worst mass shooting since 2022. REUTERS

Trump says U.S. going 'low key' as Tehran firm on Hormuz demands

U.S. President says his administration is only 'semi-negotiating', will wait and watch economic pressure mount on Iran; Hormuz deal with Oman in final stages, says Araghchi, reiterates U.S. must fulfil conditions for reopening of key waterway

Reuters
DUBAI/WASHINGTON/CAIRO

U.S. President Donald Trump signalled on Sunday he is prepared to let economic pressure mount against Iran, apparently backing away from ordering more military strikes even as Tehran issues tough demands.

"We are low-keying it," Mr. Trump said, according to the news outlet Axios.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that a deal with Oman defining new shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz was in its "final stages" but repeated comments made on Saturday that it would not reopen the waterway unless other conditions were met. He also denied on Sunday that Iran was negotiating with the U.S., saying they were merely "exchanging messages" via intermediaries.

Silent watch: A banner with an image of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei at Valiasr Square in Tehran on Saturday. AFP

The strait's blockage by Iran since the war started has sent fuel prices soaring and rattled the world economy, putting pressure on the Trump administration as midterm elections in November grow nearer.

"We are only semi-negotiating with them. We are just watching Iran with its huge inflation and the fact they have no money," Mr. Trump was quoted as saying.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards also reiterated on Sunday that they would not reopen the strait until demands were met, including U.S. compensation for war damage. The strategy was to maintain the closure "until the enemy accepts all our conditions... the strait is now actually a theatre of war for us and not just a waterway", the Guards said.

The conditions listed include ending U.S. threats against Iran, stopping aggression against Iran and its Lebanese, Palestinian, Yemeni and Iraqi allies, lifting a blockade and sanctions on Iran and freeing Iranian assets.

Kare meet

Iranian state media said on Sunday that President Masoud Pezeshkian had met Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei in late July and a paramilitary leader has promised new footage of the Supreme Leader, who has not been seen in public since being reportedly injured in the air strike that killed his father and predecessor on February 28, the first day of U.S.-Israeli air strikes on Iran.

(With inputs from AFP)

7 killed as Russia, Ukraine exchange overnight strikes

Associated Press
KYIV

Russia and Ukraine exchanged strikes overnight that killed civilians and injured many others on both sides, local authorities reported on Sunday.

Ukrainian drones killed five people and injured two dozen others, including a 4-year-old boy, in Russia's border region of Belgorod, according to the regional administration.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, Russian missiles struck a high-rise apartment block in the Saltivskyi district, killing two people and injuring 13, according to regional head Oleh Synehubov.

Eight people were injured in Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa after "dozens of missiles and drones" struck the city, according to local officials. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the seaport had been damaged by the strike.

Aftermath of attack: Burned cars at the site of a Russian air raid in Odesa, Ukraine on Sunday. AFP

Large-scale Russian missile strikes on Ukrainian cities have become almost routine in recent weeks, with Moscow exploiting Ukraine's critical shortage of interceptors for the U.S.-made Patriot systems — the sole air defence weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down ballistic missiles.

Meanwhile, Kyiv has kept up long-range drone strikes against Russian energy infrastructure, as well as the country's largest online retailer, Wildberries, and other targets deep inside Russia, sparking a fuel crisis.

Bombings mark first day in office for new Colombian President

Agence France-Presse
BOGOTÁ

Two bombing attacks in different parts of Colombia on Saturday marked the first day in office for new President Abelardo de la Espriella, leaving at least one police officer dead and several wounded.

The tough-talking hard-right leader campaigned on confronting "narcoterrorism without truce" and ending peace talks with armed groups following his inauguration on Friday in the city of Cali.

His inauguration comes during the worst wave of violence the country has experienced in the last decade.

Colombia's Army said FARC guerilla dissidents used explosives to destroy a highway tollbooth near Cali in the early hours of Saturday.

Mr. De la Espriella condemned the bombing, saying "attacking the country's infrastructure is attacking progress" in an X post. "To those responsible, I send a clear message: there will be no refuge, no leniency and no impunity," he added.

About 1,000 kilometres away, in the northern department of Cesar, an officer was killed in another bombing when an explosive-equipped drone struck a police station, officials said.

Floating fete

People dressed in fancy costumes take part in a stand-up paddle boarding festival on the Yauza River in Moscow, Russia on Sunday. REUTERS

Houthis strike Saudi Arabian oil facility, kill 11 in Yemeni city

Agence France-Presse
ADEN

At least 11 persons were killed in Houthi strikes in Yemen's port city of Mokha on Sunday while a drone salvo by the Iran-aligned rebels targeted a Saudi Arabian oil refinery on the Kingdom's Red Sea coast.

The attack in Mokha comes after a years-long truce in the civil war between the Houthis and the Saudi Arabia-backed, internationally recognised Yemeni government appeared to collapse as fighting between the rebels and the Kingdom in West Aden flared in recent weeks.

A medical source in Mokha said three civilians and eight military personnel had been killed in the Houthi attack. Two sources with the government forces earlier confirmed at least eight troops had been killed, saying that the Houthis attacked Mokha with several waves of missile and drones.

The Houthis' military spokesperson Yahya Saree said the group targeted "Saudi enemy" troops and equipment in the area with missiles and drones.

Earlier, Mr. Saree said the Houthis had struck an oil facility operated by Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil firm Aramco after the Gulf kingdom's Energy Ministry said it had extinguished a fire at the Jazan site.

Chinese authorities issue red alert as Typhoon Dolphin hits eastern coast

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

Typhoon Dolphin made landfall in densely populated eastern China on Sunday, authorities said, after the storm triggered more than 1,000 flight cancellations, evacuations and a top-level alert.

The centre of the typhoon moved over the coastline near Yuhuan City in Zhejiang Province at about 09:30 GMT, China's National Meteorological Centre said. Maximum wind speeds near the centre were more than 180 kilometres per hour at the time it made landfall, the NMC said.

Nearly 1,400 flights in and out of Shanghai's two main passenger airports were cancelled on Sunday, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

Rain wrestle: A man tries to hold onto his umbrella amid strong wind and downpour in Huangpu district, Shanghai, on Sunday. AP

The effects were felt as far away as Hong Kong on China's southern coast, where the weather observatory posted a record high temperature of 38.8 Celsius, caused by warm air pushed over the city by Typhoon Dolphin.

Typhoon Dolphin brought heavy rain and strong winds to Japan's Okinawa before reaching China. Seven people in Okinawa suffered minor injuries and 5,290 households were left without electricity, according to the island's government.

In Taiwan, dozens of ferry services were suspended and more than 180 flights were cancelled.

China's NMC issued a red typhoon alert on Sunday, forecasting "extraordinary torrential rain" in some areas of central and eastern Zhejiang.

Typhoon Dolphin's arrival in China comes two weeks after Typhoon Nouf lashed southern Guangdong province, declared by authorities at the time as the strongest storm to hit China this year.

Pentagon pushes for faster weapons production amid stockpile shortage

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

The Pentagon is pressing the U.S. defence industry to accelerate production of weapons to help replenish its diminished stockpile of munitions, including those depleted in the ongoing war with Iran.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement on Saturday that the department was actively focused on boosting munitions acquisitions to provide "the weapons our warfighters need at the pace the threat demands." He confirmed department efforts in the last week to significantly speed the process but insisted it was part of a broader modernisation effort that predated the five-month-old conflict.

THAAD interceptor inventories fell from 452 before the Iran war to roughly 232-262 in April, according to U.S. think tank CSIS. REUTERS

Deputy Defence Secretary Steve Feinberg wrote to industry leaders on Wednesday, giving them no more than 21 days to submit plans to "drive significantly faster, more aggressive delivery schedules and/or increased production for critical capabilities," according to a memo obtained by *The Washington Post*.

"Years-long development cycles are not acceptable," Mr. Feinberg wrote. "We must dramatically accelerate our program schedules and expand our production capacity now."

The memo comes as recent fighting with Iran used up more of the U.S. military's already diminished stockpiles of advanced missile interceptors, potentially putting American troops at more risk if hostilities resume, according to a new analysis.

However, President Donald Trump has bristled over public reports of a munitions shortage, posting on Truth Social on Thursday that the U.S. has "massive amounts."

Typhoon Dolphin hits eastern coast

Agence France-Presse
BEIJING

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Rain wrestle: A man tries to hold onto his umbrella amid strong wind and downpour in Huangpu district, Shanghai, on Sunday. AP

Point	Details
Storm	**Typhoon Dolphin**
Landfall country	CN China
Province	**Zhejiang**
Landfall location	Near **Yuhuan City**
Time of landfall	About **09:30 GMT**
Maximum winds near centre	**More than 150 km/h**
Highest warning	**Red typhoon alert**
Shanghai flights affected	Nearly **1,400 cancelled**
Taiwan flights cancelled	**180+**
Japan area affected	**Okinawa**
Okinawa injuries	**7 minor injuries**
Okinawa households without power	**5,290**
Previous major China typhoon mentioned	**Typhoon Noul**

Yellow Sea
Pusan
Fukuoka
Qingdao
Zhengzhou
Nanjing
Shanghai
East China Sea
Wuhan
Hangzhou
Okinawa
RYUKYU ISLANDS (JAPAN)
Nanchang
Tropic of Cancer
Taipei
Taiwan
Guangzhou
Hong Kong S.A.R.

Region	Common name
Northwest Pacific	**Typhoon**
North Atlantic & Northeast Pacific	**Hurricane**
Indian Ocean & South Pacific	**Cyclone / Tropical Cyclone**

8. How does a typhoon form?

Typhoons derive enormous amounts of energy from warm ocean water.

A simplified process is:

Warm sea surface (typically ≥ ~26.5°C)

↓

Strong evaporation

↓

Warm, moist air rises

↓

Surface pressure falls

↓

More surrounding air moves inward

↓

Water vapour condenses → latent heat released

↓

Storm intensifies

↓

Earth's rotation produces organised cyclonic circulation

↓

Tropical cyclone / typhoon develops

BEST IN CLASS

'Kohli an exemplary professional, tries to meet his standards always'

AFP

There is no doubt that Virat Kohli is an exemplary professional. The standards he sets for himself... he tries and goes out every time he plays to meet those standards. And that is why he is a great role model. I think a lot of youngsters or players want to emulate him — V.V.S Laxman, head of BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE).

ALL IS WELL

'Kuldeep took a break to assess body, not due to fitness concern'

FILE PHOTO: PTI

Kuldeep Yadav didn't bowl in the second innings of the warm-up game against Sri Lanka Cricket XI as he wanted to assess his body after a heavy workload, India's spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule said. "He had a very good outing and just wanted to take a break," Bahutule said.

METICULOUS

Gill takes his preparation very seriously, says Bahutule

SPORTZPICS

India's spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule praised Shubman Gill's meticulous preparation, saying he was preparing specifically for the threat posed by Sri Lanka's spinners. "Gill takes his preparation very seriously. He understands whatever is the demand for that particular series... his preparation is done accordingly," he said.

NO-SHOW

World No. 1 Sinner withdraws from Cincinnati Open with knee injury

AFP

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner will be absent from the Cincinnati Open due to a right knee injury, the tournament announced on Sunday. "After consulting with my doctors and my team, I have to announce that I need to withdraw from the Masters 1000 tournament in Cincinnati," the Italian said in a statement.

Ashmita stuns Han to bag her maiden BWF Tour title

Coach Park, who has now seen two of his wards win Super 300 tournaments in successive weeks, believes the Assam girl always had the tools to succeed, wants her to be more consistent

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
ASAN (KOREA)

Ashmita Chaliha produced a gritty show to secure her maiden BWF World tour title with a fighting win over fourth seed Han Qian Xi of China in the women's singles final of the Korea Masters Super 300 badminton tournament on Sunday.

Slow start

The 26-year-old from Assam, who had suffered a career-threatening knee injury two years back in Korea, overcame a slow start and a testing decider to complete a memorable victory, recovering from the loss of the opening game to stun world No. 38 Han 14-21, 21-14, 21-14 in the summit clash that lasted 53 minutes. "I feel really great and unbelievable. But then I am trying to digest it. Now, I am hungry for more," said Ashmita, who trains under Park Tae-Sang at the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati.

"In the first game, it was a little bit tricky because of the drift conditions, so I was not able to manage it... But in the second, the other side was more comfortable and there was less drift, so I was able to control it," she said. "And in the third, after 11 points, I changed again, so I was on the good side. I'm glad that I could pull it off."

Ashmita's win marks back-to-back BWF World Tour finals for Indians, with Tanvi Sharma having won the Taipei Open last Sunday.

Park, who has now seen two of his wards win Super 300 titles in successive weeks, believes Ashmita always had the tools to succeed but needed to become more consistent in her approach.

"Before the injury, Ashmita was already a good player and a very good talent. She has a good smash and nice movement, but unfortunately, at the wrong time, she had to take a break because of the injury," the South Korean told PTI.

"When she joined me, I thought, 'Oh, she is a good player.' But tactically and strategically, and also a little bit mentally, she had some problems."

The World No. 50 Ashmita had to undergo surgery and an extensive rehabilitation period after suffering a medial meniscus tear in her right knee during the Korea Open in 2024. She returned in February next year and played 14 events.

This year she competed in a couple of events but then spent three months building strength. She enjoyed a strong comeback on the BWF Tour with back-to-back quarterfinals at China Masters and Malaysia Masters and then a semifinal appearance at the Macau Open.

Ahead of Sunday's final, Park and Ashmita analysed Han's game on video, with the coach identifying unforced errors as the biggest obstacle.

"Yesterday, we also did a video analysis of her Chinese opponent. I told Ashmita, 'Your biggest problem is your own mistakes. You are making simple mistakes.

"But if you can reduce those simple mistakes, 100%, I promise you, you can win the title today," Park said.

On a high: Ashmita celebrates with Park after her memorable triumph. BWF

Sarfaraz replaces the injured Sai Sudharsan in Test squad

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Sarfaraz Khan has returned to India's Test squad after 20 months, with the Mumbai batter replacing the injured B. Sai Sudharsan for the two-Test series against Sri Lanka.

The Hindu understands that the selection committee, in consultation with the team management, picked Sarfaraz after Sai Sudharsan did not recover in time from a right big-toe stress injury.

The BCCI announced Sarfaraz's inclusion on Sunday.

He is expected to link up with the Indian team in Colombo before the side travels to Galle on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old had emerged as a primary contender alongside Shaik Rasheed and Ruturaj Gaikwad. Rasheed, who has been knocking on the selectors' door after a prolific domestic run, was considered for his ability to bat in the top-order while Ruturaj's experience and First Class record kept him in the conversation.

Comeback: Sarfaraz last played for India in November 2024. FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Sarfaraz's selection marks the return of a batter whose Test career had appeared to stall after his promising debut in 2024.

He was conspicuously left out of India's squad after not getting an opportunity during the 2024-25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. All of his six Test appearances came in 2024.

The Mumbai batter has continued to remain a top performer in domestic cricket, keeping himself in the selection frame despite the long hiatus at the international level.

The vacancy at No. 3, created by Sai Sudharsan's absence, may give Sarfaraz a chance to revive his Test career that began with considerable promise.

Jaiswal and Gill find form as India canters to a victory in warm-up game

Press Trust of India
COLOMBO

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill scored useful runs at the top of the order before Mohammed Siraj's late blitz helped India beat Sri Lanka Cricket XI by six wickets in their three-day warm-up game here on Sunday.

Chasing 207 for victory, India achieved the target in 45 overs, finishing on 214 for four with Siraj smashing 32 off just 15 balls, including three successive sixes, to bring the game to an emphatic finish.

Jaiswal made a quickfire 61 off 46 balls. He and Gill put on 108 for the opening wicket to give India a flying start to their chase. Jaiswal retired after reaching his half-century.

Gill made a useful 44 before being dismissed by spinner Keshara Nuwantha.

Dhruv Jurel chipped in with 17, while Rishabh Pant made a patient 28 before India was briefly reduced to 155 for three.

But the target was never in serious danger, with the lower-order completing the chase in the final session. Siraj then provided the fireworks, hitting three consecutive sixes to finish the game in style.

Earlier, Sri Lanka Cricket XI declared their second innings at 200 for six in 45 overs, leaving India a target of 207.

Back in the groove: Gill and Jaiswal provided a flying start. SPORTZPICS

The scores: Sri Lanka Cricket XI 363/8 decl. and 200/6 decl. (Nishan Fernando 63, Nipun Dhananjaya 46) lost to India 357/8 decl. and 214/4 in 45 overs (Jaiswal 61 (retired hurt), Gill 44, Siraj 32 n.o.)

There is brilliant coordination between CoE and Indian team management, insists Laxman

Straight bat: Laxman, seen here with Saikia and BCCI president Mithun Manhas, defended CoE's injury-management methods. SUDHAKARA JAIN

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

With Indian cricket in the throes of an injury crisis, the latest being Jasprit Bumrah and B. Sai Sudharsan's absence from the upcoming tour to Sri Lanka, V.V.S. Laxman, head of BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE), defended the institution's injury-management methods and recovery protocols.

"We don't like to use the word blame, because when you do, you're [trying to] find a scapegoat," Laxman told reporters at the CoE premises on Sunday. "There's brilliant coordination between the CoE, the team management and the RXM (Sports Science & Medicine) staff."

There has been a worrying trend of players being declared fit only to pick up a new injury within a short period of time. Laxman stressed that this was not a cause for concern even as he clarified that the "CoE was not a rehab centre" and that it had a "bigger mandate".

"When someone is playing at the elite level, you're supposed to give more than 100%," Laxman said. "Injuries are bound to happen. If you're thinking about not getting injured, you're not playing to the best of your ability. Monitoring is very, very critical, and I've got no doubt that Adrian Le Roux (S&C coach, Indian team) and others are doing that," the 51-year-old added.

Both Bumrah and Sai Sudharsan were named conditionally in the squad for the two Tests against Sri Lanka before failing to obtain fitness clearances. Asked if it would be prudent to avoid players who are still undergoing rehabilitation, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia replied in the negative.

"We have our selection meetings at least three to four weeks before the team departs," Saikia said. "We don't reject because by the time the player will have to travel or play, he may be totally fit. It's a human body, not a machine. It may take 14 days or 28 days."

The CoE has been without a Head of Sports Science since Nitin Patel's exit in March 2025. Saikia attributed this to an "acute shortage of right candidates" and Laxman stated that there will be no unseemly haste in the appointment process, for quality was paramount.

Andrew Leipus, who had had successful tenures with the Indian National team and the erstwhile National Cricket Academy, was the BCCI's first choice to replace Nitin, but he pulled out.

"Andrew had almost agreed but then backed out," Laxman said.

"The next interview process was extensive, and the first candidate was from Australia, but he did not join. The second and third candidates are already working at the CoE. It is our responsibility to upskill them while we identify someone of that stature, experience and knowledge."

More Duleep Trophy games to be telecast live: Saikia

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

This time last year, when the 2025-26 Duleep Trophy was held at the BCCI's sprawling Centre of Excellence (CoE) in the city outskirts, supporters were a disappointed lot.

The first-round matches of the domestic cricket season-opener were not broadcast on television and the whole tournament was held behind closed doors. However, in glad tidings for the fans, the 2026-27 edition, which begins on August 23 at the CoE, will see an increased share of matches on television.

And the BCCI even said that it would explore the option of holding at least the final at a proper stadium which can seat an audience. "There are some government restrictions to how we use this land and because of that, we cannot have crowds in this campus," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said on Sunday while answering a question from *The Hindu*.

"But this year, we have increased the number of matches to be telecast. That way, we are giving fans the chance to watch their favourite players and teams. We definitely appreciate your suggestion to see whether the final can be hosted in a stadium. We still have time and we'll look into that aspect."

"

We definitely appreciate your suggestion to see whether the final can be hosted in a stadium

Ashmita stuns Han to bag her maiden BWF Tour title

Coach Park, who has now seen two of his wards win Super 300 tournaments in successive weeks, believes the Assam girl always had the tools to succeed, wants her to be more consistent

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
ASAN (KOREA)

Ashmita Chaliha produced a gritty show to secure her maiden BWF World tour title with a fighting win over fourth seed Han Qian Xi of China in the women's singles final of the Korea Masters Super 300 badminton tournament on Sunday.

Slow start

The 26-year-old from Assam, who had suffered a career-threatening knee injury two years back in Korea, overcame a slow start and a testing decider to complete a memorable victory, recovering from the loss of the opening game to stun world No. 35 Han 14-21, 21-14, 21-14 in the summit clash that lasted 53 minutes. "I feel really great and unbelievable. But then I am trying to digest it. Now, I am hungry for more," said Ashmita, who trains under Park Tae-Sang at the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati.

"In the first game, it was a little bit tricky because of the drift conditions, so I was not able to manage it... But in the second, the other side was more comfortable and there was less drift, so I was able to control it," she said. "And in the third, after 11 points, I changed again, so I was on the good side. I'm glad that I could pull it off."

Ashmita's win marks back-to-back BWF World Tour finals for Indians, with Tanvi Sharma having won the Taipei Open last Sunday.

Park, who has now seen two of his wards win Super 300 titles in successive weeks, believes Ashmita always had the tools to succeed but needed to become more consistent in her approach.

"Before the injury, Ashmita was already a good player and a very good talent. She has a good smash and nice movement, but unfortunately, at the wrong time, she had to take a break because of the injury," the South Korean told PTI.

"When she joined me, I thought, 'Oh, she is a good player.' But tactically and strategically, and also a little bit mentally, she had some problems."

The World No. 50 Ashmita had to undergo surgery and an extensive rehabilitation period after suffering a medial meniscus tear in her right knee during the Korea Open in 2024. She returned in February next year and played 14 events.

This year she competed in a couple of events but then spent three months building strength. She enjoyed a strong comeback on the BWF Tour with back-to-back quarterfinals at China Masters and Malaysia Masters and then a semifinal appearance at the Macau Open.

Ahead of Sunday's final, Park and Ashmita analysed Han's game on video, with the coach identifying unforced errors as the biggest obstacle.

"Yesterday, we also did a video analysis of her Chinese opponent. I told Ashmita, 'Your biggest problem is your own mistakes. You are making simple mistakes.

"But if you can reduce those simple mistakes, 100%, I promise you, you can win the title today," Park said.

On a high: Ashmita celebrates with Park after her memorable triumph. BWF

Point	Details
Player	**Ashmita Chaliha**
Country	IN India
Home State	**Assam**
Age	**26 years**
Tournament	**Korea Masters**
BWF level	**Super 300**
Category	Women's Singles
Final opponent	**Han Qian Xi of China**
Opponent's seeding	**4th seed**
Final score	**14–21, 21–14, 21–14**
Result	Chaliha won in **3 games**
Match duration	**53 minutes**
Significance	**First BWF World Tour title of her career**
Coach	**Park Tae-Sang**
Training base	National Centre of Excellence, **Guwahati**

Tournament	Performance
China Masters	**Quarterfinal**
Malaysia Masters	**Quarterfinal**
Macau Open	**Semifinal**
Korea Masters	**Champion**

Week	Indian player	Tournament	Result
Previous week	**Tanvi Sharma**	Taipei Open	Winner
Following week	**Ashmita Chaliha**	Korea Masters	Winner

- **7. What does "Super 300" mean?**
- BWF World Tour tournaments are organised into different levels.
- Broadly:
- **World Tour Finals / Super 1000 → Super 750 → Super 500 → Super 300 → Super 100**
- The higher the level, generally the greater the ranking points, prize money and strength of the field.
- So winning a **Super 300** is a substantial international achievement and considerably more significant than winning a lower-level developmental event.

U20 Worlds: Basant, Shahnavaz make history as India's jumpers share global podium in US

Pritish Raj
New Delhi, August 9

INDIA'S JUMPERS rarely make a global podium. On Saturday, they did it twice at the U20 World Championships in Eugene, US.

Basant Kumar (19) became the first Indian high-jumper to win a medal at the U20 Worlds, claiming silver. Shahnavaz Khan (19) followed with bronze in the long jump, becoming the first Indian male long-jumper to reach the podium at the championships.

With these two medals, along with Ashish Yadav's silver in the javelin, India equalled its best-ever haul at the U20 World Championships, matching the tally from the 2021 and 2022 editions.

Basant Kumar won a silver in high jump; (right) Shahnavaz Khan won bronze in long jump in Eugene, Oregon, US, Saturday. AFI

Basant, who is coached by former national record-holder Sahana Kumari, equalled his personal best with 2.21m but lost gold to Algeria's Younes Ayachi on countback. "A big moment for him and the country. I always knew Basant was going to deliver on the big stage," Sahana Kumari told *The Indian Express*.

Shahnavaz, who was the

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Athlete	Age	Event	Performance	Medal	Historic significance
Basant Kumar	19	Men's High Jump	**2.21 m**	🥈 Silver	**First Indian high jumper ever to win a U20 Worlds medal**
Shahnawaz Khan	19	Men's Long Jump	—	🥉 Bronze	**First Indian male long jumper to win a U20 Worlds medal**
Ashish Yadav	—	Javelin	—	🥈 Silver	Added India's third medal mentioned in the article

Question	Answer
Championship	World Athletics U20 Championships
Venue	**Eugene, Oregon, USA**
Basant Kumar event	High Jump
Basant's medal	🥈 Silver
Height	**2.21 m**
Historic record	First Indian high jumper to medal at U20 Worlds
Shahnawaz Khan event	Long Jump
Medal	🥉 Bronze
Historic record	First Indian male long jumper to medal at U20 Worlds
Basant's coach	**Sahana Kumari**
India's other medal mentioned	Ashish Yadav — Javelin Silver
Total	**3 medals**
Previous comparable best	2021 & 2022

How a drone 'hellscape' might stop a Chinese invasion of Taiwan

Chris Buckley
& Amy Chang Chien
Taipei, August 9

TO REPEL any future Chinese invasion, Taiwan is building fleets of flying drones and unmanned attack boats.

The goal is to use them to help locate and attack Chinese forces approaching the island, relying on Taiwanese soldiers trained to move quickly before China can strike them. US commanders who developed this strategy call it a "hellscape": overwhelming an invading force with waves of drones, missiles and artillery, and making an amphibious assault so risky that China's leaders are deterred from trying.

Inspired by lessons from Ukraine and other recent war zones, Taiwan is now accelerating efforts to put that strategy into practice. "Our drone and counter-drone efforts started relatively late, and initially we were trying things out as we went along," Lt. Gen. Huang Wen-chi, the director general of strategic planning for the Taiwanese Defense Ministry, told a committee of lawmakers Wednesday. That has begun to change over the past two years, he added.

Members of Taiwan's military operating a drone during the annual Han Kuang military exercises in Changhua, Taiwan on Thursday. NYT

On Thursday, Taiwan's military allowed reporters to watch as troops in central Taiwan practiced using drones for reconnaissance, as part of the island's annual Han Kuang military exercises, which began on Wednesday and will run for 10 days. Maj. Gen. Lu Wen-yuan, who helped plan the exercises, said earlier that they would also train troops to take out enemy drones.

Many militaries across the world are embracing the drone revolution, but Taiwan faces a particularly urgent threat: China, which is roughly 110 miles away, claims the self-governed island as its territory.

Chinese leaders say they want to absorb Taiwan peacefully, but will not rule out using force.

They are backing that threat with expanding fleets of warships, planes, missiles and drones, as well as more frequent coast guard patrols and landing exercises.

Taiwanese officials have noted Ukraine's drone-driven gains on the battlefield, and they are trying to emulate Ukraine's David-versus-Goliath approach: using relatively cheap and nimble drones to level the playing field against a much larger adversary.

"Drones are entering a new chapter," said Max Lo, the chairman of the Taiwan National Drone Industry Association. "Taiwan, for its own survival and national defense, is in urgent need of these drones. But it's the same everywhere in the world right now — that's an opportunity for Taiwan." NYT

China begins invasion

↓

Huge numbers of unmanned systems activated

↓

Drones locate Chinese ships/troops

↓

Other drones + missiles + artillery attack them

↓

Chinese amphibious force suffers losses and delays

↓

Taiwan gains crucial time to mobilise and respond

The ultimate objective is **deterrence**.

Taiwan would prefer that China conclude beforehand that an invasion would be too expensive and risky to attempt.

Why drones are particularly suitable for Taiwan

There is a huge conventional military imbalance.

China has a much larger military than Taiwan, including significantly greater numbers of:

- warships,
- combat aircraft,
- missiles,
- personnel,
- industrial resources.

Taiwan cannot simply attempt to match China platform-for-platform.

For example, trying to build an equivalent number of large warships would be prohibitively expensive.

Drones change the economic equation.

Traditional approach

Expensive platform vs expensive platform

Asymmetric approach

Many cheap systems → threaten fewer extremely expensive systems

This is called **asymmetric warfare**.

System	Potential role
Surveillance drones	Detect Chinese ships and troop concentrations
Reconnaissance drones	Provide real-time battlefield intelligence
Attack drones	Strike vehicles, troops or military equipment
Loitering munitions	Wait for targets and then attack
Unmanned surface boats	Attack or disrupt naval forces
Small FPV-type drones	Tactical attacks on troops/equipment
Counter-drone systems	Destroy Chinese drones
Drones + artillery	Drone identifies target → artillery attacks
Drones + missiles	Drone provides targeting → missile conducts strike

- **Ukraine is the major inspiration**
- One of the most important points in the article is that Taiwan is studying lessons from the Russia–Ukraine war.
- Ukraine has demonstrated how relatively inexpensive unmanned systems can create significant problems for a much larger military.
- Taiwanese officials are particularly interested in the:
- **"David versus Goliath" approach.**
- In this analogy:
- **David = smaller Taiwan**
- **Goliath = much larger China**
- Taiwan therefore wants inexpensive, mobile and numerous systems capable of imposing disproportionately large costs.

Why Taiwan cannot rely only on drones

A "drone hellscape" does **not** mean:

> drones alone can defeat China.

A realistic defensive network would combine:

Drones + anti-ship missiles + air defence + mines + artillery + cyber capabilities + electronic warfare + mobile ground forces + intelligence.

The drones primarily make the battlefield more transparent and dangerous for an invading force.

China's position on Taiwan

This is the geopolitical background necessary to understand the article.

Taiwan has its own:

- government,
- military,
- elections,
- institutions.

Beijing claims Taiwan as part of China.

Chinese leaders say they prefer **peaceful reunification**, but they have **not renounced the use of force**.

China has also increased military pressure around Taiwan through:

warships + aircraft + missiles + drones + coast-guard patrols + military exercises.

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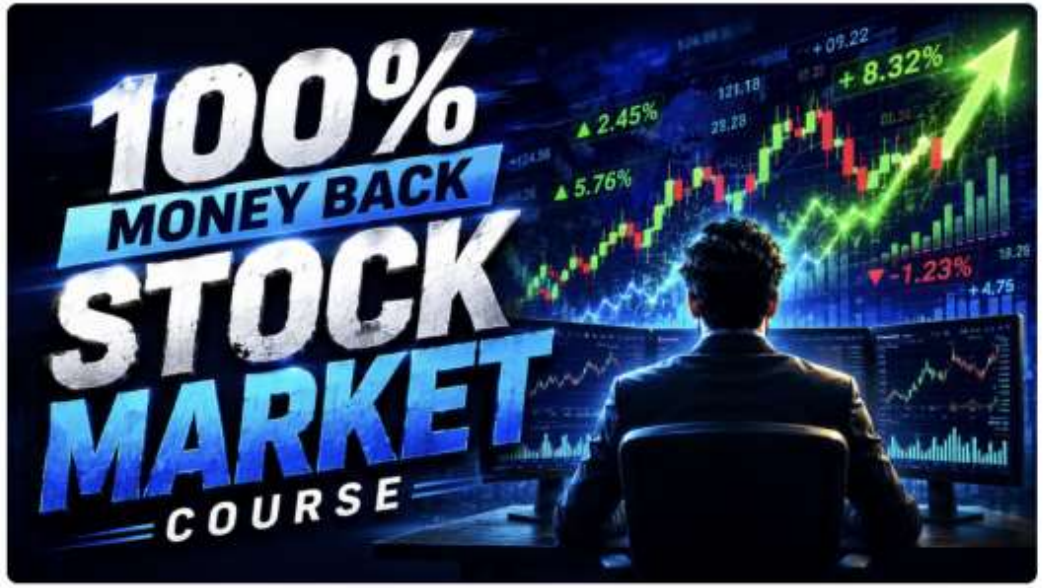

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Word of the day

Encomium:
a formal expression of praise

Synonyms: tribute, commendation, homage

Usage:
The teacher gave an encomium to the student for her hard work.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/encomium

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɪnkəʊmiəm/

Word of the day

Persnickety:
characterised by excessive precision and attention to trivial details

Synonyms: careful, picky, fussy, particular

Usage: *She is persnickety about how her room is arranged.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/persnickety

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pəsnɪkəti/

Thank you ☺