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▶ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Thiru S. Joseph Vijay personally inspected the flood-prevention works being carried out at the Captain Cotton Canal in Vyasarpadi—under the Greater Chennai Corporation—where floating dredging machines are being used to remove water hyacinths and silt to ensure the unhindered flow of rainwater.

Supreme Court issues notices on protest-related petitions, seeks reasons behind prohibitory orders from government

▶ KALIDAS NEWDELHI

Supreme Court directs the preservation of CCTV footage, including in the apex court premises

The Supreme Court on Thursday (October 15, 2026) issued notices on a series of petitions challenging the Election Commission of India's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, as well as the mass detentions of protesters, journalists and others during anti-CEC protests in Delhi last week.

Delhi Police Commissioner Anurag Kumar has told the Supreme Court that "preventive measures" taken on October 10 were based on intelligence inputs, ever-changing ground situation, and with an objective of preventing any disturbance of public order.

Meanwhile, Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke has called for a 'Lehra Do Tiranga' gathering at Central Park, Connaught Place, in Delhi, on October 16 at 5 p.m. The announcement comes after party leaders Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das were sent to five days of judicial custody for allegedly waving the Tricolour at Jantar Mantar.

Abhijeet Dipke, Kapil Sibal, Prakash Raj, Prashant Bhushan and Neha Bora hold joint press conference

Actor Imran Khan will move the Bombay High Court, challenging the notice issued to him to leave the country by October 28 for allegedly violating provisions of the Immigration and Foreigners Act by participating in a protest in solidarity with the agitation in Delhi against the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).

Mr. Khan, a U.S. national, is likely to file a petition in the High Court by Friday (October 16, 2026) or Monday (October 19, 2026) through his advocate Zulfikar Memon from MZM Legal.

As per the plea, no provision of the law or any rule prohibits an OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) cardholder from participating in a protest.

Heavy security will be in place in and around Connaught Place and Jantar Mantar ahead of the CJP's proposed protest on October 16, with several companies of paramilitary forces already stationed in the national capital, police sources said.

Police will deploy personnel at strategic locations, erect barricades and regulate the movement of protesters and commuters to maintain law and



order and prevent any untoward incident, a source said."We have issued notices on all the petitions. Union government would file its counter affidavit.

We have sought from the Union government the reasons and circumstances behind the prohibitory orders under S. 163 BNSS

We have sought union government's response to petitions alleging police assault on people, particularly protesters, lawyers and journalists.

As far as the Delhi Union of Journalists' petition on seizure of journalists' devices, the SG has said there were no such seizures. We have asked him to make good this statement in the counter affidavit.

Bench has risen."

Bring on record any fact that belittles the dignity of this court: CJI tells lawyers' bodies

CJI tells lawyers' bodies SCBA, SCAORA can bring on record any fact that belittles the dignity of this court.

The counsel for the lawyers allege brutal action by the police. They said that the Police Commissioner must apologise to the lawyers.

Senior advocate Gaurav Bhatia submitted that a pregnant woman journalist had been pushed by Rahul Gandhi himself, accusing the petitioners of selective outrage. He questioned why senior advocate Indira Jaising had not taken cognisance of the incident.

The Delhi Union of Journalists, represented by senior advocate C.U. Singh, told the Supreme Court that journalists' devices had been seized and sought their release, noting that the devices were essential to their livelihood.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta denied that any devices had been seized.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said the instances of harassment cited by the Network of Women in Media, India (NWMI) should be investigated. Senior advocate Indira Jaising argued that the police could not investigate themselves.

The Supreme Court said no coercive action should be taken against the woman journalist booked by the Delhi Police following allegations that she publicly humiliated police officers and used casteist slurs against them.

J Bagchi said the court would examine whether freedom of expression meant that every person could claim to be a journalist. He noted that there were accredited journalists and those employed by recognised media organisations, adding that the law provided different levels of protection.

"Everybody acting as journalists will create problems," the Chief Justice observed.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, supported by senior advocates Gaurav Bhatia and Mahesh Jethmalani, accused the petitioners of disrupting courtroom decorum, saying they were creating a ruckus "as if they are on the streets".

He urged the court to grant him time to respond to senior advocate Indira Jaising's petition. Mr. Mehta said some people claimed to be freelance journalists while recording videos and making reels. "We do not know who is a reel-maker or a freelance journalist, but no woman must be harassed," he said, adding that women police officers had also been harassed.

The Solicitor-General urged the court not to pass any blanket order in the meantime. He also suggested that videos purportedly showing harassment could have been generated using artificial intelligence (AI).



▶ Chief Minister Joseph Vijay and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore—who also serves as the Minister for Trade and Industry—Gan Kim Yong, jointly inaugurated the 'CapitaLand Data Centre Chennai 01', located in Ambattur, Chennai. In keeping with a traditional Singaporean custom, they marked the opening by rolling a pineapple into the new data centre facility.

Sundaram Finance Limited Increases Deposit Interest Rates Effective 16th October 2026

Chennai: Effective 16th October 2026, Sundaram Finance increases Deposit Interest Rates for One Year Tenure by 0.30%and by 0.25% for Two & Three-year tenure respectively for both Regular and Senior Citizens. Regular: The interest rate for One-year deposits has been increased from 6.70% p.a. to 7.00% p.a. For two years, it has been increased from 7% p.a. to 7.25% p.a. & for three years it has been increased from 7.25%p.a. To 7.50%p.a. Senior Citizens: The interest rate for One-year deposits has been increased from 7.20% p.a. to 7.50% p.a. For two years, it has been increased from 7.50% p.a. to 7.75% p.a. & for three years it has been increased from 7.75%p.a. To 8.00%p.a. Sundaram Finance currently has a deposit base of ₹6,088 crore, reflecting the continued trust and confidence of its deposit holders. Company enjoys AAA rating Stable from both ICRA and CRISIL, denoting highest safety for deposits

An Invitation to a Festive Getaway at The Leela Coorg Forest Sanctuary



Chennai : The Leela Coorg Forest Sanctuary invites guests to embrace quieter celebrations, meaningful connections and immersive experiences across its 76 acres of coffee plantations and forest. From October 17–25, 2026, and November 5–15, 2026, guests can enjoy a peaceful festive escape with True Indian Luxury, featuring all-villa accommodation, wellness experiences, nature walks, coffee tastings, kayaking and stargazing.

Designed for every kind of traveller, the sanctuary offers a restorative calmcation for those seeking relaxation, memorable nature-inspired experiences for couples, and a nature-rich getaway for guests travelling with their pets. Couples can explore wildlife trails, discover Coorg's coffee culture and enjoy the evening Coffee Session, an immersive bean-to-cup experience. Pet owners are encouraged to contact the resort in advance for applicable pet-stay arrangements and guidelines.

The festive stay offering includes a festive welcome and daily breakfast, subject to applicable booking terms and dates. Guests can also explore exclusive stays, dining and curated experiences through Leela DISCOVERY, The Leela's loyalty programme in partnership with Global Hotel Alliance (GHA), offering privileges across 50+ distinguished brands and 1,000+ hotels worldwide. For reservations, visit The Leela Coorg Forest Sanctuary – Festive Getaway. For loyalty programme details, visit Leela DISCOVERY.

Infrastructure and power sector expected to attract funding in H2FY27: Brickwork Ratings

Chennai: According to Brickwork Ratings (BWR), infrastructure and power are expected to attract funding in the second half of FY27, supported by project execution and timely payments. Commercial real estate is likely to drive funding flows in services, while gold loans and loans against property will support non-banking financial company (NBFC) lending. However, small NBFCs with significant microfinance exposure remain stressed.

India Inc's credit profile remained resilient in H1FY27 despite elevated crude oil prices, deficient monsoon rainfall and tighter global monetary conditions. Data from major Indian rating agencies showed 2.7 upgrades for every downgrade during April-September 2026, compared with 2.4 a year earlier. Downgrades declined 11%, while upgrades remained steady.

"Infrastructure, power, capital goods, auto components and secondary steel led upgrades, supported by public spending and steady domestic demand. Textiles, ceramics, diamonds and specialty chemicals faced pressure from weak exports and competition from cheaper imports," said K. H. Patnaik, Chief Ratings Officer, BWR.

Rewin Health launches Jadhu, India's first AI-powered daily life-skills plat form for the differently abled



Chennai: Rewin Health, a Chennai-based digital therapeutics company, officially launched JADHU, India's first AI-powered daily life-skills platform for differently abled children, teens and adults. JADHU combines AI-personalised daily programming, Virtual Reality based real-world practice environments and real-time physiological monitoring to build the everyday skills needed to participate confidently and independently in everyday life. The platform has been clinically validated in collaboration with eight premier medical institutions, special schools and care organisations.

MoUs were exchanged on stage with seven clinical and community partners — Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu, KRM Special School, MERF Institute of Speech and Hearing, Swabhimaan Trust, M.S. Chellamuthu Trust and Research Foundation, Aravind Eye Care, and Sri Ramachandra Medical College. A further 40 schools, clinics and care organisations joined as Jadhu partners, taking the network to 47 on day one.

Ms. Madumathi IAS, Secretary, Welfare of Differently Abled Persons Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, and Dr. Aneesh Sekhar IAS, Mission Director, National Health Mission, both spoke to the scale of the need across Tamil Nadu and to the effectiveness of the approach Jadhu takes, and congratulated the team on the launch.

Speaking about the launch, Vijay Karunakaran, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Rewin Health, said: "Our own study found that 83% of parents say what their child learns in therapy does not carry into daily life, and that 72% of families are not in structured therapy at all. That is not a failure of therapists; it is a failure to give families a structured way to practise. JADHU puts 60 minutes of guided, personalised practice into the home every day, in the situations where independence is actually needed, and gives the therapist objective data on what happened in between. It does not replace clinical diagnosis or professional therapy — it makes both go further."

Shyam Metalics Presents 'Shakti Ek Roop Anek'- A One-of-a-Kind Durga Puja Spectacle Celebrating the Many Forms of Shakti



Chennai: This Durga Puja, Shyam Metalics is set to bring Kolkata alive with 'Shakti Ek, Roop Anek'—a distinctive celebration of creativity, culture and

compassion that explores the many expressions of Shakti in everyday life. Rooted in the brand's core values of Shakti, Suraksha and Samvedana, the campaign brings

together immersive installations, inspiring stories of hope and meaningful community initiatives to create memorable festive experiences across the city.

Moving beyond the grandeur of traditional Puja celebrations, 'Shakti Ek, Roop Anek' celebrates Shakti through three powerful expressions: Ummeed (Hope), Yaadein (Memories) and Sukoon (Comfort and Care). From turning heartfelt wishes into

possibilities and celebrating the art and culture of Bengal to recognising the tireless efforts of Bengal Police, the initiative reflects a simple yet powerful belief: Shakti is not merely a symbol of strength, but a force that nurtures dreams, creates lasting memories and brings comfort when it is needed most.

At the heart of the campaign is the Wall of Shakti, a distinctive installation crafted using SEL Tiger TMT Bars and featuring a prominent structure of Maa Durga. Visitors can place their wishes on the wall, with Shyam Metalics undertaking to fulfil selected wishes and bring its promise of "Sapne Pure Honge" to life. The initiative celebrates the transformative power of hope and demonstrates how meaningful support can help turn aspirations into reality.Adding to the festive experience, the Shakti Tunnel will offer visitors an immersivecelebration of Bengal's art, culture and the spirit of Durga Puja through striking visuals and interactive selfie experiences. The installation aims to create a memorable space where visitors can engage with the many cultural expressions of Shakti while capturing moments of their festive celebrations.

MGM Healthcare Malar, Adyar launches Metabolic Clinic, for Obesity and Metabolic Disorder



Chennai: MGM Healthcare Malar, Adyar has launched a Metabolic Clinic with an advanced, comprehensive multispecialty programme for obesity and metabolic disorders, offering individualised, evidence-based treatments for excess weight management of associated medical complications, and support for remission of several metabolic conditions.

The programme prioritises sustainable outcomes and long-term metabolic health rather than weight loss alone. It addresses associated conditions such as prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), and lipid abnormalities, including elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels. It also helps patients break the cycle of knee pain, reduced physical activity, and further weight gain. In addition, the programme offers integrated care for obstructive sleep apnea and fatty liver disease, which can improve with sustained weight reduction.

Thiru Rhevanth Charan P, MLA, Maduravoyal, launched the programme in the presence of Dr. Kalpana Thai B, Medical Superintendent, MGM Healthcare Malar Adyar, Dr. Meherprasad Y. D., Senior Consultant - Endocrinologist, and the team of medical experts from the new clinic.

The programme is led by Dr. Meherprasad Y. D., Senior Consultant Endocrinologist, with over 30 years of experience in weight management, supported by specialists Dr. Manohar G. (Cardiology), Dr. Ammaiyappan Palaniswamy C. (Pulmonology), and Dr. Kavitha Sampathkumar (Hepatology), along with dietitians and physiotherapists.

In his comments, Dr. Meherprasad said, "Metabolic problems such as excess weight, high blood sugar, abnormal cholesterol levels, and conditions such as PCOS are becoming increasingly common, affecting not just adults but also children and young adults. These conditions can increase the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and kidney disease over time. Hence, identifying them early and starting treatment is important. Our integrated approach enables the development of individualised treatment plans that address the multiple health challenges associated with obesity, promote sustainable weight management, and support the remission of eligible metabolic conditions." He added: "Our approach is to help patients achieve lasting weight loss through medical treatment, appropriate medication, and personalised lifestyle changes, reducing the need for surgery wherever possible. More importantly, we want patients to make healthy eating, regular physical activity, and other healthy habits a natural part of their everyday lives."

Adobe Research: 6.7% of Indian enterprises have scaled AI; 59% Face Challenges Moving from AI Pilots to Scale



Chennai: Adobe, the global technology leader that unleashes creativity, productivity and customer experiences through innovative tools and platforms, today released the India findings from the Adobe 2026 State of AI Readiness Report. The study of 475 senior executives across India examines what separates organizations that scale AI from those that stall.

According to the findings, approximately 59% of organizations in the region are stuck in the "Frozen Middle", piloting or deploying AI without the coordination needed to scale it. For agentic AI specifically, the figure is 40%. Only 6.7% of companies, or 30 organizations in the dataset, have scaled AI across multiple workflows and built the operating model to sustain it. These Leaders convert pilots to production at nearly four times the rate of other companies.

Investment is not the constraint. While 77% of companies are lifting AI investment year-on-year, almost two in three believe they are still underinvesting.

Jeremy Willmott, Senior Director, Digital Strategy Group Asia Pacific, Adobe said, "As AI investment grows, the gap between experimentation and enterprise-wide value is becoming harder to ignore. Organizations that establish clear ownership, shared measures of success and stronger collaboration between business and IT will be best placed to move beyond isolated pilots and achieve sustainable impact."

EDITORIAL



Southern Mail
NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY
FRIDAY 16-10-2026

Spiralling food prices: on rising inflation

September's retail inflation, at 5.54%, an almost two-year high, marks the fourth consecutive month that price increases have kept headline CPI above the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) 4% target. The impact has been particularly severe for rural Indians, whose inflation rate reached 6.08%.

Rural food inflation rose almost two percentage points between August and September, touching 8.06%. Onion (108.09%), garlic (54.62%) and ginger (62.85%) drove the surge, even as potato (-11.50%) and tomato (-8.62%) prices remained below year-earlier levels. The festive season ahead will be expensive for rural households already facing the uncertainties of a deficient monsoon,

El Niño-related risks to harvests and incomes, and unusually high temperatures. Headline CPI is now just 0.46 percentage points below the RBI's upper tolerance limit of 6%. The Monetary Policy Committee raised the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.50% in October, ending a pause that began after its previous increase in February 2023.

Another increase in December cannot be ruled out if price pressures continue to broaden. Chief among the factors driving inflation since the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran have been fuel, food and transport, compounded by a depreciating rupee.

The Indian crude basket, according to the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, rose from $82.04 a barrel in July to $116.09 in September — a 41% increase — with economy-wide implications for freight, production and distribution. The RBI's special dollar facility for oil marketing companies may ease spot-market pressure on the rupee,

but only temporarily if the underlying import dependence and geopolitical risks persist. The crucial subgroup, transport services for goods, recorded inflation of 14.73% in September, up from 14.64% in August. Restaurant and accommodation services inflation has reached 9.36%, while inflation in personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods and services, which include precious metals, has moderated to 13.75%. Core inflation, excluding food and fuel but including precious metals,

rose to 4.6% in September from 4.16% in August, suggesting that price pressures are broadening. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have pulled a record ₹3.08 trillion ($32.73 billion) out of Indian equities in the nine months ending September this year, which is almost double that of the whole of CY2025. FPIs have been net sellers in six of the past nine months as they seek safe havens, stronger dollar-denominated returns, and bond yields. Selling resumed in October, adding to pressure on the ru-

NAME CHANGE

I,UMAPATHI RAGUPATHI, DOB : 25/03/1990 -Residing at No-88, MERKU THERU, ARASADI KUPPAM Post, Alagappasamudiram,Cuddalor District. Pin-607103.Tamil Nadu,INDIA, Shall henceforth be known as given name Ragubathi. Surname Umapathy

UMAPATHI RAGUPATHI.

Kotak Securities rebrands its retail business as Kotak Neo; Unifies Investing, Trading and Wealth Solutions



COIMBATORE: Kotak Securities Limited announced rebranding of its customer-facing identity as Kotak Neo creating a unified and future-ready investment ecosystem. Kotak Neo is a reflection of a fundamental shift in how customers engage with financial markets today, seeking greater choice, seamless digital experiences and access to expertise, all in one place.

The transition follows a multi-year transformation of Kotak Securities, marked by significant investments in new technology stack, product innovation, research and customer experience to address the evolving needs of India's investors and traders. The move brings the business under a single customer-facing identity, combining digital capabilities with research expertise and relationship-led engagement.

Speaking on the launch, Shripal Shah, Managing Director & CEO, Kotak Neo, said "Investors' needs have continued to evolve. Today, they are not thinking only in terms of individual products like stocks, mutual funds or derivatives. They are looking at the bigger picture of how to build wealth, diversify their portfolios and participate in different opportunities across the economy. But meeting all these needs often means dealing with multiple platforms, providers and advisors. With Kotak Neo, our aim is to bring more of that journey together within a single ecosystem."

Haier Launches M3 Series Washing Machine with AI Multi Wash Technology



Chennai : Haier Appliances India, the No. 1 global major appliances brand for 17 consecutive years, has launched the M3 Series washing machine at its 'Elevate with Haier' event, introducing India's only triple-drum washing machine with AI Multi Wash technology. Featuring three independent drums, including two 1 kg drums and one 10 kg drum, the 12 kg-capacity machine enables users to wash different laundry loads simultaneously while providing personalised fabric care and improved hygiene. Mr. NS Satish, CEO of Haier Appliances India, said the launch marks a significant milestone in premium laundry care, reinforcing the company's commitment to intelligent innovation and convenience for modern Indian households.

The Haier M3 Series features AI Wash, Smart Dose technology, AI Smart Control and an AI Smart Center that intelligently manages detergent usage, water and power across all three drums. Its Essence Wash function completes a full load in 39 minutes, saving up to 37% of washing time, while Quick Clean completes a cycle in 46 minutes compared with 1 hour and 29 minutes. Equipped with three Direct Motion Motors, Triple Drum Dynamic Balance technology and AI vibration control, the washing machine offers quieter operation with minimal vibration while fitting within standard washing machine dimensions.

Designed for modern Indian households, the M3 Series supports separate washing of baby clothes, everyday garments, sportswear and delicate fabrics in a single appliance. Priced at ₹1,30,000, the 12 kg model comes with a four-year comprehensive warranty and a 12-year motor warranty. The washing machine is available at retail outlets across India and through the official Haier India website: https://shop.haierindia.com/.

JSS AHER, Mysuru Signs MoU with Japan's Prestigious Hokkaido University.



Ooty: In a significant development JSSAHER signed Memorandum of Understanding with the 150-year-old Japan's prestigeous Hokkaido University recently . This initiative would openup new avenues in Biotechnology, Food and Agricultural Sciences

Sharing this significant development Dr. B. Suresh Pro Chancellor JSSAHER, this would strengthen the global academic and research partnerships.

The MoU was signed by Prof. B. Suresh, Pro Chancellor, JSS AHER,and Prof. Teruo Sone, Dean, Graduate School of Global Food Resources, Hokkaido University, on *13th October 2026 at Sapporo, Japan.

The agreement assumes special significance as Hokkaido University is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2026. Established in 1876 as Sapporo Agricultural College, it is one of Japan's most prestigious National Universities.

The collaboration was facilitated through the efforts of Dr. Siddabasave Gowda, Faculty of Health Sciences, Hokkaido University, and was undertaken with the blessings and guidance of His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Swamiji, Suttur Mutt.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. B. Suresh said, _"Hokkaido University brings 150 years of distinguished academic heritage, while JSS AHER brings the aspirations and energy of a young, research-driven University. When experience and ambition come together, exciting possibilities emerge.

Introducing the Tata Play Smart App: 500+ Live TV Channels on Smart TVs Without a Set-Top Box or Antenna



Chennai: Tata Play has launched Tata Play Smart, a television streaming app designed to bring the familiarity of live television interface on connected TV. Subscribers will get 500+ live channels, without the need for a set-top box, dish antenna or wires.

At the heart of Tata Play Smart is Tata Play's much-loved, user-friendly live TV experience, designed for the big screen and delivered seamlessly over home broadband. Tata Play Smart can be downloaded directly from a Smart TV's app store by anyone, irrespective of whether they currently use a DTH service, cable connection, or no pay-TV service at all. It allows viewers to access live channels on their Smart TV, mobile phone, tablet or laptop, using any internet connection. On the big screen, the experience would seem familiar to anyone accustomed to DTH, with channel numbers, a program guide and remote-friendly controls. The app can also be opened on a compatible device to start watching, bringing the familiarity and ease of Tata Play's entertainment experience to a new generation of connected screens.

Talking about the launch, Harit Nagpal, MD & CEO, Tata Play, said, "The consumer's core need to watch sports, news and daily soaps live on the big screen as appointment viewing has remained unchanged even as Smart TVs and home broadband have transformed the way content is accessed by connected homes. While DTH continues to deepen its reach across the masses, Tata Play Smart is designed to address the infotainment needs of wired urban homes."

Tata Technologies Q2 FY27 Results

Coimbatore: Tata Technologies Limited (BSE: 544028, NSE: TATATECH), a leading global product engineering and digital services company, announced financial results for the quarter ended September 30, 2026. Total Company Operating Revenue stood at ₹16,988 million, up +28.4% YoY. Services Segment Revenue was ₹13,557 million, up +33.9% YoY. In USD terms, Services Segment Revenue came in at $141.9 million, up +4.3% QoQ in cc. Operating EBITDA at ₹2,733 million, up +31.5% YoY EBITDA margin up +40bps YoY at 16.1%; Flat QoQ. Net Income was at ₹1,714 million vs. ₹1,655 million in Q2 FY26. Net income margin was at 10.1%. Workforce strength was at 12,895. [LTM] attrition came in at 15.6%. Tata Technologies Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Warren Harris said: "I am pleased with our strong performance in Q2, with revenues growing 28% year-on-year, reinforcing our positive outlook for FY27. We remain confident in delivering strong double-digit growth for the full year, supported by robust demand, ongoing program ramp-ups, and healthy pipeline conversion. Through our leadership in product realization, growing full-vehicle development capabilities, expanding Aerospace presence, and AI-native transformation, we believe Tata Technologies is becoming a highly differentiated engineering and technology partner, well-positioned for sustainable long-term growth."

WHY POOR SLEEP COULD MAKE DIABETES HARDER TO CONTROL



~ Authored by Dr Arun Raghavan, Consultant Diabetologist & Metabolic Physician, Revivo Clinic for Obesity and Diabetes ~

India is now home to one of the largest diabetes populations in the world. The ICMR-INDIAB national study, published in The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology (2023), estimates that 101 million Indians are living with diabetes and another 136 million are in the pre-diabetes stage . Much of the conversation around diabetes management still centres on diet, medication and exercise. One factor that is routinely overlooked is sleep.A recent study found that sleep duration and quality were significant predictors of HbA1c (the key marker of long-term glucose level control) in people with type 2 diabetes. It also highlights that sleeping less than six hours a night results in higher HbA1c levels in type 2 diabetes patients.

How poor sleep pattern can impact diabetes management: • It raises stress hormones: When you don't get adequate sleep, your body reads it as stress and keeps cortisol (the stress hormone) levels higher than they should be at night. This also makes the body less sensitive to insulin. As a result, your usual dose and your usual meal don't control blood sugar the way they did earlier. That's often why many people with type 2 diabetes see a higher fasting reading in the morning, even when nothing has changed in their diet or medication.

• It triggers hunger and cravings: After a bad night's sleep, your hunger hormones go out of balance. Ghrelin (the hormone that tells you to eat) goes up, and leptin (the one that tells you when you've had enough) comes down. So, you feel hungry sooner and stay hungry longer. This can be recognised through your craving towards tea and biscuits, rice, sweets or a second helping. These are exactly the foods that send blood sugar climbing.

• It contributes to weight gain. Over time, disrupted bedtime can lead to daytime fatigue and reduced physical activity. This, in turn, results in weight gain, especially around the abdomen. This matters in the Indian context, where abdominal obesity and insulin resistance are already defining features of the disease. The ICMR-INDIAB study found that nearly 40% of Indian adults already carry this kind of abdominal weight. So poor sleep quietly adds to a problem many of us are already carrying.

The relationship also works in both ways. Poorly controlled blood sugar can itself disturb sleep through night-time urination and discomfort, creating a cycle that is difficult to break without addressing both ends.

Your bedtime is crucial Sleep, therefore, deserves to be treated as part of diabetes management rather than a lifestyle luxury. Most adults need seven to eight hours of consistent, good-quality sleep. Regular sleep and wake timings, limiting late-night screens, caffeine and heavy meals, and speaking to a doctor about persistent snoring, insomnia or daytime sleepiness can make a measurable difference. For someone living with diabetes, protecting sleep is one of the simplest and most underused ways to support steadier blood sugar, better energy and fewer long-term complications.

MG Windsor INDULGE Edition Launched at ₹17.99 Lakh



Chennai : JSW MG Motor India has launched the MG Windsor INDULGE Edition at ₹17,99,800 (ex-showroom), offering a more premium take on business-class comfort. Powered by a 38-kWh battery, the electric vehicle delivers 100 kW (136 PS) of power, 200 Nm of torque and a certified range of 332 km. Its exterior features an exclusive Shadow Gold body colour with a contrasting Black roof, Black ORVMs, R-18 Black Alloy Wheels and INDULGE badging on the C-pillar.

The special edition features an Urban Tan and Black upholstery theme, INDULGE-embroidered front headrests and a standard PRIVE Screen for second-row passengers. Premium cushions and neck pillows with exclusive INDULGE badging further enhance rear-seat comfort. The accessory package includes a rear sunshade, themed 3D mats, chrome front grille accents, bumper corner protectors, body side moulding and a premium leather key cover.

Speaking on the launch, Vinay Raina, Chief Commercial Officer, JSW MG Motor India, highlighted that the MG Windsor has reached over 80,000 families in 24 months, reflecting its growing popularity in the EV segment. The MG Windsor, India's first Intelligent CUV, combines sedan-like spaciousness with SUV versatility, featuring Aero Lounge seats that recline up to 135 degrees and a 15.6-inch GRANDVIEW Touch Display. JSW MG Motor India, a joint venture between JSW Group and SAIC Motor, focuses on sustainable mobility, advanced technology and localisation, having sold over 1,50,000 electric vehicles since its first launch.

Tata Steel Colors introduces Colorcoat® pre-painted steel in India



Chennai: Tata Steel Colors Private Limited (TSCPL) announced the introduction of the globally recognised Colorcoat® range of pre-painted steel products in India, bringing decades of European expertise, advanced technology and proven building-envelope solutions to the country's growing infrastructure sector.

Mr. Praveen V. Thampi, Managing Director, Tata Steel Colors, said, "As India builds for tomorrow, industries and communities need materials that deliver on every front: longevity, design and environmental performance. Our goal is to provide access to advanced global solutions that can help Indian infrastructure set new standards on the world stage. Tata Steel Colors is proud to bring globally acclaimed solutions to the domestic and global market, empowering architects and builders to design for the future."

Maldives detains 25 TN fishermen, boats, CM Vijay tells Centre; seeks action



CHENNAI: Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Thursday apprised the Centre that 25 Tamil Nadu fishermen have been detained by the Maldives Coast Guard along with their three boats and sought swift action for their release.

Writing to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Vijay said the fishermen, hailing from Thoothukudi district, were detained by the Maldives Coast Guard in the early hours of Tuesday, adding that three mechanised boats were also seized.

"I request you to kindly take up the matter with the Government of Maldives through appropriate diplomatic channels and facilitate the early release and safe repatriation of the fishermen and their boats," Vijay told Jaishankar.Seeking the personal intervention of the minister, Vijay said it would provide the much needed reassurance to the affected families and the fishing community.



▶ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay held bilateral talks with Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore Gan Kim Yong, on the sidelines of the unveiling of the Singapore-based CapitaLand Data Centre Chennai 01 at SIDCO Industrial Estate in Ambattur

NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE BILL: CENTRALISATION OF INDIAN SPORTS WITH MORE TRANSPARENCY AND TIMELY ELECTIONS

All sports bodies in India, including the BCCI, will have to seek recognition from a National Sports Board

Story so far: The National Sports Governance Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday (July 23, 2025), minutes before being adjourned amid Opposition protests. The Bill, which is one of eight legislations listed for introduction in the ongoing Parliament monsoon session, seeks to regulate the various sports administrators in India. The Bill constitutes a National Sports Board (NSB) which will oversee all sports federations, including India's richest sports body – the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"I did a series of consultations with NSFs, athletes, coaches, also got 600 inputs from the public when the draft was put online for suggestions," said Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya ahead of the monsoon session. He added that international bodies like the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FIFA too were involved while drafting the Bill.

However, two sports body which have opposed the Bill are BCCI and Indian Olympic Association (IOA), citing curtailing of autonomy.

National Sports Governance Bill: Drafted with inputs from international bodies also, says Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya

Recognised sport organisations will be governed by newly established national sports bodies such as - National Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee, and National and Regional Sports Federations for each designated sport. Each national or regional sports federation will have international recognition by the concerned international sports governing body.



Each of the above national sports bodies will have a General body, a 15-member Executive Committee with at least four women members, an ethics Committee, a dispute resolution committee, and an Athletes committee. Election to the executive committee for a four-year term is limited to Indian sportspersons above the age of 25 years but below 70 years. Persons between 70 and 75 years may contest elections, if permitted by bye-laws, and shall serve a full term. The government can approve government servants to seek election in the above committee.

A look at India's sports policy journey post independence | Explained

National Sports Board (NSB)

A National Sports Board (NSB) will be established, which has the powers to recognise, suspend or cancel registrations of sports organisations. Its powers also include - (i) conducting inquiry on matters affecting welfare of sportspersons, development of sports in the country or misuse of public funds (ii) issue guidelines for Code of Ethics by sport bodies, constitute administrative bodies (iii) frame Safe Sports Policy for the protection and safety of women, minor athletes and others (iv) maintain roster of the National Sports Election panel which will oversee free and fair elections to the Executive Committees and the Athletes Committee of the National Sports Bodies.

The NSB will also collaborate with International and national sports bodies to ensure compliance with the international standards, protection of the rights of athletes and support personnel. The board can suspend or cancel recognition of a sports body if its international recognition is suspended/cancelled, if it violates any part of this Act, if it has failed to hold elections, publish its annual audited accounts for misused, misapplied, or misappropriated any public funds. No sports organisation will be recognised unless it is a registered society, an incorporated not-for-profit company or a registered trust.

The Centre is empowered to appoint officers and employees to discharge NSB's functions.

Election panel and tribunal

A National Sports Election Panel comprising of retired Chief/State Election Commissioner and other such electoral officers will be constituted, and every sports organisation shall appoint an electoral officer from the panel to oversee its election process.

A three-member National Sports Tribunal will also be constituted, headed by a former judge of the High Court or Supreme Court, to ensure 'independent, speedy and cost-efficient' disposal of sports-related disputes.

The tribunal has powers similar to a civil court and can summon anyone under oath, seek evidence, documents of discovery, and public records from any office. No civil court is allowed to hear pleas on matters in which Tribunal has jurisdiction. All cases in which National Sports Bodies are parties and are pending before a District Court or High Court will be transferred to the Tribunal on a date specified by the Centre.

However, the Tribunal cannot adjudicate on disputes during events organised by International Federations such as the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games etc. It also does not have jurisdiction on matters dealt with by the internal disputes resolution committee of a National Sports Body, other tribunals, any International Federation, or the Court of Arbitration for Sports. It cannot adjudicate on doping-related disputes and involvement of International Charters and Statutes. Its verdict can be appealed to the Supreme Court after a thirty-day deadline.

Other salient features

All sports organisations recognised by the NSB shall be considered as a public authority under the Right to Information Act, 2005 with respect to the exercise of its functions, duties and powers.

Any sports organisation seeking to use the word "India" or "Indian" or "National" or any national insignia or symbols in any language in its registered name, operating name, logo, or otherwise must obtain a no-objection certification by the Centre. Upon suspension/cancellation of its registration, the sports organisation cannot use the name "India" or the name of any State or district in India, or conduct any sports trials, tournaments, or events.

The Board will maintain accounts, records, and prepare an annual statement which shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at any interval it seems fit.

The Centre has sweeping powers to make rules for modes of election to different sports bodies, membership to the Board, measures to ensure protection of rights and welfare of athletes, powers and functions of the Board, salary, qualification and term of various members elected to these bodies. It is also empowered to relax eligibility criteria for members, impose restrictions on participation of any national team/sportspersons of a concerned sport in international sports competitions in the interest of national security, public order and safety.

Any action taken 'in good faith' by the Board or a National Sports Body or the Tribunal or any of their employee is protected from legal proceedings.

PRAJWAL PARAJULY HATES CHENNAI'S AIRPORT, CABS AND PARKS. WHAT ABOUT THE WEATHER?

Even a staunch Chennai ally like Prajwal Parajuly has to contend with its airport's packed golf cars, chaotic cab drivers and befuddling secret passes for walks in the park. But, he thrives in 40 degrees C

As accusations go, this is one I am not particularly ashamed of: readers say I am far too positive about Chennai in this column. They point out that, like a gleeful part-time resident who absconds just when the temperatures become unbearable, I choose to focus only on the food, festivals and the finer things. They do have a point. My column has been insufferably upbeat. Chennai, like every city, has its share of issues. Readers have demanded that I talk about them in the same vein as I do the chutneys at Murugan Idli.

To embrace Chennai living further, I have eschewed the Madras Club for a weekend rental at one of the four Seaward Roads. My flat is part of a charming two-storied house on a tree-lined street. Some days, Pagir, a community art space that's housed in the building, hosts rehearsals in the living room, and I wake up to the sounds of thumping feet and singing conches.

My place is a short jaunt to the beach, which I seldom take advantage of. Valmiki Nagar is a cute neighbourhood —mom-and-pop shops still thrive, the idli places are inviting, and the four Seaward Roads are somewhat walkable. Not all houses have been torn down, and the community WhatsApp group is a delight as long as you stay away from arguments about stray dogs. Now that I have a little slice of



Chennai to call my own, I have unearthed a set of somewhat-first-world irritations with this city I mostly adore. It begins the minute I get off the plane.

Oh Madras, my Chennai

My biggest problem with Chennai is its airport.

Back when I was a starry-eyed teenager in America, I often wondered if airports in India would ever catch up with those in the West. (How naïve I must have been to even consider western airports a yardstick when the Changis of the world were already being spoken about in breathless tones.) Here we are, though, a mere two decades later, smug about our world-class terminals in Bengaluru and Delhi and Mumbai being better than almost anything in America. The Chennai airport, unfortunately, is where your confidence in Indian airports goes to die. The international wing is dated, ugly and abysmally connected. We do have a direct flight to London, unlike Kolkata, but that does not negate the fact that our airport is far inferior infrastructurally. When Kolkata is outdoing you in terms of development, you know you're not just woefully behind but doing something completely wrong.

If that's the international terminal, the domestic would look ancient in 1980s Delhi. In what metro — nay, in what city — is it acceptable to join a mile-long line after you have retrieved your luggage so a wobbly golf cart can haul you to a carpark that's only slightly farther than Sri Lanka? What pinches harder is that the neighbourhood is populated with exemplary airports. Hyderabad has the most efficient airport I have encountered in the country. And the Bengaluru airport is, of course, the Leela Palace meets the Arashiyama Bamboo Forest meets the Eden Project.

Chennai Metro to set up real-time info boards at airport, railway stations, and malls to aid commuters

Ah! Bengaluru. Chennaiites will never admit it, but Bengaluru is a city they view with a mix of envy and schadenfreude. A Chennai-verses-Bengaluru argument always results in platitudes about our having the beach so what if they have the weather. We are safer and less polluted but also less diverse. Sure, Bengaluru outperforms us when it comes to restaurants and pubs, but it is also worse in terms of traffic congestion and pollution. Our rival definitely trumps us in matters of tree cover and pedestrian-friendliness. We are becoming greener than before, but Bengaluru far surpasses us in walkability. I cannot even sugarcoat this: Chennai is the worst city for pedestrians in the country. I am struck by the scarcity of parks and gardens. I am contemplating a membership at the Theosophical Society Library just so I can use its grounds for walks. The good people there reading this: invite me for a talk and grant me membership. I'll read and walk. I'll walk and read. I'll read, walk and talk.

Author Prajwal Parajuly finds Sri City fitness hacks: stairs, tofu and trash bag workouts

When you can't use walking as transportation, you are forced to drive or get driven everywhere. The drawback, though, is that Chennai Ubers are the least professional I have seen in the country. The waiting times are awful (more awful than anywhere else in India), and the cancellations are rampant (more frequent than anywhere else in India). I have come to the sad conclusion that Uber works better in Tier-2 cities than it does here. I should, of course, try the city's bus network, which I have been told is superb. Superb is how I'd describe my rather youthful foray into Rapido. I hope it doesn't go the way of Uber, whose shenanigans here, more than anywhere else, continue to shock me.

Only in Chennai have I been confronted with a phenomenon (it has happened about five times, so I am surprised I haven't come up with a name for it yet) where the driver asks that I cancel my Uber as soon as I get in the car. The idea is for me to pay him the same amount the app would charge me and for him to avoid paying the Uber commission.

Now, I am all for any deviousness that involves sticking it to a gazillion-dollar conglomerate, but imagine being asked to participate in this song-and-dance when you're already late for your flight? It doesn't help nerves that said flight is from the Chennai airport.

So, yes, dear readers, I do have complaints about this city I love: the lacklustre airport, the lack of walkability and Uber's lackadaisical service. Not the weather? you marvel. It's a humid city. So what? Suck it up and eat an ice-cream.

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HOW DOES THE INDIAN HARMONIUM PRODUCE ITS LIVELY MUSIC?



The sounds of an Indian harmonium seem 'alive' because the instrument doesn't run on the clinical power of electrical energy but on a human body in motion. This may also explain why it became a staple of Indian classical, devotional, and folk music

The Indian portable harmonium is a close cousin of the larger foot-pumped organs once found in European churches and homes. It's a wooden box roughly the size of a small suitcase. You sit on the floor behind it and pump a pair of bellows with one hand and play piano-like keys with the other. All these instruments work on the same simple idea: air is pushed past metal strips called reeds; when they vibrate, musical notes are created. The sound of the harmonium has been a staple of both Indian folk music and mainstream cinema.

How does a harmonium use air?

A harmonium doesn't have strings, membranes or electronic circuits. Instead, its 'fuel' is air in motion.

When the bellows attached to the instrument are pulled open, they suck some of the air in the room into their folded chambers, funnelled through inlet valves. When you push the bellows closed, the air is squeezed forward into an airtight wooden compartment that lies directly under the harmonium keys.

Because the compartment's walls don't move, the air pressure within rises above normal atmospheric pressure by a small amount, usually a few kilopascals. The compartment also holds a slender internal spring or a weighted flap that helps maintain this pressure, even if you don't pump the bellows at a regular rate.

In fact, as long as you pump the bellows every few seconds, the reeds will feel enough pressure to make sounds.

How does a harmonium make sound?

The keyboard on top of the harmonium resembles a piano in miniature. But unlike in a piano, each key is only a lever. If you press a key, its far end tilts upward inside the box, lifting a pallet lined with felt.

The pallet covers a hole that leads from the pressurised wooden compartment to a single metal reed. When the key is at rest, the pallet closes the hole and no air flows. When you press the key, the pallet opens, allowing high-pressure air to rush through the hole and towards the reed.

Most Indian harmoniums expose 1.5 to 3 reeds to each hole. A stop rod next to the keyboard allows you to choose which set of reeds, called a bank, is active at any time. If you slide out one stop rod, an extra airway opens so the same key can expose a second bank that is tuned to one octave higher or lower, creating a more organ-like tone.

How does each reed operate?

Every reed is essentially a tongue of brass or phosphor-bronze nailed on top of a rectangular slot in a metal frame. When air pressure rises on the front side, the tongue bends slightly into the slot, allowing a puff of air to slip past to the rear. The same puff now exerts pressure on the back side of the tongue, pushing it forward again.

This rapid seesawing motion sets up a vibration with a frequency of hundreds of hertz for higher notes and around 100 Hz for the lower ones.

The vibrating reed shreds the air stream into pulses, which bounce around inside the box before spreading into the room as sound waves. Because the reed is fixed at one end and free at the other, its pitch depends mainly on its length, thickness, and mass. The shorter or thinner the reed, the higher its natural frequency will be.

Unlike flutes or trumpets, the harmonium's reeds sit inside a wooden cavity rather than an open pipe. As a result, larger cavities produce lower notes and vice versa. The wooden compartment, the leather that makes the bellows, and even the player's lap all absorb or reflect certain frequencies, giving each instrument a unique timbre.

Because warmer air is less dense, reeds in such an atmosphere will also have a slightly higher pitch. Professional players thus often carry small screwdrivers to tweak the reeds' sounds before a performance.

Why does the sound seem 'alive'?

The harder you pump the bellows, the louder the sounds will be. This is simply because stronger pumping raises the pressure in the compartment and moves the reeds harder. Fluent players often use quick pulses on the bellows to produce sharp accents and ease off to create graceful decrescendos. Many designs also include a coupling lever that, when engaged, connects a key to the key one octave higher, so pressing a single note automatically depresses its octave partner without forcing the player's fingers to stretch. Second, because the reed's vibrations feed on the pumping, the instrument can be made to respond to the smallest motions. Players can brighten a note by pumping in a short burst or stall it to thin the note.

More fundamentally, the sounds of an Indian harmonium seem 'alive' because the instrument doesn't run on the clinical power of electrical energy but on a human body in motion. This may also explain why it became a staple of Indian classical, devotional, and folk music, including its willingness to accompany singers outdoors, through power cuts, and even play through the humid monsoons.

CORD BLOOD STORAGE SLOWS DOWN, DOCTORS SAY IT MAY HAVE A ROLE IN REGENERATIVE MEDICINE IN THE FUTURE



Storing cord blood is necessary only if indicated, for instance in cases where an older sibling has leukemia; it is important to understand that all claims of the potential of cord blood stem cells to grow into any organ are still in the experimental stages, say experts

July is marked as 'Cord Blood Awareness Month'. While some experts observe that the uptake for storing umbilical cord blood has slowed down unlike in the past, they say it is beneficial when used for direct donations in the case of a child requiring treatment for diseases such as leukemias. Research exploring its potential is in the early or experimental stages, and it may have a role in regenerative medicine in the future, doctors say.

The Indian Council of Medical Research, in its Guidelines for Umbilical Cord Blood (UCB) Banking Collection, Processing, Testing, Storage, Banking and Release for Clinical Application 2023, said umbilical cord blood "contains stem cells that can be used to treat haematopoietic and genetic disorders including cancer".

Umbilical cord blood is rich in Haematopoietic Stem Cells, which possess the properties of self-renewal as well as the ability of differentiation into myeloid and lymphoid cell lineages. It is also known to be rich in mesenchymal cells, which are self-renewing and minimally immunogenic and play a key role in immune suppression in response to graft-versus-host disease, it said. It added that there are 22 licensed UCB banks in the country.

Doctors' forum dispels beliefs on commercial cord blood banking

Who needs to store cord blood and why?

Jaishree Gajaraj, senior consultant, obstetrics and gynaecology and head of department, MGM Healthcare, Chennai said, "Though the awareness on storing cord blood has increased over the years, the big rush that we had once seen has died down. Nearly 15 years ago, everybody wanted to know about storing cord blood, and now, it is plateauing."

"We do not proactively suggest cord blood storage. Even the global guidance says doctors should not recommend it proactively. But if any of our parents ask about cord blood and storing it, we tell them it is good and has potential. Storing cord blood is necessary only if indicated. For instance, if the older sibling in a family has leukemia, then, it definitely has a benefit as we need not look out for a matching donor. We have had such instances and it has been gratifying," she said.

Hyping up the benefits of private banking

Dr. Gajaraj added: "But we also need to remember that all claims of the potential of cord blood stem cells to grow into any organ are still in the experimental stages; everything is simulated in laboratories. Even its use in infertility and hair growth are on an experimental basis with no big randomised control trials. So with no guidelines recommending it, those who can afford to, can do it."

Vinutha Arunachalam, consultant, obstetrics and gynaecology, laparoscopic minimally invasive surgeon and robotic surgeon, Apollo Women's Hospitals, Chennai, said, "We do get a lot of inquiries from parents about storing cord blood. Many parents do some research on their own or would have known someone who had stored cord blood or had benefited from it. When women near their expected date of delivery, we do offer them the option of storing the cord blood in the standalone banks available."

Reevaluating the import of cord blood banking in regenerative medicine

Role in treatment and costs

As of now, stem cells in cord blood are used in the treatment of leukemias and myelomas, and blood-related disorders. They are being explored for cartilage regeneration. In the future, it could have benefits in many more areas, Dr. Arunachalam said, adding "There is a 50% genetic match for the parents, and for other siblings of the child. It could be used to treat disorders in both the parents and the siblings."

"Approximately, two decades ago, cord blood storage cost ₹70,000. It appeared important then, and was expensive too. But in the subsequent years, it went on to lose its value slowly. Its role in future use got reduced with time except in direct donations in case of a child with a disease," said Aruna Rajendran,

associate professor and haemato-oncologist, department of haematology, bone marrow transplant unit, Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Chennai.

In the U.K. and U.S., people still philanthropically donate cord blood to public cord blood banks for any patient who needs a transplant, she said, adding: "Cord blood can be stored for 20 years. Because of the acceptable HLA mismatches in cord blood stem cell source,

and immediate availability, it is a good stem cell source for bone marrow transplantation. But over the years, with widespread use and refined technique of haploidentical bone marrow transplants where every parent and most siblings can donate for a patient, cord blood-based bone marrow transplants have reduced in numbers."

It may have a role in the future of regenerative medicine but currently, it is in experimental stages and not a standard of care, Dr. Rajendran added.

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THE TROUBLING TAKEOVER OF BENGALURU'S OPEN PLAYGROUNDS

Several playgrounds in Bengaluru that were once thriving, energetic hotspots of organic multi-sport activities have disappeared, either gobbled up for infrastructure projects or replaced by flashy, 'pay and play' sporting facilities.

Sustained citizen activism in pockets of Bengaluru have been trying to challenge the attempted takeover of Bengaluru's open playgrounds. A court stay has temporarily halted the proposed upgrade of a basketball court at this playground in Indiranagar.

Blatant attempts to take over the city's open playgrounds have left Bengalureans scrambling to take the legal route. A recent court stay might have temporarily halted the controversial upgrade and proposed expansion of a basketball court in Indiranagar. But the spotlight is right back on a system that has been swallowing up the city's limited open spaces for infrastructure projects, denying children the right to access and freedom to play.

For the collective, I Change Indiranagar (ICIN) and local residents around Victory Grounds in Indiranagar 1st Stage, the protracted legal battle to save the ground has been propelled by a fear: apprehension that the proposed upgrade and development of the basketball court could be a cover to eventually deny access to local children. This trend has been visible in many parts of the city, and the residents are determined not to let it repeat here.

On its part, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) maintains that the upgraded court will remain accessible to the public and will not be privatised as feared. But both ICIN and the residents around the ground are not convinced. Several playgrounds that were once thriving, energetic hotspots of organic multi-sport activities have disappeared, replaced by flashy, access-controlled sporting facilities.

Disregard for open spaces

But more troubling is the disregard for open spaces in the land acquisition process for mega infrastructure projects. In a telling example, anthropologist and seasoned rights campaigner Usha Rao draws attention to three playgrounds taken over for the Namma Metro Line along a three-kilometre stretch: The Chhota Maidan in Shivajinagar, the Bamboo Bazaar Banda Ground and the Pottery Town playground.



The Banda Ground has been Usha's research focus for long. "I have been studying it personally over so many years. It was a free space for very low income communities in an area where there are no large plots, and the roads are narrow and dangerous for children to play. It was also a community space. It was an Idgah ground with prayers and a place of celebration for Christmas, Ganapathy, Deepavali and other festivals. There is a mixed community around. Plus, at any point of time, one could see some 12 games going on," she recalls.

The takeover of playgrounds strikes at the very heart of Bengaluru's livability. Beyond traffic, this too has been a factor in lowering the city's score in global livability indices.

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In the original plan, Banda Ground was not the location for the Namma Metro station on the Gottigere-Nagawara Line. The station was to come up near the Cantonment Railway Station, aiding seamless shifts for passengers from one mode of transport to another. However, despite opposition from citizens and public transport experts, the location was shifted disrupting community life in and around the ground.

Barely a kilometre away is the site of the Metro's Pottery Town Station, once a dynamic community space and the only playground within a 3 km radius. Although part of the Pottery Town Government High School, this ground was open to children from Benson Town, Jayamahal and Williams Town to play football, cricket and other games. Today, the place is abuzz with construction activity.

Livability challenged

The takeover of playgrounds strikes at the very heart of Bengaluru's livability. Beyond traffic, this too has been a factor in lowering the city's score in global livability indices. As Usha points out, these open spaces go beyond games and double up as spots where children socialise, mix with people from different strata of society. Youngsters develop social skills through play, building friendships, learning to collaborate and resolve conflicts. These accessible play areas often nurture community cohesion while promoting mental health through physical activity.

Advocates for accessible public spaces wonder whether these factors are considered at all in the land acquisition process for big projects. To make way for a Metro Line, the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) had earlier taken over the Jakkarayanakere playground, once a popular hangout for children in and around Seshadripuram. It is now only a nostalgic memory.

'Pay and play' exclusivity

Mobile apps allow people to book slots at sporting facilities, the rates of which are inevitably out of reach of children from lower income groups. File image for representation purposes.

Mobile apps allow people to book slots at sporting facilities, the rates of which are inevitably out of reach of children from lower income groups. File image for representation purposes. | Photo Credit: The Hindu

The mushrooming of 'pay and play' sporting arenas across the city have indeed increased options for those who can afford them. Mobile apps allow people to book slots, the rates of which are inevitably out of reach of children from lower income groups. "Kids from the neighbouring Binnamangala slum at the intersection of Indiranagar 100ft Road and Old Madras Road use the Victory Ground. Even the basketball court was used by these children," says Sneha Nandihal from ICIN.

Active resistance from local residents have achieved success in the past in a few cases. An attempt to take over a shared playground in Thippasandra had met with vocal, multi-pronged protests by residents of the nearby Geethanjali Layout five years ago. As civic activist Jagadeesh Babu recalls, the move to put up a private cricket academy was challenged by citizens, who flooded the Palike Joint Commissioner with hundreds of SMSes and WhatsApp messages seeking action. Mounting protests eventually led to scrapping of the project.

Rising development pressure in the city's Central Business District (CBD) has reduced open spaces, with institutions prioritising infrastructure over play, says Rajeev G. Malagi, Programme Manager, Sustainable Cities and Transport at WRI India. "Lifestyle shifts and mobile usage have further contributed to declining physical activity and youth well-being," he explains.

URDPFI guidelines

The Centre's URDPFI (Urban and Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation) guidelines recommend 10 to 12 sqm of open space per person, he points out. "However, Bengaluru is working towards achieving this. There is an urgent need to revive and strengthen Bengaluru's school playgrounds and open spaces to re-engage youth with the outdoors, supporting their holistic development while also enhancing the city's climate resilience and creating livable environments."

Rajeev's recommendations to re-establish open spaces are these: Mandate all new schools to provide open play areas proportionate to student strength; transform school playgrounds into sports training centres accessible to youth and local communities; and create an interconnected network of open spaces including parks, playgrounds and public facilities. This network could be integrated with accessible public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure to support active urban living.

While decades-old playgrounds are being acquired for multiple projects, new open spaces are not being created. Usha warns that this will have large repercussions on generations to come. "If an underground Metro station is built in place of a playground, will the space above become available for the children? No. Such places will be completely under security cameras with shops. It is a complete loss," says the anthropologist, indicating the need for a total policy rethink on open spaces in the city.



▶ CPI(M) forming a human chain around the Government Medical College Hospital Kozhikode on Wednesday in protest against the alleged attempts to defame the institution.



▶ Babu Parambath and wife Valsala at their carbon-neutral home 'Meda' in Vengeri, Kozhikode.

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INDIA'S POLICE MUST GET OUT OF DIRTY HARRY'S SHADOW

It is time for a policing reset where human dignity and professionalism replace fear, coercion and the illusion of quick justice

Imagine a crime scene, where two detectives arrive. The first person is Sherlock Holmes, who is calm, meticulous and relentlessly logical. He sees what others overlook, asks things that others miss, and lets logic and evidence guide every step. He knows that the truth cannot be extracted by force and that it must be uncovered through careful, patient investigation.

The other person is Dirty Harry, gruff, impatient and contemptuous of rules. He does not investigate; he intimidates. He does not gather evidence; he extracts confessions. For him, justice is about speed, not accuracy, even if it leaves behind broken bodies and ruined lives.

These are not just fictional characters. They represent two conflicting visions of policing in India. The question is this. In the fight against crime, do we want a Sherlock Holmes or a Dirty Harry in our police stations?



A culture of impunity

The custodial death of Ajith Kumar, a 27-year-old temple guard, in June, in Tamil Nadu, is a grim reminder of the perils of the Dirty Harry-style of policing. The case (which involved missing jewellery from a car) happened just months after the Tamil Nadu Police Commission had recommended, among other things, a series of reforms to curb custodial torture.

According to a 2023 Lok Sabha reply, 687 people had died in police custody across India between 2018-19 and 2022-23, which is an average of two to three deaths every week. The data showed that these States had the highest numbers — Gujarat (81), Maharashtra (80), Madhya Pradesh (50), Bihar (47), Uttar Pradesh (41), West Bengal (40), and Tamil Nadu (36).

Official figures conceal more than they reveal. Many custodial deaths are quietly labelled as suicides, accidents, or sudden illnesses. Torture often occurs off the record — beyond lockups and CCTV surveillance. In Ajith Kumar's case, it reportedly happened in police vans, abandoned buildings, a village tank bed, and in a cow shed behind a temple.

Custodial violence overwhelmingly targets the daily-wage worker, the migrant, the slum dweller, the Dalit, and the tribal. So, torture is not just bad policing. It is structural injustice that reflects and reinforces the entrenched hierarchies of caste, class and power.

Torture persists due to inadequate training especially for the public-facing constabulary that makes up 90% of the police force alongside poor infrastructure, pressure to deliver quick results, and weak institutional oversight. Disciplinary action is rare and criminal convictions rarer still. More troubling is societal tolerance of custodial violence, which normalises the abuse, turning crime into the routine and impunity into unofficial policy.

In D.K. Basu (1996), the Supreme Court of India had laid down detailed safeguards against custodial torture. In K.S. Puttaswamy (2017), it reaffirmed dignity and bodily autonomy as fundamental rights. Yet, torture remains rampant. The Law Commission of India's 273rd Report (2017) urged Parliament to enact a standalone anti-torture law, but no such law exists. India has yet to ratify the United Nations Convention Against Torture. In 2025, India was ranked a "high-risk" country in the Global Torture Index — a searing indictment we can no longer ignore.

On research and real world examples

The case against torture is not just moral or legal. It is scientific.

Torture is often mythologised as a necessary evil — the quick fix when time is short and lives are at stake. Films and television shows often portray a suspect cracking under pressure, revealing the truth just in time. But decades of scientific research and real-world evidence tell a very different story.

In Why Torture Doesn't Work: The Neuroscience of Interrogation (2015), neuroscientist Shane O'Mara explains that torture impairs the brain's prefrontal cortex and hippocampus,

the very regions essential for memory and clarity. Victims become disoriented, incoherent, and cognitively impaired; they will say anything, even lie, just to end the pain.

Experience bears this out. During the Algerian War (1954-62), French forces used torture extensively, only to find that much of the intelligence gathered from Algerian insurgents was useless or led to dead ends. In 2007, the International Committee of the Red Cross found that detainees from CIA "black sites" had confessed only to end their suffering, producing false or unusable information. In the United States, the Innocence Project used DNA evidence to overturn over 375 wrongful convictions, many based on coerced confessions. In Ajith Kumar's case, the victim 'confessed' to hiding jewels in a cowshed — not because it was true, but because he wanted the beatings to stop.

The CIA's now-infamous "enhanced interrogation techniques" — waterboarding, stress positions, sleep deprivation — were debunked in the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee Report (2014). The 525-page partially redacted summary (from a 6,700-page report), based on classified CIA documents,

concluded that these methods failed to yield actionable intelligence against al Qaeda. Worse, the time wasted chasing false leads had diverted attention from actual threats. So, what works? According to a Netflix documentary "American Manhunt: Osama bin Laden", the vital lead (the courier who led the U.S. to bin Laden) was uncovered through good, old-fashioned detective work — non-coercive intelligence gathering, surveillance, and methodical analysis.

After the wrongful conviction of six men in the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings, the U.K. abandoned confession-based policing. It adopted the PEACE model (Preparation and Planning, Engage and Explain, Account, Closure, and Evaluation) that focused on building rapport and trust with a suspect, open-ended questioning, active listening, and video recording of the interviews. This model reduced false confessions, improved conviction accuracy and restored public trust. Countries such as Norway, Canada and New Zealand have adopted it with similar success. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has endorsed it.

Post-9/11, the High-Value Detainee Interrogation Group (HIG), a joint initiative of the FBI, the CIA, and the Department of Defence, undertook extensive research on interrogation techniques. Its peer-reviewed studies confirmed that non-coercive, rapport-based methods consistently outperformed torture in producing accurate, timely, and actionable intelligence.

In Norway, far-right terrorist Anders Breivik, who killed 77 people in 2011, was interrogated without threats or coercion. The police's calm, professional approach led to a full confession and valuable insights into extremist networks, demonstrating that even the most heinous crimes do not justify abandoning legal principles. In the U.S., Najibullah Zazi, who plotted the 2009 New York subway bombing, cooperated with the FBI after being treated with respect. His detailed disclosures helped dismantle a wider terror network.

Holmes, not Harry

The core issue is that this is not a debate about policing. It is a test of our democratic maturity. The law must protect the most vulnerable, not brutalise them. Every custodial beating is not just a wound on the body of a citizen.

It is a stain on the soul of the state. India must immediately ratify the UN Convention Against Torture and enact a standalone anti-torture law. All States should embed the PEACE model into police training, and declare zero tolerance for custodial abuse. When Sherlock Holmes's methods succeed in reality — not just in fiction — why should India cling to Dirty Harry's shadow?



▶ Catholic Forum members during a demonstration against the arrest of two Catholic nuns in BJP-ruled Chhattisgarh, in Thiruvananthapuram

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HYDROGEN VERSUS BATTERY: THE COST OF CLEAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

At present, hydrogen fuel cell buses and trucks cost 20-30% more than their battery electric counterparts

Nearly seven in 10 people in developing countries are expected to be living in cities by 2050 given rapid urbanisation. While urban growth provides greater access to jobs and essential services, it also brings challenges with it such as traffic congestion and air pollution, which significantly impact health.

In India, a Lancet study reports that from 2008 to 2019, short-term exposure to PM2.5 particles accounted for nearly 30,000 deaths annually across 10 major cities, representing 7.2% of all deaths. This includes around 5,100 deaths per year in Mumbai, 4,678 in Kolkata, and 2,870 in Chennai. The chart shows the number of deaths attributable to PM2.5 exposure every year in the 2008-2019 period

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These alarming figures have prompted many cities, including Cairo (Egypt), Dakar (Senegal), Santiago (Chile), and Bogotá (Colombia), to explore cleaner public transport options. As a result, demand for electric vehicles (EVs) has risen globally.

By 2023, there were 40 million electric cars on the world's roads — a 35% increase from the previous year. However, EVs still represent only a small share of total global vehicles. The chart shows electric car sales from 2012 to 2024.

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Over half of global sales took place in China, followed by Europe and the U.S., with other regions contributing a much smaller share. While battery electric vehicles (BEVs) dominate the market, Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs) present an alternative with several advantages — they have a longer driving range due to higher energy density, can refuel in just 5-15 minutes, and are generally lighter than battery-powered vehicles. They are particularly suitable for long-distance travel, rugged terrain, and extreme cold.

However, FCEVs remain rare, with only 93,000 units globally — equating to just one hydrogen vehicle for every 330 battery-powered ones. This is largely due to their high initial and operational costs. The chart shows the initial cost of various vehicles.

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As shown in the chart, fuel cell buses and trucks cost 20–30% more than their battery-electric counterparts. Nonetheless, prices for both are expected to converge by 2030 as technology improves.

Operational costs, however, remain a concern. The chart highlights the cost per kilometre for various vehicle types.

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Diesel buses cost about $0.27 per km, while electric buses cost only $0.17, making them more economical despite their higher upfront cost.

In contrast, hydrogen fuel cell buses are significantly more expensive to operate. Blue hydrogen, produced from natural gas, costs $0.84 per km, while green hydrogen, derived from renewable sources, costs $0.91 per km. Experts predict that the initial cost of hydrogen vehicles will match that of battery-electric vehicles within the next five years. However, their operational costs are expected to remain high, even beyond 2030.

In India, the adoption of EVs is progressing at a steady pace. EVs accounted for approximately 5% of total vehicle sales in 2023. Electric car registrations rose by 70% year-on-year to 80,000 units compared to just a 10% growth in overall car sales. However, the most rapid growth was in the three-wheeler segment, where India accounted for nearly 60% of global electric three-wheeler sales. In fact, in 2023, India surpassed China to become the largest market for electric three-wheelers, with over 0.58 million units sold.

India also ranks as the world's second-largest market for electric two-wheelers, with 0.88 million units sold in 2023. But this figure is significantly lower than China's 6 million units. Notably, China, India, and ASEAN countries dominate the global market for electric two- and three-wheelers, while all other regions combined contribute less than 5% to global sales in these categories.



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