

CHAMPAI SOREN LIKELY TO QUIT JMM

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Champai Soren, former Jharkhand Chief Minister and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader is likely to quit Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).



SC TAKES SUO MOTU COGNISANCE OF KOLKATA RAPE AND MURDER

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



The Supreme Court on Sunday took suo motu cognisance of the rape and murder of a postgraduate trainee doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9. A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud is scheduled to hear the case, instituted on the court's own motion, on Tuesday. The matter will be called for hearing on the top of the board of cases listed for the day before the Bench.

The court's suo motu intervention follows an August 13 order of the Calcutta High Court

transferring the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation from the Kolkata Police. The police had arrested a civil police volunteer in the case.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), the largest national voluntary organisation representing doctors of the modern system of medicine had formed a committee to present a "safety document" to the Union Health Ministry that will include the road map to make healthcare institutes safe for employees.



"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."

—Benjamin Franklin

MALAYSIAN PM ARRIVING IN NEW DELHI TODAY

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will embark on a three-day visit to India, where he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will sign a number of agreements and chart out a “multi-sectoral cooperation agenda” to enhance trade, strategic ties, and people-to-people links.

Extradition request

The extradition of Zakir Naik, controversial Islamic preacher who is wanted by Indian investigative agencies on alleged charges of hate speech and money laundering is expected to be taken up during Mr. Ibrahim’s visit. The provisional arrest request and extradition request against Mr. Naik, who



moved to Malaysia in 2016, was sent to the Malaysian government in January 2018. In 2021, Mr. Modi raised Mr. Naik’s extradition with the then Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohammad, when they met on the sidelines of a conference in Russia. Mr. Mahathir, who granted Mr. Naik permanent residency, ruled out India’s request publicly. Indian agencies had also failed to persuade Interpol to issue a Red Corner Notice against Mr. Naik despite three requests between 2017 and 2021. The Interpol’s adjudicating body found the evidence against Mr. Naik “not sufficient”.

SRI LANKAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Sri Lanka’s ninth presidential election, scheduled for September 21, has attracted a record 39 candidates, signalling a return to “business as usual” despite the severe economic crisis of 2022. The number of contenders, four more than in 2019, suggests a robust democratic process. Incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe, traditionally with the United National Party, is running as an independent. At 75, he aims to garner broad support by highlighting the political and economic stability achieved during his two-year tenure, made possible by backing from the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna

(SLPP), led by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. In early 2022, Sri Lanka faced the full effect of an economic meltdown, brought on by, among other things, the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings. The central bank announced a debt repayment moratorium amid unsustainable debt and critically low reserves. The Russia-Ukraine conflict further worsened the situation. The Aragalaya movement resulted in the ousting of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in 2022. Since then, Sri Lanka has secured an extended fund facility with the IMF, supported initially by India and now with an “agreement

in principle” with India and the Paris Club creditors on a debt treatment plan. During the early recovery phase, people faced price hikes. Recently, prices of electricity, fuel, and cooking gas have decreased, but people are still struggling. Earnings from tourism, a major contributor, amounted to around \$ 328 million in July against \$ 219 million a year ago. The Lankan Government announced a monthly cost of living allowance of LKR 25,000 for public service employees, effective January 2025.

Mr. Wickremesinghe faces Sajith Premadasa of the Samagi Jana Balawegaya (United People’s Front), Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, and Mahinda Rajapaksa’s son, Namal of the SLPP. Mr. Dissanayake, who visited India in February, hopes to capitalise on public frustration with traditional political parties, a sentiment that fuelled the Aragalaya movement. Other candidates include P. Ariyanethran, a “common Tamil candidate”, Sarath Fonseka, former Army Commander, and Nuwan Bopage, a nominee of the Aragalaya activists. The leading candidates should push for the restoration of provincial councils, which represent a measure of autonomy as envisaged in the 13th Amendment.

NEPAL’S NEW FOREIGN MINISTER BEGINS FIVE-DAY INDIA VISIT

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Nepal’s new Foreign Minister Arzu Deuba Rana on Sunday embarked on her first official visit to a foreign country after assuming charge at the invitation of Mr. Jaishankar. Foreign Minister Arzu Deuba Rana will meet External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral ties and promote cooperation. As part of the regular exchange of high-level visits between Nepal and India, Ms. Rana’s trip will further consolidate the age-old, multi-faceted relations between the two neighbours.

“Nepal is a priority partner of India in its Neighbourhood First policy. The forthcoming visit will provide both sides an opportunity to discuss and review the progress in bilateral cooperation and help in advancing our ties further.”

Union Ministry of External Affairs



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ARMY FIELDS TACTICAL 'ASSAULT CANINE' ZAC AT BILATERAL EXERCISE IN SRI LANKA

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Armies of India and Sri Lanka have deployed canines — “K9s” in military parlance — in the bilateral exercise Mitra Shakti under way in the island nation. The Indian Army has deployed Zac, a Belgian Malinois, while Sri Lanka has fielded two canines. The 10th edition of Exercise Mitra Shakti is being held from August 12-25 at the Army Training School, Maduru Oya, Sri Lanka.

During the joint exercise, Zac will participate in a range of activities, including house intervention, jungle searches, laser-guided assaults, area sanitisation, and other facets of counter-insurgency operations. In one of the scenarios, Zac intercepted an assailant who was trying to run away from a roadblock.

Army dogs are routinely employed in urban operations such as vehicle checks, search-and-assault operations and explosive detection. The Indian contingent comprising 106 personnel is represented by a battalion of Rajputana Rifles along with personnel from other arms and services. The Sri Lankan contingent is being represented by personnel from Gajaba Regiment of Sri Lankan Army.



LATERAL RECRUITMENT TAKES AWAY QUOTA OF SCHEDULED COMMUNITIES, OBCS: RAHUL

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha alleged the policy of lateral entry into senior positions in the bureaucracy as an “anti-national step”, “openly snatching away” reservation in government jobs from the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Class (OBCs). Mr. Gandhi’s sharp attack came a day after the UPSC advertised vacancies for 45 posts, including of Joint Secretary, Director, and Deputy Secretary in the Union Ministries through the lateral-entry mode. This is the biggest phase of lateral recruitment being undertaken by the Centre. Usually, such posts are filled by officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), and other Group A services.



“Reservation of SC, ST and OBC classes is being openly snatched away by recruiting through lateral entry on important posts in various Ministries of the Central government. I have always said that the underprivileged are not represented in all the country’s top posts, including the top bureaucracy. Instead of improving it, they are being pushed further away from the top posts through lateral entry.”

*Rahul Gandhi
Leader of Opposition, Lok Sabha*

12 % OF TESTED SPICE SAMPLES FAIL QUALITY, SAFETY STANDARDS

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

Nearly 12 % of Indian spice samples tested failed to meet quality and safety standards, data show. Several countries had earlier taken steps over contamination risks in two popular Indian brands, MDH and Everest.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India conducted inspections, sampling and testing of mixed spice blends after Hong Kong suspended sales of some blends of the two brands in April over high levels of a pesticide. Britain then tightened controls on spice imports from India, while New Zealand, the United States, and Australia have said they were looking into issues related to the brands.

MDH and Everest have said their products are safe for consumption. Their spices are among the most popular in India, the biggest exporter, producer and consumer of spices in the world. According to the data obtained by Reuters under the Right to Information Act, 474 of 4,054 samples tested between May and early July did not meet quality and safety parameters.

RAILWAYS TO ADJUST ITS CLOCKS TO MAINTAIN THE RIGHT TIME

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



The Indian Railways will develop a master clock system for synchronising time with the applications and systems across its network. The necessity of keeping uniform time across all systems and applications involved in train operations arose following difficulties in accident investigations.

Under the current manual method, stationmasters set time on the instructions of section controllers. Zonal Railways across the country use various systems, sourcing time from different sources. With the advent of technology, the time for the master clock system would be sourced from Navigation with Indian Constellation (NAVIC) or the National Physical Laboratories. The High-Level Team, led by the Railway Board's Director for

Telecommunications will study the existing system of time synchronisation and its impact on various applications in terms of proper functioning and post-incident analysis. The team will finalise the architecture for the master clock system and the time dissemination for different functioning assets spread across various Zonal Railways, production units, workshops, and data centres. The RDSO has been asked to demonstrate a prototype for the master clock system and the synchronisation between different applications and systems by October 2.

The Railway Board had constituted a high-level committee to coordinate with the Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), the Railways research arm, to finalise the architecture for the master clock system that not only ensure proper working of the system of train operations and management, but also for post-facto analysis of rail accidents.

FSSAI BEGINS PROJECT ON MICRO PLASTIC CONTAMINATION

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched a project to assess micro-plastic contamination in food products and develop methods for its detection. The primary objectives of the project include developing standard protocols for micro / nano-plastic analysis, conducting intra- and inter-laboratory comparisons, and generating critical data on micro-plastic exposure levels among consumers. The aim is to develop and validate analytical methods for detecting micro and nano-plastics in various food products, as well as assess their prevalence and exposure levels in India.

A SNAPSHOT OF MIGRATION IN INDIA

ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Multiple Indicator Survey of the National Sample Survey Office’s 78th Round, conducted in 2020-21 offered a detailed look at the reasons for intra and inter-State migration across India, and the problems faced by migrants. We parsed unit-level data from the survey (more than 11.63 lakh respondents) to arrive at the tables.

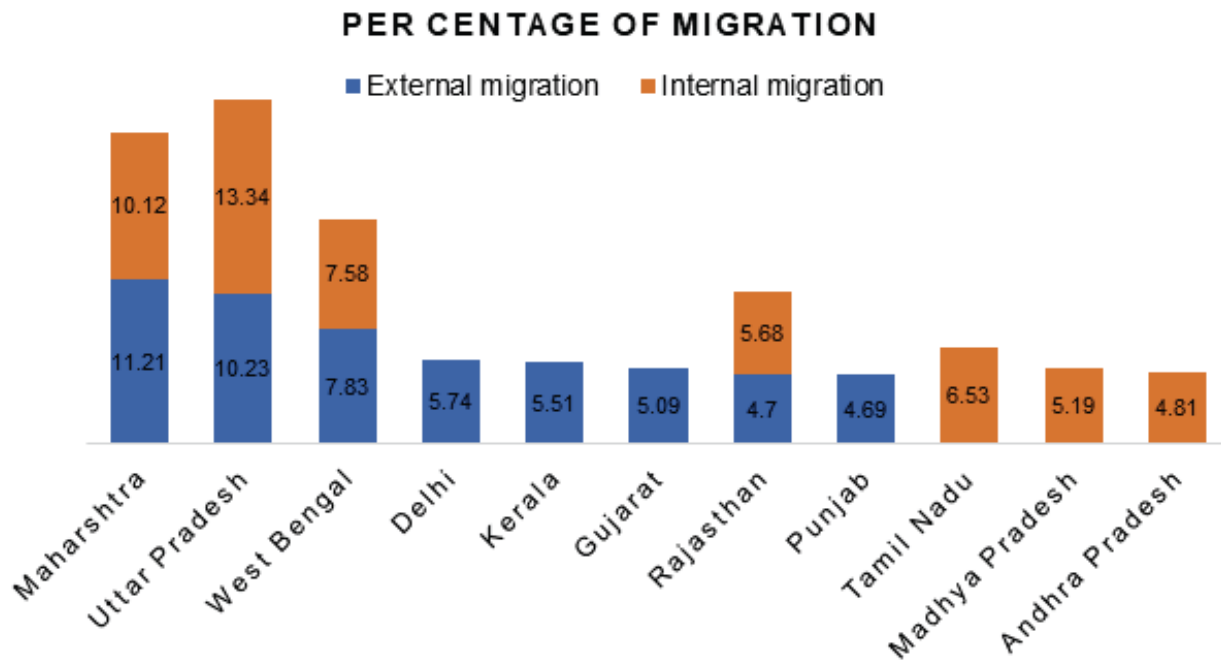


FIGURE: Bar chart representation of percentage of migration



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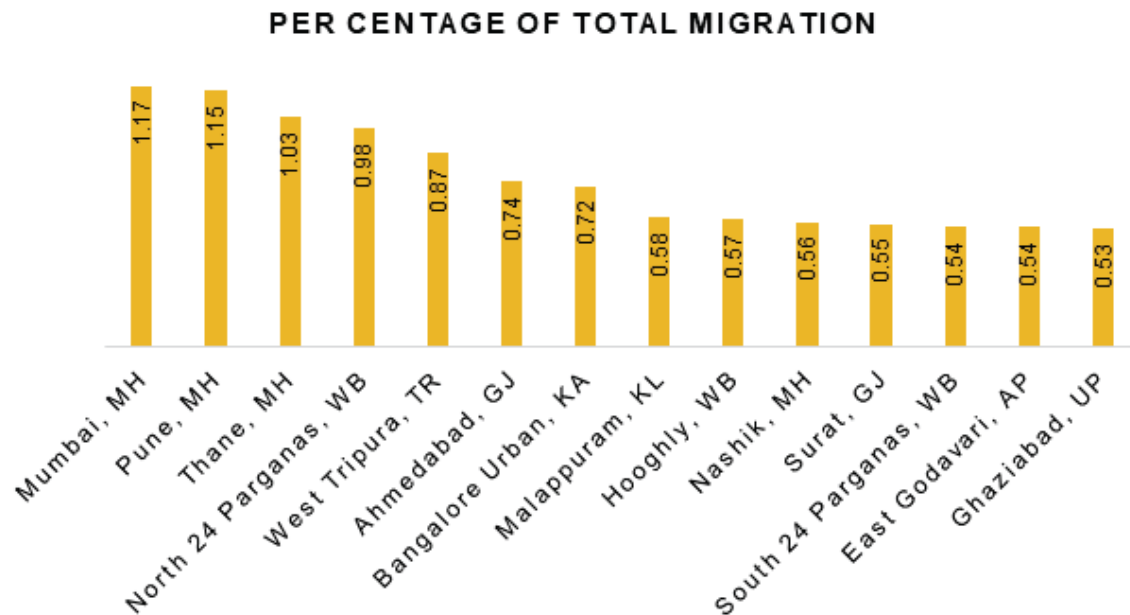


FIGURE: Bar chart representation of percentage of total migrants as a share of population

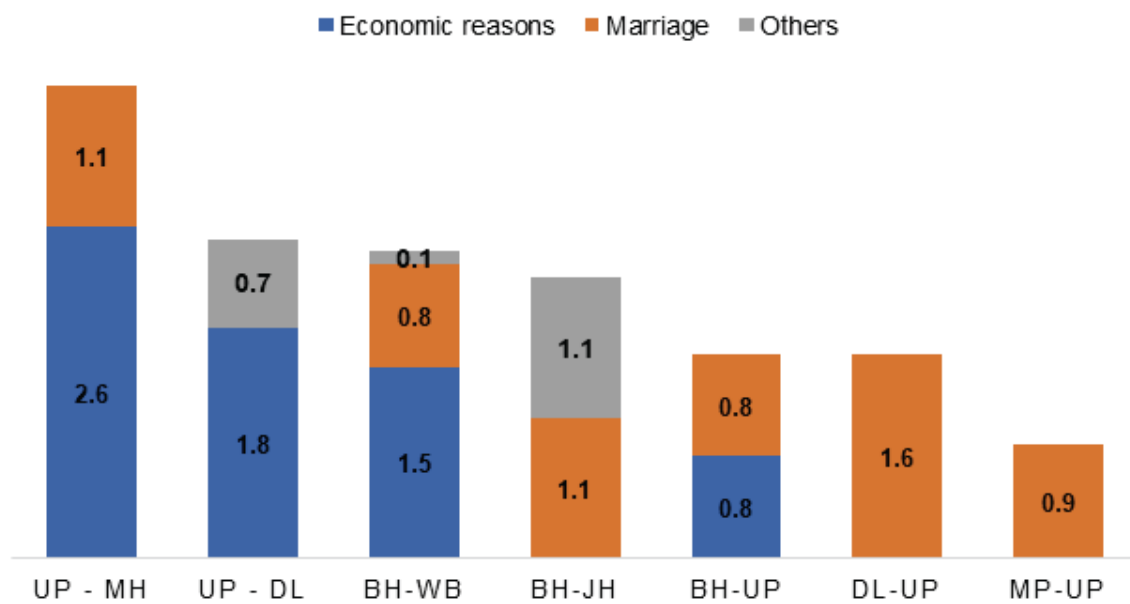


FIGURE: Bar chart representation of percentage of reasons for the migration as a share of migration.

States with the highest share of external and internal migrants among all migrants in India. Maharashtra hosted the highest share of external migrants, followed by Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. U.P. also contributed the highest number of migrants, followed by Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Bihar. These States also hosted a significant number of internal migrants.

Migrants going from U.P. to Maharashtra formed the largest chunk of all external migrants, followed by migrants from the Gulf countries (some returning to Kerala), and migrants going from U.P. to Delhi. Suburban Mumbai remains the district that hosts the highest number of migrants, followed by Pune and Thane in Maharashtra.

Among migrants moving States for economic reasons (who constituted roughly 22% of all reasons), which include better employment prospects, business, service transfers, etc., migrants going from U.P. to Maharashtra formed the largest chunk of all migrants, followed by those moving from U.P. to Delhi and from Bihar to West Bengal. Marriage was one of the main reasons (68.2 % of all reasons) for migration as well, with migrants from U.P. to Maharashtra, Bihar to Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh to U.P. accounting for the top three highest numbers.



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