

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

Nearly 150 Indians languish in Bangladeshi prisons even after completing their sentences

DHAKA, JUNE 8: Nearly 150 Indians continue to languish in Bangladeshi prisons despite completing their jail terms as procedural delays debarred their return home, officials said on Monday.

A prison official said 152 foreigners, including 148 Indians, were languishing in Bangladeshi prisons even though they had completed their jail terms, according to prison statistics published six months ago.

The official, who preferred to remain anonymous, said several of these foreign inmates had completed their terms years ago, however the official identification process alongside bureaucratic or diplomatic inaction prolonged their captivity.

He said a large number of the Indian inmates were detained on charges such as illegal cross-border entry.

News portal Bdnnews24.com on Monday reported 17 Indians continued to languish in the southwestern Shariatpur District Jail alone despite the completion of their prison terms, with the correction centre officials saying their repatriation remained stalled. News archive access



The inmates could not be released as their identities remain unverified, while repeated attempts to contact the Indian Embassy yielded no response, the report said. Jailer Papiya Sultana told the outlet that police had detained 20 people at different times near the Padma Bridge in 2022 and 2023, and they were later sent to prison on court orders.

She said that though they completed their sentences, they were still in captivity with the status of "release prisoners" or RP since the verification and repatriation process remained incom-

plete. "Among them, Indian nationals, identified as Satyendra Kumar and Babul Singh, died in jail on February 2, 2024, while another inmate, known only as Rajan, died on May 29, 2025," she said. Prison officials said the bodies of the three inmates were kept for a long period in the morgue of Shariatpur Sadar Hospital, and following legal formalities, two bodies were cremated locally in January 2025, while the third was cremated in December the same year. According to the report, Shariatpur prison currently holds 14 men and

three women Indian nationals, with many of them facing language barriers.

Prison officials also say some inmates are refusing to eat properly, raising concerns over their health.

Shariatpur District Bar Association General Secretary Mridha Nazrul Kabir said the issue required coordinated efforts by the foreign and law ministries so the inmates could return to their families and homeland.

Prison officials in Dhaka said apart from India, inmates awaiting repatriation include citizens of Pakistan, Myanmar and Nigeria. (PTI)

Brain cells acting as 'disappointment meter' may help design new class of drugs, study finds

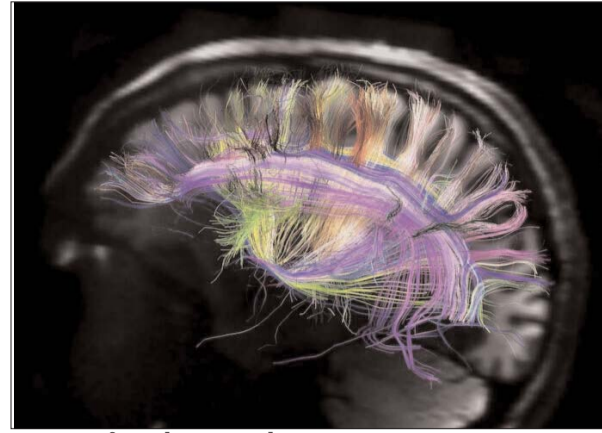
NEW DELHI, JUN 8: A study has found that a group of brain cells might act as a "disappointment meter", activating when reality falls short of expectations, and identifying these neurons could pave the way for a new and more effective class of medications for conditions like depression and addiction.

The findings, published in the journal *Current Biology*, reveal that the feeling of being let down is something that particular cells in the brain are designed to detect and record.

Mapping the cell types that show a sensitivity to disappointment might someday lead to a new class of medications that better treat neuropsychiatric disorders like depression and addiction, lead researcher and senior author Emily Sylwestrak, an assistant professor of biology in the University of Oregon College of Arts and Sciences, said.

Researchers looked at the lateral habenula region, a small, evolutionarily ancient structure located deep in the brain, and which processes negative emotions.

Previous studies have shown the region, some-



times referred to as the brain's 'anti-reward centre', to become active in response to unexpected negative events, such as a punishment out of the blue or a reward no longer granted.

However, the region contains many kinds of neurons, and scientists have yet to isolate the roles of individual cell types within it, the researchers said. "What we're trying to understand is how those different cell types are mapped to particular behaviours. This new paper is a look at a cell type that we think is doing something very specific in the reward system," Sylwestrak said.

Sylwestrak and colleagues recorded brain activity in mice trained to poke their

noses into a port to earn sugar water. After the mice had learned to expect a sweet sip when approaching the spot, the reward was sometimes smaller than expected or withheld entirely.

The researchers observed that the not only did the neurons in the lateral habenula suddenly burst into activity in such moments, but also that the activity scaled according to the degree of disappointment.

The team could infer how much sugar water the animal received based on the strength of the neural response. "It's like being able to record the activity in your neurons and tell whether you were given one, two or three Skittles (candy) when

you expected five. The activity in these cells is such a reliable reporter of the difference between expectation and outcome that it essentially acts as a disappointment meter," Sylwestrak said.

Comparing brain activity in worse-than-expected contexts, such as when the mice encountered a sudden puff of air, the researchers found that the neurons in question were relatively quiet, suggesting the cells may not be merely "bad news detectors".

The specificity is central for learning from mistakes, changing behaviours and perseverance, said author Kana Suzuki, a doctoral student in Sylwestrak's lab. However, the cognitive processes can be disrupted in neuropsychiatric disorders. "If you're looking at a neuropsychiatric disease, you need to know which knobs to turn to set things right," Sylwestrak said.

"So, if we know that a particular cell type is compromised in depression, for example, scientists might be able to design drugs that specifically target it and avoid the effects of stirring others," she said. (Agencies)

Armenian PM Nikol Pashinyan claims victory in election seen as test of Russia's influence

YEREVAN, JUNE 8: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan early Monday claimed victory in a general election seen as a test of Russia's influence in the South Caucasus state, as preliminary results showed his governing Civil Contract party came first with 49.81 per cent of the vote.

Pashinyan and the governing Civil Contract party were looking for a strong mandate for a new geopolitical course for Armenia, including distancing the former Soviet republic from Moscow, seeking to join the European Union and deepening cooperation with the West.

Casting his vote on Sunday, Pashinyan said that the country would continue strengthening its independence, statehood, democracy and rule of law.

"The European Union is



our main partner in democratic reform implementation, and we will continue that path," he said.

Pashinyan's main opponent, Samvel Karapetyan, is a billionaire who made his fortune in Russia and is under house arrest for allegedly advocating for the government's overthrow. Karapetyan, whose Strong Armenia bloc was the runner-up with 23.29 per cent of the vote, has rejected the charge as politically moti-

vated. Richard Giragosian, who heads the independent Regional Studies Centre think tank in Armenia's capital, Yerevan, described the vote as a "pivotal election" that "stands as a referendum on the future of the country."

"This election provides a fresh mandate on sustaining the positive momentum of diplomatic engagement, normalisation of relations with neighbours, and the continued diversification of Arme-

nia's security partners," Giragosian told AP on Monday. Russian officials have hit Armenian exports with a barrage of restrictions in recent weeks. President Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials have made thinly veiled threats comparing Armenia's path to that already taken by Ukraine, which was invaded by Russia.

Meanwhile, Armenian investigators said that they issued six arrest warrants for members of Karapetyan's Strong Armenia party the day before the election, accusing them of buying votes. The nation's Central Election Committee confirmed Saturday that the party could run after a member of another opposition party, Republic, appealed for Strong Armenia to be barred over corruption allegations.

Mamata Banerjee meets Kejriwal ahead of INDIA bloc meeting

NEW DELHI, JUN 8: Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee on Sunday met Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal in the national capital, a day ahead of a meeting of the opposition INDIA bloc.

The TMC described the meeting as "warm", and said the two leaders held discussion on "the road ahead".

Twenty-three political parties of the INDIA bloc will meet on Monday to redraw their strategy to take on the BJP and iron out differences amid changed power dynamics after the defeat of regional anchors TMC and DMK in the recent assembly polls.

"Our Hon'ble Chairperson Smt Mamata Banerjee along with our Hon'ble National General Secretary Shri Abhishek Banerjee met with Shri Arvind Kejriwal Ji today, in Delhi," the party said



in a post on X. "Following a warm interaction, they held an extensive discussion on the road ahead," it said.

The TMC also made a call for unity and a "better future" in 2029, in an apparent reference to the next Lok Sabha elections.

"When the people of India unite, no force on earth can stop their march towards justice, dignity and a better future in 2029," it added.

Mamata Banerjee is in

Delhi to attend the INDIA bloc meeting.

The Mamata Banerjee-Kejriwal meeting comes months after AAP announced that it was no longer part of the INDIA bloc.

AAP is unlikely to attend Monday's meeting.

The INDIA bloc meeting also comes amid strain in ties among some constituents of the opposition alliance, with the DMK set to skip the meeting over what it has de-

scribed as Congress' "betrayal" in Tamil Nadu and the CPI(M) expressing its displeasure over allegations by top Congress leaders that the Left had colluded with the BJP in Kerala.

The TMC has continued to maintain direct engagement with Kejriwal and AAP, and leaders of the two parties have met on several occasions over the past two years, including during opposition outreach efforts after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and ahead of key opposition consultations.

The TMC has also backed Kejriwal and AAP in their confrontations with the Centre. There was no immediate word from either side on whether the Mamata Banerjee-Kejriwal meeting touched upon the INDIA bloc meeting or possible opposition coordination in the future. (PTI)

7.8 magnitude earthquake in southern Philippines causes 4 deaths, damage and tsunami

MANILA, JUNE 8: An offshore magnitude 7.8 earthquake rocked the southern Philippines early Monday, damaging buildings and a key access bridge in a large southern city and setting off a 1-metre (3-foot) tsunami that washed ashore on nearby coasts. At least four people were killed and more than 200 others injured, officials said.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. urged people to go to higher ground in Philippine areas vulnerable to a tsunami, and Indonesian and Malaysian authorities also issued warnings to their nearby coastal areas.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said the threat of a tsunami had largely passed about five hours after the 7:37 am quake. But it still urged people to stay alert and to heed warnings from local authorities as sea levels may fluctuate for a few more hours.

The strongest quake to strike the Philippines this year was centred at sea about 13 kilometres southwest of General Santos, a city of more than 700,000 people that is a hub for tuna processing and other commerce in the southern Mindanao region of the archipelago na-



tion. The Philippine leader said disaster-response agencies were on standby to respond. "The national government is moving and we will not leave Mindanao behind," Marcos said.

At least three people were killed and 130 others were injured in General Santos, where at least a few small buildings partially collapsed and several structures, including a key access bridge, sustained dangerous cracks. Rod Sosmena, regional director of the Office of Civil Defence, told The Associated Press.

The Department of Health said another person died in Davao Oriental province due to the quake.

There were no immediate reports of people being trapped in partially collapsed structures in General Santos due to the quake, said Sos-

mena, who was being driven to work when the ground violently shook.

"Our pickup truck suddenly jerked and I thought we had a flat tire," Sosmena the AP by telephone from General Santos. "People dashed out of houses into the streets."

The international airport in General Santos was temporarily shut due to the earthquake and 17 domestic flights were cancelled, civil aviation officials said.

Ednar Dayanghirang, director of the Office of Civil Defence in a nearby southern region, said more than 100 students attending morning flag-raising ceremonies sustained bruises and some fainted in panic at different grade and high schools.

"I myself could hardly stand and keep my balance when the ground shook as I

was leaving my house," Dayanghirang told the AP by telephone from southern Davao, a major port city in the southern Philippines.

DZRH radio station in Manila reported that a small commercial building housing its provincial branch partly collapsed and staffers dashed to the ground floor without injuries. It wasn't clear if other people were trapped in the rubble of the four-storey office building. Debris also fell from other buildings, hitting tricycle taxis parked below.

The quake was caused by movement in the Cotabato Trench at a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

"It's a major earthquake and we're expecting damages and we've already seen some damaged buildings based on videos we've seen," institute director Teresito Bacolcol told AP.

Waves of 1-metre (3-feet) were monitored in the Philippine provinces of Sultan Kudarat and Sarangani by land-based tsunami watch stations, Bacolcol said. Smaller waves were monitored in at least one other province, he said.

Chennai-born architect of Trump's AI policies to step down from White House post

WASHINGTON, JUN 8: Chennai-born Sriram Krishnan, the architect of US President Donald Trump's policies on artificial intelligence, is stepping down from his role as senior policy adviser at the White House.

The 42-year-old, who has had stints at Microsoft, Facebook and Twitter, made the announcement of leaving his role as Senior Policy Advisor for Artificial Intelligence in a post on X on Saturday.

"I'll be leaving my role at the White House at the end of this month. After a break I'll be working on helping tackle some of the large challenges facing America on AI (more on that later)," Krishnan said.

Krishnan was an architect of the Trump administration's "AI Action Plan", which provided a blueprint to roll back regulation of the emerging technology and promote the build-out of data centres across the country.

He also was among Trump's tech advisers who crafted an executive order limiting states' ability to regulate AI.

"It is hard to express how big a privilege it has been to serve the American people



and how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to do so. First and foremost, it has been an honour to serve under President Donald Trump. Without his leadership, we would not be leading in the AI race," Krishnan said.

Krishnan's close ally at the White House, David Sacks, said it has been one of the great privileges to work so closely with him over the past 18 months.

"Your skills are genuinely unique: a rare combination of deep technical fluency in AI, sharp policy instincts, exceptional strategic thinking,

and true diplomatic talent," Sacks, Co-Chair, President's Council of Advisers on Science & Technology, said on X.

Krishnan listed the American AI Action Plan, the National AI Policy Framework, and forging AI acceleration partnerships among his achievements during his tenure at the White House.

"The past 18 months have given me a front row seat to this critical moment on AI facing America and our allies.

Whether it is energy, data centres or a clear path for Americans to experience the

benefits of AI, there are many tough issues we all need to navigate together," Krishnan said.

"I plan on building institutions that help tackle some of those challenges for America and its allies," he said.

Before joining the government, Krishnan was a general partner at the venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz and worked at Facebook and Twitter. He is a close ally of Elon Musk and advised him on his 2022 takeover of Twitter, which was renamed X.

Born in Chennai in 1984, Krishnan earned his Bachelor of Technology in Information Technology from SRM University in 2005, before moving to the US two years later to join Microsoft.

Krishnan's appointment to the White House drew sharp criticism from Trump's right-wing influencers, such as Laura Loomer.

Loomer said Krishnan had supported removing some caps on green cards and easing the ability of skilled foreign workers to come to the United States, which went against Trump's agenda of "Making America Great Again". (PTI)