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**PIONEER IN SHORT**

**CHAOS IN CLOTH, MAZE OF MAIZE**

Is there a problem of plenty or plenty of problems? Farmers across India are distressed with the falling crop prices and, in some cases, they are not even able to recover the price of inputs and production. Generally, a plentiful crop output, as is the case in the last season, is a reason to celebrate. According to the central agriculture ministry, rice and wheat production reached a record level of more than 1,500 lakh tonnes, and 1,180 lakh tonnes, respectively, which were 124 lakh tonnes, and 46.53 lakh tonnes higher than last year. Additionally, moong (green gram) production increased to 42.44 lakh tonnes, soybean to 152.68 lakh tonnes, and groundnut to 119.42 lakh tonnes. Maize and millet output are estimated at 434.09 lakh tonnes and 185.92 lakh tonnes, respectively, compared to 376.65 lakh tonnes and 175.72 lakh tonnes last year. Similarly, oilseed output in 2024-25 is estimated at a record 430 lakh tonnes, which is 33 lakh tonnes higher than the figure in 2023-24.

FULL REPORT ON P10

## PM pitches new global parameters at G20

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
 New Delhi/Johannesburg

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday proposed a G20 initiative aimed at enhancing clean energy transitions by boosting recycling, easing supply chain pressures and advancing joint research on critical minerals, and suggested forging a partnership to make satellite data more accessible and interoperable.

On the sidelines of the Summit, Modi met several world leaders, including his British counterpart Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, South Korean President Lee Jae-myung, Brazilian President Lula da Silva and several other world leaders on the sidelines of the G20 Summit and discussed issues of bilateral and mutual interests.

PM Modi also met his Japanese counterpart Sanae Takaichi on the sidelines



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, centre, and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, right, during IBSA Leaders' meeting, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg. PTI

of the G20 Summit and discussed bilateral cooperation in areas like innovation, defence and talent mobility. It was the first meeting between PM Modi and Takaichi after she assumed the leadership of her country in October. Modi also held discussions with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on cooperation in various areas, including trade, investment, mining, critical minerals, AI and food security.

The G20 Open Satellite Data Partnership proposed by PM Modi during the second session at the G20 Summit in Johannesburg suggests that satellite data of G20 space agencies would be made available to developing countries for agriculture, fisheries, and disaster management, among other activities.

## Centre backs off on Chandigarh Bill amid Punjab uproar

MONIKA MALIK ■ Chandigarh

New Delhi's attempt to calm rising political tempers in Punjab over the proposed Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill has done little to blunt the sharp, State-wide backlash, with all major parties — including the BJP's own State unit — closing ranks to defend Punjab's claim over Chandigarh. Hours after the possibility of introducing a Bill altering the Union Territory's constitutional position triggered protests across the State, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Sunday afternoon issued a categorical clarification that no final decision had been taken and that the Centre had "no intention" of bringing the Bill in the upcoming Winter Session.



**CHANDIGARH BELONGS SOLELY TO PUNJAB. WE WILL NOT ALLOW ANYONE TO SNATCH WHAT WAS MADE FROM OUR SOIL**  
 —CHIEF MINISTER BHAGWANT MANN

The statement, posted on X, stressed that the proposal was only meant to "simplify" the Centre's law-making process for Chandigarh and did not, in any way, seek to change its governance structure, undermine the traditional administrative arrangement with Punjab and Haryana, or pave

the way for an independent Administrator. The Ministry added that any decision would be taken only after "adequate consultations" with all stakeholders.

But the reassurance has done little to quell resentment in Punjab, where the issue of Chandigarh - built by uprooting Punjabi villages and envisioned as Punjab's post-Partition capital — has always evoked strong historical, emotional, and political responses.

The controversy erupted after a Lok Sabha bulletin included the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2025, among the list of new Bills likely to be introduced during the December session.



## RSS runs on social support, says Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
 Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had completed 100 years of service and continues to work solely with social support, without any foreign or institutional funding.

Addressing a 'Gita Prerna Mahotsav' event in the presence of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, Adityanath said diplomats and foreign envoys often ask how the Sangh operates.

"We tell them that we have worked as 'swayamsevak' (volunteers). They ask about funding... We say there is no funding pattern. No OPEC country or international church funds it. RSS stands on

the strength of society and works with a spirit of service," Adityanath said. The CM added that the organisation serves every distressed person, irrespective of religion, language or region.

"RSS teaches that the nation comes first, and anyone who can contribute to taking India to greater heights must be supported," he said. Adityanath also criticised those who, according to him, have turned service into a tool of deals and influence, claiming that they attempt to change India's demographic character through pressure and greed.

Referring to the spiritual message of the Bhagavad Gita, the Chief Minister said it can provide guidance in challenging times.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath (right) interacting with a group of people during an event. PTI

India clinched the inaugural Blind Women's T20 World Cup after defeating Nepal by seven wickets in the final at Colombo's P Sara Oval on Sunday, completing an unbeaten run in the six-team tournament. India chased down Nepal's 114/5 with remarkable ease, finishing at 117/3 in just 12 overs.

India opted to bowl first and controlled the match from the opening overs. Nepal managed only a single boundary in their entire innings, unable to break past India's tight field placements and disciplined underarm

## Cab Sec tutors officers to increase efficiency in decisions

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA  
 New Delhi

The Cabinet Secretariat has taken a strong objection to the functioning of 'few' ministries and departments that have not been following the prescribed rules of 'delaying', which is ultimately hampering the Centre's 2021 vision on initiative for 'Increasing Efficiency in Decision Making'.

In a strongly worded note to all secretaries of the Government of India, the top

most office of bureaucracy has said, "This is against the essence of the reforms undertaken so far and creates potential delays in file processing". The Secretariat has sought immediate intervention to review the levels of disposal and channels of submission in the ministries/departments to ensure that levels do not exceed four and that the special secretary/additional secretary/joint secretary functions as bureau heads.

"The old format was cumbersome and too tedious in a

department for rolling a file right from the section officer levels to deputy secretary, JS, AS, etc, which means multiple layers were involved in the movement of files. Now, new measures were incorporated into the Central Secretariat Manual of Office Procedure, 2022, for delaying for immediate disposal and efficiency. While a few of them have been implemented, many, which include a very prominent Ministry, are yet to be implemented. Hence, the Cabinet Secretariat has sent a

reminder to all the concerned HoDs of the Government of India," explained a top Government officer.

"It observed that delayering is not being done and implemented in the true spirit, and a trend of increasing the channels of submission is observed in some ministries and departments. To sustain measures undertaken as part of increasing decision-making, you are advised to review levels of disposals. I request you to devote your

## SIR reunites families after separation

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

True, the Election Commission of India (ECI) does not only "delete" but also "reunites" too. Amid an ongoing political slugfest over alleged "stress-related" deaths on account of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, SIR has started building bridges to the past.

Amid the deletion scare of names, SIR, by default, has united at least three families in the past two weeks of its inception in Bengal.

Cut to Purulia district bordering Jharkhand: The Chakrabarties of Gobardanga village witnessed a happy reunion with the eldest son of the family, Vivek Chakrabarty,



Vivek Chakrabarty

after 37 long years. Vivek had gone missing in 1988, never to return home, notwithstanding frantic searches conducted by the family for decades.

Though hope and memories faded and life moved forward, Providence had different desires. Pradip

Chakrabarty, a local BLO who had his phone number printed in all the enumeration forms, suddenly got a phone call from distant Kolkata. A young boy on the other side was inquiring about his backward linkages required to satisfy the technical audit of SIR.

As the discussion proceeded and minute details shared, "I realised that this was my own nephew that I was speaking to," BLO Chakrabarty said. Even as a wave of emotions flowed, punctuated by spans of silence, Vivek, the father of the "nephew", intermittently thanked his younger brother, saying he was a small boy when he was lost and never knew what he would do with life.

## Action against singers promoting gang culture: Haryana DGP

MANOJ KUMAR ■ Chandigarh

Amid rising concern over the glorification of gangsters in regional music, Haryana Director General of Police (DGP) OP Singh on Sunday issued a sharp directive to senior police officers, calling for uncompromising action against singers whose songs or videos promote gang culture and influence young listeners towards crime.

He said that the singers, who promote gang lifestyles to youth through music and videos, should be treated as criminals, and strict legal action should be taken against them. These people,

in a matter of minutes, destroy the teachings given to youth by their parents, education by teachers, and the society's discipline, he added.

Moreover, the controversy over provocative lyrics in Haryanvi songs has been simmering for years. The genre, known for its folk roots, has increasingly faced criticism for shifting towards themes of violence and criminal behaviour. Amid mounting concerns over the impact of such content on youth, police had earlier directed the removal of 40 controversial songs from social media platforms.

## India crowned champions of inaugural Blind Women's T20 World Cup

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA  
 New Delhi

India clinched the inaugural Blind Women's T20 World Cup after defeating Nepal by seven wickets in the final at Colombo's P Sara Oval on Sunday, completing an unbeaten run in the six-team tournament. India chased down Nepal's 114/5 with remarkable ease, finishing at 117/3 in just 12 overs.

India opted to bowl first and controlled the match from the opening overs. Nepal managed only a single boundary in their entire innings, unable to break past India's tight field placements and disciplined underarm

bowling lines. The chase was anchored by Phula Saren, who remained unbeaten on 44. India's batters relied on clean hitting, communication, and sharp running, closing the challenge well before the final overs. "This is the biggest moment of my and my team's life," Captain Deepika TC said after the win.

Deepika said the victory carried emotional weight for the squad. She also said that messages of support from Women's World Cup winner Jemimah Rodrigues and India's Test captain Shubman Gill had boosted morale ahead of the final. "Their encouragement was meaningful for us," she said.



Indian women team posing for photographs after winning the T20 blind womens world cup in Colombo. PTI

**This is the biggest moment of my and my team's life**  
 —CAPTAIN DEEPIKA TC

India had entered the final after beating Australia in the first semifinal. Nepal advanced by defeating Pakistan on Saturday. Sri Lanka, the co-hosts, managed only one win in the league phase, against the USA. India was the first team to qualify for the knockouts after winning all five matches in the round-robin stage.

Blind cricket follows specialised rules. The ball is a plastic sphere with metal

bearings that produce sound. Players are categorised by vision: B1 (fully blind), B2, and B3 (partial sight). Teams must field a mix of these groups. The ball is bowled underarm along the ground, and B1 batters use runners for safety. Every run scored by a B1 player counts as two. These adjustments shape a game that depends heavily on sound, orientation, and spatial awareness.

For India's players, the win came at the end of a journey defined by struggle, community support, and late discovery of the sport. Captain Deepika, who lost her sight as a baby, grew up in a farming family in Karnataka.

## 2 arrested for killing recovery agent

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

The Ghazipur police arrested two youths for killing recovery agent Shashi Prakash Upadhyay following a dispute over payment of Rs 101, which the victim had borrowed from them.

ACP (Ghazipur) Anindya Vikram Singh said the accused worked under the victim and were unhappy over their low salary.

"The victim did not pay Rs 101, which he took from them for purchasing an item," the ACP said. He said

this was what the accused told police during the interrogation.

They had killed the victim by beating him on the road at night in the local police station area. The vehicle used in the crime had also been recovered.

On November 20, the victim's father, Chandrabhushan Upadhyay, Ambedkar Nagar, had informed the police through an application that two to three unknown persons had assaulted his son, Shashi Prakash Upadhyay, and he had died during treatment.

Based on the above application, a case under Section 103 (1) BNS was registered against two to three unknown persons.

Senior officials immediately visited the scene and inspected it.

Police teams were formed to investigate the incident and the arrest of the accused.

On Sunday, the team was tipped off about the miscreants involved in the murder of the recovery agent. The team was told that the accused were present near Kamta bus stand. At this, a police team

led by Inspector Ghazipur reached the scene and nabbed two of the miscreants involved in the crime.

They identified themselves as Akhilesh Kumar of Gonda and Prince alias Arun Yadav of Azamgarh.

On their search, Rs 400 was recovered from Akhilesh Kumar, while two mobile phones and Rs 350 were recovered from Prince alias Arun Yadav.

The arrested accused confessed to their crime and said they killed the victim with a common intent.

The two arrested accused disclosed during interrogation that they were friends of the deceased Shashi Prakash Upadhyay and knew each other. They worked part-time under the deceased in Lucknow.

On November 19, they had an argument with Shashi over salary and financial transactions. During the scuffle, they beat Shashi to death. The accused confessed that they were trying to escape from Lucknow on Sunday when they were caught by the police.

## DyCM inaugurates Jamboree Charak Hospital in Vrindavan Yojana

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

To ensure health services during the 19th National Jamboree, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak formally inaugurated the Jamboree Charak Hospital in Vrindavan Yojana on Sunday. Upon his arrival, he was given a grand welcome by the Scout-Guide band, and the children honoured him with a guard of honour and salute.

The deputy chief minister conducted a detailed inspection of the various medical facilities established in the hospital. He reviewed the emergency ward, first-aid room, medicine storage, essential medical equipment, rapid medical response system and deployment of paramedical staff along with the overall health infrastructure.

During the inspection, he also observed the ongoing blood donation programme and appreciated its well-organised arrangements. He then received detailed information about the Jamboree medical management from the DG Medical and CMO Lucknow, and thoroughly assessed the hospital's overall preparations. Thereafter, the deputy chief minister also inspected several important sites in the Jamboree area -- camp sectors, accommodation arrangements, activity zones, food arrangements and security management-- and expressed satisfaction with preparations.

Addressing the Scout-Guide participants, he said that the role of youth is paramount in nation-building. He advised the children to adopt discipline, patriotism, a spirit of service and cultural diver-

sity as core values of life. He stated that the youth of India will shape the strong leadership of the future, and events like the Jamboree provide them with real experiences of unity, courage, cooperation, leadership and global understanding.

On the occasion, State President Scout and Guides Dr Mahendra Singh said, "After 61 years, Uttar Pradesh has once again been honoured with the opportunity to host the National Jamboree. Around 32,000 Scout-Guide participants from across the country are present here, and all arrangements related to their facilities, safety, accommodation, food, recreation, and training have been made as per international standards," he said.

He said that a special adventure park has also been set up at the Jamboree ground.

## Unnao family attempts self-immolation

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

To highlight their alleged plight at the hands of police in Unnao, 11 members of a family, including five minors, attempted self-immolation after they reached the Tango barrier near the chief minister's residence by pouring petrol over themselves on Sunday morning.

The policemen present there promptly acted and overpowered the group of people, and they were brought to the Gautampalli police station for interrogation.

As per reports, the family members reached around 10.40 am and attempted to pour petrol on themselves. Seeing them doing so, the police swung into action and overpowered them.

Initial investigation revealed that the family is from Asiman village in the Lonarikheda police station area of Unnao. Five of the 11 members are minors.

On Saturday, a man from a neighbouring village filed an FIR against two of the family's boys for molesting his daughter.

The eldest member of the family said a family from the neighbouring village had been harassing them, and no action was taken on their complaint, so they planned mass suicide. He stated their opponents wanted to kill them, had filed a case against them and had also implicated them in an SC/ST case three months ago.

According to him, their opponents' only work was to implicate people in false cases in the area. "We complained about this to the authorities several

times, but no action was taken. After this, we planned mass suicide. We had brought petrol with us, but the police arrested us," the man said.

A police spokesman said a case under different sections of the BNS had been registered against the family, which attempted self-immolation on Sunday.

"The eldest member in the family alleged that the police were not hearing his pleas, and his opponent had named even the minors and innocents in the FIR. The family grievance was that the minors also had been named in the SC Act, and the local police were registering a case on their complaint. The matter has been referred to competent authorities in Unnao, and those who attempted self-immolation have been detained," a police spokesman said.

## Girl rejects marriage proposal, murdered

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

An 18-year-old student of Dharmavat Khera was murdered in Mohanlalganj on Sunday after she refused a marriage proposal from an obsessed youth.

The accused, Alok Rawat, a resident of Lonapur in the BBD police station area, barged into the house of the victim, Priyanshi Rawat, attacked her during an argument and slit her throat.

He fled the spot on a motorcycle, but was later arrested by the cops and is being interrogated in the case.

Priyanshi's younger sister, Mehak, the only witness, said their mother was away at work when the incident occurred. Despite being critically injured, the victim attempted to chase and restrain the attacker but collapsed due to severe blood loss.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Vikas Kumar Pandey and Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Vasanth Rallapalli reached the spot and recorded statements about the incident.

The family revealed that Alok had earlier threatened to kill Priyanshi after she stopped talking to him and refused to marry him.

## Youth held for sexually exploiting girl in name of marriage

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

A 26-year-old youth was arrested on Sunday for allegedly sexually exploiting a Scheduled Caste girl on the pretext of marriage in the Rahimabad police station area.

The accused, identified as Rishi Yadav aka Munna of Bhulbulakhera in Rahimabad, confessed to his crime and disclosed that he befriended the victim through Facebook and later committed the crime while promising to marry her.

In her complaint, the girl had alleged that she met the accused through Facebook and later they became very close. The accused later sexually exploited her and reneged on his promise to marry her.

It was alleged that he abused her and hurled casteist remarks at her when she insisted on marriage.

## KDA prepares to implement New City project in phases

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Kanpur**

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) is preparing to implement the New Kanpur City (NKC) Project in phases. It has started purchasing the land to launch the project soon.

KDA Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal held a meeting with officials and said that a proposal for the New Kanpur City Plan should be prepared and submitted to RERA within 10 days. Additionally, the Uchti (Atal Yojana) plan is being planned on 500 bighas of land. This will be imple-

mented through a PPP model. A tender will be issued to finalise its layout and select a developer. He also ordered the identification of 3,000 acres of land for Greater Kanpur.

A meeting is underway at the government level between the KDA and the Municipal Corporation regarding this matter. After a quick resolution, Aero City will be relocated near Chakeri.

Meanwhile, with the launch of New Kanpur City and the Uchti Yojana (Atal Yojana), the KDA has also begun clearing occupied land

at various locations. Following the Vice-Chairman's orders, the enforcement officers of all four zones have begun clearing the land. 40,000 square metres of land has been cleared in several locations, including Kapatli, Gwaltoli, Panki, and Barasirhi. The KDA is also preparing to launch small housing schemes on the land acquired in small pockets.

KDA Vice-Chairman Madan Singh Garbyal has ordered all zonal officers to curb illegal constructions and also clear their village community and acquired land.

## Students' musical talent showcased

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Kanpur**

The Seth Anandram Jaipuria School, Kanpur, celebrated its 51st Founders' Day.

The ceremony commenced with the arrival of the chief guest, Dr Bharat Bhasker, Director IIM Ahmedabad, followed by the inauguration of the annual school exhibition titled 'Kshitij - The Breathing Canvas.'

The lighting of the lamp set a solemn tone for the occasion, with distinguished guests, including Dr Bharat Bhasker, Shishir Jaipuria, Chairman of Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions; Vinod Malhotra, Adviser to the group; Harish Sanduja, Director - Schools and



IT; Ganesh Tiwari, School Principal; MK Mishra, Vice-Principal (Senior School); Madhusree Bhaumik, Vice-Principal (Junior School) and Shailendra Agnihotri, GM (Admin), taking part in the ceremonial proceedings.

## 200 villagers provided blankets

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Sonabhadra**

To provide relief from the winter, Hindalco Renusagar's CSR department distributed warm blankets to 200 needy villagers in Viawhaw village.

While distributing the blankets, chief guest RP Singh, Unit Head of Hindalco Renusagar and special guest Indu Singh, senior member of Disha Mahila Mandal Renusagar, interacted with the villagers, listened to their needs and problem and assured them that Hindalco Renusagar will continue to strengthen its commitment to social responsibility.

RP Singh said, "Hindalco Renusagar's objective is not limited to operating the industry, but rather, it is our primary responsibility to actively contribute to overall development of villages surrounding the project to raise their standard of living."

The villagers expressed their gratitude to Hindalco management for this initiative and said that this support is a great relief for them during the cold weather.

At the end of the program-



mme, PR Head Mridul Bhardwaj, Sudhakar Annamalai, M Karthik, Vibha Singh, Pooja Bhardwaj, Chitra Sudhakar, Vaishnavi Karthik, and Kiran Srivastava distributed blankets. The programme was conducted by Sanjeev Kumar Srivastava, in-charge of the Rural Development Department, Renusagar.

## DM REVIEWS SIR WORK

District Magistrate BN Singh on Sunday took stock of the progress of feeding the names of voters, distribution

of enumeration forms, collection of distributed forms under the Special Intensive Revision campaign. During this time, a sanitation worker who was absent at the booth of Barail primary school was suspended. On the occasion, DDO Hemant Kumar Singh, tehsildar (Sadar) Amit Kumar Singh, DPPO Namita Sharan, BSA Mukul Anand Pandey, DIOS Jai Ram Singh, Additional District Information Officer Vinay Kumar Singh along with the officers concerned and employees were present.

## Contractor sexually assaults minor, held

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

The Indira Nagar police arrested a shuttering contractor for allegedly raping his colleague and friend's five-

year-old daughter.

Before the incident, the accused had consumed alcohol with the girl's father. He then lured the girl with a toffee and took her to a secluded spot where he raped her and then fled.

After the girl returned home crying, her parents were stunned to see her condition. When asked, she recounted the entire incident. Her parents took her to the police station. The police first admitted the girl to the hospital and then filed a complaint.

According to the police complaint, the accused,

Sunil, went to his friend's house at 8 pm on Thursday and consumed alcohol together. Afterwards, Sunil took his friend's daughter with him, promising to buy her a candy.

According to police, both the victim's family and the accused are from Bihar.

The accused Sunil and the girl's father work as shuttering contractors. After consuming alcohol, Sunil raped the girl in a secluded area.

Based on the mother's complaint, a case was registered against the accused, Sunil, for rape and

under the POCSO Act. The accused has been arrested.

The inspector stated that the accused, Sunil, fled his home after the incident. When police arrived at his home, they found the accused's wife.

When questioned about Sunil, she couldn't provide any information. Sunil does not have a mobile phone.

The police took the victim's father with them and began searching for Sunil. Within seven hours of the complaint being filed, the police arrested the accused Sunil near Sector 14.

## Cyber fraudsters dupe 3 of cash

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

Cyber fraudsters duped three people out of huge cash in three separate cases reported at different police stations.

The fraud was done through credit card and UPI transactions. The police have registered a case and begun an investigation.

As per reports, Mateen of Saadatganj reported receiving a phone call on October 7, claiming to have created a credit card PIN. The caller

downloaded a mobile app and generated the PIN, after which Rs 49,638 was transferred from his bank's Visa card. Following a complaint to the cyber cell, Rs 25,075 has been frozen.

In the second case, Rajiv Kumar of Vikas Nagar reported that a transaction of Rs 1,20,831 was made from his credit card. He was unaware of this as he did not receive any OTP.

Upon learning of the incident, he called the bank's customer service and had the card blocked. He has

filed an FIR at the Vikas Nagar police station.

In the third case of fraud in Aliganj, a fraudster posing as a Paytm agent came to the stall of Ramu and asked for a transaction of Rs 1 in the name of updating his KYC. The next day, the fraudster revisited the victim's stall and created a fake UPI and transferred Rs 49,000 and then Rs 50,000 from Ramu's account to his mobile phone. The fraud was discovered when the victim went to the bank on November 17 to update his passbook.

## Police seize property of criminals

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

The Lucknow Police seized property worth Rs 1.55 crore and a Fortuner, all proceeds of crime, of three accused. These criminals have formed a gang and extorted money from people, amassing wealth worth several lakhs.

According to police, Shivendra Singh Chauhan (40) of Janki Vihar Colony, Jankipuram, has several cases registered against him at the Madiagon police station and other police stations. Shivendra is the gang leader and has a total of 10 criminal cases registered against him since 2023 at

the Aliganj and BKT police stations in Lucknow.

The gang leader Shivendra Singh Chauhan entered the world of crime in 2023 and, along with other members, formed an organised gang and began extorting money. He amassed wealth worth approximately Rs 57.41,615.

Similarly, property acquired by Kuldeep Singh of Radhapuram Colony, Kanchanpur Matiyari, was confiscated on Friday. Kuldeep Singh, along with his gang members, faces numerous charges of murder, destruction of evidence and fraud in various districts. These cases have been filed since 2010.

Kuldeep, while working with the gang, began committing crimes for financial and material gain. He acquired property with the proceeds from crime, valued at approximately 9,844,625 rupees. He had no other source of income for these properties other than crime.

A Fortuner was seized during a seizure action against Vishal Yadav alias Dharam Singh Yadav near the Shiv Mandir in Jarhara village of Indiranagar.

Vishal committed crimes by forming gangs. He used the proceeds of crime to purchase a Toyota Fortuner, which is currently valued at approximately Rs 14.14 lakh.

## Cop accused of exploiting nursing student sexually

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
**■ Lucknow**

A nursing student from Ashiyana has accused a traffic constable of sexual exploitation on the pretext of marriage with her. The incident took place at a hotel in Sarojini Nagar.

The student alleged that the constable had a

relationship with her for five years under the pretext of marriage. She alleged that she filed complaints at the Ashiyana and Sarojini Nagar police stations, but no action was taken. According to the victim, they became friends through Facebook in 2019, and their friendship later blossomed into a love affair.

During this time, the

constable had physical relations with her several times at a hotel in Transport Nagar. The victim stated that the accused constable is originally from Sultanpur and his marriage is already fixed elsewhere.

The student alleged that the constable refused to marry her after she protested his marriage to

another girl. The victim alleged that the police were playing delaying tactics because the matter involved a policeman.

She said last week she filed a complaint with the women's helpline 1090. She later went to the Ashiyana police station with her family and gave a written complaint. However, she

was asked to contact the Sarojini Nagar police as the crime took place at a hotel in the Sarojini Nagar police station area.

Ashiyana inspector Chhatrapal Singh said that the incident occurred in the Transport Nagar area, which was under the jurisdiction of the Sarojini Nagar police station.

### The Pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from Anu Gupta to Anu Sanghi W/o Deepak Sanghi R/o 127/783/4 W 1, Saket Nagar Kanpur for future purposes.

### NOTICE

I have changed my name from Nancy Omar to Nancy Sanghi W/o Sovit Sanghi R/o 127/783/74 W1, Saket Nagar Kanpur for future purposes.

### NOTICE

I Pabinta Rai W/o No. 9425411-L, Rank Hav Name Nimesh Tamang, permanent address Rangbee Bich, Kaman Khoti Dhura Reshop Bazar, Darjeeling, (WB) Unit 6/11 GR, declare before Notary Magistrate my title has been mentioned in my husband's Service Record as PABINTA TAMANG my correct name as per academy documents, Aadhaar Card and Voter Identity Card my name and surname is written as PABINTA RAI. Both names PABINTA TAMANG and PABINTA RAI. is the same person. same may be recorded in my husband's service record.

### NOTICE

It is informed to the General eneral public that the informant, Mrs. Priya Pandey, wife of Vinod Kumar Pandey, resident of E-181, Indira Nagar, Raebareli, has acquired ownership of a building No. EWS-181, Indira Nagar, Tehsil Sadar, District Raebareli, through a Hibnamna (donation deed) dated 19.02.25, serial no. 2408, before the Sub-Registrar, Sadar, Raebareli. The original deed related to the said property is dated 06.07.02, serial no. 2622 which is in favour of Shri Bajrang Lal Maurya and original deed dated 24.08.02 serial no.-2632 which is in favour of Shri Lakhjan Singh were in the possession of the informant but on 10.08.25 while taking them for photocopying to the Collectorate, the last pages of the entire original deed dated 06.07.02 of buyer Bajrang Lal and deed dated 24.08.02 of buyer Lakhjan Singh fell down and got lost and could not be found despite extensive search. If anyone has it, please provide it to the informant. 1. Certified copy of deed dated 24.8.2002 at Sub Registrar Sadar Raebareli, Book no. 1 Seller's Identification no. (VOI) Pages 325/344 serial no. 2622 which is in favour of Bajrang Lal Maurya. 2. Original deed dated 24.08.2002 with the Sub-Registrar, Sadar, Raebareli, Book No. 1, Seller's Identification No. 2543, Pages 113/150, Serial No. 2632, in favour of Mr. Lakhjan Singh. The FIR has been filed with the Raebareli Crime Bureau on 10.09.2025. Priya Pandey, wife of Vinod Pandey Resident of E-181, Indira Nagar, City and District, Raebareli, Mobile No. 9305059792

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI (CIVIL APPELLATE JURISDICTION) Notice Under Order V Rule 20 Code of Civil Procedure			
RFA No. 818/2024 And CM No. 68967/2024, 68968/2024 & 68970/2024 Appelant against the Order dated 12.08.2024 Passed by Dr. Ruchi Aggarwal Arsan, Presiding Officer, MACJ-01(Central) Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi In Civil Suit No. CS DJ No. 17139/2016/1973 SH JAGDISH PRASAD AGGARWAL THR LFR			
VERSUS		.....APPELLANT(S)	
SMT RANI DULARI (SINCE DECEASED) AND ORS		.....RESPONDENT(S)	
Notice to: Respondent(s):			
60 I. SMT. RANI GUPTA (WIFE) W/O SH. SURINDER KUMAR GUPTA R/O FLAT NO. 601-602, TOWER A4, OLIVE COUNTY, VASUNDHRA, SECTOR-5, GHAZIABAD, UP-201012	12. SMT. SHAKUNTALA DEVI W/O SH. GAURI SHANKAR, R/O 63, MAYO ROAD, KANPUR, UP.		
60 III. SH. ANUPAMA AGGARWAL (DAUGHTER) D/O SH. SURINDER KUMAR GUPTA R/O S 8/110, MAGBOOL ALAM ROAD, KHAJURI, VARNANSI, UP-221001	18. SMT. USHA RANI GOEL, W/O SH. SURINDER PRAKASH GOEL, R/O HIRDEY BHAWAN, BHADRAPURA, BAREILLY, UP.		
Whereas the above-noted appellant has presented an appeal under Section 96 CPC along with the above-mentioned application which was listed before the Court on 26.11.2024 and the Court ordered issuance of notice to you. And whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Court that you cannot be served in the ordinary manner, Notice is hereby issued that, if you wish to defend the above-mentioned application, you may cause an appearance to be entered on your behalf either personally or through an advocate duly appointed by you for the purpose before the Court of Worthy Registrar (Appellate) on 08.12.2025 (Wed) at 11:00 a.m.			
If no appearance is made on your behalf by yourself, your pleader or someone by law authorized to act for you in the above mentioned appeal and pending application on the aforementioned date, no further notice of the subsequent date of hearing of the said application will be given and the same will be heard and determined ex-parte in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of this Court on this 06th day of November, 2025. Assistant Registrar (App.) (Civil) for REGISTRAR GENERAL			

## Gita offers answers for a world in confusion: Mohan Bhagwat

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

The Bhagavad Gita provides timeless guidance for a world struggling with moral confusion, conflict and the lack of peace, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat said on Sunday.

Addressing the Gita Prerna Mahotsav here, Bhagwat said the purpose of the event was not merely ceremonial, but to inspire people to live the Gita. "We are here because the Gita has to be lived, not just recited. Its 700 slokas must be read, contemplated and applied in our daily lives," he said.

Drawing parallels between Arjuna's dilemma on the battlefield of Kurukshetra and the present global situation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief said the world today is "lost, exhausted and directionless", despite material progress. "There is wealth and comfort, but no peace, no contentment, no moral clarity," he said.

Bhagwat said India's ancient wisdom once guided the world for thousands of years, and the Gita is the distilled essence of that knowledge. "Just as Krishna removed Arjuna's confusion,



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat hold a copy of the 'Bhagavad Gita' during the 'Divya Geeta Prerna Utsav' programme, in Lucknow, on Sunday.

the Gita can help humanity confront its challenges today," he said.

Bhagwat said the Gita inspires one to be courageous while facing problems, rather than running away from them. "Krishna tells Arjuna — 'Do not escape. Stand firm, confront the problem and act without ego or fear,'" he said. The RSS chief noted that true strength lies in fulfilling one's duty selflessly.

"Great acts done with a selfish intent bring no good. Even small actions done for the welfare of others carry immense value," he said.

Bhagwat also noted that India's civilisational identity has survived both glory and adversity for thousands of years. India was a world leader once. It endured invasions for centuries and still stands. To rise again, we must understand our essence," he said.

The RSS chief urged people to study the Gita, understand its meaning and gradually incorporate its teachings in their lives. "If we live the Gita, our lives will change, and India will move towards becoming a vishwaguru again," he said. Bhagwat praised initiatives for making the Gita's wisdom accessible through simple and practical interpretations.

## Let's build a new UP inspired by ideals of Ram Rajya: Yogi Adityanath

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday expressed hope that the restoration of the 'dharma dhwaja' in Ayodhya will usher in a new era of happiness, peace, and prosperity in the state.

The dharma dhwaja will be installed in a grand ceremony in Ayodhya on November 25 under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a post on his official website, Adityanath said, "On November 25, 2025, the name of Shri Ayodhya Dham will once again be inscribed in golden letters on the pages of history."

He emphasised that under the guidance of the prime minister, the work being done at Ayodhya Dham is inspired by the life values of Lord Ram.



Additionally, he called on the people of the state to pledge to build a new Uttar Pradesh inspired by the ideals of Ram Rajya.

The chief minister also shared a letter addressed to the people, saying, "The restoration of the dharma dhwaja will

transform Ayodhya into a global spiritual centre. This ritual, following the consecration of the grand Ram temple, is not merely the culmination of a yajna (sacrifice) but the beginning of a new era."

Noting that Ayodhya Vision 2047 is rapidly coming to fruition, Adityanath said that new connectivity, state-of-the-art infrastructure, rapid tourism development, and initiatives like smart city and solar city are establishing Ayodhya as a sustainable, inclusive, modern city on a global scale.

"For millions of devotees, reaching Shri Ayodhya Dham has become easier, safer, and more convenient than ever before. The city of Lord Shri Ram is emerging on the world map as a cultural capital, where heritage is respected and unprecedented development is taking place."

## No change in power tariffs: UPERC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

For the sixth consecutive year, power regulator UP Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC) has kept power tariffs unchanged. The regulator on Saturday announced the power tariff for the current fiscal year 2025-26.

The regulator rejecting the UP-Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) Annual revenue requirement (ARR) for a hike in power tariff said, "the Commission has not found any justification for an increase in tariff rates for FY 25-26."

The tariff orders shall be in force after seven days from the date of publication by the licensee/UP Power Corporation Limited in at least two Hindi and two English daily newspapers.

Sumit Kumar Agarwal, secretary of the UPERC, said: "The tariff order of 5 State Discoms — all wholly owned subsidiaries of the UP Power Corporation Limited for 2025-26 has been finalised by

the UPERC after taking into consideration the objections, comments and suggestions of the stakeholders, public and the State Advisory Committee."

On the front of reducing the line losses, the Commission said only Madhyanchal and Paschim Anchal DISCOMs were able to achieve targets set for FY 24-25 for distribution losses, worst-performing being Purvanchal Vidyut Nigam followed by Dakshin Anchal Vidyut Nigam.

UPPCL is incurring a loss of ₹1.02 per unit supplied by it. The actual loss could be higher as the Average Cost of Supply (ACS) projected for FY25-26 is 8.18 (Rs/kWh), whereas the Average Billing rate is projected to be 7.61 (Rs/kWh). The regulator did not reveal the average per unit revenue realised by the UPPCL. The UP Government will continue to provide subsidy for lifeline consumers (Rural and Urban), rural scheduled metered consumers and private tubewells at the

same level as the previous year.

The Commission has approved distribution losses of 13.35 per cent against 13.77 per cent as claimed by the UPPCL and Discoms. A subsidy of ₹17,100 crore will be provided by the State Government. Besides the Government subsidy, revenue from the existing tariff of ₹86,183.29 crore payable by consumers has been approved by the Commission.

The Commission has approved the ARR of 5 State Discoms for 2025-26 in line with the recently notified UPERC Regulations, 2025. The Commission has approved a consolidated ARR for 2025-26 at ₹1,10,993.33 crore for the purchase of 163,778.24 MU as against a projected ARR of ₹1,12,865.33 crore filed by State Discoms for the purchase of 164,592.49 MU.

This leads to a total revenue earning of ₹1,03,283.29 Cr for the UPPCL/Discoms. As a result of this, there will be a regulatory gap of ₹7,710.04 crore for FY

2025-26 for the licensee.

The regulator has directed the UPPCL and all its five subsidiaries to collect and update PAN details of all consumers wherever TDS is to be deducted, as per the provisions of the Income Tax Act, on interest to be paid on the Security Deposit. Licensees are to deposit the tax deducted and issue TDS certificates to such consumers at the time of payment of interest on the Security Deposit. The consumers should be able to download the certificate by logging into their online account. The regulator said during public hearings, several issues have been flagged by consumers in multi-storied buildings and townships on single point connection regarding irregularities, lack of transparency in billing and other issues. The Commission will shortly be issuing a consultation paper highlighting the issues and possible mechanisms to address them for stakeholder comments.

## Koshala literature fest from Nov 27

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

The Koshala Literature Festival will be organised from November 27-30 at UP Darshan Park, attracting acclaimed writers, thinkers, performers and audiences for a four-day celebration of creativity and cultural dialogue.

This edition arrives with special significance, following Lucknow's recent addition to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network as a Creative City of Gastronomy. The 2025 theme pays homage to this honour, celebrating not only the culinary excellence of Lucknow, but also the intellectual, poetic, artistic and cultural traditions that have nourished its spirit for centuries.

A landmark highlight of Koshala Literature Festival 2025 is the launch of the Sahir Ludhianvi Award for Poetry, a new national literary honour celebrating poetic excellence that reflects Sahir's lyrical brilliance and social conscience.

## Maurya predicts setbacks for Opposition in Bengal, UP

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

A day after Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP government and the Election Commission of plotting to remove voters from select constituencies, Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya suggested that the next electoral setbacks for the opposition would come in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

Taking to X on Sunday, Maurya posted, "During the Bihar elections, with Rahul Gandhi diving in and dragging Tejashwi Yadav along, the fate of the Mahagathbandhan was sealed."

Maurya, who served as the BJP's co-incharge for the Bihar Assembly polls, added, "The next number is that of Mamata Didi (West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee) and then SP's brave Akhilesh Yadav."



In the recent Bihar assembly elections, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) secured a two-thirds majority, leaving the INDIA bloc far behind.

Akhilesh had alleged on Saturday that the BJP and the Election Commission were conspiring to delete more than 50,000 votes in assembly segments where the SP and the INDIA bloc had won during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. He claimed the special intensive revision (SIR) of voter lists was being

misused for this purpose. Akhilesh said, "We expect the Election Commission to remain impartial and address our complaints. But we are hearing that after losing in 2024, the BJP and the commission are focusing heavily on West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh."

He further alleged that the SP had received information that major "preparations" were underway jointly by the BJP and the Election Commission in both states.

## UP govt declares Nov 25 as public holiday

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh government on Sunday declared November 25 as a public holiday to commemorate the 350th martyrdom anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, widely revered for his sacrifice in defending religious freedom and human rights.

According to the official notification, all state government offices, schools, and educational institutions will remain closed.

The state government stated that the decision honours the Guru's extraordinary courage and his unwavering commitment to protecting the oppressed, particularly during a period of intense persecution in the 17th century.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, remembered as "Hind di Chadar," sacrificed his life in 1675 to uphold the right to freedom of belief.

His martyrdom holds a significant place in India's socio-religious history, symbolising the protection of pluralism and the safeguarding of civil liberties. The state government said the observance aims to raise awareness of his teachings on compassion, equality and resilience.

Cultural and religious programmes are expected to be held across gurdwaras and public venues in Uttar Pradesh, with community organisations preparing to host prayers, processions, and discourses on the life and legacy of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

By declaring a public holiday, the state adminis-

tration hopes to encourage citizens to participate in the remembrance activities and reflect on the Guru's message of unity and protection of human dignity.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, "The history of the great Sikh Gurus is still written in golden letters, which gives a new inspiration to all of us and motivates us to move forward in life continuously."

He participated in the programme organised in Lucknow on the martyrdom day of the ninth Guru of the Sikh sect, 'Hind di Chadar' Guru Shri Teg Bahadur Ji Maharaj and remembered his contributions to the protection of religion and service to humanity. Millions of salutes to the sacred sacrifice of Guru Shri Teg Bahadur Ji Maharaj!"



UPDPG Rajiv Krishna pinning a Police Flag on Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath at the latter's official residence to mark the Police Flag Day on Sunday

## Statewide drive intensifies to identify illegal foreign nationals

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

To strengthen national security, uphold social harmony, and ensure efficient resource management, both the central and state governments are accelerating efforts to identify illegal foreign nationals. Uttar Pradesh, India's largest and strategically significant state, is taking a particularly proactive role in this initiative.

All District Magistrates and senior police officials have been instructed to give top priority to verifying foreign nationals and thoroughly reviewing their documentation. Uttar Pradesh's geographical positioning, sharing borders with eight states, one Union Territory, and Nepal, adds further urgency to this campaign. In recent years, incidents involving

infiltration, fake identity documents, and activities affecting stability have risen in border regions, directly impacting the state. The unauthorized settlement of foreign nationals in cities under forged identities poses a challenge not only to law and order but also to social balance and the fair distribution of public resources.

With these concerns in mind, the Uttar Pradesh Police and district administrations are jointly accelerating verification and identification procedures. Authorities have emphasised that the process will be fair and transparent, ensuring no inconvenience to law-abiding individuals. At the same time, strict action will be taken against those found using fraudulent documents or involved in suspicious activities.

To support this process, temporary detention centers will be set up in every district. These facilities will allow officials to safely house individuals until documentation checks are complete, helping prevent misuse of public services and easing pressure on local civic systems.

According to information shared in Parliament, former Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju stated in 2016 that an estimated 20 million illegal Bangladeshi immigrants may be residing in India. Additionally, in August 2017, he informed Parliament that more than 40,000 illegal Rohingya migrants are present in the country.

The presence of illegal foreign nationals affects government benefits, employment opportunities, and resource distribution.

## A new era of self-reliance showcased at IITF by women entrepreneurs from UP

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh Pavilion at the India International Trade Fair (IITF) this year is not just a display of products, it is a powerful reflection of social transformation. The biggest highlight of the pavilion is the remarkable rise of women entrepreneurs from across the state, standing proudly behind startups, traditional crafts, food enterprises, and innovation-led ventures. The growing presence of these women marks a significant shift in Uttar Pradesh's economic landscape, signaling a future where women are not just participants, but

leaders in development. For years, the state has been working toward a holistic ecosystem where women feel safe, confident, and empowered. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, these efforts have taken the form of structured policies and grassroots action. The result is now visible, not only in trade fairs and exhibitions, but also in villages, urban centers, and global markets where women-led brands from Uttar Pradesh are finding space and recognition.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's governance model places women at the center of the state's development vision. The

government's approach is not limited to financial support; it includes education, protection, leadership opportunities, and market access. This has helped turn empowerment into measurable economic strength.

One of the key pillars behind this transformation has been the state's commitment to women's safety and dignity. Special security arrangements for women have been implemented across districts to ensure mobility without fear.

A network of 1,647 women's help desks has been set up, reinforcing that women's safety is not just a policy promise but an operational priority. This growing sense of security has given

women the confidence to step beyond traditional boundaries and participate actively in business, education, and innovation.

Efforts like Mission Shakti have played a crucial role in expanding opportunities. Mission Shakti, in particular, has encouraged women's participation in politics, employment, and overall social development. Women are now visible in areas where participation was previously limited, technology, modern agriculture, manufacturing units, and digital enterprises.

The Uttar Pradesh Pavilion features women-led Self-Help Groups, startups incubated under

government schemes, and entrepreneurs who have benefited from skill development programs, credit access, and mentoring initiatives. These women are producing a range of products, including millet-based items, Khadi apparel, eco-friendly decor, and organic cosmetics. Their ventures are not just contributing to the economy, they are inspiring others to follow.

As visitors explore the IITF Pavilion, what stands out is not only the variety of products but also the confidence, pride, and ambition of women who represent Uttar Pradesh. Their journey reflects a larger narrative of transformation, inclusion, and

progressive development. With the rise of women-led enterprises and continued policy support under CM Yogi's leadership, Uttar Pradesh is setting

a strong national example. The state is moving toward a future where women are not just beneficiaries of development they are the driving force behind it.



## IN FOCUS



People move in a queue to offer prayers to Lord Ayyappa at the Sabarimala Temple in Pathanamthitta district in Kerala

# Wife's final salute and a heartbreaking farewell

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Chandigarh/Shimla

The IAF officer wife of Wing Commander Namansh Syal, killed in the Tejas crash at the Dubai Air show, managed a farewell salute with their six-year-old daughter clinging to her as his mortal remains were consigned to flames in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra district on Sunday.

The wing commander's cousin lit the pyre in the presence of Indian Air Force and civic officials, politicians and locals, who had lined up to pay their last respects to their dear 'Nammu'. For the locals, Namansh, who was in his mid-30s, remains an outstanding athlete distinguished by his dedication to the country, "who even set an example in death by diverting the aircraft to save thousands present at the mega air show".

Syal was killed on November 21 after the indigenous multi-role Light



Wing Commander Afshan Akhtar wife of Namansh Syal salutes as his mortal remains are being brought to his ancestral home in Kangra district in Himachal Pradesh

Combat Aircraft crashed during an aerial display at the air show. On Sunday, the mortal remains were brought to Sulur Air Force Base in Tamil Nadu, and they were received with full military honours.

Later, the body was flown to Himachal Pradesh's Gaggal airport and then

taken to his native Patiyalkar village in an Army truck bedecked with flowers and followed by a convoy of armed forces and civilian vehicles. Hundreds of people lined up en route while patriotic slogans and rallying cries, such as *Jab Tak Suraj Chaand Rahega, Nammu Tera Naam Rahega*, rent the air. As the

convoy reached the village, Syal's parents, his wife, and his six-year-old daughter were seen alighting a vehicle, visibly devastated by the loss. "Namansh's death is a big loss to the country and me," said Jagan Nath Syal, the father of the deceased pilot. He claimed that there were



PTI

only four aerobatic pilots in the country, and Namansh was one of them.

He also said that his son was considered the best student by his trainers. Namansh and his wife met during their first posting in Pathankot, and later got married in 2014. Himachal Pradesh Sports Minister Anil

Goma, Chairman of Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation RS Bali, BJP leader and former Assembly Speaker Vipin Parmar, officers of the Air Force and Army, the deputy commissioner, and the superintendent of police were among those present at the funeral.

## MoU signed for food processing industries

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Lucknow

The Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), a Central University in Lucknow, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Food Processing, Government of Uttar Pradesh.

This partnership aims to develop food processing industries in the state, focusing on BBAU's Amethi centre.

Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya praised this initiative, while Additional Chief Secretary Biharilal Meena played a key role in the MoU signing.

The agreement was guided by BBAU Vice-Chancellor Prof Raj Kumar Mittal, alongside Prof S

Victor Babu, Dean of Academic Affairs and Dr Komal Singh from the Department of Food Science and Technology, BBAU Satellite Campus, Amethi.

This collaboration offers students hands-on training and experience in food processing industries, promoting research, academia and industry partnerships.

It also facilitates startup policies and government funding for food industries, providing financial aid for training and projects.

The Amethi centre of BBAU will primarily benefit from this MoU, boosting the local food processing industry and creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

## UP advances development of Agra's Guru Ka Tal Gurudwara

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Lucknow

As the nation observes the 350th martyrdom year of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Uttar Pradesh has taken a significant step to honour Sikh history by advancing the integrated tourism development of Guru Ka Tal Gurudwara in Agra.

The state government has allocated Rs 2 crore for the site's development, a move that reinforces the sacred connection between Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Agra -- the city where he once stayed during a difficult chapter of his life.

Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh said

that Guru Tegh Bahadur's message of courage, compassion and justice continues to inspire India even today. "Preserving Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji's legacy is our duty and honour. His sacrifice stands as a universal message of truth and freedom," he said.

Guru Ka Tal marks the very ground where Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji spent nearly nine days during his visit to Agra. History recalls how he faced pressure for religious conversion during Aurangzeb's rule, yet chose sacrifice over submission. The site is revered for preserving the memory of that unyielding

spiritual strength.

Nearby Maithan also holds emotional significance. When Guru Ji visited in 1665, Mata Jassi offered him a cloth thaan, giving the locality its name. A well dug on Guru's guidance is believed to have turned its water from brackish to sweet -- a story still cherished by local families and Sikh travellers.

With this project, Agra is moving beyond its global image as the city of the Taj Mahal. Guru Ka Tal is emerging as a centre of seva, langar, karuna and Sikh heritage, creating a spiritual identity that complements Agra's monumental legacy.

Visitors now experience a deeper side of the city - one rooted in service, compassion and shared cultural pride.

Agra welcomed 1.78 crore visitors in 2024 and 77,09,078 tourists between January and June 2025 alone. Its proximity to Delhi, NCR, Lucknow and Bundelkhand makes it a natural hub for both domestic and international travellers.

The development of Guru Ka Tal is expected to further strengthen the local tourism economy and create employment opportunities.

Jaiveer Singh said that Agra stands as a "shining North Star" on India's

tourism map. "Along with the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, we are committed to highlighting the city's multi-faith heritage. Guru Ka Tal reflects the spirit of 'sarv dharma sambhav.' Our effort is to ensure this sacred site receives the dignity and recognition it deserves," he said.

With the sanctioned redevelopment, Guru Ka Tal moves towards becoming a landmark of Sikh heritage, drawing visitors from India and abroad -- not just for history, but for an experience of spiritual depth, 'seva' and the timeless teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

## Zero tolerance for terror sympathisers, youth radicalisation: J&K LG to officers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday chaired a high-level security review meeting here, directing officials to take the "strongest possible action" against terror sympathisers and those trying to radicalise youth. He also asked officials to intensify intelligence-led operations against terrorists and concerted efforts to monitor digital platforms used by terror outfits for radicalisation and funding.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, DGP Nalin Prabhat, Special Director General (Coordination), Police Headquarters, S J M Gillani, Principal Secretary (Home) Chandraker Bharti, and ADGP, CID, Nitish Kumar attended the meeting, an official spokesman said.

Addressing the meeting, the LG congratulated the Jammu and Kashmir Police for its meticulous investigation and quick response in dismantling the pan-India terror network, allegedly headed by a group of "radicalised doctors" early this month. "Our 360-degree approach to counter-terrorism with massive crackdowns on terror financing, narco-terror links, over-ground workers (OGWs), and sympathisers is focused on dismantling the entire support structure to terrorists," Sinha said.

"Our coordinated efforts will ensure that the remnants of the terror ecosystem are completely wiped out from Jammu and Kashmir," the LG added, emphasising a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism. According to the spokesperson, Principal Secretary to LG Mandeep K Bhandari, Inspector General of Police Bhim Sen Tuti, Divisional Commissioner (Jammu) Ramesh Kumar, IGP (Traffic) M Suleman Choudhary, and DIGs, Deputy Commissioners, and SSPs of the Jammu Division also participated in the meeting to review the security situation, with the onset of winter.

## YSRCP accuses Naidu Government of historic collapse in crop prices

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Amaravati

YSRCP supremo Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday accused Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu of overseeing a "historic collapse in crop prices and neglecting farmers."

Reddy alleged that under Naidu's administration, farmers have suffered steep price crashes in paddy, maize, mango, coconut and several other crops. He claimed the situation has forced many farmers to plough back their produce due to "the lack of Government support."

"I strongly condemn Naidu for presiding over a historic collapse in crop prices while refusing to even look in the direction of farmers. Because of his negligent rule, farmers were crushed by the steep fall in prices," Reddy said in a post on 'X'. The opposition leader claimed that instead of offering support, Naidu was attempting to "divert attention with publicity initiatives" such as Raitanna Meekosam, creating an impression that "farmers themselves were responsible for their suffering."

Reddy further alleged that the chief minister spent crores on chartered flights, helicopters, foreign tours, weekend trips, legal matters, publicity activities and media outreach,



while "not releasing adequate relief funds for farmers."

He alleged that despite repeated price crashes over the past 18 months, the NDA coalition Government did not allocate any funds for price stabilisation and "failed to provide input subsidy or compensation during nearly 16 natural calamities that hit the state." Reddy said YSRCP leaders visiting protesting farmers were met with false cases, and that Government announcements "rarely translated into action," affecting chilli, tobacco, mango and onion growers. He also alleged that Naidu dismantled key farmer welfare systems such as free crop insurance, Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs), e-Crop, the Chief Minister's Assurance and Price Protection

Programme (CMAPP) and doorstep procurement -- removing crucial safeguards for farmers. He claimed that the pending input subsidy stands at around ₹600 crore and that free crop insurance has been discontinued. He added that the Rs 20,000 promised under the Annadata Sukhibhava scheme was only partially delivered, "leaving farmers to purchase fertilisers from the black market and rely on middlemen."

He warned that farmers "will no longer tolerate deception and neglect", adding that those forced onto the streets by Naidu's governance are prepared to hold him and the ruling party accountable for "betrayal, injustice and destruction of livelihoods."

## 124 border villages being developed under vibrant villages programme-II in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Jammu

A comprehensive roadmap has been prepared for the focused development of 124 strategic villages across 43 border blocks in eight districts under the second phase of the Vibrant Villages Programme in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Sunday.

The information was shared at a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo to assess the progress and implementation of the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) in the Union territory, an official spokesman said. He said a robust institutional framework has been established with the designation of nodal departments and officers at the UT and district levels, along with the constitution of screening committees by the General Administration Department (GAD).

The programme covers the border districts of Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara in north Kashmir, and Samba, Jammu, Kathua, Rajouri and Poonch in the Jammu division, he said. A comprehensive



gap analysis has been conducted across 1,421 border villages to achieve saturation in four critical areas -- all-weather road connectivity under PMGSY-IV, telecom connectivity under Digital Bharat Nidhi, on-grid electrification through RDSS, and television connectivity under the BIND scheme.

While 1,378 villages have already been connected with road infrastructure, 30 strategic villages have been proposed for connectivity under PMGSY-IV, the spokesman said, adding that surveys for 169 habitations have also been completed for seeking norm relaxations to facili-

tate connectivity in difficult terrains. With respect to telecom connectivity, the meeting was informed that the BSNL has expedited 4G saturation surveys, with 98 of the selected vibrant villages currently covered and plans are underway to extend services to the remaining shadow areas, particularly in Kupwara and Bandipora districts, the spokesman said.

Regarding electrification, he said the districts of Jammu, Samba and Kathua have achieved 100 per cent coverage. The power development department has been directed to prioritise pending works in Tulail Valley and Kupwara to

ensure grid connectivity for the remaining 1,402 households in Kupwara and 2,574 households in Bandipora, he said.

To bridge the information and communication gap, the spokesman said focused efforts are being made to provide DTH facilities to households with television sets, especially in the border blocks of Baramulla and Kupwara.

District nodal officers have completed verification of local Government directory (LGD) codes and are in the process of finalising village action plans, which utilise geo-tagging technology to align development works with village-specific needs identified during the gap analysis, the spokesman said.

Beyond physical infrastructure, the VVP-II also prioritises financial inclusion, tourism promotion and preservation of cultural heritage.

The roadmap includes organising medical camps, awareness campaigns and tourism initiatives aimed at boosting the local economy and strengthening national integration, the spokesman said.

## Chhattisgarh: Security forces set up new camp in Karregutta Hills, strengthen hold in Maoist hideout

PIONEER NEWS  
■ Bijapur

Nearly six months after carrying out a comprehensive anti-Naxal operation in the dense forests of Karregutta Hills along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border, security forces have set up a new camp in the area, once considered a safe hideout for senior Maoists.

The forces set up a 'Suraksha Evam Jan Suvidha Camp' (security and public facility camp) on November 4 near Tadpala village under the Usoor police station of Bijapur district, an official said on Sunday. In April-May this year, Central and state security forces carried out a 21-day comprehensive operation in the dense



forests around Karregutta Hills, during which they eliminated 31 Naxalites.

They also seized 35 weapons, 450 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and a large number of detonators and other devices, besides 12,000 kg of other materials, including medical supplies, electric equipment, Naxal literature, etc, police said.

The official said that the new camp will serve as the forward operating base (FOB) for the 196th and 205th battalions of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action -- an elite unit of the CRPF), respectively. The camp will help curb Maoist activities in the border region

and improve operational capabilities, and will also help in facilitating essential services such as roads, electricity, drinking water, health facilities, schools, PDS (Public Distribution System) outlets, mobile connectivity and anganwadi centres for villagers in the area, he said.

As a part of the plan to set up camp in this strategically important interstate border region, joint teams of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF), both units of the state police, CoBRA's 205th and 210th battalions, and the CRPF's 196th battalion reached Tadpala on November 3. A site was selected in the presence of senior police and CoBRA officials, and

the camp was successfully set up the next day, the official said.

Security forces displayed exceptional courage in navigating steep, inaccessible terrain, the absence of roads, constant threat of IEDs and ambushes, and acute shortage of water while establishing the camp, he said.

Helicopter support was provided throughout the process, and senior officers visited the site periodically to supervise and guide the teams, he said.

The official said that the location will also be developed as a specialised training centre for jungle warfare, field craft, tactics and other practical training modules, aimed at enhancing operational capa-

bilities in insurgency-hit regions. From Tadpala, joint and coordinated operations will be conducted along the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border. On November 11, senior state police and CRPF officials visited the camp, interacted with personnel and congratulated them for successfully completing the task under difficult conditions, he said.

CRPF Director General Gyanendra Pratap Singh, along with senior CoBRA and state police officers, visited the camp on November 20-21, and stayed there overnight, sending a strong message of solidarity and support to the forces, the official said. As many as 14 IEDs have been recovered and safely defused by bomb dis-

posal teams since the establishment of the camp in the area, he said. At least 22 security camps have been established in Bijapur since 2024. During this period, 202 Maoists were killed in separate encounters, 749 surrendered, and 1,006 were arrested in the district, he said.

Under the "Niyad Nella Naar" (your good village) scheme aimed at facilitating development works in remote villages located in the vicinity of security camps, significant progress has been reported in road connectivity, electricity supply, water facilities, health-care expansion, school and anganwadi establishment, and strengthening mobile network services.



## Guru Tegh Bahadur inspires brotherhood: CM Sukhu



Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Sunday said Guru Tegh Bahadur's teachings inspire all to follow the path of mutual respect, brotherhood and tolerance.

## Andaman to open more islands gradually, protect ecosystem

The Andaman and Nicobar Government is analysing the impact of opening new islands and the rising influx of tourists in the archipelago to ensure the preservation of the ecosystem while ensuring more islands are opened in a graded manner, officials said. The island Union Territory known for its pristine beaches and mangrove kayaking tours, has witnessed a significant jump in domestic tourism since pre-COVID years.



## SRK pays tribute to terror victims, salutes security forces



Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan has paid tribute to victims and security personnel of major terror attacks and urged people to rise above divisions to uphold peace, saying that when there is peace, "nothing can shake or defeat India" and break the spirit of its citizens.

## Birla hails Sindhi community's role in India's progress

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Sunday highlighted the Sindhi community's commitment to service, saying it made it a key contributor to India's social, economic, and cultural advancement. Birla was addressing an event titled 'Sashakt Samaj - Samridh Bharat', organised by the Vishwa Sindhi Hindu Foundation of Associations (VSHFA) at the Vignyan Bhawan.



# No clarity yet on Karnataka CM: Kharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Bengaluru

As speculation around Chief Minister change in Karnataka refuses to die down, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday said that the party high command will decide whatever it is, and he has nothing to say now.

The AICC chief stated this, a day after his more than an hour-long meeting with chief minister Siddaramaiah here. "I have nothing to say about the developments that have happened. So you (media) standing here is a waste of your time and I too feel bad. Whatever it is, the high command will do it. There is no need for you to worry more about it," Kharge told reporters outside his residence here.

The power tussle within the ruling party has intensified, amid speculations about chief minister change in the State, after the Congress Government reached the halfway mark of its five-year term on November 20.

Speaking to reporters last night, after meeting Kharge, second such meeting between the two in less than a week, Siddaramaiah, while responding to a question regarding clarity about his tenure as the CM had said, he



will abide by whatever the high command decides, and everyone also should.

He however had termed the buzz around leadership change as speculation and media creation.

The CM's meeting with the AICC chief had come after some MLAs supporting Shivakumar travelled to Delhi and met Kharge, as the Congress Government completed 2.5 years in office.

Shivakumar however had said he was not aware of legislators travelling to Delhi to meet Kharge.

On Sunday, Ministers HC

Mahadevappa and K Venkatesh — considered close to CM Siddaramaiah — met Kharge at his residence.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Kharge, Mahadevappa said, there is no situation for CM change now, and in case such a situation arises, the Congress high command will decide.

Stating that it was a courtesy call with Kharge, he said, during the meeting, organising the party and preparing it for the upcoming local body polls were discussed.

Asked about discussion

on leadership change, Dalit CM and cabinet reshuffle with Kharge, the minister said, "None of them were discussed. There is no race for CM post." Asserting that there is no question of leadership change before the party, as Siddaramaiah, who is holding the CM position is working effectively, he said, "If such a situation arises, the high command will take a decision, but such a situation is not there right now."

Mahadevappa also ruled out on any signature campaign in the party to gather opinion on CM change. "No

one has called or contacted us so far."

"Congress will complete its full term and will come back to power in 2028. The CM will be there till 2028 and complete the term," he added.

While Siddaramaiah is pushing for a reshuffle of his Cabinet, Shivakumar wants the party to first decide on leadership change, party sources said.

According to several party insiders, if the Congress high command approves the cabinet reshuffle, it would signal that the incumbent chief minister Siddaramaiah will complete the full five years term, which will scuttle the chances of Shivakumar from occupying the coveted post.

There was stiff competition between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar for the chief minister's post after the declaration of Assembly election results in May 2023, and the Congress had managed to convince the latter and made him the Deputy CM.

There were some reports at the time that a compromise had been reached based on a "rotational chief minister formula," according to which Shivakumar will become CM after two-and-half years, but they were not officially confirmed by the party.

# MP CM Yadav criticises Digvijaya for questioning Naxal leader Hidma's killing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav on Sunday sharply criticised former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh for questioning the encounter in which Chhattisgarh's most wanted Naxalite, Hidma, was killed. Yadav said it was "deeply unfortunate" that a senior leader would cast doubt on an operation carried out by security forces fighting one of the country's most violent extremist movements.

In a video statement, Yadav said, "It is a matter of great regret that former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh appears to stand with Naxal elements when the nation is fighting against them. Calling the encounter fake is extremely disappointing, especially when many Congress leaders themselves have been victims of Naxal violence."

The Chief Minister demanded an apology from Singh, adding that the ongoing campaign to give a "final farewell to the ideology of Lal Salaam" required support from all political quarters. "As a senior leader, he should remember that Naxalites are loyal to no one. He owes an apology to the



people," Yadav asserted. Yadav also accused Singh of ignoring the sacrifice of Ashish Sharma, a police officer from Narsinghpur who lost his life in the encounter. "At the very least, Digvijaya Singh should have expressed condolences to the martyr's family. Ashish Sharma fought bravely and laid down his life. He deserved recognition, even a recommendation for the President's award," Yadav said. He added that the state Government had extended every possible support to Sharma's family, in accordance with the wishes of the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister. The Government has announced an out-of-turn sub-inspector

appointment for Sharma's younger brother and a plan to build a park and stadium in the martyr's name in his village. "We are honoring his extraordinary sacrifice, but Congress's former chief minister could not offer even a few words of sympathy. There is nothing more unfortunate," Yadav said.

The controversy began when Digvijaya Singh shared a video of tribal activist Soni Sori, who alleged that the encounter was "fake" and claimed it amounted to "murder." The post sparked an intense political row, with the BJP accusing Singh of weakening the morale of security forces and amplifying narratives that favour Naxal groups.

# MK Stalin hails Sri Sathya Sai Baba's compassion driven service

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Puttaparthi (Andhra Pradesh)

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Sunday said that Sri Sathya Sai Baba's compassionate service created lasting social transformation across several sectors.

In a letter to the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust on the occasion of Baba's birth centenary, the Chief Minister noted that the celebrations provide an opportunity to recognise the public-spirited initiatives he shaped.

"Sri Sathya Sai Baba's compassion-driven service brought enduring social change across many spheres of public life," Stalin mentioned. The letter was brought by Tamil Nadu minister PK Sekar Babu and was handed over to Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust managing trustee RJ Ratnakar.

Baba's work rested on the belief that human welfare must reach every home, and that true service lies in improving lives

## BABA'S WORK RESTED ON THE BELIEF THAT HUMAN WELFARE MUST REACH EVERY HOME

through compassion expressed in action. He said it gave him immense happiness that the centenary celebrations were being held at Prasanthi Nilayam in Puttaparthi in Sri Sathyasai district, bringing together people who deeply value Baba's lifelong service to society.

According to Stalin, Baba's contribution to water security remains a significant chapter in the shared history of Tamil Nadu, as the Trust played a key role in strengthening the project that brought Krishna river water to the State.

He recalled the cordial relationship Baba shared with former Chief Minister, the late M Karunanidhi, who recognised the value of the project for Chennai and vast stretches of

agricultural land. He said that in healthcare, Baba created institutions that offered advanced treatment free of cost, giving dignity and relief to countless families across India.

He further noted Baba encouraged learning environments that welcomed students from varied backgrounds, combining academic excellence with human values to build an inclusive educational model.

Stalin noted that in rural development too, Baba supported initiatives that improved drinking water access, strengthened local infrastructure and brought tangible changes to everyday life. The CM said what remained remarkable in all of Baba's work was his belief that compassion attains meaning only when translated into service.

Baba's message urged people to recognise the worth of every individual and to build a society rooted in care, fairness and mutual respect, he added.

# BJP accuses Madani of defending terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind chief Maulana Arshad Madani's remarks alleging discrimination against Muslims while citing the example of the Al Falah University, which is under scanner in the Delhi blast probe, triggered a row with the BJP on Sunday, saying the "aatanki bachao (save terrorist) jamaat" has become active.

Madani claimed that while Zohran Mamdani had been elected the mayor of New York and a Khan could become the mayor of London, Muslims in India cannot even become vice chancellors in universities.

"The world thinks that Muslims have been crippled and finished. I don't believe so. Today, a Muslim, Mamdani, can become the mayor of New York, a Khan can become mayor of London; whereas in India, no one can even become a university vice-chancellor," he said at a session at the Jamiat headquarters here on Saturday.

"And even if someone does, they will be sent to jail, like Azam Khan. Look at what is happening today with Al Falah. He (the founder) is in jail, and no one knows how many years he will be in jail," Madani said. The Government is working relentlessly to ensure that Muslims never raise their heads, the chief of one of the two factions of Jamiat alleged.

BJP leaders slammed Madani for the remarks and accused him of giving a communal colour to the Delhi blast probe.

The ruling party's spokesperson, Shehzad Poonawalla, said, "In the name of vote bank, the 'bhajjann of appeasement' and the 'aatanki bachao jamaat (save terrorists group)' has become active."

"Arshad Madani ji, leave aside this talk of mayor; this country has seen Muslims becoming President, vice president, chief justice, home minister. The biggest artists and businessmen have also come from the Muslim communi-



ty." "When a terror act takes place, those people who say terrorism has no religion, start advocating on behalf of terrorists on the basis of religion," he said. Poonawalla also said, "Therefore, I say that behind the doctor of terrorism, there are spin doctors of terrorism. And these spin doctors are not just Arshad Madani but others like P Chidambaram ji, who said it is the circumstances that make a terrorist."

"Hussain Dalwai says they were the sufferers of injustice. Imran Masood calls

them youth gone astray. Mehbooba Mufti and her daughter also play the Islamophobia card," he said. "Whenever a terrorist is caught, they keep 'vote bank neeti' over 'rashtriya neeti' and come to the defence of terrorism," Poonawalla alleged.

Reacting to Madani's remarks, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said, "In India, APJ Abdul Kalam, who became the President, is the icon of Muslims. He always kept his head high. Why make others an icon?"

# PM MODI, RUSSIAN DUMA CHIEF GREET OM BIRLA ON BIRTHDAY

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi/Moscow

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Russian parliament Duma chairman on Sunday greeted Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on his birthday. "My best wishes to Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla ji on his birthday. He is known for his calm leadership and unifying presence in the House," Modi said in a social media post.

The prime minister said Birla's commitment to strengthening legislative processes, fostering constructive debate and upholding the dignity of Parliament is widely respected. "He has worked tirelessly to make Parliament productive and people-centric. May he be blessed with a long and healthy life in the service of the nation," Modi said.

# TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee wants criminal case against Adhikari for BLO suicides

SAUGAR SENGUPTA  
■ Kolkata

Political mud-slinging intensified over Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls even as Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee on Sunday demanded that criminal prosecution should be initiated against Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari for publicly threatening the Booth Level Officers (BLOs) engaged in SIR forcing them to commit suicide.

Launching a scathing attack against Adhikari for pushing the BLOs to the brink he said "none but the Election Commission of India and Suwendu Adhikari are responsible for the BLOs who are committing suicide. Criminal proceedings should be initiated against Adhikari because of his threats issued to the BLOs."

His point of reference were two successive suicides committed by two BLOs in a matter of a week — one in Jalpaiguri district in North Bengal and the other in Nadia district in South Bengal — both allegedly because of "intensive work pressure" that they were unable to cope up with.

He slammed Adhikari for repeatedly threatening the BLOs for incorrect submission of enumeration forms. Adhikari had earlier warned the BLOs saying "there are many BLOs in Bihar who have either been jailed or FIRs have been lodged against them for allowing false entries in the enumeration forms in Bengal too the BLOs are being cautioned against any such connivance with the sinful TMC Government."

Curiously Banerjee tended to ignore a statement from

TMC leader and Bengal minister Siddiquillah Chowdhury who on Sunday warned the BLOs of dire consequences if a single name was deleted from the electoral rolls.

Chowdhury who is also the State president of Jamiat Ulama e Hind said during a conference where workers from his social group assembled from a number of districts including East and West Midnapore, Jhargram said, "we are keeping a close watch on the proceedings we will not let the BLOs sleep if a single name is deleted from the electoral rolls." Another TMC leader and MLA from South 24 Parganas said that the local BLOs and the BJP workers would be tied to the trees if names were deleted from electoral rolls.

The TMC leadership's statements invited immediate response from the State BJP



Kalyan Banerjee (Left) and Suwendu Adhikari (Right)

with Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar who said that all the "bonafide citizens" had welcomed the SIR and only those who were "unauthorized voters" were afraid about the initiation of the process.

Majumdar who led a Parivartan Yatra (Rally for Change) in West Midnapore said that the "people of Bengal had made up their mind to throw out the Mamata Banerjee Government" which was why they were so much afraid.

"They (TMC) knows that with a clean voters' list they will not be able to remain in power this is the reason that the bonafide citizens have welcomed the SIR whereas the TMC ministers are opposition it they know that thousands of unauthorized voters who have infiltrated India will be purged after SIR and

then they will have no fake voters to fall back on this is the reason that they are getting afraid and attacking the BJP," Majumdar a former State BJP president said.

Criticising Kalyan Banerjee for making "such irresponsible statements," BJP spokesperson Debjit Sarkar said "he (Banerjee) is attacking BJP and Suwendu Adhikari."

While BJP is not Election Commission of India why does he not go to the Commission to seek a remedy or the Supreme Court seeking better ways to implement SIR these are not threats but shrieks coming out the TMC leaders' mouths because they are afraid of the imminent defeat they know that Mamata Banerjee is in power for just a few months where after they will have to sweep the streets."

## States Focus



### BHAJANLAL SHARMA MEETS BJP DISTRICT, MANDAL PRESIDENTS

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhaajanlal Sharma on Sunday held a closed-door interaction with BJP district and Mandal presidents and office-bearers from Ajmer and Bikaner divisions at his residence, ahead of the upcoming urban body and panchayat electoral exercises. The meeting, attended by BJP State president Madan Rathore, State Finance Commission chairman Arun Chaturvedi, Lok Sabha MP CP Joshi, Rajya Sabha MP Ghanshyam Tiwari and former state president Ashok Parnami, focused on strengthening booth-level networks and communicating the State Government's performance to voters.



### KHANDU PRAISES VIDYA BHARATI SCHOOLS FOR FOSTERING DISCIPLINE

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Sunday praised Vidya Bharati schools in the State, stating that the institutions have been instrumental in moulding students into patriotic, disciplined and culturally rooted individuals. Khandu made the remarks in a post on X after meeting Gobind Mahant, all-India organisation secretary of Vidya Bharati, and members of the organisation's Arunachal Pradesh unit.

### Chhattisgarh Deputy CM meets surrendered Naxalites

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Sukma

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma has met surrendered Naxalites at a rehabilitation centre in Sukma district and asked officials to arrange their visit to the state assembly during the winter session to help them understand democratic processes. Sukma, once considered a Maoist stronghold, is now witnessing significant progress in counter-insurgency efforts, with the central Government aiming to make Chhattisgarh as well as the country free of the Naxal menace by March 2026.

More than 2,100 Maoists have surrendered in Chhattisgarh in the last 23 months, while senior Naxal

leader Mallojula Venugopal Rao alias Bhupathi laid down arms along with 60 other cadres in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district last month. Sharma, who also holds the Home portfolio, paid a surprise visit late Saturday evening to the rehabilitation centre in Sukma town, which houses 94 surrendered Naxalites, comprising 54 men and 40 women, as per officials.

He held a 'choupal' (traditional meeting) with the youth who have surrendered arms and joined the mainstream, an official statement said.

The deputy CM sat on the ground with the youth, listened to their concerns and experiences and directed officials to provide proper food, accommodation and other essential services to them.

## J&K on high alert ahead of 26/11 anniversary

MOHIT KANDHARI  
■ Jammu

Ahead of the 18th anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, the entire security grid across Jammu and Kashmir has been kept in a state of high alert to prevent any untoward incident.

After the Jammu and Kashmir police busted the inter-State 'White Collar' terror module, leading to the arrest of a highly radicalised group of doctors, the security forces remain on their tenterhooks following the deadly blast in Delhi on November 10.

To assess the preparedness of the security forces deployed at ground zero, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha separately chaired a high-level security review meeting in Jammu on Sunday.

The meeting assumes significance as key investigators are tirelessly tracking the footprints of all those members of the 'White Collar' Terror module who



have reportedly gone missing after the recovery of huge consignment of explosives, arms and ammunition from the Faridabad area of Haryana near Al-Falah University campus.

On Saturday, the State Investigation Agency (SIA) arrested a man from Srinagar who allegedly arranged the weapon that was recovered from a locker of Dr Adeel Ahmad Rather

inside GMC, Anantnag. Rather was arrested in Saharanpur on November 6. The arrested person has been identified as Tufail Niyaz Bhat, a resident of the Batamalo area of Srinagar.

## POWERGRID HR TECH CONFERENCE 2025 Unveiling the future of work

PRAKASH V / PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

In an era where technology is reshaping the DNA of businesses, the conversation around the future of work has never been more urgent. POWERGRID, one of the world's largest power transmission companies, is leading this dialogue with vision and conviction. On 25 November 2025, at The Leela Ambience, Gurugram, POWERGRID will host its inaugural HR Tech Conference 2025, a landmark event designed to bridge innovation, leadership, and human-centric transformation. This full-day conference is not merely a gathering of HR professionals; it is a forward-looking platform where the future of work meets the realities of organisational growth. With over 300 delegates expected, including senior HR leaders, policymakers, PSU management, and corporate decision-makers, POWERGRID aims to redefine how organisations engage with talent in an age of digital acceleration.

At the heart of the event lies a powerful theme: "Innovate HR; Include and Inspire People". The curated sessions reflect the expanding mandate of HR, from administrative support to strategic leadership. As organisations adopt advanced tools like AI-driven talent analytics, automation, and integrated digital ecosystems, HR leaders are called upon to balance innovation with empathy, efficiency with ethics, and speed with sustainability. The event will explore pressing questions shaping modern workplaces: How will HR 5.0 redefine organisational culture, combining technological precision with emotional intelligence? What ethical frameworks must be established for the responsible use of AI in recruitment, performance



management, and employee well-being? What capabilities must employees and leaders build to navigate volatility, complexity, and continuous change?

In line with global best practices, POWERGRID has collaborated with talent and HR experts to enrich the event's intellectual depth. According to insights highlighted on SHRM India's platform, POWERGRID has been steadily strengthening its HR framework through continuous employee engagement, structured leadership development, advanced HRMS platforms, and a commitment to learning and innovation. These initiatives have set the foundation for the HR Tech conference, which aims to scale these best practices across industries.

A major attraction of the event will be a Technology Showcase Pavilion, where leading HR solution providers will demonstrate cutting-edge tools. Delegates will get a first-hand experience of next-generation technolo-

gies, from AI-enabled recruitment systems and LMS platforms to advanced performance analytics and digital wellness solutions. This hands-on exposure will enable leaders to understand how these systems can be integrated into their organisations for measurable impact.

Adding inspiration to insight, the one day event will feature renowned speakers including corporate leaders, behavioural science experts, and professionals from diverse fields. Among them is celebrated cricketer Ajinkya Rahane, whose presence will bring valuable perspectives on discipline, resilience, and mental composure, defining the qualities of modern leadership. The HR Tech Conference will also include paper presentations and poster sessions, recognising exemplary HR interventions across organisations. Yet, beyond its technological ambition, the Conference represents something deeper, it reflects POWERGRID's commitment to PURPOSE.

This commitment goes beyond operational excellence to focus on empowering individuals, nurturing a culture of learning, and strengthening well-being at every level of the organisation. The day will conclude with an evening of celebration and networking, reinforcing the idea that while technology enables progress, human connection fuels it.

For POWERGRID, the HR Tech Conference 2025 is more than an event. It is a call to action, a collective effort to co-create workplaces that are agile, inclusive, resilient, and future-ready. As India accelerates towards digital transformation, POWERGRID's initiative sends a clear message: the most powerful energy shaping the future of organisations is not electrical, it is human.

## ITBP to set up 10 all-women border posts along LAC



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi/Jammu

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), which guards the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China, is establishing 10 all-women border posts along this arduous and icy frontier, the director general of the paramilitary said. The force, as part of its ambitious "forwardisation" plan, initiated post the 2020 military clash in Ladakh, has also moved its 215 border posts forward along the front on India's north and eastern flank so far.

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) DG Praveen Kumar said this during the 64th Raising Day parade of the force held in Jammu on Saturday.

"We have worked on the forwardisation plan and, as a result, the number of forward-deployed BOPs (border outposts) is now 215 as compared to 180.

"The establishment of seven new battalions and a sector headquarters has not only strengthened this plan

adopted to further beef up the security and intensify counter-terror operations during the coming winter months. The district-wise review was conducted and necessary instructions were passed to prevent any untoward incident.

Following the Delhi Car blast, security measures have been heightened with frisking and regular patrolling by various security agencies at vital locations across Jammu and Kashmir.

Security personnel have been deployed at strategic locations along highways, including the Srinagar-Jammu national highway in Pulwama and the Qazigund-entry point of Kashmir valley, to monitor vehicle movement and maintain public order. Police have also intensified inspections of shops and establishments dealing with chemicals, fertilisers, explosives, hardware, and automobile workshops across Jammu and Kashmir.

They also briefed him about various measures

(forwardisation) but has also enhanced our reach and supervision of the forward areas," the DG said.

The Centre has sanctioned seven more battalions and a sector office comprising about 9,400 personnel for the ITBP in 2023. The DG said the force will establish 41 more such forward bases along the India-China Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the near future in order to "strengthen security and coordination".

As part of enhancing the role of women combatants, the ITBP is in the process of establishing two all-women BOPs in Ladakh's Lukung and Thangi in Himachal Pradesh.

Eight more all-women BOPs will be made operational on this front, the DG said. The ITBP chief said the training institutions of the force have been "reorganised" and five new skilling modules have been launched for the troops, including on subjects like mountain warfare and tactical survival.

## Owaisi backs NDA, seeks Seemanchal focus

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Patna

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi has promised "full cooperation" to the NDA Government in Bihar provided Chief Minister Nitish Kumar did "justice" to the Muslim-dominated Seemanchal region, and kept "communalism" at bay. The Hyderabad MP made remarks to this effect during his two-day tour of Seemanchal, the north-eastern region of Bihar from where five of the AIMIM's candidates achieved victory in the recent assembly polls.

"We extend good wishes to the new Government that has been formed in Patna. We can also promise full cooperation provided it does justice to the Seemanchal region and also kept communalism at bay," Owaisi said.

The BJP, which is the largest partner in the ruling NDA, has been alleging that "infiltration" was rampant in Seemanchal, which was leading to "demographic imbalance" in the region.

"The AIMIM has been fighting not just for Muslims, but for all people living in Seemanchal, which has a high population of Dalits and tribals, too. We expect the new Government to pay some attention to this neglected region, and not remain obsessed with Patna and Rajgir," Owaisi said.

Rajgir is a famous Buddhist pilgrimage town in Nalanda district, to which Chief Minister Nitish Kumar belongs, and has been chosen for developing several facilities in the past few years, including an international cricket stadium and a film city. Owaisi also took a veiled dig at the RJD, the INDIA bloc's largest constituent in Bihar, which had spurned AIMIM's request for a tie-up in the assembly polls.

"It has been proven that those who seek the votes of Muslims in the name of stopping the BJP will not be able to stop that party. So, those who have been relying on the MY (Muslim Yadav) combination must do a rethink," he said.

## Audience love is overwhelming on Amaran: Periasamy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ Panaji

Film director Rajkumar Periasamy says he feels overwhelmed by the love people have showered on his war drama movie "Amaran", a war drama starring Sivakarthekeyan and Sai Pallavi.

The 2024 Tamil-language film, which served as the opening film of the Indian Panorama section of the ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI), is based on the true story of Indian Army officer Major Mukund Varadarajan, played by Sivakarthekeyan.

The story, adapted from a chapter of the book "India's Most Fearless: True Stories of Modern Military Heroes", chronicles Varadarajan's journey from college to his military service in Kashmir, and the sacrifice that he makes during a counter-terrorism operation in 2014.

Pallavi essays the role of Mukund's wife Indhu Rebecca Varghese, who received the Ashoka Chakra award on behalf of her late husband. "I don't remember the process of 'Amaran', or the

screenplay order. By the time I gave away the film from post production centers for the release until then I was carrying the film within me. Once, I gave it out, then the audience owns it and we are burden free. I don't have the burden of success on me. I'll wear 'Amaran' as a proud feather on my shoulder," Periasamy, who made his debut with the 2017 Tamil film "Rangoon", told PTI.

"Since, the time it was released the love that has been showered upon the film, cast and crew, and me, is overwhelming. When I look back, the process for the film was more than six to six-and-half years, so it took a lot of time, but it was worth-while," he said.

The filmmaker further said he is glad viewers connected with the film for its true purpose—telling the real-life story of a soldier who sacrificed his life for the country. "Every time I receive an award or felicitation or I'm at a screening, I only think of the sacrifices made by our Indian army, soldiers, and the families of the soldiers," Periasamy said. The film, which released



across the country on October 31, 2024, reportedly earned over Rs 300 crore at the box office. It is produced by veteran actor Kamal Haasan's banner Raaj Kamal Films International. The filmmaker said he feels "blessed" to have had two exceptional performers — Pallavi and Sivakarthekeyan — leading the film. "I wrote the film during lockdown. There's a scene

where Indu walks on the stage wearing a sari, until then she is tomboyish. While I was writing the sari scene, I only thought of Sai Pallavi as a character, I didn't know if she would agree to it. But she said yes after I gave her the narration," Periasamy said.

For the role of Varadarajan, Sivakarthekeyan was the only actor who came to the director's mind.

### WOLF & DOG TEAM BACKS FILM IDIOT

Panaji: The producing team behind "Wolf & Dog" have boarded "Idiot", a Ladakhi feature film that was showcased at the co-production market of the WAVES Film Bazaar, the industry platform of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI). Set in the high-altitude Changthang region of Ladakh, "Idiot" marks the feature debut of filmmaker Stenzin Tankyong, known for shorts such as "Sekool" and "Last Days of Summer", which played at international festivals including Rotterdam.

"Both Siva and I knew each other beforehand, we both started our career with TV and so I had that access. I found him right for the role because he has not done any such character before," he said. Periasamy reportedly is set to direct Dhanush in his next movie.

When asked about the project, the filmmaker said, "My films will always have theme of humane (stories), and a lot of realism."

## CONGRESS SLAMS MODI GOVT OVER CHANDIGARH BILL U-TURN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

With the Union Home Ministry stating that it has no intention to bring the proposed bill on Chandigarh in Parliament's Winter session, the Congress on Sunday took a swipe at the Modi Government, claiming it is yet another example of its "first announce, second think" approach to governance.

Congress general secretary in-charge (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said that on Saturday, the Parliament Bulletin for the forthcoming Winter Session had listed for introduction a Constitution Amendment Bill to enable the appointment of a full-time LG for Chandigarh.

This was immediately and aggressively opposed by the Congress and other parties in Punjab whose Governor is also the Administrator of Chandigarh, Ramesh said on social media. The Union Home Ministry now says that it has no intention to introduce the Bill in the Winter Session, he said.



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## Justice Surya Kant to take oath as next CJI today

Justice Surya Kant, who has been part of several landmark verdicts and orders on abrogation of Article 370 removing Jammu and Kashmir's special status, Bihar electoral rolls revision and Pegasus spyware case, will on Monday take oath as the 53rd Chief Justice of India. He will succeed Justice BR Gavai, who demits office this evening.

Justice Kant was appointed as the next CJI on October 30 and will remain in the post for nearly 15 months. He will demit office on February 9, 2027 on attaining the age of 65 years. Born on February 10, 1962 in Hisar district of Haryana to a middle-class family, Justice Kant went from being a small-town lawyer to the country's highest judicial office, where he has been part of several verdicts and orders of national importance and constitutional matters. He also has the distinction of standing 'first class first' in his Master's degree in law in 2011 from Kurukshetra University.

Justice Kant, who penned several notable judgments in the Punjab and Haryana HC, was appointed the chief justice of Himachal Pradesh HC on October 5, 2018. His tenure as an SC judge is marked by verdicts on the abrogation of Article 370, free speech and citizenship rights. The judge was part of the recent presidential reference on the powers of the Governor and President in dealing with bills passed by a state assembly. The verdict is keenly awaited with potential ramifications across States. He was part of the bench that kept the colonial-era sedition law in abeyance, directing that no new FIRs be registered under it until a Government review. Justice Kant also nudged the Election Commission to disclose the details of 65 lakh voters excluded from the draft electoral rolls in Bihar while hearing a batch of petitions challenging the poll panel's decision to undertake Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters list in the poll-bound State.

In an order that emphasised grassroots democracy and gender justice, he led a bench that reinstated a woman sarpanch unlawfully removed from office and called out the gender bias in the matter.



# Breaking the Bench's Glass Ceiling: CJI Surya Kant's to Build a More Inclusive Judiciary



**DR C RAJ  
KUMAR**

The 53rd Chief Justice of India, Justice Surya Kant, who will take over the reins of the judiciary today, will have many challenges to address. There are social expectations that have been generated on account of his progressive mindset and natural ability to navigate complex issues of diversity and inclusion with clarity and sensitivity. One such expectation from the new Chief Justice is in relation to the aspiration of the judiciary to become a more inclusive institution with a greater representation of women across all levels of the judiciary. It is notable that, in the larger context of promoting diversity and inclusion within the legal fraternity, a bench of the Supreme Court led by Justice Surya Kant has already issued several landmark directions mandating reservation for women in the executive bodies of various bar associations across India.

On 28 March 2025, in a reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, Mr Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Law and Justice (Independent Charge), observed, "...Since 2014 till date 06 women judges have been appointed in the Supreme Court and 162 women Judges have been appointed in the High Courts. As on March 18, 2025, there are 02 women Judges working in the Supreme Court and 110 women Judges in High Courts. As on February 28, 2025, there are 7,852 women Judges working in District and Subordinate Courts." As of now, there is only one woman judge in the Supreme Court, Justice BV Nagarathna. The silver lining, however lies in the District and Subordinate Courts, which have nearly 35 per cent women and constitute the largest representation within the three tiers of the judiciary.

The next major reform initiative



Justice Surya Kant

would be to focus on the higher judiciary, especially the High Courts and the Supreme Court. Quite remarkably, the outgoing Chief Justice of India, Justice GR Gavai, poignantly observed on his last working day at a farewell hosted by women lawyers of the Supreme Court at the Women's Bar Room, "...I have a regret that I could not get a woman member to the Supreme Court ... but in so far as High Courts are concerned we had recommended 16 women Judges... among them are women lawyers of Supreme Court. So, my collegium always believed in wide representative to women members..."

The spirit of these observations of the outgoing Chief Justice of India echoes a larger vision that needs to be pursued with purpose and conviction by the new Chief Justice of India. Breaking the bench's glass ceiling is absolutely essential for the judiciary to send the right signals that equality and diversity are not just legal and constitutional concepts but require individual and

institutional efforts to implement them. Justice Surya Kant is in a position to shape the future of the higher judiciary by ensuring that this becomes an institutional priority and has the full consideration of the collegium. There are three critical aspects to this effort, and they need to be pursued simultaneously:

### 1. Collegium should consider recognising gender diversity as a constitutional imperative

The collegium headed by the Chief Justice of India plays a central role in all judicial appointments to the higher judiciary. The Chief Justice of India, through dialogue and deliberation within the collegium, should work towards building consensus in recognising that gender diversity is not just a policy objective but a constitutional imperative. The endeavour of Justice Surya Kant, along with other members of the collegium, should be to ensure that at least 40 per cent of judicial appointments made to the Supreme

Court and the High Courts should be women. This will take significant courage of conviction and consensus-building efforts within the collegium, but the new Chief Justice is well positioned to pursue this bold and unprecedented initiative.

### 2. Democratic and inclusive ways of Identification of lawyers across High Courts

The existing methods and mechanisms of identifying suitable candidates in the form of lawyers practicing in High Courts to be considered for appointment as judges may not be suitable for selecting women lawyers. Many outstanding women lawyers may have chosen different pathways into the world of legal practice, and hence, innovative and some out-of-the-box thinking may be necessary to identify potential women for appointment as judges of the High Court.

One idea could be to look into the law firms and other organisations where there could be outstanding women lawyers who may not be

actively practicing in the courts. However, their qualifications, competence, and experience is not less significant for being a good and effective judge. This will also be a unique way of addressing the challenge of having judges in the High Courts and the Supreme Court who are familiar with commercial disputes, while recognising the complex relationship between law, policy, regulation, and economics.

### 3. Seniority should be occasionally balanced with diversity

The existing process of selecting judges to the Supreme Court places the strongest emphasis on seniority, including the effort to have Chief Justices of High Courts appointed as judges of the Supreme Court. There have been a few judges who have been directly appointed to the Supreme Court either from the Bar or even when they are not serving as Chief Justice of a High Court. Justice Surya Kant may be able to provide enlightened leadership for engaging in debates and discussions within the collegium for occasionally balancing the need for having diversity while forgoing seniority, especially when selecting women judges to the Supreme Court. This is almost necessary as the historical challenge of having fewer women judges across High Courts has put women at a significant disadvantage when it comes to being eligible, with seniority working in their favour for being considered for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court.

It is time that the Indian judiciary embraces wholly and substantially the vision of diversity and inclusion in letter and spirit, where the outcomes of the policy should become as important as the process adopted in selecting judges to the higher judiciary. Justice Surya Kant may just have what it takes to address this challenge with honesty and integrity.

The writer is a Vice Chancellor of OP Jindal Global University

## Supreme Court berates woman lawyer

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Why did you get into this mess?", the Supreme Court recently said to a woman lawyer for getting into an intimate relationship with her client, a man, who had come to her seeking advice on his divorce case.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and R Mahadevan said that the lady, being an advocate, should have maintained

professional boundaries with her client, particularly when his divorce had not concluded.

The Bench questioned why the woman, who is 36 years old and a practising advocate, entered into a personal relationship with her own client.

"She is an advocate. She is handling the petitioner's divorce case. Why did you do that? We don't expect this," said Justice Nagarathna. When she insisted she had

only "guided" him and never formally appeared, the Court noted that the distinction made little difference if she acted as his legal advisor while becoming personally involved.

The Court was hearing the man's petition seeking anticipatory bail in a case filed by the woman, who had been representing him in his matrimonial dispute before they entered a personal relationship. Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Rishi

Malhotra submitted that the complainant, a practising lawyer, had filed "four identical cases" of sexual assault against different accused persons and that the Bombay High Court had even ordered an inquiry into her conduct.

Justice Nagarathna took note of the complainant's professional background and asked how an advocate could cross the line of propriety with a client she was representing in a divorce case.

## Kerala judge moves Supreme Court against disciplinary action for closing 1,900 petty cases

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Kochi

A lady judicial officer from Kerala recently moved the Supreme Court against disciplinary action taken against her by the High Court for stopping proceedings in more than 1,900 minor criminal cases almost a decade ago. A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep

Mehta sought a response from the State of Kerala on plea challenging two Kerala High Court orders filed by lady Judge Sony AS that upheld the disciplinary penalty and rejected her request to restore her seniority, increments and service benefits.

The case traces back to 2016, when the officer, then serving as a Judicial First

Class Magistrate in Kollam, invoked her powers under Section 258 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to stop proceedings in over 1,900 summons cases involving minor offences such as rash driving and drunken driving. The cases had remained pending for years as the accused repeatedly failed to appear despite coercive steps. According to her peti-

tion, these orders were passed in good faith to reduce backlog in accordance with administrative directions encouraging magistrates to prioritise contested trials.

Her performance, she stated, was later commended by the Registrar (Subordinate Judiciary) in multiple letters of appreciation between 2018 and 2022.

## Supreme Court's opinion on Presidential Reference: Will it make any difference in the tussle between the Governor and State Governments



**RANJIT  
KUMAR  
SINHA**

The Presidential Reference concerning the powers of the Governors and the President in relation to state bills reached the Supreme Court through the exercise of the President's advisory jurisdiction under Article 143 of the Constitution.

The Reference was primarily triggered by a specific judicial decision. The Tamil Nadu Government challenged the Governor's prolonged delay in giving assent to several bills passed by the State legislature.

The Supreme Court, on April 8, 2025, delivered a judgment in which a two-judge Bench found the Governor's indefinite delay to be "illegal" and "erroneous." The Apex Court, using its inherent power under Article 142, set specific timelines for Governors and the President to act on state bills presented for assent under Articles 200 and 201, and even went to the extent of suggesting 'deemed assent' on some long-pending bills.

The Supreme Court's ruling, particularly the imposition of fixed timelines and the concept of 'deemed assent,' created significant constitutional uncertainty regarding the scope of the Governor's and President's powers.

The two-judge Bench prescribed a maximum of three months for the Governor to either withhold assent and return a Bill with a message or reserve it for the President's consideration, and a maximum of one month for the Governor to grant assent to a Bill re-enacted by the State Legislature.



President Droupadi Murmu

by the Governor within three months from the date of reference.

Consequently, President Droupadi Murmu invoked her power under Article 143(1) of the Constitution to seek the Supreme Court's advisory opinion on the matter.

The President referred a set of 14 questions to the Supreme Court, seeking clarity on whether the judiciary can fix timelines for them or review the merits of their decisions.

The Supreme Court constituted a five-judge Constitution Bench (as required by Article 145(3) for Article 143 references) to hear the matter. The opinion, delivered on November 20, 2025, by a bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai, Chief Justice-Designate Surya Kant, and Justices Vikram Nath, PS Narasimha, and AS Chandurkar, was unanimous and referred to as the "Opinion of the Court."

The opinion essentially clarified the constitutional position, holding that while Governors cannot sit on bills indefinitely, the Court cannot impose fixed timelines or grant "deemed assent," as this would violate the separation of powers.

This decision significantly enhanced the constitutional power and authority of both the Governor and the President by firmly establishing two key principles: the rejection of fixed judicial timelines and "deemed assent," and the affirmation of the Governor's and President's non-justiciable constitutional discretion.

While rejecting the safeguards sought by the opposition-ruled States, the Supreme Court issued a very strong constitutional caution to Governors, limiting their power through the threat of judicial review of inaction.

The most significant caution is against the practice of sitting on a Bill indefinitely. The Constitution Bench expressed its view that a Governor cannot use silence or deliberate, prolonged inaction as a method to obstruct the legislative will of the State Assembly.

The Apex Court stressed that stalling bills indefinitely and bringing bills to a procedural impasse is antithetical to the Constitution and that the system of cooperative federalism demands dialogue and cooperation, not obstructionism. It said the Governor must choose one of the options expressly provided

by Article 200 (Assent, Reserve, or Return) and clarified that the Governor does not have the option to "withhold assent simpliciter." If assent is withheld, the Governor must simultaneously return the Bill to the State Legislature for reconsideration with a message outlining their concerns. This compels constitutional dialogue.

While the Court cannot review the merits of the Governor's decision, it can review the fact of deliberate inaction. It clarified that "inaction that is prolonged, unexplained, and indefinite" will "certainly invite limited judicial scrutiny." If found, the Supreme Court can intervene to issue a limited writ of mandamus, directing the Governor to exercise one of the three constitutional options within a reasonable period, without dictating which one to choose. The immunity under Article 361 cannot shield indefinite delays.

In essence, the Supreme Court's opinion drew a clear red line: Governors have discretion on what to do with a Bill (Assent, Reserve, or Return), but they have no constitutional discretion on when to do it if the delay is clearly a willful attempt to obstruct the elected Government.

Despite the caution mentioned above, does the Supreme Court's opinion have a demoralising impact on Opposition-Ruled States and undermine the People's Choice for governance of the State through elected Government? Will this help in reducing the conflict between Governors and the Opposition-Ruled States?

The enhancement of the Governor's power is widely seen as demoralising for opposition-ruled states, where there has been enormous conflict in the exercise of power by both the Government and the Governors.

Without a fixed deadline, Governors often perceived as acting on behalf of the central Government — can contin-

ue to engage in prolonged, indefinite delay, making it politically and legally challenging for state Governments to get their legislation passed quickly.

Further, this enhanced power, despite the cautions, is perceived by the states as undermining the people's choice and their legislative mandate.

The ruling essentially chose to uphold the Constitution's system of checks and balances (the Governor's power to scrutinize bills) rather than ensuring the quick and easy passage of laws desired by the elected state Government.

The Supreme Court's cautions, like limited judicial review of prolonged delay, are subjective and lack a measurable standard. This means states must still engage in lengthy, expensive legal battles to force a Governor to act, thereby stalling bills meant for the people and frustrating the will of the elected Assembly. It places the burden of fighting gubernatorial obstruction back on the shoulders of the elected state Governments, which is precisely why it is viewed as demoralising.

The Supreme Court's opinion won't stop Governors and opposition-ruled states from fighting, but it does give them rules for how to fight based on the Constitution. Since no deadline, like 60 or 90 days, has been fixed for Governors to act, the process of Bills has been left open-ended. A Governor who intends to obstruct can still cause long delays by offering vague reasons, moving the bill slowly, or engaging in a drawn-out "dialogue."

Some of the lawyers who closely watched the proceedings in the Presidential Reference explained that the opinion has not talked about the deadline for the Governor's action on the Bills, as the five-judge Constitution Bench adhered strictly to the principle of separation of powers.

They said the Court's role in an advisory opinion under Article 143 is to inter-

pret the existing law, not to amend the Constitution. By refusing to impose fixed timelines, the Court signaled that imposing such a procedural rule would be an act of "judicial amendment," which is the exclusive domain of Parliament under Article 368. Therefore, the opinion deliberately offered a judicial remedy (limited review of inaction) instead of a legislative remedy (a constitutional amendment).

In such circumstances, since state Governments are established through the people's choice, Governors are expected to act on Bills quickly and decisively to implement the legislative mandate. The expectation is that the Governor should not use silence or deliberate, prolonged inaction to obstruct the legislative will of the State Assembly.

As the opinion in the Presidential Reference has severely diluted the extreme view taken in the judgment by the two-judge Bench (specifically the fixed timelines and 'deemed assent'), the onus is now firmly placed on the Governors, particularly in opposition-ruled states, to consider every Bill judiciously and within a reasonable time.

Further, the political stakes of this judicial clarification are especially high in opposition-ruled states like West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, all of which are scheduled to go for assembly elections in 2026.

Given the persistent tension between the Governors and the elected State Governments in these states, the Supreme Court's opinion ensures that Governors are now constitutionally compelled to take a definitive, reviewable action (Assent, Reserve, or Return the Bill with a message), thereby ensuring that the Governor's decision will become a more transparent subject for political debate before the elections.

The writer is a senior journalist covering legal affairs



## Editor's TAKE

### Modi's six-point mantra for a better world

Prime Minister Modi sets the agenda of the G20 Summit. Its outcome reflected renewed drive toward cooperation and a more equitable world order

There are numerous global forums where nations gather to devise common strategies and chart pathways for regional and collective progress. Yet many of these platforms become mired in competing interests, eventually reduced to talking shops with little tangible change on the ground. The G20 Summit in Johannesburg, however, stood out as a clear exception. For once, member countries rose unanimously against the high-handedness of developed nations and resisted US pressure, asserting their demand for greater equity in the global economic order. The highlight of the Summit was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's six-point plan which was pragmatic and was hailed by one and all. These six points could bring about a radical change if they are implemented in right earnest. Yet another highlight which made the Summit relevant was the adoption of a climate declaration despite a US boycott and pressure. Prime Minister Modi's six proposals gave clarity and practicality to Summit's agenda and alignment with the priorities of the Global South. The first point on the drug-terror nexus underlined the urgent need for coordinated action against crime networks that destabilise economies and societies, especially in the low GDP countries.

His second proposal, the G20 Global Healthcare Response Team borne out of Corona pandemic could be a game changer when health emergency strikes on global scale. By creating a trained, deployable medical corps, the G20 can respond swiftly to future health emergencies – especially in vulnerable regions. This initiative, if realised, can be one of the most practical solutions for mitigating health emergencies.

PM Modi's push for a G20 Africa-Skills Multiplier Initiative further positioned India as an advocate for African development. Skill-building and workforce transformation are essential for global economic growth. Equally significant was Modi's call for a Global Traditional Knowledge Repository—a platform that recognises the value of indigenous knowledge in medicine, agriculture, and sustainability. This could create a vast pool of traditional knowledge gathered over thousands of years and put to best use of humanity. The final two proposals – a G20 Open Satellite Data Partnership and the Critical Minerals Circularity Initiative—link technological collaboration with resource security. With global transitions to clean energy accelerating, critical minerals will determine economic power and environmental stability. Modi's alignment with the Summit's emphasis on a 'Critical Minerals Framework' reflects the shared understanding that producer countries, must benefit more equitably from their resources. The Summit's biggest achievement was the adoption of the G20 Leaders' Declaration. The document underscored the need to scale climate finance "from billions to trillions" and acknowledged deep energy-access inequalities, especially in Africa. This commitment resonates with the long-standing demand of developing countries that climate ambition must be matched by climate finance. If carried forward with sincerity, these outcomes can ensure a fairer, greener, and more stable world.

## Four New Labour Codes: A Historic Reform

By replacing 29 colonial-era Acts with four new Labour Codes, the government has created a unified and modern labour framework suited to today's economy. The move reshapes wages, social security, workplace safety, and industrial relations



KAPIL MISHRA

India took a decisive leap on 21 November 2025, one that has been delayed for over seven decades. With the rollout of the four new Labour Codes, the Modi Government has finally swept away the tangled web of 29 outdated, colonial-era laws written in the 1930s to 1950s. Those laws belonged to a different India; not the world's fastest-growing major economy aspiring to become Viksit Bharat by 2047. In one stroke, that old system has been replaced with a modern, unified, pro-worker, pro-industry framework designed for ambition, mobility and dignity. As the Prime Minister often says, "Naye Bharat ka shramik majboor nahi, majboot hai."

For the first time, India's labour landscape speaks one language. Wages now have one national definition, ending decades of confusion that let arbitrary payments and exploitation thrive. This change is a historic reform carried out under the Code on Wages, 2019, which unified four earlier wage-related laws and established a clear, uniform wage framework for the entire country. Minimum wages apply to every worker across sectors, overtime must be paid at double rates, and gender discrimination is illegal: full stop. Even transgender workers stand protected in law. This is the kind of transparent, just framework that workers in the Indian economy deserve. And this, too, is where Modi's governance philosophy comes alive: simple rules, fair outcomes, and a system that treats every worker with respect.

The reforms go far deeper than the headline numbers. The Industrial Relations Code, 2020 makes grievance redressal real: committees must have women members, fixed-term employment now guarantees social security and gratuity without trapping employers in outdated restrictions, and work-from-home finally finds a place in Indian law. Digitalisation ensures fewer disputes and faster justice. *Yeh hai asli ease of living aur ease of doing business, working together instead of working at odds.*

But perhaps the most transformational change is in the Social Security Code, 2020. India has become one of the first nations to bring gig and platform workers (delivery partners, cab drivers, app-based freelancers) into the formal safety net. A dedicated fund, mandatory contributions from aggregators, universal social-security portability and expanded family definitions for women employees reflect a welfare architecture built for the 21st-century workforce. When a gig



INDIA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE FIRST NATIONS TO BRING GIG AND PLATFORM WORKERS — DELIVERY PARTNERS, CAB DRIVERS, APP-BASED FREELANCERS — INTO THE FORMAL SAFETY NET

The writer is a Minister for Law & Justice, Labour, Employment, Development, Art, Culture & Language, Tourism in the Delhi Government

dailypioneer @imkapil\_mishra kapilmishra\_ind

worker delivering food at midnight gets legal recognition and future protection, it signals a country whose development model includes everyone, not just the privileged few.

The gains of reforms are already visible in states that moved early. Gujarat recorded 13.36 per cent GSDP growth between 2022-23 and 2023-24, with manufacturing contributing an impressive 28-30 per cent, well above the national average.

Andhra Pradesh's reforms helped add 5.7 lakh organised manufacturing jobs, the largest jump among all states. Uttar Pradesh added 7.4 lakh workers in organised manufacturing over last 5 years. Rajasthan saw a 13per cent surge in female workers after allowing women to work night shifts, and Haryana's unemployment rate fell sharply from 9.3per cent to 3.4 per cent. These are not abstract numbers; they are evidence that when states embrace reforms, rozgar badhta hai, nivesh aata hai, aur parivartan zameen par dikhta hai.

Safety and dignity, long overlooked in Indian labour laws, finally stand front and centre. The new Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 ensures every establishment with ten or more workers must meet modern safety standards, migrant workers receive formal protection, women can work in all sectors including night shifts with proper safeguards, and mandatory health check-ups and appointment letters become the norm. Even a single worker involved in hazardous activity is now covered.

The days of "adjust kar lo" workplace culture are over; the law now recognises the inherent dignity of labour.

Politically, this reform marks a clear contrast between PM Modi's governance and decades of stagnation under the previous governments. For years, successive governments promised labour reform but hesitated. Complexities, pressure groups and inertia ensured nothing changed. Modi's government has done what others only debated, aligning India's labour regime with global standards while keeping workers at the centre. This positions the BJP as the genuine champion of the working class: factory floor workers, gig-economy youth, migrant families, women entering new sectors, and MSME employees who have long lived in the shadows of informality. *Jo kaam dusron ne 70 saal tak nahi kiya, woh kaam Modi sarkar ne ek faisle se kar dikhaya.*

In the end, these Labour Codes are more than administrative reform. They are a shift in national character. For workers, they mean rights without hurdles. For industry, compliance without harassment. For India, they mean productivity, formality and growth, aligned with the standards of nations we aim to compete with, not trails we hope to follow.

This is not just an economic reform. It is a civilisational step toward a New India where every worker stands taller, every industry moves faster, and every aspiration finds a fair chance.

The Pioneer SINCE 1865

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## PICTALK



Players in action during an archery match organised by the Sports and Youth Welfare Department of the state, in Jagdalpur PHOTO: PTI

## DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

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## BIHAR ADOPTS HARDLINE STRATEGY FOR STABILITY

The Nitish Kumar-led Bihar government is in decisive action. Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary being allotted the Home Minister portfolio has surprised many, sparking widespread speculation about the reasons and implications. Traditionally, the Chief Minister retained the Home Department, reflecting the importance of law and order and the need to entrust it either to himself or to a trusted confidant.

This strategic allocation appears to be a hardline move, balancing coalition interests while maintaining a strong grip on governance. Deputy CM Choudhary will now oversee the law and order apparatus, signalling a determined approach to crime control, while CM Nitish Kumar focuses on administrative functions through

the General Administration Department, ensuring sustained control over bureaucracy. Immediately after assuming charge, efforts to strengthen policing and operational efficiency have been initiated, demonstrating a robust commitment to public safety.

The distribution of portfolios reflects a calculated, forward-looking plan aimed at stabilising governance and promoting overall development.

By clearly delineating responsibilities, the government positions itself to navigate coalition dynamics while maintaining effective oversight across departments.

Bihar's leadership adopts a decisive, hardline strategy to secure law, administration, and political stability.

SUNIL OKHADE | INDORE

## The fearless protector of faith and human freedom



SUKHDEV SINGH

2ND OPINION THE PIONEER

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, stands in history as a towering symbol of courage, sacrifice, and the universal right to religious freedom. His martyrdom was not only an act of spiritual conviction but a bold assertion of human rights long before the concept gained global recognition.

His life and teachings carried forward Guru Nanak's principle that the Sole Commanding Power—Ek Omkar—is truth without fear (Nirbhau) and without enmity (Nirvair). From this flowed a simple but profound ideal: humans must neither instil fear in others nor live in fear themselves. Guru Tegh Bahadur wrote and lived this philosophy. His verse captures the essence of freedom from fear:

One who does not cause fear to anyone, nor does he fear anyone. He alone is enlightened—thus says Nanak. This principle shaped his greatest sacrifice. When a group of Kashmiri Brahmins sought his protection from attempts at forced conversion by officials of Emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Tegh Bahadur assured them courage. He told them to convey that if he himself converted, they would follow. Soon after, he was arrested and taken from Agra to Delhi along with his companions—Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Dyal Das, Bhai Gurditta, and Bhai Jaita.

The Guru was ordered to perform a miracle or embrace Islam. His refusal led Aurangzeb to brutally martyr the Guru's companions before his eyes, hoping to break his resolve. Bhai Mati Das was sawed alive, Bhai Dyal Das was boiled in water, and Bhai Sati Das was burned after being wrapped in cotton. Yet the Guru remained calm, rooted in the understanding of the body's impermanence: The human body is made of the five elements and returns to the source from which it arose. In November 1675, Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded in Delhi. His body was secretly taken and cremated by a Sikh merchant, while his head was carried to Anandpur Sahib by Bhai Jaita and cremated by the young Guru Gobind Rai, the tenth Guru. Born on April 1, 1621, in Amritsar to Guru Hargobind, Guru Tegh Bahadur was originally named Tyag

Mal. He earned the name "Tegh Bahadur"—Brave Swordsman—for his valour in the Battle of Kartarpur.

His early education included reading, writing, religion, music, martial training, and horsemanship. Influenced deeply by Guru Hargobind's doctrine of Miri-Piri, he combined spiritual depth with worldly responsibility. After years of meditation in Bakala and a long pilgrimage, he was identified as the true Guru through the famous incident of Makhana Shah Lubana, who announced "Guru ladho re!" upon finding the genuine Guru. During his travels across the North, East, and Assam, Guru Tegh Bahadur spread Guru Nanak's teachings and founded Anandpur Sahib—the City of Bliss.

As persecution under Aurangzeb intensified, he travelled extensively to inspire people to face tyranny with steadfast faith. Guru Tegh Bahadur composed 59 shabads and 57 shlokas incorporated in the Guru Granth Sahib. His verses guide humans toward detachment, integrity, and inner freedom. His life and martyrdom remain eternal reminders of the right to live—and believe—without fear.

The writer is Professor (Retd) of Applied Linguistics & ELT Department of English Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Mamdani-Trump ties raise eyebrows

Zohran Mamdani's historic meeting with Donald Trump at the White House represents more than just a ceremonial political event — it highlights the transactional and unpredictable nature of US-India relations. Despite Trump's well-known personal camaraderie with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his administration has repeatedly imposed steep tariffs on Indian goods, showing that his diplomacy is often driven by short-term gains rather than consistent strategic logic.

Mamdani, notably the son of acclaimed Indian filmmaker Mira Nair, embodies the rising influence of the Indian diaspora in American politics. His growing rapport with Trump, a leader with whom he previously clashed ideologically, illustrates how Indian-origin figures are increasingly bridging divides across the US political spectrum. Yet, while the friendship appears warm and cordial, the continued enforcement of harsh economic policies toward India underscores Trump's transactional style. Personal bonds, even when publicly celebrated, do not always translate into favorable policy outcomes. This encounter reflects both opportunity and caution, highlighting the diaspora's influence while reminding India to watch Washington carefully.

RS NARULA | PATIALA

### Fatima bosch crowned Miss Universe 2025

Kudos to Fatima Bosch of Mexico for being crowned Miss Universe 2025 at the 74th edition of the event held in Bangkok, Thailand. Her poise, intelligence, and radiant charm helped her clinch the coveted title in a finale that showcased her grace, confidence, and sharp thinking.

Fatima's winning answer focused on believing in one's authenticity and self-worth, while also creating safe spaces for women globally. This approach embodies "real beauty" — a combination of a beautiful mind, constructive thought processes, and a commitment to empowering others.

India's own Manika Vishwakarma also made a mark by reaching the Top 30 out of 120 contestants, reflecting the continued presence and promise of Indian participants on the global stage. Historically, three Indian women — Sushmita Sen (1994), Lara Dutta (2000), and Harnaaz Sandhu (2021) have won Miss Universe crowns, each later entering successful film careers.

Globally, the US leads with nine titles, followed by Venezuela (7), Puerto Rico (5), Philippines (4), Mexico (4), and India ranking sixth with three crowns. These results highlight both the competitive spirit of the pageant and the growing influence of diverse cultures on the world stage.

SREELEKHA PS | TELANGANA

### Labour codes to reshape workforce

India has embarked on a new labour era with the Government implementing the Four Labour Codes: the Code on Wages (2019), Industrial Relations Code (2020), Code on Social Security (2020), and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (2020). These reforms represent one of the most comprehensive and far-reaching workforce changes since Independence, aimed at modernising and streamlining labour legislation across the country.

The new codes are designed to ensure universal social security, the timely payment of minimum wages, safer workplaces, and equitable opportunities for women, gig workers, and agriculturists. By consolidating and simplifying multiple existing laws, these reforms make compliance easier for employers while more effectively safeguarding workers' rights. Crucially, the codes benefit both organised and unorganised sector employees, addressing long-standing gaps in social protection and labour welfare. They focus on fair remuneration, workplace safety, social security coverage, and mechanisms for dispute resolution, making them progressive and inclusive. By modernising labour laws holistically, India is laying the foundation for a more secure, equitable, and productive workforce.

DIMPLE WADHAWAN | KANPUR NAGAR



## The harbinger of freedom of conscience in India

Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom in 1675 was India's first great stand for freedom of conscience. His defence of the persecuted Kashmiri Pandits anticipated the principles now enshrined in global human-rights charters. Three and a half centuries later, his message remains central to India's pluralist ethos

FIRST Column



JAGMOHAN SINGH RAJU

Long before constitutional guarantees or modern rights charters, India witnessed a defining assertion of freedom of conscience. It came not from a monarch, parliament or court, but from the scaffold at Delhi's Chandni Chowk on 24 November 1675, when Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, chose martyrdom to defend the right of Hindus to practice their faith. Born in 1621 in Amritsar, Guru Tegh Bahadur was a saint, poet, warrior and thinker whose 115 hymns in the Guru Granth Sahib emphasise detachment, fearlessness, compassion and the sovereignty of the human soul. His life and writings prepared a society to confront intolerance with moral courage. Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, often remembered for its religious greatness, also deserves recognition as a foundational chapter in India's political evolution. It was the earliest and clearest assertion in Indian history that the conscience of an individual is sovereign, that even the mightiest empire cannot command belief, and that the defence of faith includes the defence of another's freedom to worship differently. It was a rebellion not of armies but of spirit, not for territory but for moral principle, and in many ways it marked the moral beginning of India's long journey towards freedom of faith, pluralism and civic dignity. To appreciate the magnitude of the Guru's stand, one must recall the climate of Aurangzeb's reign, which began in 1658 and grew increasingly doctrinaire. In the 1670s, when his campaign of forced conversions spread terror across parts of the Mughal Empire, the blow fell most brutally on the Kashmiri Pandits. Their temples were desecrated, their religious practices prohibited, and their leaders threatened with death unless they embraced Islam. Desperate and distraught, a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits travelled to Anandpur Sahib to seek Guru Tegh Bahadur's intervention. They approached him not as the chief of a sect but as a moral guardian of the vulnerable. They saw in him someone who could protect dharma in the highest sense - the right to faith, to worship and to live with dignity. That they turned to a Sikh Guru rather than to a Hindu king or a rival army



GURU TEGH BAHADUR'S MARTYRDOM, OFTEN REMEMBERED FOR ITS RELIGIOUS GREATNESS, ALSO DESERVES RECOGNITION AS A FOUNDATIONAL CHAPTER IN INDIA'S POLITICAL EVOLUTION

The author is a retired IAS officer  
 @dailypioneer  
 @TheDailyPioneer  
 /dailypioneer

is itself telling. It reflected the moral authority the Guru commanded across communities. By this time, Sikhism had a distinct and firmly rooted identity, built on equality, service and the rejection of dogma and caste barriers. Yet Guru Tegh Bahadur's vision transcended the boundaries of his own tradition. He responded to the Pandits not as the representative of a community defending its own, but as the custodian of a universal principle. He affirmed that faith cannot be coerced and conscience cannot be subjugated, and that the protection of another's belief is as sacred a duty as the protection of one's own. When the Guru observed that religious persecution unleashed by Aurangzeb could be confronted only through sacrifice by an exalted soul, his nine-year-old son Gobind Rai, later Guru Gobind Singh, answered with clarity that there was no spiritually exalted soul greater than his

father. Guru Tegh Bahadur understood instantly that the sacrifice had to be his. He did not negotiate, raise an army or propose retaliation. Instead, he offered himself as the solitary challenger to imperial coercion. This willingness to embrace martyrdom for the religious freedom of others is unique in world history. It was an act of absolute moral courage, for it sought no victory except the triumph of a principle. The Guru was arrested at Agra, imprisoned at Delhi's Red Fort, tortured and repeatedly asked to embrace Islam. He refused every inducement and threat. When persuasion failed, the Mughal court killed his Sikh companions, one by one, to break his resolve. Inspired by the Guru's leadership and true to his teachings, his Sikhs cast away fear and embraced death with unshakable faith. Bhai Mati Das was sawn alive; Bhai Sati Das was wrapped in cotton, smeared with oil and burned; and Bhai Dayal Das was boiled to death in a

cauldron. None renounced their faith or abandoned their Guru. Their courage elevated martyrdom from religious testimony to moral protest, asserting the dignity of human conscience against the weight of imperial power. The Guru was beheaded on 24 November 1675 in full public view where Gurudwara Shishganj is located in Delhi today. What followed after the beheading was no less heroic. Bhai Jaita, later known as Bhai Jiwan Singh, carried the Guru's severed head from Delhi to Anandpur Sahib, evading capture with remarkable ingenuity. Lakhhi Shah Banjara, a cart driver, placed the Guru's body in his cart, took it home and set his own house on fire to perform the cremation, since open cremation was forbidden. These men came from different castes and backgrounds - Arora, Brahmin, Khatri, Lubana - yet in that moment of crisis they stood united in devotion and purpose. They demonstrated that in the Guru's path caste dissolves,

and the humblest individual can rise to unforgettable greatness. The Guru's martyrdom did not end with his death. It sowed the seeds of spiritual resistance that later flowered into the Khalsa under Guru Gobind Singh. The Khalsa was not merely a religious brotherhood but a disciplined community committed to justice, equality, fearlessness and service. Over the following centuries, this spirit shaped Sikh history and the history of India. Banda Singh Bahadur dismantled the Mughal regime in Sirhind and asserted the dignity of peasants. The Sikh misls challenged Mughal and Afghan dominance. Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a plural, inclusive kingdom admired even by his adversaries. The Singh Sabha reformers revived the Panth's intellectual and social foundations. Kartar Singh Sarabha, Bhagat Singh and Udham Singh carried the torch of freedom into the modern age. Sikh soldiers serving India after independence inherited the same legacy of courage, discipline and sacrifice. The moral stamina that sustained India's freedom, integrity and civic courage can trace its origin to the moment when Guru Tegh Bahadur offered his life at Chandni Chowk. The principles for which he died were so universal that they resonate beyond the borders of India. The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirm that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion - a right Guru Tegh Bahadur defended with his life nearly three centuries before the world formally recognised it. His stand anticipates, and in many ways prefigures, the modern global consensus on the sanctity of conscience. That a seventeenth-century Indian spiritual leader articulated this principle at the cost of his life is a tribute both to him and to the civilisational ethos he embodied. As India marks 350 years of his martyrdom, the question is not only how we remember Guru Tegh Bahadur, but how we inherit him. His legacy urges us to uphold truth without fear, protect the vulnerable without hesitation and guard the sovereignty of conscience without compromise. It challenges us to build a society where freedom of belief is not merely tolerated but cherished as a civilisational value. His martyrdom remains an expression of India's pluralistic ethos - that the true measure of a nation lies in how it protects the moral freedom of its people.

## Scientific nationalism: Reuniting science, culture, and conscience



ASHVATHAMAN

Science and nationalism are often treated as different realms-one devoted to universal truth, the other to collective identity. But in India's civilisation, they were never separate. The pursuit of knowledge was always linked to the service of the nation and the upliftment of humanity. From ancient astronomers to modern innovators, our thinkers saw no contradiction between devotion and discovery. Scientific Nationalism is the rediscovery of that balance. It calls for the reunion of intellect and integrity, innovation and identity, discovery and dharma. It reminds us that science becomes meaningful only when guided by conscience, and that nationalism becomes transformative only when empowered by knowledge. **The Civilisational Context** India has always viewed science as sacred. The Vedas described the universe as Vijnana-structured intelligence guided by order. Aryabhata's astronomy, Charaka's medicine, and Susruta's surgery were all acts of inquiry rooted in humility. Knowledge was not pursued for dominance over nature, but for harmony with it. When Dr APJ Abdul Kalam spoke of transforming India into a developed nation through science and technology, he did not separate innovation from ethics. His laboratories were spaces of national service, where rockets and satellites became symbols of collective aspiration. That spirit defines Scientific Nationalism-the conviction that the advancement of knowledge must strengthen the nation and uplift humanity. **The Philosophy** The foundation for this idea lies in Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism, which envisioned balanced growth of body, mind, heart, and soul. • The body stands for material and technological progress, • The mind for intellectual inquiry,

• The heart for cultural rootedness, and • The soul for spiritual and moral direction. When these four dimensions work in harmony, science becomes humane, and nationalism becomes enlightened. Progress without morality leads to arrogance; patriotism without knowledge leads to stagnation. Scientific Nationalism harmonises both. **Science with Conscience** Modern technology gives humanity immense power, but without conscience, it risks dehumanisation. Artificial Intelligence can empower or exploit; biotechnology can heal or harm. The moral compass that guides these forces determines their impact. Scientific Nationalism insists that the Indian approach to science must be value-based. It does not seek to copy global models but to enrich them with civilisational wisdom. In Bharat's worldview, knowledge divorced from ethics is ignorance in disguise. True progress is that which enhances life, not that which endangers it. **The Need for Cultural Confidence** For centuries, India's scientific contribution was undervalued due to colonial narratives that separated science from spirituality. Yet, history records that Indian civilisation has always been scientific-not in imitation of others, but through its own method of observation, reasoning, and reflection. Today, as India rises in space, nuclear, and digital technologies, we must also rise in cultural confidence. When a student codes in Tamil, when a scientist researches in Hindi, or when an innovator designs for rural India, science becomes part of our living culture. It ceases to be foreign and becomes familial. **Education for a Self-Reliant Bharat** Scientific Nationalism calls for an education system that teaches not only how to think, but also why to think. The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) is a vital step towards that goal. It encourages learning in mother tongues, multidisciplinary education, and ethical reasoning-principles that bridge the divide between intellect and identity. When a student in a small town learns robotics in their native language, they are not just acquiring technical skill-they are inheriting a civilisational legacy. They become part of a tradition that sees knowledge as service, not status. **From Laboratories to National Mission**

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A Ashvathamam is Tamil Nadu BJP State Secretary, f and founder of Project Tamil AI and the Integral Humanism Foundation

@asuvathamam  
 /dailypioneer

Every innovation that serves the nation-from Chandrayaan to Digital India-embodies Scientific Nationalism in practice. ISRO's missions, indigenous vaccine development, and the semiconductor drive all show that India's path to self-reliance lies not in isolation, but in rooted innovation. For Bharat, the laboratory is a temple and innovation a form of worship-because knowledge that serves people is sacred. The scientist and the soldier serve the same mother-one by defending her borders, the other by expanding her horizons. **The Way Forward** To embed Scientific Nationalism into national consciousness, three key steps are needed: • Integrate ethics into science education. Every engineering, medical, and research programme must teach the moral implications of innovation. • Promote regional-language research. Translating core scientific materials into Indian languages will democratise knowledge and bridge the urban-rural divide. • Link research with social reform. Encourage scientists to focus on national challenges-water, energy, healthcare, and agriculture-where technology directly uplifts society. Science must no longer remain the privilege of a few; it must become the power of the many. **The Moral Compass of the Future** Scientific Nationalism is not hostility towards the world; it is humility before our own potential. It invites the global community to see science not as a race, but as a relationship-a collaboration between intelligence and compassion. Dr Kalam once said, "Dreams are not what you see in sleep; they are those that keep you awake." Scientific Nationalism is that wakeful dream-of a Bharat that creates, innovates, and leads with moral strength. • Science gives us power. • Culture gives us direction. • Conscience gives us purpose. When these three unite, Bharat will not merely follow the global race for progress-it will lead it with wisdom and humanity. Scientific Nationalism is not a slogan. It is a renaissance-a reawakening of India's timeless spirit through the instruments of modern science.

@asuvathamam  
 /dailypioneer

## Clean India requires change in mindset and policy



KAJLEEN KAUR

Sanitation is a civic duty, a discipline that reflects the cultural ethos of the public and policymakers in a nation. While India shows promising numbers in terms of GDP and is on its way to becoming the third-largest economy in the world, it is ironic that it still grapples with fundamental challenges of cleanliness and hygiene. Dirty environments and surroundings carry social, economic, and health costs, besides tarnishing the national image and discouraging foreign tourism and investment. On the path to becoming a developed nation, the first criterion is infrastructure development, along with its maintenance, both in terms of long-term sustainability and cleanliness. While large funds are allocated every year to new projects, the upkeep of older ones remains disappointing. Land beneath flyovers often serves as free garbage dumps, contributing to urban decay, encroachments by homeless people, open defecation, and creating unhygienic conditions. Similar situations are seen at many road dividers, often occupied by mendicants seeking alms. Weak enforcement of littering laws and the absence of garbage bins at reasonable distances give people the liberty to dispose of waste in public spaces. Unplanned and rapid urbanisation has further worsened the situation, with rising demand but limited service provision. Population migration from rural areas has overburdened cities with waste management needs, informal settlements, and infrastructure maintenance, highlighting lapses in city management, policymaking, and implementation. Communities such as Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) are often seen taking charge of cleaning and maintaining their local areas, with volunteers and resident contributions. However, the provision of such services on a larger scale-for a city, state, or country-can only be effectively delivered by government authorities. In economic terms, these are public goods or services, which are non-rival, meaning that once provided, they benefit everyone equally. They are also non-excludable, meaning that those who do not contribute cannot be prevented from enjoying the benefits. Sanitation

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The author is Assistant Professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi

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 /dailypioneer  
 /kajleen-kaur-930472209



services therefore face a "free rider" problem, where everyone derives positive utility from clean surroundings, but few are willing to contribute. Consequently, it ultimately falls within the remit of formal administration to frame and implement stringent policies. Clean India cannot be optional; it must serve as a core pillar of Viksit Bharat@2047. Achieving this does not require high technology or heavy funding, but rather a change in mindset and willingness from civic authorities and the public. The Swachh Bharat Mission, which brought cleanliness into mainstream discourse, must be strengthened in both policy formation and implementation. In a country where the scale of need exceeds public resources, Public-Private Partnerships can accelerate the journey towards a sustainable, clean India. Stricter laws and penalties, alongside active participation from local societies, NGOs, and communities such as RWAs, should form essential components of a long-term plan. Most importantly, while we refer to our country as a mother, it is our social responsibility to work together towards a Clean India.



The India middle-class buyer generally come in several types. There is a section that is extremely brand conscious. Being wealthy and rich, it opts for the topnotch global brands that cost in lakhs. A handbag for ₹2,00,000, or more, or a luxury watch for ₹1,00,00,000, or more. One hears of the big fat Indian wedding, where hundreds of millions are spent without batting an eyelid, or looking at the costs. There is another section, which is pragmatic. It is brand conscious, but hunts for bargains, and discounts. It earns decently, but does not wish to blow up the money. It wishes to save, and spend on crucial assets like a large home, gold, and jewellery. There is now a section that has emerged between these two. On social media, some experts and observers have dubbed them as anxiety buyers.

The anxiety-driven consumers opt for something, whose price is neither too high, nor discounted. It is sizable enough to sound impressive. But it is neither high-brow, or low-brow. Think of a suitcase that costs ₹30,000, or a month's rent for the 2bhk in a decent locality in a metro's suburbs. Think of a fancy watch that is ₹50,000 to ₹1,00,000. Think of a neck piece that is ₹40,000 or so. Their first car is not going to be the cheapest, but possibly a mid-segment one. They want to splurge, and more than the middle middle-class. But they will not go overboard. In their weddings, expect Indian, Thai, Korean, and Chinese cuisines, or multi-cuisine dishes. It will be a destination wedding at a domestic location. You will know that either their salaries are decently high, or they fall into a substantial double-incomes no-kids category.

You will hordes of these people in the IT hubs like Bengaluru, and Pune, where the salaries are on the higher side. They will be consultants in the knowledge segments of the economy, maybe working for the think tanks. The start-ups have a high congregation of such middle-class employees, whose incomes are buoyed by the employee stock options as the valuations zoom. Not to forget the day traders, and stock investors, who are either savvy enough, or lucky enough to earn 100-200 per cent returns within months, or a couple of years. You can find them loitering around in the fancy malls, buying products that are expensive but not extravagant. They will go to the fine-dining outlets a few times a month, and spend tens of thousands of rupees on a single visit. They will pack the happening pubs on weekends, and go pub-hopping in a crazed manner.

A recent post on such people, and their behaviour went viral. Uploaded by Valance Fernandes, a start-up executive, it stated that such buyers are not rich enough to not care, but they are too status-conscious to buy sensible (not discounted). Such consumers are not buying things for their utility. They are not picking up stuff because it has a brand tag, and price tag that implies rich and wealthy. It is, as Fernandes says, buying comfort for income guilt. "We are buying therapy for our income anxiety," he wrote. Function is not crucial. Emotional validation is. The goods that they buy screams that 'I have made it,' even if the savings show that 'I am financially insecure.' They wish to be seen as those in the upper bracket of the income and wealth pyramid. They want to be known as the true children of reforms, or those who have escalated up the socio-economic ladder in the past three decades. They spend because they can.

Marketers have realised how to gain from these anxious-ridden buyers. They opt for what Fernandes dubs as insecurity pricing. The ₹30,000 travel bag is an example. It convinces the buyer that she has purchased something that is pricey and classy, and enhances her societal reputation. It takes care of the insecurity of being left behind. Yet the pricing is not out of reach. It pushes the buyer to spend enough to leave behind a balance for other things. It cajoles the shopper to feel that she can afford it, even if it is not an Armani or Louis Vuitton. These are the consumers who realise, and are convinced that they are a few notches above most of the middle class, although they are several notches beneath the wealthy. They may not be among the top one per cent, but they are surely among the top 5-10 per cent. They are separate from the rest.

Thus, there is a new price segment which has entered the marketing lexicon. The trick is to make the potential buyers feel insecure that they are being left out of the top niche, and forced to join the middle majority. This encourages the purchases of the products that are priced high enough to create a sense of status, yet it is within the stretched reach. Thus, the shoppers do not feel cheap, or left out. The ₹30,000 bag may provide the same function as one that is a tenth of the price. But the difference lies in the feeling that the former constitutes the best, or nearly the best. The latter does not.



# India's Da Vinci labour of codes

Before we delve into the complexities or simplifications that arise out of the implementation of the four new labor codes, allow me to recall two events which happened about three-and-a-half decades apart. The first relates to a personal one. When I was a young journalist, a media house offered a lucrative job with an attractive salary package. The deal was that I would sign a contract that would be valid for three years but I would not be deemed to be an employee as defined by the wage board. My terms would be outside the legal purview.

In those days, which is perhaps true today in some organisations, the salaries of journalists were decided by the wage boards, which were set up by the Government. Being young and not very influenced by the romance of communism or socialism, I unhesitatingly opted for the contract. Of course, even then, I realised the anger and angst of the wage-board employees, who had the security of the jobs, but were still exploited in a market where supply always exceeded demand.

Now, let us fast-forward three-and-a-half decades. Let us look at Tamil Nadu, where MK Stalin led an alliance comprising Congress, and other left parties to a sweeping assembly victory in 2021. Tamil Nadu is one of the most industrialised states, and attracts foreign and domestic investments in manufacturing. To reassert the image as a favourite destination for investments, the Stalin regime announced that a factory worker could opt to clock up to 12 hours a day, and earn extra income. There was opposition from the alliance partners, not to speak of the trade unions, social workers, and NGOs. Stalin was forced to withdraw the policy.

The two events sum up the schizophrenia that has surrounded the labour laws since Independence. There is the tendency to protect and cuddle the interests of the workers, who are

deemed to be permanently oppressed by the capitalist class. To this effect, a series of laws are routinely enacted to protect their rights, and improve livelihoods. At the same time, the capitalists and their advisors routinely come up with innovative solutions that bypass these laws.

The ironic thing is that the workers willingly and unhesitatingly accept what is offered to them. For them, more than the esoteric labour laws and protections, which often work only on paper, it is the cash in hand which matters more. This is the essence of the four recent labour codes. From 29, the number of laws were reduced to four with effect from November 21, 2025. This indeed a significant and landmark reform. But the trade unions have objections.

To sum up, the objections revolve around four issues: Protection of the incomes; protection of jobs; protection of livelihoods, and; factors related to their health, safety, and other similar issues. There is no doubt that the unions played a significant role in improving the lives of the workers. But at the same time, when you look at the numbers, which are hard numbers, one gets a different perspective. In India, there are 650 million workers. Of them, seven per cent work in the organised sector, which means that 50 million-odd Indians work in the proper and formal factories, and offices.

Thus, this is the number that receives the so-called protections, which include social security, pension, regular incomes hikes, and stipulated leaves, and other features. Nearly 600 million or more do not work in the organised sector. Despite the best efforts of the unions, they have never been a part of the formal workforce. This includes 45 per cent, who are employed as workers in the agriculture sector, where there is no question of organised labour activity.

To this extent, I feel that the implementation

of the four codes is a dramatic step in the right direction. I am not just talking about the gig workers, about whom there is a lot of discussion in the media. Gig workers have become a significant part of the workforce. But perhaps more important than them, if you look at the numbers, are the agriculture workers, and those who work in MSMEs. They are the ones who need real protection, apart from the gig workers. The codes help them, and are a step ahead in the right direction.

For instance, one of the provisions is that a gig worker is not defined as a permanent employee of a platform or an aggregator, and yet the latter need to contribute up to two per cent of the turnover to create a corpus for the former's social security. A second provision, which caught attention, is that an employment offer letter is mandatory for workers. This sounds forward looking, and attractive. No doubt, the problem in India is one of implementation.

One, in the case of the codes, the state governments will play a critical role in the implementation because like agriculture, health, and education, labour laws fall under their domain. Two, there will be sections who will try to bypass the laws meant to help the workers. The checks and balances, and how one protects the rights of the workers without descending into red tape and corruption, will be the biggest challenge that these codes will face in the coming years.

Remember, there is an army of inspectors armed with laws to protect the workers. But many of them evade and avoid their responsibilities. State and central governments will need to be pragmatic to figure out solutions whereby the employers do not cut corners or bypass the laws. At the same time, the workers must feel that they will get improved livelihoods. Therein lies the challenge.

Do not forget that 350 million Indians categorise themselves as self-employed. They work but do not have employers. What will the four codes do for them? Their numbers are growing by the day. The employees can seek benefits from the employers, even if the former are temporary, contractual, or gig workers. The self-employed, especially those with small and minimal incomes are caught in a bind. It is crucial for the policy-makers to think of them, and initiate efforts to provide adequate social security for them.

Not too long ago, the country's prime minister said that people who sell goods, and products on the streets are adequately employed, and could not, and should not be counted among the unemployed. Although a few critics smirked, this was the blatant truth, and ground reality. Educated people do not get the work that they desire, and decide to go on their own. The uneducated ones are exploited, and deem it necessary to do their own work, even if the incomes are lower. The comfort, and ambitions matter.

The author has worked for leading media houses, authored two books, and is now Executive Director, C Voter Foundation

**OUR TAKE**



**Sutanu Guru**  
Author, Journalist and Academician



Is there a problem of plenty or plenty of problems? Farmers across India are distressed with the falling crop prices and, in some cases, they are not even able to recover the price of inputs, and production. Generally, a plentiful crop output, as is the case in the last season, is a reason to celebrate. According to the central agriculture ministry, rice and wheat production reached a record level of more than 1,500 lakh tonnes, and 1,180 lakh tonnes, respectively, which were 124 lakh tonnes, and 46.53 lakh tonnes higher than last year. Additionally, moong (green gram) production increased to 42.44 lakh tonnes, soybean to 152.68 lakh tonnes, and groundnut to 119.42 lakh tonnes. Maize and millet output are estimated at 434.09 lakh tonnes and 185.92 lakh tonnes, respectively, compared to 376.65 lakh tonnes and 175.72 lakh tonnes last year. Similarly, oilseed output in 2024-25 is estimated at a record 430 lakh tonnes, which is 33 lakh tonnes higher than the figure in 2023-24. The ministry claims that a "record groundnut and soybean output" is responsible for it.



**Jayanta Bhattacharya**  
Senior Journalist

But by the time the crops hit the market, domestic prices witnessed significant drops across commodities, including rice, tur (red gram), moong, urad (black gram), groundnut, and soybean. Maize farmers reportedly sold at below the minimum support price (MSP), and at prices that failed to recover the costs of production. According to the ministry's figures (Agmarknet), where the MSP for maize was fixed at ₹2,400 per quintal for procurement in 2025-2026, the season-wise price was ₹1,730.85 and, on November 21, it fetched ₹1572.96 per quintal. India produces 422.81 lakh tonnes of maize, which accounts for three per cent of the global production. The US, which wants India to buy American corn, accounts for 35 per cent.

In Madhya Pradesh, nine farmers reportedly committed suicide within a month due to loss of crops, mounting debt and lack of fair prices. The state regime denied that crop failure was the main reason behind their tragic decision. Farm union leaders claim that the problems are associated with plenty, alleged "lobbies," and "flawed" policies. The Government's attempt to meet domestic demand with control over prices is going against farmers' interests. It is a double-edged

# Chaos in cloth, maze of maize



sword considering that New Delhi wishes to protect the agriculture sector while inking international trade deals.

According to the Communist Party of India-affiliated All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) president Rajan Kshirsagar, "All free trade agreements include scope for duty-free imports of agricultural produce." He claims, "In 2022-2023, the (bilateral) deal with Australia allowed duty-free import of up to 51 lakh cotton bales. Since then, cotton prices have been falling below MSP." Earlier this year, the Government's decision to temporarily waive off duty on imports till the end of this year gave rise to diverse speculations.

Some claimed that the decision was aimed to benefit the textile industry's demands for the removal of the 11 per cent duty to soften the impact of the high US tariffs. Others contended that it was related to the ongoing bilateral talks between India and the US. Then an American team cancelled its planned visit to Delhi. The move was seen as a measure to defuse the ongoing trade tensions with the

US, which is India's second-largest cotton supplier. Input costs in the textile sector are crucial as the country has a nearly four per cent share in world's textile exports.

According to the textile ministry, the sector provides direct employment to over 45 million people, making it the second largest employment generator in the country, next only to agriculture, which is the source for its raw material. But for the farmer, it is a different story. As on November 21, the market price of cotton was ₹7,008.81 per quintal (as per

Agmarknet) against MSP of ₹7,710.00. "The Government follows a wrong import-export policy," claims Mohini Mohan Mishra, secretary, Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS).

"The process of crop imports begins even before the domestic produce is ready to hit the market. We have repeatedly requested that our farmers be given a month or two before the imported crops are introduced," says Mishra. The imports are intended to augment stocks to protect consumers against likely spikes in domestic prices. But there are

other factors at work. "The US wants to dump surplus maize and soybean; though China has recently entered into an agreement with Washington to buy soybean," explains Mishra.

Maize demand witnessed a growth in India due to the mandatory use of ethanol-blended petrol. "The US is forcing India to buy its cotton, soybean, maize, wheat, and dairy products, which will affect domestic growers," adds Kshirsagar. When pointed out that such imports will finally benefit Indian consumers with cheaper food products, he provides an alternate theory. Taking cotton as an example, he points out, "This (duty-free import) was against just six per cent of textile exports. If the government provides MSP at C2+50 per cent (one-and-a-half times the comprehensive cost of production) you will not need to depend on exports." However, according to the data from the National Statistics Office, inflation dropped to 0.25 per cent last month, riding on food inflation declining to a negative five per cent.

Contrarily, it does not augur well for the growers, adding to the problems arising due to factors such as the weather conditions and climate change, market access, getting adequate crop price, among others, contributing to farmers' distress. There is a gradual decrease in the number of peasants due to the migration towards the cities in search of alternate occupation. Farming has always sought Government support. It is invariably a catch-22 for the policy-makers. They cannot make every section happy.

The fact remains that India, like other nations, is caught in a global trade squeeze, which is initiated by the American tariffs. As the US forces nations to open their markets for its farm produce, agriculture in most nations faces challenges. There is obviously the fear of imports. In India, it is coupled with strong production. The pricing structure is wonky despite the MSP regime. In addition, there are export and import lobbies at work. The demands of the industries differ from those of the farm community. There is a lag between the decisions, and market scenarios due to pressures and counter-pressures. By the time, the policy-makers get into the act, the situations have changed, and require different approaches.

(The author has more than three decades of experience across print, TV, and digital media)



## PIOTECH

### How Pichai fixed 8-year-old 'emoji mistake'



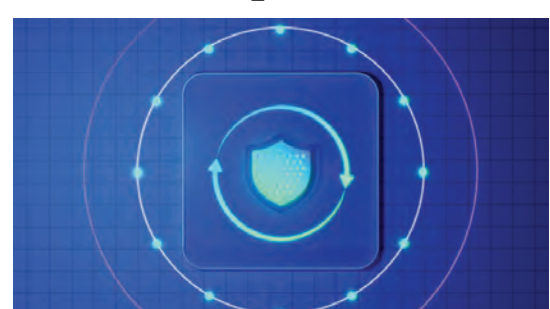
Eight years after Google was roasted online for a cheeseburger emoji that placed the cheese under the meat. Now, Google CEO Sundar Pichai has finally set the record straight with the help of Google's latest generative AI models. Back in 2017, Google faced a lot of backlash when the ingredients of its cheeseburger emoji in Android were stacked incorrectly. Pichai jokingly apologised at that time and promised to soon come up with a fix. Recently, the Google CEO delivered the correct emoji. Pichai shared a post on social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter) in which he shared an AI-generated cheeseburger image with the cheese firmly above the patty, captioned "iykyk" as a nod to the viral furor. The emoji correction coincided with Google's launch of Gemini 3, its most advanced AI model, and Nano Banana Pro, a new image-generation tool capable of producing realistic pictures, diagrams, and charts. These tools demonstrate improved spatial reasoning, allowing AI to understand how objects should be positioned in the real world. Tech investor Balaji Srinivasan noted that the burger image showed Gemini 3 had solved a long-standing challenge: "Normally, AI models struggle with spatial orientation... but this image seems to resolve that issue." The launch of Gemini 3 marks a turning point for Google, which has faced criticism for lagging behind rivals in generative AI. The company's stock surged to a record high this week, briefly making Google more valuable than Microsoft.

### Rubrik introduces intelligent business recovery for MS 365



Rubrik, the Security and AI Operations company, has introduced Rubrik Intelligent Business Recovery for Microsoft 365 and DevOps Protection for Azure DevOps and GitHub. These new offerings provide enterprises with intelligent, orchestrated recovery after a cyberattack or major outage. The Rubrik services enable comprehensive backup and swift recovery, and empower businesses to rapidly restore mission-critical functions for operational resilience. "When outages occur, it can take an enterprise weeks – or even months – to get their teams back online and their data recovered," said Anika Gupta, Chief Product Officer at Rubrik. Current data recovery often lacks crucial business context, leading to high risk and losses in revenue or productivity because of the simplistic focus on a single workload, or data that lacks business context. Further, current solutions lack visibility into where data resides, whether the data is in Microsoft Outlook inboxes, OneDrives, SharePoint sites, Teams chats, or elsewhere. Now, Rubrik Intelligent Business Recovery for Microsoft 365 takes a quantum leap beyond traditional time-based or data-centric approaches. Customers gain automated, business-aware recovery, to restore critical users and their data across applications such as Microsoft Exchange, OneDrive, SharePoint, and Teams. Rubrik intelligently defines the recovery scope, to enable rapid business restoration and significantly reduce downtime.

### DevOps protection for Azure DevOps and GitHub



Today's DevOps platforms house critical intellectual property and artifacts, including source code, Infrastructure as Code (IaC), and AI/ML pipelines—which means they are a prime target for cyberattacks. Unfortunately, recent high-profile breaches are definitive proof that native platform security is critically insufficient against these modern threats. DevOps environments are further exposed by the widespread use of AI agents, which can introduce new vulnerabilities for attackers to target as well as flawed code commits at a scale that surpasses typical human error. Rubrik DevOps Protection closes critical gaps, providing a single, trusted platform to safeguard the entire software and AI development lifecycle, ensuring organizations no longer have to risk the loss, corruption, or even temporary unavailability of their most valuable intellectual property and development pipeline. Azure DevOps and GitHub customers can now trust that their source code and Continuous Integration/Continuous Delivery (CI/CD) pipelines are protected and preserved in addition to their core functions. DevOps Protection for Azure DevOps and GitHub will provide automated and unified protection, Air-gapped, immutable backups and rapid, granular recovery.

(All inputs from PTI)

# Framing India's AI governance: India's vision and voice

Public and private sectors in India collaborate as key architects in advancing AI



Dear reader, by now you must be convinced on how artificial intelligence is weaving into India's social fabric. While generative AI continues to provoke debate over its disruptive potential, one consensus remains: AI is here to stay. As India races to define the rules and ethics of artificial intelligence, the real battleground isn't only in policy documents or technical standards—it's in communication. How governments frame AI, how industry markets it, how media reports it, and how citizens discuss it on WhatsApp or in local languages all shape public trust and understanding. India's AI journey is a high-stakes narrative of ambition meets reality.

India's AI adoption unfolds as a government-orchestrated epic, blending visionary blueprints with practical enablers to empower the masses. At its core lies the Honourable Prime Minister's vision of "AI for All," articulated in the November 2025 India AI Governance Guidelines, which positions AI as a force multiplier for Viksit Bharat by 2047. This framework builds on foundational initiatives like the National Strategy for AI, emphasizing responsible AI for social empowerment through applications in rural healthcare diagnostics, localized education, and farmer-centric climate resilience tools. "Safe & Trusted AI" pillar, a cornerstone of the India AI Mission, democratizes access by investing in foundational ecosystem layers—compute resources, data-sharing platforms, and widespread skilling to counter global concentrations of AI capabilities. Complementing this are Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) successes such as Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker, now evolving into multilingual interfaces like Bhashini, which tailor AI to India's linguistic tapestry of 22 official languages and beyond. From a communications standpoint, these initiatives craft an uplifting narrative of inclusion, yet they demand vigilant storytelling to address risks like misinformation and biases.



The industry landscape injects vitality into AI's evolution, positioning it as a driver of widespread transformation across diverse applications. Businesses in various fields are encouraged to harness digital public infrastructure for expansive outreach, alongside efforts to broaden availability of essential data and processing resources, drawing in capital and spurring creative advancements. Operational advice emphasizes embracing self-initiated standards, issuing regular disclosures on practices, and employing combined technical and regulatory strategies to address potential downsides—aligning implementations in areas like health services, public administration, and more with core ethical considerations. This domain's contribution is essential in bridging conceptual strategies with tangible outcomes, though narrative hurdles persist: Exuberance surrounding advanced generative technologies requires balancing with clear revelations that reinforce societal assurance, averting any slowdown in momentum.

Academic and research contributions infuse intellectual rigor and emphasize capacity building to bridge gaps. Programs for education, skilling, and training are prioritized to empower individuals, heighten awareness of AI's opportunities and risks, and cultivate a workforce attuned to ethical imperatives. Institutions like those under the Technology & Policy Expert Committee (TPEC) are tasked with informing standards, reflecting a narrative shift toward human-centric design. Yet, from a comms lens, academia's voice often remains siloed; amplifying research on algorithmic fairness through accessible dialogues could enrich national storytelling, aligning with the "People First" principle.

India's AI narrative is shaped by its vast social and cultural diversity, demanding governance that balances scale with equity while avoiding divides across languages, regions, and communities. As AI enters classrooms, farms, and public services, communications must demystify how these systems work—translating probabilistic algorithms and emerging risks into relatable, empowering stories that counter fears of deepfakes, surveillance, or discrimination. India's "jugaad" ingenuity sits alongside cultural caution about powerful technologies, making it vital for ethical frameworks and public narratives to evolve with new breakthroughs, as stressed in ongoing government-industry-civil society dialogues. In this context, vernacular multimedia campaigns become essential, turning abstract ethical concerns into human-centred messages that embody an approach to AI governance that is truly "Understandable by Design."

Public and private sectors in India collaborate as key architects in advancing AI, blending governmental coordination with industry agility to drive ethical and inclusive growth. The public sector takes the lead in setting strategic directions through a coordinated, multi-agency structure that spans central ministries, specialized regulators, and advisory groups. This ensures a unified push toward building robust AI ecosystems, with high-level bodies focusing on overarch-

ing policy alignment and technical safeguards. Sector-specific enforcers maintain oversight on compliance, while expert committees provide ongoing guidance on emerging challenges, emphasizing human-centered approaches and risk-aware deployments. Such integration fosters an environment where public investments in foundational resources like data platforms and computational power directly support widespread adoption, particularly in critical areas such as healthcare and agriculture. India's early AI policy efforts have evolved from broad strategic visions to targeted, adaptable frameworks, laying groundwork for responsible scaling. Initial national strategies focused on sector-specific applications, such as improving public services and economic productivity, while subsequent missions emphasized foundational investments in computing infrastructure and skill enhancement programs. The latest comprehensive guidelines, released in early November 2025, introduce a structured approach across enabling, regulatory, and oversight domains, including tailored risk evaluation tools and phased implementation timelines. Short-term measures

prioritize institutional setups and voluntary adoption mechanisms, medium-term steps involve standard publications and experimental regulatory environments, and long-term plans call for ecosystem reviews and legislative updates to handle new capabilities. These interventions demonstrate notable effectiveness in promoting innovation without stifling progress. The emphasis on flexible, evidence-based adjustments has facilitated quicker responses to real-world issues like data biases and security vulnerabilities, contributing to broader trust in AI systems. However, gaps remain in enforcement consistency and public awareness, with calls for enhanced training initiatives and transparent liability structures to strengthen outcomes. Overall, the policies' pragmatic blend of voluntary and mandatory elements has positioned India to harness AI's potential for inclusive development, though sustained communication efforts are essential to amplify their reach and address lingering adoption barriers in diverse contexts.

The writer is a former civil servant, who writes on cinema and strategic communication. With inputs from Zoya Ahmad and Vaishnavi Srinivasan. The views are personal.

# When the market learns to think: How AI is rewriting India's economic consciousness



Recently, while ordering dinner from the same neighbourhood restaurant I have trusted for years, I noticed something unsettling. The price of my usual dish had risen by nearly twelve rupees. There had been no shortage of ingredients, no sudden rise in wholesale costs, no inflationary jolt worth mentioning. The reason lay elsewhere. At exactly 7:42 pm, an algorithm had calculated that demand in my pin code was likely to rise. When I mentioned this to the restaurant owner the next day, he smiled faintly. "It's not my rate," he said. "The system decides now." Later that evening, my taxi home cost almost double what I had paid that morning. The weather was calm. Traffic flowed smoothly. Nothing in the physical city had changed. Only its invisible logic had. This is not a story about rising prices. It is a story about the architecture of decision-making itself — about who decides, how they decide, and what happens when that authority quietly migrates away from human hands. Across the world, and increasingly in India, the market is undergoing a transformation far deeper than digitisation or liberalisation. It is no longer merely responding to human behaviour. It is anticipating it, classifying it, scoring it — and acting upon it before the indi-

vidual even realises they are being evaluated. The market, without fanfare or public debate, has begun to think. This isn't just automation. It is the relocation of economic power. Decisions that once involved negotiation, discretion, and visibly human judgment are now routed through machine logic — probabilistic systems that almost never explain how they reached their conclusions. We see the outcome. We do not see the reasoning. Participation remains visible. Authority does not. A loan application is rejected without explanation. A job applicant is filtered out by software they never meet. A gig worker's daily income rises and falls according to surge coefficients they cannot see or challenge. Efficiency has deepened. Understanding has thinned. This is the point where an economic shift becomes a political one. India continues to speak of artificial intelligence as if it were merely another industry — an extension of the IT services era. That framing is dangerously outdated. AI today functions less like a sector and more like infrastructural intelligence. It shapes logistics, credit allocation, crop insurance, welfare targeting, recruitment, consumer pricing, healthcare triage, even political messaging. It does not sit at the edges of the economy. It scripts the rules by which the economy now operates. And with that comes a new grammar of power. The real advantage in this new landscape is not just capital or

scale. It is prediction. The firm that anticipates demand outperforms the one that simply responds to it. The platform that infers intent before it is articulated begins to shape behaviour before a choice feels conscious. Value is no longer created merely at the moment of purchase. It is created at the moment a future action is correctly forecast. Prediction, once a managerial tool, has become a governing mechanism. Insurance companies recalibrate premiums using climate risk models. Fintech platforms assign "trust scores" based on behavioural traces. Retailers adjust prices minute by minute through real-time demand forecasts. Agricultural applications advise farmers through satellite-assisted probability models that suggest when to sow or sell. These systems do more than optimise. They stratify. They decide which lives are considered worthy of risk and which are economically inconvenient. When such decisions are opaque, power becomes unaccountable. When the logic shaping outcomes cannot be questioned, society begins to resemble a managed system rather than a participatory economy. Speed without comprehension does not empower. It destabilises. AI's most significant impact is not the sudden disappearance of jobs. It is subtler and more corrosive. Certain skills simply fade from visibility. If a form of human judgment cannot be easily measured, captured, or ranked by an

algorithm, it slowly loses institutional value. The economy does not collapse. It quietly reorganises itself around what machines recognise as meaningful. Experience becomes noise. Wisdom becomes anecdotal. Human intuition is tolerated but no longer trusted. Nowhere is this more perilous than within India's informal workforce — its drivers, vendors, migrant labourers, small traders, and rural entrepreneurs. They are increasingly governed by platforms they neither design nor understand, dependent on scoring systems and digital metrics that determine their income and visibility. Without deliberate policy intervention, AI will not reduce inequality. It will automate its reproduction. India's digital confidence masks a deeper vulnerability. The most critical components of advanced AI — high-performance chips, core models, cloud infrastructure, and foundational algorithms — remain concentrated in the hands of a few foreign corporations and governments. This is not merely technological dependence. It is strategic fragility. When credit systems, supply chains, and financial flows rely on external compute power, national autonomy becomes conditional. The threat does not appear dramatic. It arrives through convenience. In the modern world, sovereignty is no longer defined only by land or borders. It is computational. Whoever controls the logic that shapes economic behaviour exercises a form of power that is both invisible and

immense. Intelligence itself has become a strategic asset. Algorithms do not possess ethics. They do not distinguish between what is fair and what is merely efficient. They optimise according to the data they are fed. And because historical data often carries historical prejudice, they frequently reproduce old inequalities with mathematical precision — not because they intend to discriminate, but because repetition is coded into their learning. Inequality spreads not through ideology, but through iteration. The real danger is not rogue machines. It is perfectly obedient ones — systems that execute flawed instructions with flawless consistency. Efficiency, when detached from ethical oversight, does not resolve injustice. It deepens it beneath a veneer of objectivity. This technological shift is routinely packaged as progress: faster services, seamless platforms, instant decisions. Beneath that promise lies a choice India is already making, even if it prefers not to articulate it. Will we allow imported intelligence to dictate the contours of our social and economic life? Or will we insist on shaping systems built within our own democratic and cultural framework? Will citizens become data points to be finely optimised, or participants in deciding how these systems govern them? This is not a call to reject technology. It is a call to design it consciously. That means building transparent

systems, insisting on explainability, regulating algorithmic decision-making, strengthening domestic computing capacity, and creating mechanisms through which citizens can challenge automated outcomes. It means treating AI not as a private convenience but as public infrastructure — one that must be governed with clarity and care. Technology will inevitably transform India's economy. The question is not whether it will happen, but how it will be shaped and who will benefit. A society that cannot interrogate the systems shaping its outcomes slowly forgets what participation feels like. India's AI future will not be judged solely by GDP growth or technological speed. It will be judged by whether people still recognise themselves in the decisions that shape their lives. By whether power remains visible or hides inside unreadable code. By whether efficiency serves dignity or replaces it. The market may now be learning to think. But thinking is not wisdom. Wisdom requires context, memory, empathy, and consequence — qualities that no machine acquires on its own. A thinking market may be inevitable. A humane one is not. It is a matter of design, of regulation, of civic will. And for now, that responsibility still rests with us — in how consciously we choose to live alongside the intelligence we are building.

Author is a theoretical physicist at the University of North Carolina, United States

FROM THE WORLD

RUSSIA

Putin's India visit to be fruitful

President Vladimir Putin's forthcoming visit to India will be "extremely grand" and "fruitful", Russian State TV said on Sunday quoting Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov. "We and the Indian side are actively preparing for the visit and hope it will be fruitful in every sense. It will be an extremely grand (visit) because it's even called a state visit," Ushakov said, in an interview to VGTRK Russian State TV's Kremlin correspondent Pavel Zarubin. "The visit provides an opportunity to put into practice the agreement between the prime minister of India and the Russian president that they will meet annually for a thorough discussion on both bilateral affairs and current international issues," Ushakov said. According to him the dates will be simultaneously announced in New Delhi and Moscow closer to the visit.

TUNISIA

Hundreds march against injustice

Tunisians took to the streets of downtown Tunis on Saturday over what they described as President Kais Saied's increasingly authoritarian rule and demanding the release of all jailed political prisoners. The rally, held under the banner "Against Injustice," brought together families of political detainees and activists from different ideological backgrounds. The demonstration drew more than 1,000 protesters, some dressed in black and chanting anti-regime slogans, including "The people want to overthrow the regime," "What a great country! Oppression and tyranny!" and "No fear no terror, the street belongs to the people." The protest came as part of a broader surge in protests nationwide over political and economic turmoil under Saied's rule.

## India, Brazil and Indonesia laid foundation for G20: Ramaphosa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Johannesburg

India, Brazil and Indonesia had laid the foundation for the G20 Leaders' Summit that ended on Sunday afternoon following two days of deliberations, President Cyril Ramaphosa said in his closing address.

"We learnt a lot from what Indonesia, India and Brazil did. In many ways, what we see having unfolded here was based on the foundations that those three countries of the Global South put in place," Ramaphosa said.

"The G20 South Africa Leaders' Declaration is more than words. It is a commitment to concrete action that will improve the lives of people in every part of the world.

"Our agreement on a Declaration during this summit demonstrates the value of the G20 as a forum that can facilitate joint action on issues of shared concern not only for the leaders, but shared concern for the peoples of the world.

"More than that, it reaffirms our renewed commitment to multilateral cooperation and our recognition that our shared goals outweigh our differences," the president said.

Thanking the G20 members for their attendance, Ramaphosa said their top of form commitment had been vital in reaffirming the G20 as the premier forum for international economic



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva during G20 Summit in Johannesburg

cooperation. "We have met this year in the face of significant challenges and demonstrated our ability to come together even in times of great difficulty to pursue a better world," he said. The president reaffirmed that the greatest opportunity for prosperity in the 21st century lies in Africa. "We have sought to place Africa's growth and development at the heart of the G20's agenda. Harnessing that opportunity will require a strong partnership between Africa and the G20 and indeed between Africa and the rest of the world," Ramaphosa said.

Reiterating elements of the Declaration, Ramaphosa said the G20 has called for an end to conflicts and wars around the globe and for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, to end poverty in all its forms, to reduce inequality within and among

countries and to take urgent action to combat climate change. "The G20 has pledged to extend support to low and middle income countries as they confront debt vulnerabilities," he added. Other decisions Ramaphosa reflected on included mobilising finance for a just energy transition, climate change actions, energy security, affordability and universal access and the importance of supporting developing economies in their transition to low carbon emissions.

"During this summit, we reaffirmed our support for the G20 Critical Minerals Framework, a cooperative blueprint to ensure that critical mineral resources drive prosperity and sustainable development across the globe," Ramaphosa added.

He also highlighted the mandate given to the South

African Presidency at the 2024 Rio de Janeiro Summit, which led to the G20@20 Review, drawing on the diverse perspectives of participating members and guest countries.

"It is our hope that recommendations of the review will serve as a helpful guide for the G20 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose in an ever-changing world," he said. Ramaphosa said the G20 must act boldly and act together to create an environment of inclusive growth, reduced inequality and sustainable development.

"We have laid the foundation of solidarity, now we must build the walls of justice and the roof of prosperity. Let us move forward together, demonstrating to the world that we have the capacity to confront and overcome the world's challenges.

## French Navy slams Pakistan media over misinformation on Op Sindoor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

Pakistan on Sunday faced major embarrassment after the French Navy refuted claims made by Pakistani media that a French commander had confirmed Pakistan's air superiority over India during the May 2025 conflict and the loss of Rafale jets. The Navy called the reports "extensive misinformation" and "fake news."

The strong rebuttal as Pakistan's Geo TV had published an article claiming that French commander Captain Jaquis Launay had confirmed Pakistan's dominance in the aerial engagement during Operation Sindoor. It also claimed that the Pakistan Air Force was "better prepared" and that the Rafale fighter was downed not because of the technological superiority of the Chinese J-10C fighters. Refuting the claim, the French Navy termed it "fake news," saying.

"These statements were attributed to Captain Launay who never gave his consent for any form of publication. The article contains extensive misinformation and disinformation". What may come across as poor editing and journalistic oversight, the Navy pointed out that it carried the wrong name of the commander: "First name is Yvan, not Jaquis." "Contrary to what has been established in the article, his responsibilities are limited to commanding the organic naval air station where the



French Rafale Marine aircraft are stationed," the French Navy said.

"When asked the question about operation SINDOOR, he neither confirmed nor denied that Indian aircrafts had been shot down. He refused to comment on possible jamming of the Indian Rafale by Chinese systems," the Navy clarified. The Navy also clarified that he never referenced the Chinese J-10, contradicting the claims made by Pakistani media.

The French reaction drew sharp criticism online, with many condemning what they described as anti-India propaganda in the Pakistani media.

BJP leader Amit Malviya highlighted the incident as evidence of Pakistan's "desperate misinformation machinery". "The French Navy has called out Pakistan's Geo TV and its correspondent Hamid Mir for spreading 'misinformation and disinformation'." In his report, Hamid Mir peddled the same old, fabricated claims about Rafales and the so-called May conflict and has now been publicly exposed.

When official institutions start debunking their propaganda, you know how des-

perate Pakistan's misinformation machinery has become," he wrote.

Several others also criticised the Pakistani media along similar lines, alleging that it has a history of spreading misinformation and making unfounded claims against India. In May, India launched a swift military operation against Pakistan, Operation Sindoor, in response to the Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 innocent lives. The military action operation dealt a significant blow to the Pakistani army and resulted in casualties, before both sides agreed to a ceasefire at Islamabad's request. Between the launch of the operation and the ceasefire on May 10 evening, Indian forces bombed nine terror camps in Pakistan and PoK, killing at least 100 terrorists, and the IAF struck targets at 13 Pakistani airbases and military installations.

Earlier in October, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said Pakistan lost as many as 12 to 13 aircraft, including fighter jets such as US-made F-16s and Chinese-origin JF-17s, to the IAF's precision strikes on ground and in the air during Operation Sindoor.

## Bangladesh Govt sends letter seeking Hasina's extradition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Dhaka

Bangladesh's interim Government of Muhammad Yunus has sent an "official letter" to New Delhi seeking the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina after the country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) sentenced her to death.

"The letter was sent the day before yesterday (Friday)," the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) reported, quoting foreign affairs adviser Touhid Hossain as saying without elaboration. The special Bangladesh tri-



bunal on November 17 handed Hasina, 78, the capital punishment along with then home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal on charges of committing "crimes against humanity" after their trial in absentia while both are staying in India.

The third accused in the case, former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al Mamun, who faced the trial in person was handed a five-year jail term as he appeared as an "approver" or state witness. Hasina's Awami League Government was toppled in a student-led violent protest termed as the 'July Uprising' on August

5 last year. Three days later, Nobel Laureate Yunus flew from Paris at the call of the protesting students to assume the charge of the interim Government as its chief adviser.

Hasina and the two others were accused of adopting brutal means to tame the protestors while a UN rights office report said about 1,400 people were killed in between July 15 and August 15 last year. The interim Government had in December last year sent a diplomatic note verbal seeking Hasina's extradition when India just acknowledged its receipt with no further comment.

## India offers strong support to Brazil for COP30

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Belem

India on Sunday expressed 'strong support' to Brazil for the inclusive leadership of the COP30 Presidency and welcomed several decisions adopted at the just concluded climate summit.

Though New Delhi expressed satisfaction with many decisions, it did not specifically call the COP30 a success in devising a policy aimed at preventing climate change issues. In an official release, India expressed its gratitude for the "High-level Statement" at the Closing Plenary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP30 here on Saturday.

The UN climate talks in Brazil ended with a pledge of more funding for countries to adapt to the wrath of extreme weather. But it did not include a roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels.

The Indian delegation at the climate summit was headed by Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupendra Patel Yadav.

The statement conveyed India's gratitude to the leadership of COP President Andre Correa do Lago, which it said was rooted in inclusion, balance, integrity and the Brazilian spirit of 'Mutirao', meaning collective effort in the indigenous Tupi language of Brazil.

"Welcoming progress under the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), India underscored the equity dimension of the decision, remarking that it reflects a recognition of the overwhelming need for adaptation in developing countries," the Ministry of Environment,

THE UN CLIMATE TALKS IN BRAZIL ENDED WITH A PLEDGE OF MORE FUNDING FOR COUNTRIES TO ADAPT TO THE WRATH OF EXTREME WEATHER

Forest and Climate Change said in a statement. A key element of India's address was the emphasis on long-standing obligations of developed countries to provide climate finance. The statement expressed appreciation for the efforts the Presidency took in supporting India in beginning the journey towards a long-overdue focus on Article 9.1 of the Paris Agreement. It stated that India sincerely hopes in the spirit of international cooperation that promises made 33 years ago in Rio would now be fulfilled due to the first steps parties have taken in Belem. "India expressed satisfaction with major outcomes of COP30, foremost among them the establishment of the Just Transition Mechanism," the statement said, calling it a significant milestone and expressed hope that it would help operationalise equity and climate justice at both global and national levels.

"India thanked the Presidency for delivering the space to discuss Unilateral Trade-Restrictive Climate Measures. These measures are increasingly affecting all developing countries and are violative of the principles of equity and CBDR-RC, enshrined in the convention and its Paris Agreement," it added.

## France honours Indian spy Noor Inayat Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ London

Noor Inayat Khan, a descendent of the 18th-century Mysore ruler Tipu Sultan, has become the only Indian-origin woman to be honoured with a commemorative postage stamp by France for her role in the French Resistance as an undercover British agent during the Second World War.

The French postal service, La Poste, honoured Noor with a stamp issued to honour the "Figures of the Resistance" who fought against Nazi Germany. She is among a dozen war heroes and heroines chosen on the set of stamps issued this month to mark 80 years since the end of World War II.

"I am delighted that France has honoured Noor Inayat Khan with a postage stamp, especially as it comes on this

important 80th anniversary of the end of the war," said Shrabani Basu, the London-based author of Noor's biography - 'Spy Princess: The Life of Noor Inayat Khan'.

"Noor sacrificed her life in the fight against fascism. She grew up in Paris, joined the war effort in England, and it is wonderful to see her face on a postage stamp which will be posted by ordinary people in France," she said.

Each stamp is in the form of an etching taken from a photograph, with the stamp on Noor showcasing her in her British Women's Auxiliary Air Force uniform. "Britain honoured Noor in 2014 to mark the centenary of her birth. She now has a stamp in her honour issued by Britain and France. It is time that India, the country of her ancestors, honours her with a postage stamp too," said Basu.

## Lakshmi Mittal quits UK ahead of proposed new taxes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ London

Indian-origin steel magnate Lakshmi Mittal, until now based in Britain and a regular on the country's richest billionaires tally, has decided to quit the UK as the Labour Party-led Government's feared tax shake-up for the super-rich nears, according to a UK media report on Sunday. Rajasthan-born Mittal is a resident in Switzerland for tax and will now spend much of his future in Dubai, according to 'The Sunday Times'.

The founder of ArcelorMittal steelworks is worth an estimated 15.4 billion pounds as per the 2025 'Sunday Times Rich List', which ranked him the UK's eighth richest man.

Now, the newspaper references sources close to the 75-year-old industrialist to claim he has become the latest billionaire to leave



the UK ahead of a much-anticipated Budget by Chancellor Rachel Reeves on Wednesday.

Mittal already has a mansion in Dubai and has now bought up "tracts of an intriguing development on the nearby Naïa Island" in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the newspaper claims.

The news of Mittal's exit comes ahead of expected tax rises on the wealthy as Reeves tries to address a 20

per cent exit tax on those leaving the UK, have caused much unease among the wealthy. "It wasn't the tax on income (or capital gains) that was the issue," one adviser familiar with the Mittals' move is quoted by 'The Sunday Times' as saying.

"The issue was inheritance tax. Many wealthy people from overseas cannot understand why all of their assets, wherever they are in the world, should be subject to inheritance tax imposed by the UK Treasury. "People in this situation feel they have little choice but to leave and are either sad or angry to be doing so," the adviser said.

While death duties are levied at up to 40 per cent in the UK, there is no inheritance tax in Dubai and in Switzerland. Reports of Mittal's relocation from the UK follow other entrepreneurs, including India-born tech entrepreneur and investor Herman Narula.

## Japan crossed red line: China

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Taipei

Japan "crossed a red line" with comments by its new leader suggesting a potential military intervention over Taiwan, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Sunday. Remarks earlier this month by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi that a Chinese naval blockade or other action against Taiwan could be grounds for a Japanese military response were "shocking," Wang said in a statement posted on the Chinese Foreign Ministry's website. "It is shocking that Japan's current leaders have publicly sent the wrong signal of attempting military intervention in the Taiwan issue, said things they shouldn't have said, and crossed a red line that should not have been touched," Wang said. The most senior Chinese official to address the tensions so far, Wang added that China must "resolutely respond" to Japan's actions and that all countries have the responsibility to "prevent the resurgence of Japanese militarism."



## Guinea-Bissau votes as President seeks second term

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
■ Bissau

Guinea-Bissau began voting on Sunday as President Umaro Sissoco Embalo seeks a second term in the West African nation, which has endured multiple coups. The presidential and parliamentary elections come at a critical time in West Africa, where democracy has recently been challenged by disputed elections that analysts say could embolden militaries that have forcefully taken power in several countries. Analysts say Sunday's vote is a close race between Embalo and Fernando Dias da Costa, a little-known 47-year-old backed by former Prime Minister Domingos Simoes Pereira, the runner-up in the 2019 presidential election. The winner needs more than 50 per cent of the votes; otherwise, the election will head to a runoff.



## Ukraine and Western allies meet in Geneva

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Geneva

Talks between Ukraine and its Western allies on a US-proposed peace plan to end Russia's invasion got underway in Geneva on Sunday, Ukrainian officials said.

The head of the Ukrainian delegation, presidential chief of staff Andrii Yermak, wrote on social media that they held their first meeting with the national security advisers from the UK, France and Germany. The allies have rallied around Kyiv in a push to revise the plan, which is seen as favouring Moscow despite its all-out invasion of its neighbour.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio was expected to join the talks together with Army Secretary Dan Driscoll and President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff.

"The next meeting is with the US delegation. We are in a very constructive mood," Yermak said. "We continue working together to achieve a lasting and just peace for Ukraine."

The 28-point blueprint drawn up by the US to end the nearly four-year war has sparked alarm in Kyiv and European Capitals.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said his country could face a stark choice between standing up for its sovereign rights and preserving the American support it needs.

The plan acquiesces to many Russian demands that



Zelenskyy has categorically rejected on dozens of occasions, including giving up large pieces of territory. The Ukrainian leader has vowed that his people "will always defend" their home. Speaking before Sunday's

talks, Alice Rufo, France's minister delegate at the Defence Ministry, told broadcaster France Info that key points of discussion would include the plan's restrictions on the Ukrainian army, which she described

as "a limitation on its sovereignty." "Ukraine must be able to defend itself," she said. "Russia wants war and has waged war many times in fact over the past years." Speaking to reporters outside the White House

on Saturday, Trump said the US proposal was not his "final offer." "I would like to get to peace. It should have happened a long time ago. The Ukraine war with Russia should have never happened," Trump said. "One

way or the other, we have to get it ended." Trump didn't explain what he meant by the plan not being his final offer, and the White House didn't respond to a request for clarification.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Sunday that Warsaw was ready to work on the plan with the leaders of Europe, Canada and Japan, but also said that it "would be good to know for sure who is the author of the plan and where it was created."

Some US lawmakers said Saturday that Rubio had described the plan as a Russian "wish list" rather than a Washington-led proposal. The bipartisan group of senators told a news conference that they had spoken to Rubio about the peace plan after he reached out to some of them while on his way to Geneva.

Independent Maine Sen. Angus King said Rubio told them the plan "was not the administration's plan" but a "wish list of the Russians."

A State Department spokesperson denied their account, calling it "blatantly false." Rubio himself then took the extraordinary step of suggesting online that the senators were mistaken, even though they said he was their source for the information.

The Secretary of State doubled down on the assertion that Washington was responsible for a proposal that had surprised many from the beginning for being so favourable to Moscow.

## US signals efforts to protect Nigeria's Christians



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Washington

US President Donald Trump's administration is promoting efforts to work with Nigeria's Government to counter violence against Christians, signalling a broader strategy since he ordered preparations for possible military action and warned that the US could go in "guns-a-blazing" to wipe out Islamic militants. A State Department official said this past week that plans involve much more than just the potential use of military force, describing an expansive approach that includes diplomatic tools, such as potential sanctions, but also assistance programs and intelligence sharing with the Nigerian Government. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth also met with Nigeria's national security adviser to discuss ways

to stop the violence, posting photos on social media of the two of them shaking hands and smiling. It contrasted with Trump's threats this month to stop all assistance to Nigeria if its Government "continues to allow the killing of Christians". The efforts may support Trump's pledge to avoid more involvement in foreign conflicts and come as the US security footprint has diminished in Africa, where military partnerships have either been scaled down or cancelled. American forces likely would have to be drawn from other parts of the world for any military intervention in Nigeria. Still, the Republican president has kept up the pressure as Nigeria faced a series of attacks on schools and churches in violence that experts and residents say targets both Christians and Muslims.

## Pakistanis vote in bypolls for 13 seats amid tight security



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Islamabad

Voting is underway on Sunday in Pakistan for by-elections in 13 National Assembly (NA) and Punjab Assembly seats amid tight security. Out of the 13 seats, six are for the NA and seven are for the provincial seats. Polling began at 8.00 am and will continue without a break till 5.00 pm, according to the polling schedule announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Most seats were declared vacant after the disqualification of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI)

lawmakers, who were convicted for their alleged involvement in the May 9, 2023, attacks on military and civilian installations protesting the arrest of their party chief, Imran Khan. The NA constituencies are NA-96 (Faisalabad), NA-104 (Faisalabad), NA-129 (Lahore), NA-143 (Sahiwal) and NA-185 (Dera Ghazi Khan) from Punjab province and NA-18 (Haripur) from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Punjab is the main battleground, and the authorities have deployed over 20,000 security personnel, including police, paramilitary Rangers.

## Houthi court sentences 17 to death for spying



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Cairo

A Houthi-controlled court in Yemen's capital convicted 17 people of spying for foreign Governments and sentenced them to death in the latest development in a years-long Houthi crackdown on local staff from foreign agencies.

The Specialised Criminal Court in Sanaa handed down the verdict on Saturday, according to the Houthi-run SABA news agency. The people convicted were part of "espionage cells within a spy network affiliated with the American, Israeli and Saudi intelligence," said the court, which handed down a death sentence by firing squad in public.

The court also sentenced a man and a woman to 10 years in prison, while another defendant was acquitted. Saturday's verdict can be appealed, said Abdulbasit Ghazi, a lawyer representing some of the defendants who were convicted.

The defendants were accused of "spying with foreign countries in a state of enmity with Yemen during the 2024-2025 period," SABA reported. Prosecutors said the defendants collaborated with intelligence officers from Saudi Arabia, Britain and the United States, as well as Israel's Mossad intel-

ligence service, SABA reported. The defendants provided "the enemies with information about dozens of locations and movements of the state leaders, as well as information about the missiles which led to the targeting of several military, security and civilian sites resulting in the death of dozens and widespread destruction of infrastructure," SABA reported.

The verdict was the latest in a years-long crackdown by the Houthis in the areas of Yemen under their control. The Iranian-backed rebels have imprisoned thousands of people during Yemen's civil war that began in 2014, including United Nations staff members detained in June.

Over the course of the past two years, the rebels have detained dozens in a crackdown focused on the UN and others working for international aid groups and foreign embassies. The rebels repeatedly alleged without evidence that they were spies. Courts in Sanaa and other Houthi-held areas in Yemen previously gave harsh sentences to those accused of collaborating with the Saudi-led coalition. The rebels executed nine people who were convicted of involvement in the killing of a senior Houthi official in an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition in April 2018.

## PM urges Andrew to testify in Epstein probe

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
London

Pressure is increasing for the former Prince Andrew to give evidence to a US congressional committee investigating the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein after Britain's prime minister suggested he should testify.

Keir Starmer declined to comment directly about King Charles III's disgraced younger brother, but told reporters travelling with him for the Group of 20 summit in Johannesburg that, as a "general principle", people should provide evidence to investigators. "I don't comment on his particular case," Starmer said.



"But as a general principle I've held for a very long time is that anybody who has got relevant information in relation to these kinds of cases should give that evidence to those that need it." The former prince, now

known as Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, has so far ignored a request from members of the House Oversight Committee for a "transcribed interview" about his "long-standing friendship" with Epstein.

Starmer's comments came after Rep. Robert Garcia of California, the committee's ranking Democrat, and Suhas Subramanyam, a Democrat from Virginia, said Andrew "continues to hide" from serious questions.

"Our work will move forward with or without him, and we will hold anyone who was involved in these crimes accountable, no matter their wealth, status or political party," they said in a statement released on Friday.

Andrew was stripped of his royal titles and honours last month as the royal family tried to insulate itself from criticism about his relationship with Epstein.

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## Ugandan men seek DNA paternity tests

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Nabumali

Among the most sensitive family disputes Moses Kutoi mediates are those involving upset men questioning why some of their children don't resemble them.

For the Ugandan clan leader attuned to the wisdom of his ancestors, the matter is taboo, never to be discussed with others. Yet Kutoi feels compelled to intervene in the hope of saving marriages that sometimes turn violent and are on the verge of breaking. "Even me, I don't resemble my father," the clan leader recently told one disbelieving man he was helping.

Paternity has become a key test of faith in this east African country as DNA testing becomes more widely available, fuelled in part by published reports of well-known

Ugandans who eventually discovered they were not the biological fathers of some of their children. The matter has become so heated that clerics and traditional leaders now urge tolerance and a return to the kind of African teachings that village elders like Kutoi say they stand for. At last year's Christmas Day service, the Anglican archbishop of Uganda, Stephen Kazimba, cited the example of the virgin birth of Jesus — the bedrock of Christian belief — in a sermon that sought to discourage DNA testing among the faithful.

"You take DNA and you find out that out of the four children, only two are yours," he warned. "So just take care of the children the way they are, like Joseph did." The Ministry of Internal Affairs runs a Government-accredited lab that conducts court-ordered investigations.

## NPP Govt fails to deliver promises: Rajapaksa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Colombo

Accusing the NPP Government of failing to deliver on its pre-election promises, Sri Lanka's Opposition party, led by former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, has warned that it would move to topple the administration at the "first opportunity".

Since sweeping the 2024 elections, the National People's Power (NPP), led by President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, has pursued cases against members of the previous Rajapaksa administration. Several have been jailed or granted bail on corruption charges, including two who received 20-year prison terms following convictions.

"We are ready and we warn the Government that we will topple the Government at the first



opportunity," Namal Rajapaksa, son of Mahinda Rajapaksa, told a well-attended rally in the Colombo suburb of Nugegoda on Friday. Namal, 39, seen as the political heir to the Rajapaksa family, accused the NPP Government of failing to deliver on its pre-election

promises. "We tell the Government, please fulfil what you promised to the people a year ago," he said.

In an apparent reference to several of his party members being jailed or on bail for corruption, Namal said he would not be intimidated by Government actions. "We will continue our fight," he said. The large turnout came despite the main opposition SJB's decision to stay away. The SJB, led by Sajith Premadasa, is ideologically opposed to the Rajapaksa's SLPP and has sought to avoid joint appearances due to ongoing corruption investigations. "This rally is the indicator that all people have united despite the differences among the political parties," said Udaya Gammanpila, the organiser of the rally. The rally was the first since the main opposition came out onto the streets against the NPP. Harin Fernando, representing the Ex-president Ranil Wickremesinghe's UNP, claimed the rally was a "roaring success" despite alleged attempts by the Government to scuttle it. "Loudspeakers were silenced, and power was cut to deter us. But look at the turnout," he said.

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## ICAI Singapore promotes India-Singapore startups

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Singapore

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Singapore Chapter, is working to empower early-stage startups with the Capital, mentorship, networks and global platforms they need to scale, chairperson Anuradha Shroff has said. "As we are working in a global business community, we are promoting India-Singapore startup community for long-term prosperity of the youth-led innovative businesses," Shroff told on Saturday after hosting a demo-day innovation demonstration and investor pitching sessions. "This year is special for more reasons than one as Singapore celebrated its 60 years of independence and 60 years of diplomatic relations with India," said the veteran of managing international businesses for over three decades.



## Stronger quake may hit Bangladesh, warn experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Dhaka

Experts have urged the Bangladesh Government to take immediate action after an earthquake claimed at least 10 lives in the country, warning that a far stronger tremor may lie ahead and that failure to act now could result in greater losses. A 5.7-magnitude earthquake struck on Friday morning, causing at least 10 deaths and significant damage to buildings, mostly in central parts of Bangladesh, including the capital Dhaka. Three mild-intensity tremors also rocked the country on Saturday. According to a report published in The Daily Star newspaper on Sunday, Friday's quake "lays bare Dhaka's fragility". The Dhaka district administration has confirmed damage to at least 14 buildings, while Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) put the figure at more than 50.

## PROSPECT



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, wife Riniki Bhuyan Sharma offering prayers at the Atrudra Mahayagnam held at Guptheswar Temple in Singiri, Sonitpur

### INDIA DIVERSIFIES EXPORT BASKET AS SHIPMENTS TO US DECLINE: SBI RESEARCH REPORT



Share of India's merchandise exports to other countries increased as shipments to the US declined since July 2025, indicating diversification of export basket across product categories, according to an SBI research report.

India's total merchandise exports during April-September 2025 inched up by 2.9 per cent to \$220 billion compared to \$214 billion in the year-ago period, the report said.

Cumulative exports to the US also registered a growth of 13 per cent to \$45 billion in the April-September period from \$40 billion in the year-ago period, though there could be some front-loading effects to the aftermath, with September figures registering negative year-on-year growth of about 12 per cent, said 'Ecowrap', the SBI's research report.

The report further said the share of the US in India's exports has been declining since July 2025, falling to 15 per cent in September, mainly because of a decline in exports of marine products, precious and semi-precious stones, ready-made cotton garments, and cotton fabrics.

"Interestingly, the share of India's merchandise exports to other countries during this period has increased significantly, indicating the diversification of our exports basket with the UAE, China, Vietnam, Japan, and Hong Kong, as also Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and India being among the top destinations (over FY25) across different product categories," the report said.

"So, could it be that some destinations are exporting more to the USA after procuring from India?" it said.

According to the report, Australia's share in the US imports of pearls, precious, semi-precious stones has increased to 9 per cent YTD in January-August 2025 from 2 per cent during the same period in the previous year.

Hong Kong, too, registered an increase in share from 1 per cent to 2 per cent to the US during the same period.

### Airports Authority pavilion at IITF 2025 attracts youth



The Airports Authority of India (AAI), a cornerstone of civil aviation in India, is participating in the India International Trade Fair at Bharat Mandapam from November 14 to 27, 2025. AAI has established an interactive pavilion (Hall No.1.19 G) that has already become a revelation among visitors, particularly the aspiring youth of India.

The AAI Pavilion fittingly showcases the advancements in civil aviation that have been realised under the visionary leadership of our Narendra Modi and the proactive initiatives of the Government of India.

The pavilion features displays that highlight the core strengths of AAI, encompassing Air Navigation Services, state-of-the-art airport infrastructure, and various technological upgrades and sustainability initiatives that AAI has adopted since its inception.

The ATM-CNS Console within the pavilion provides visitors with an experience of the communication between air traffic control and pilots, while the diverse fire equipment used during emergencies sparks interest. Similarly, the airport models, interactive screens about airports, artwork, various schemes, quiz zones, and selfie points are designed to engage the youth who aspire to play a significant role in the aviation industry and contribute to national development.

Throughout the past week, the pavilion has attracted numerous visitors from all walks of life. Students are excited by the displays, and the officials at the stalls are effectively explaining AAI's role in aviation and providing curated guidance to the visitors.

Indian aviation is all set to become the 3rd largest Civil Aviation Market in the world. For the thriving and booming aviation industry, the AAI Pavilion at IITF 2025 sets the right template going forward to achieve Viksit Bharat 2047 goals of the country.

## FinMin renews merger proposal of 3 insurance companies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The Finance Ministry is considering an earlier proposal to merge the three state-owned general insurance companies into a single entity, following their improved financial health, to achieve better efficiency and scale.

The Government infused ₹17,450 crore between 2019-20 and 2021-22 in three PSU general insurance companies, namely Oriental Insurance, National Insurance and United India Insurance, to bring them out of financial distress.

In the Budget for 2018-19, the then finance minister Arun Jaitley announced that the three companies — Oriental Insurance, National Insurance, and United India Insurance — would be merged into a single insurance entity.

However, the Government dropped the idea in July 2020, and the Union Cabinet rather approved a capital infusion of ₹12,450 crore into the three general insurance companies.

As their finances have improved, the finance ministry is doing a preliminary assessment of the merger of these entities with a view to improving their efficiency,



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### US tech majors Apple, Amazon, Cisco, Meta jointly oppose Indian telcos on 6 GHz band spectrum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ New Delhi

US tech majors Apple, Amazon, Cisco, Meta, HP, and Intel Corporation have jointly opposed Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea's demand to allocate spectrum in the 6 gigahertz (GHz) band for mobile services.

The tech majors sought the entire 6GHz band to be allocated for wifi services instead.

In a joint response to telecom regulator Trai's consultation paper for the next round of spectrum auction, the US technology giants have said the technical and commercial readiness in the 6 GHz band is not established for mobile services.

"We do not recommend setting timelines for any future auction of the 6425-6725 MHz and 7025-7125 MHz ranges for IMT. TRAI, together with the Department of Telecommunications, should review the allocation of the upper 6 GHz band following the outcomes of WRC-27, including Agenda Item 1.7 concerning 7.125-8.4 GHz," the joint submission said.

The tech giants said any upper 6 GHz spectrum that would otherwise remain unused should be made available for unlicensed use in the interim.

The government has said 400 MHz of frequencies in 6 GHz are available for auction, 300 MHz will be available by 2030 and 500 MHz will be delicensed for use by low power applications, meaning wifi services.

Reliance Jio has demanded that the entire 1200 MHz spectrum available in the 6 GHz should be included in the upcoming event even though the government has decided to delicense 500 MHz of lower frequency range in the



band for low power or wifi applications.

The newly identified 6425-6725 MHz and 6725-7125 MHz bands form part of the upper 6 GHz band (6425-7125 MHz range). The government has decided to delicense (make it freely accessible) the lower 6 GHz band (5925-6425 MHz) for low power applications mainly wifi.

Vodafone Idea has demanded putting 400 MHz of spectrum that is available for use for sale in the upcoming auction.

Airtel, too, has sought deferment of the auction of 6 GHz band due to challenges related to ecosystem readiness in the band, in terms of device availability, network equipment, and global harmonisation. US-based chipset major Qualcomm, however, has echoed views similar to Airtel.

"The upper 6 GHz band is critical for mobile growth in India and it may be noted that several other countries like China, Brazil and European countries are considering the entire 700 MHz in this Upper 6 GHz band for 6G. By deferring

the auction of the 6425-6725 MHz and 7025-7125 MHz bands until after WRC-27, India safeguards its 6G future, aligns with global standards, and honours its leadership aspirations," Qualcomm said.

Telecom industry body Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, etc, has opposed delicensing of the 6 GHz band.

"Delicensing is misleading and counterproductive. Licensed IMT spectrum ensures quality-of-service, predictable performance and nationwide scalability, all of which are vital for Digital Bharat and 6G applications such as connected mobility, automation and industrial networks," COAI said.

It said delicensing even a part of the 6 GHz band will be an irreversible action, permanently foreclosing its use for licensed mobile broadband services and severely limiting India's long-term digital capacity and provision of affordable services.

according to sources. Besides, the proposal to privatise a general insurance company, as announced by the Government, is being examined, sources said, adding that various options are on the table, but nothing has been firmed up yet.

It is to be noted that Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, while announcing the 2021-22 Budget, had announced a big-ticket privatisation agenda, including the privatisation of two public sector banks and one general insurance company.

Subsequently, the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Act, 2021, to allow privatisation of state-owned general insurance companies, was approved by Parliament in August 2021.

The amended legislation dropped the requirement that the central Government should hold not less than 51 per cent of the equity capital in a specified insurer.

Also, it provided for allowing greater private participation in public sector insurance companies and enhancing insurance penetration and social protection, among other objectives.

To facilitate the entry of new players from overseas to cater to the demand for insurance and increase penetration, the Government has lined up a bill seeking to increase the FDI limit to 100 per cent from the existing 74 per cent in the insurance sector in the upcoming Winter session.

The Winter session of Parliament is slated to begin on December 1 and continue till December 19. The session will have 15 working days.

### In a first, 7 limestone blocks to be up for auction in J&K



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

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Hong Kong, too, registered an increase in share from 1 per cent to 2 per cent to the US during the same period.

The SBI research report further said the buoyancy in trade talks reaffirms India's desire to come out of the highest (among Asian peers) tariff structure while enhancing capability building across several loops, with recently concluded LPG deals and strategic defence deals last month, bolstering the fair probability of a mutually amicable, fruitful negotiation.

Tariff has impacted India's labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, jewellery, and seafood, particularly shrimp, which operates with a lower margin, the report said.

To support the exporters, the Government has approved ₹45,060 crore, including ₹20,000 crore in credit guarantees on bank loans.

### CPHI & PMEC India from November 25

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

The 18th edition of CPHI and PMEC India 2025, South Asia's largest pharmaceutical industry event, is slated from November 25 to 27, at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida. CPHI & PMEC India serve as a premier global destination for pharmaceutical sourcing and innovation, bringing together over 2,000 exhibitors and 50,000 plus industry professionals, buyers, and investors from 120 plus countries.

The 2025 edition will feature the complete pharmaceutical value chain under one roof, encompassing formulations, APIs, excipients, fine chemicals, packaging, machinery, lab and analytical equipment, cleanroom technology, and contract services, offering unparalleled opportunities for business networking, B2B matchmaking, and market insights.

Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India, said "The Indian pharmaceutical industry has

evolved into one of the most dynamic and innovation-driven sectors globally, recognized for its world-class capability in producing affordable generics and life-saving vaccines. The sector continues to play a pivotal role in driving economic growth and global healthcare accessibility, by contributing around 1.72 percent to the national GDP."

"With the Union Budget 2025-26 proposing an allocation of over Rs 5,268 crore to the Department of

Pharmaceuticals, marking a nearly 29 percent increase from the previous year, the government's continued focus on strengthening R&D, infrastructure, and capacity building further reinforces India's vision of becoming a global hub for pharmaceutical innovation.

The event serves as an ideal platform for strengthening collaboration, knowledge exchange, and strategic partnerships that will shape the future of India's pharmaceutical landscape," he added.

## India, Israel may implement proposed FTA in two phases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
■ Jerusalem

India and Israel are considering implementing their proposed free trade agreement (FTA) in two phases to ensure early benefits for the trade community of both countries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. India and Israel on Thursday inked terms of reference (ToR) to formally launch negotiations for the agreement.

The ToR include market access for goods by eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers, investment facilitation, simplification of customs procedures, increasing cooperation for innovation and technology transfer, and easing norms to promote trade in services. "We are considering doing this in two tranches. A decision will be taken when the talks begin. Both ministers are keen to finalise the first phase early so that the trade community benefits

sooner," Goyal said here. The minister is in Israel to meet leaders and businesses to discuss ways to boost bilateral trade and investments. He is leading a 60-member business delegation. Goyal said that he and Israeli Economy and Industry Minister Nir Barkat have agreed that they will first focus on low-hanging fruit in the FTA.

They have also decided not to touch the sensitive issues on both sides. The two countries, he said, may look at "how innovative and R&D can drive greater investments in each other's countries, work on joint projects where we can leverage on their skill sets and they can leverage on the economies of scale in a large market like India".

"It is quite possible that we may come out with the first phase on an FTA, so that we can kickstart the benefits faster," Goyal said. On a big metro project in Israel, the minister said Israel has just come out with pre-qualifica-



Union Minister Piyush Goyal meeting Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel. Minister of Economy and Industry of Israel Nir Barkat and others are also present

tion documents for a \$50 billion metro project in Tel Aviv. It involves 300 km of underground tunnelling and is one of the largest projects, and they are keen that Indian companies should also bid for it, he said. "We have

several players, both in the public and private sectors, who have done massive works. We have 23 cities which are setting up metros in India," Goyal said, adding that Israel would "very seriously" like India to be a part

of that project and "I hope Indian companies take interest and join the bidding process".

During 2024-25, India's exports to Israel dipped 52 per cent to \$2.14 billion from \$4.52 billion in 2023-24.

Imports, too, fell 26.2 per cent to \$1.48 billion last fiscal year. The bilateral trade stood at \$3.62 billion. India is Israel's second-largest trading partner in Asia.

Though bilateral merchandise trade is dominated mainly by diamonds, petroleum products, and chemicals, recent years have witnessed an increase in trade in areas such as electronic machinery and high-tech products, communications systems, and medical equipment.

Major exports from India to Israel include pearls and precious stones, automotive diesel, chemical and mineral products, machinery and electrical equipment, plastics, textiles, apparel, base metals, transport equipment, and agricultural products.

Imports include pearls and precious stones, chemical and mineral/fertiliser products, machinery and electrical equipment, petroleum oils, and defence, machinery, and transport equipment.

## BRIEFLY

### FREE TICKETS FOR MEN'S JUNIOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP



Hockey India on Sunday announced free tickets for fans to watch the men's junior World Cup, to be held from November 28 to December 10.

The tournament which will also be held in Chennai, will feature a total of 24 teams, making it the largest edition in the junior World Cup history.

"By offering free tickets, our aim is to open the gates for students, young athletes, families, and hockey lovers across Tamil Nadu and beyond," said HI president Dilip Tirkey in a release.

The virtual free tickets can be booked through ticketgenie website or the Hockey India app, the release said. "The atmosphere created by passionate fans has always been our biggest strength, and we are committed to making international hockey accessible to everyone," he added.

### ABHINAV DESHWAL WINS 25M PISTOL GOLD AT DEAFLYMPICS



Abhinav Deshwala won India's 15th medal in shooting at the Deaflympics, clinching the gold in the 25m pistol event here on Sunday with a record in qualification.

He shot a score of 44 in the final to edge out South Korea's Seung Hwa Lee, who finished on a score of 43.

Serhii Formin of Ukraine won the bronze while the other Indian shooter, Chetan Hanmant Sapkal, finished in fifth place.

Abhinav started the final with five perfect hits, following it up with another four hits in the second series. He hit the next 18 of 20 shots which included two series of perfect fives and two rounds of four hits. He then hit two perfect rounds and followed it up with a round of four hits.

In the 10th and final round, Abhinav hit three, his lowest round in the final but it was enough for the shooter to win gold. Earlier in qualification, Abhinav equalled the World Deaf Qualification record and the Deaflympics record with a score of 575-13x.

## SECOND ASHES TEST

# Head hundred, Cummins' return could shake up Australia's lineup

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Perth

Changing a winning combination in the second Ashes cricket test could be on the cards for Australia after Travis Head's astonishing audition as an opener and the possible return of regular skipper Pat Cummins.

Changing the England approach after succumbing to an eight-wicket loss inside two days — a speed unseen in a century — is unlikely according to head coach Brendon McCullum. He is steadfastly sticking with his "blueprint" despite mounting criticism of the attack-at-all costs Bazball method from critics including former test skippers.

Wrapping up the first test in Perth so quickly gave the players from both teams an extra three days to recover and prepare for the day-night test at the Gabba starting December 4.

Head volunteered to move up the batting order from number 5 to open when Usman Khawaja was injured ahead of Australia's second innings, when the first test was delicately poised after a clattering of 30 wickets in five sessions.

Far from being overawed, he clubbed a century off 69 deliveries — the third-fastest ever by an Australian in test cricket — and ended up with



123, more than double the next-highest individual score in Perth.

How the 38-year-old Khawaja recovers from a back problem will determine the Australian top order in Brisbane, his home ground, as much as his batting form and age. The bowling attack may also be overhauled with Cummins saying he's "half a chance" to be fit in time after missing the Perth test.

Cummins hasn't played a test since Australia's 3-0 sweep over West Indies in the Caribbean in July because of a lower back issue.

"It's feeling good," Cummins said during a brief commentary stint during the first test. "It's on track

and pulling up pretty well. I'm pretty hopeful and it's probably better than it was a few weeks ago."

Cummins said he was disappointed to miss the opening match but that was better than potentially missing the entire series.

"There were probably times where I thought I wasn't going to play a game," Cummins said.

"It's been tough. The whole cricketing world is watching, and you just wish you were out there."

Cummins and Josh Hazlewood both missed the Perth test, leaving Mitchell Starc as the only member of the regular pace triumvirate. In a player-of-the-match performance, shading even

Head's incredible hundred, Starc took a career-best 7-58 in the first innings and finished with a 10-wicket haul for the match and a stunning catch. Brendan Doggett took five wickets on debut and likely would be the bowler to make way if needed.

England took five seamers into the Perth test, relying on express pace to rattle the Australians. It worked in the first innings, but backfired in the second when Head took on the short-pitch bowling and won.

With the Gabba also a venue that offers extra pace and bounce, and it being a day-night format, the English may again go for a similar attack but aim to bowl at a different length.

The batting was problematic for the English, with five-wicket collapses in each innings costing them precious momentum. England was bowled out for 172 and 164 despite being in commanding positions at times and set Australia a target of 205 for victory. The Australians reached that quickly.

"To be honest I thought 200 was a good score, I thought it was a very defendable score," McCullum told the BBC. "We've got some work to do, no doubt. But one thing we won't be changing is our blueprint, we'll stay true to that."

## Lennart leads comeback 6-2 win over Freiburg in Bundesliga

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Berlin

The 17-year-old Lennart Karl starred for Bayern Munich as the Bundesliga leader fought from two goals down to beat Freiburg 6-2 on Saturday.

Karl, who was making his ninth league appearance and second start, delivered a timely message to Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann before the World Cup next year by instigating Bayern's comeback with a goal, assist and sparkling play.

Michael Olise also starred by scoring two goals and setting up three more.

Freiburg capitalized on Bayern's passive start with Yuito Suzuki and Johan Manzambi scoring after corners inside the first 18 minutes. It was the first time Bayern had fallen behind at home this season.

Karl replied four minutes later after controlling Olise's ball with his left foot and scoring with his right, and the youngster returned the favor for Olise to equalize before the break.

The irrepressible Karl might have scored again after the break, only he had a would-be goal ruled out after a VAR check for offside in the buildup.

Dayot Upamecano scored from Olise's corner and Harry Kane added to his league-leading tally on the hour mark.

Karl went off to resounding applause in the 71st after taking a knock to his hip,

leaving Olise to set up substitute Nicolas Jackson for the fifth in the 78th. Olise completed the scoring in the 84th, set up by Hiroki Ito, who was making his first appearance of the season.

Undav also demanding attention Stuttgart forward Deniz Undav conceded a penalty and then scored a hat trick to earn a 3-3 draw at Borussia Dortmund.

Undav was omitted from Germany's squad for the latest World Cup qualifiers, but he has now scored five goals in his last two games for Stuttgart.

Stuttgart was better until Undav conceded the penalty for a foul on Nico Schlotterbeck.

Emre Can scored from the spot in the 34th and Maximilian Beier added another goal before the break.

Undav pulled one back with a brilliant finish with his back to goal after the break, equalized in the 71st, then drew Stuttgart level again in stoppage time after Karim Adeyemi thought he'd won it for the hosts.

Wolfsburg's woes continue After firing its coach and sporting director during the international break, Wolfsburg's hopes of a fresh start were dealt short shrift in a 3-1 loss at home to Bayer Leverkusen.

Borussia Mönchengladbach won 3-0 at Heidenheim, and Augsburg defeated Hamburger SV 1-0.

## Liverpool, Man City lose again to boost Arsenal's Premier League title pursuit

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

Liverpool's Premier League title defense lurched deeper into crisis Saturday — losing 3-0 at home to Nottingham Forest. Manchester City's challenge was also hit by a 2-1 loss at Newcastle.

A sixth defeat of the campaign left last season's runaway champion Liverpool 11th in the standings and eight points behind leader Arsenal, having played a game more.

Coach Arne Slot accepted it was a "very, very, very bad result" and said he could "never come up with enough excuses" for his team's alarming run of results.



"That is far from good enough and I'm responsible for that," he said after goals from Murillo, Nicolo Savona and Morgan Gibbs-White at Anfield consigned Liverpool to

a sixth defeat from its last seven games in England's top flight. To put that into context, the Merseyside club only lost four times over the entire season last term when

winning a record-equaling 20th title.

Arsenal was the big winner on the day, despite not playing, after seeing two of its main rivals drop more points.

City fell to its fourth defeat, with Harvey Barnes scoring twice for Newcastle at St James' Park. Chelsea is second and within three points of Arsenal after a 2-0 win at Burnley. Arsenal plays Tottenham on Sunday.

Liverpool loses again it was the second time in successive seasons Forest has won at Anfield and it lifted Sean Dyche's team out of the relegation zone. It was also back-to-back wins for the first time this term for Forest, which is already on its third coach following the firings of Nuno Espirito Santo and Ange Postecoglou.

How Liverpool could do with a similar winning run after seeing its title defense unravel long before the season has even reached the halfway point.

It has only won once in the league since Sept. 20. And the latest loss could have been even worse, with Forest

seeing a first-half strike from Igor Jesus ruled out for handball. That would have doubled the visitors' lead after Murillo had opened the scoring with a low effort from inside the box in the 33rd minute. Ultimately it mattered little as Forest pressed home its superiority in the second half through Savona a minute after the restart.

As Liverpool tried to mount a comeback, Gibbs-White put the game beyond doubt in the 78th.

Not even the return of goalkeeper Alisson from injury and a first start in a month for British record signing Alexander Isak could turn Liverpool's form around.

## Neres scores twice to help Napoli move top of Serie A

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Milan

David Neres provided two goals and an assist to help Napoli beat Atalanta 3-1 and move top of Serie A on Saturday.

It was the first time Neres had scored since January.

Napoli is a point ahead of Inter Milan, Roma and Bologna but could be overtaken on Sunday when Roma visits Cremonese and Inter hosts Milan in a city derby. Milan is also only three points behind Napoli.

Bologna won 3-0 at Udinese earlier, while sixth-place Juventus was held to a 1-1 draw at bottom club Fiorentina.

Napoli was without a win in November having drawn in Serie A and the Champions League before losing to Bologna before the international break.

It took the lead in the 17th minute when Neres raced away from his marker and kept his cool to slot into the far bottom corner.

He had waited 11 months



for that goal but only had to wait another 21 minutes before scoring again, firing home a smart pass from Scott McTominay.

Neres then turned provider on the stroke of halftime with a cross from the right for Noa Lang to head in his first

goal for Napoli since joining from PSV Eindhoven in the offseason.

Substitute Gianluca Scamacca pulled one back seven minutes into the second half but it proved little more than a consolation for Atalanta and new coach

Raffaele Palladino.

Pobega scores double Bologna winger Riccardo Orsolini, the league's leading scorer, recovered from a rare penalty miss to set up Tommaso Pobega for the first of his two goals.

Bologna struggled to break

Udinese down but was given a golden chance shortly before halftime when Udinese defender Kingsley Ehibuzie blocked Pobega's shot with his elbow.

However, Maduka Okoye saved the resulting penalty from Orsolini - who had scored 15 of his 16 previous spot kicks.

Orsolini thought he had redeemed himself minutes later but his would-be goal was ruled out for offside.

Bologna broke the deadlock in the 54th minute. Orsolini knocked down a cross-field pass and cut inside before rolling it across for Pobega to drill into the bottom left corner.

Worse was to come for Udinese six minutes later as Okoye's terrible pass was intercepted by Pobega to score his second of the game.

Udinese did not learn from that and got into another mess trying to play out from the back in stoppage time, allowing Federico Bernardeschi to sweep into an empty net.

## Barcelona marks Camp Nou homecoming with 4-0 rout of Athletic Bilbao

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Barcelona (Spain)

Barcelona was back at its beloved Camp Nou and produced a dominant 4-0 victory over 10-man Athletic Bilbao to add to the homecoming celebrations on Saturday.

Some 45,000 fans were on hand as Europe's largest soccer stadium re-opened at roughly half capacity. Camp Nou had been closed for over two years for a major overhaul that the indebted club hopes will boost revenues.

Robert Lewandowski set the tone by scoring just four minutes into the match. Ferran Torres added two goals from a pair of superb passes by fellow forward Lamine Yamal, and Fermin Lopez scored in his first game at Camp Nou.

Athletic lost Oihan Sancet to a red card for a dangerous foul of Lopez in the 53rd with the hosts up 3-0.



"We played well from the start and took another three points, but the important thing today is being back at Camp Nou," Lewandowski said. "It is something else to play here. I think when we play at Camp Nou we are a little bit stronger."

Barcelona's fans belted out the club hymn before kickoff amid a celebratory vibe despite the chilly weather.

They had reason to be extra happy. The last time

they had been able to attend a game at Camp Nou was May 2023. For the following 900-plus days, Barcelona played its home games at the municipally owned 55,000-seat Olympic Stadium located atop a hill overlooking the city that was more difficult to reach.

"It has been two years at the (Olympic Stadium) and it wasn't easy, the atmosphere wasn't the same, you could tell it wasn't Camp Nou," the 36-year-old fan Carlos Narváez said.

## Thitikul pulls away, leads Korda by 6 in LPGA finale

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Naples (Florida, USA)

Jeenoo Thitikul made nine birdies for the second straight day, this time giving her an 8-under 64 that allowed the Thai star to pull away Saturday and build a six-shot lead going into the final round of the CME Group Tour Championship.

Thitikul, the number 1 player in women's golf, is one round away from sweeping all the awards on the LPGA Tour, along with the \$4 million check for winning.

She has all but clinched LPGA player of the year and

the Vare Trophy for the lowest scoring average, and could set an LPGA record depending on her closing round.

Nelly Korda shot a 65 and still lost ground. She was six shots behind, along with Pajaree Anannarukarn of Thailand, who also shot 65 on another warm, relatively calm day at Tiburon Golf Club.

Thitikul was at 22-under 196. She won last year at 22-under par, and made it clear that her work is not yet done.

"Trying to make birdies and birdies and birdies," she said with a stress-free

smile. After a bogey on the par-5 opening hole, Thitikul ran off four birdies in a five-hole stretch to regain her momentum. And then she made four straight birdies on the back nine to seize control.

The final pairing will be the number 1 and number 2 players in women's golf, but it still feels like a mismatch the way Thitikul has played this week.

"I was just trying to do the same," Thitikul said. "Just trying to go for the fairway, trying to find the best that we can to get near the pin and then make the putt. Simple strategy."

She already has made 24 birdies in her 54 holes this week. She has missed just five fairways and six greens going into the final round.

Korda didn't plan on doing anything differently with a six-shot deficit on Sunday.

"You are out there competing hard and you're trying to win, but you also have to not get too ahead of yourself and play the game," she said. "Because if you start to get a little too ahead of yourself and push a little too hard, those mistakes do start to creep in and it's not going to be beneficial," she added.

## Sami Valimaki leads by 2 at Sea Island, eyes 1st PGA win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ St Simons Island (Georgia)

Sami Valimaki of Finland ran off four straight birdies to close out the front nine on his way to a 5-under 65 that gave him a two-shot lead Saturday in the RSM Classic going into the final round of the final event of the PGA Tour season.

So much of this season finale at Sea Island is about the last chance to retain a full PGA Tour card for next year. Now it has turned into a chance for players to get their first PGA Tour title.

Valimaki was at 19-under



193 and was two ahead of Michael Thorbjornsen and Patrick Rodgers, each with a 68 and both Stanford alumni a generation apart.

Rodgers was the number 1 amateur in the world when he left Stanford in 2014. Thorbjornsen was number 1 in the PGA Tour University

ranking when he finished college in 2024.

Rodgers has played 311 tournaments on the PGA Tour with four runner-up finishes, one of them a playoff loss in 2018 at Sea Island to Charles Howell III.

"It's just unfortunately in this game you can't control the outcomes," Rodgers said. "I really try hard to control the outcomes, but it doesn't work. I need to be the best version of myself that I can be, look to build a really quality golf game and trust that that's going to give me the most opportunities throughout the season."



## Muthusamy, Jansen power South Africa past India in Test

**KUSHAN SARKAR**  
■ Guwahati

Senuran Muthusamy and Marco Jansen made Indian finger spinners' look ordinary in good batting conditions with invaluable lower-order contributions as South Africa seized control of the second Test by posting a massive 489 in their first innings on Sunday.

Trailing 0-1 in the two-match series, India were nine for no loss in 6.1 overs when stumps were drawn in fading light.

Muthusamy, who had scored a match-winning 89 not out against Pakistan in Rawalpindi a month ago, hit his maiden Test hundred, a gutsy 109 off 206 balls while Jansen sent the spinners on a proverbial leather hunt with smashing 91-ball-93.

The last four Proteas batters from Nos 7 to 11 added a whopping 243 runs. Muthusamy and Verreynne adding 88 for the seventh wicket while the centurion added another 97 runs with number nine Jansen.

During his belligerent

effort, Jansen smashed seven sixes, the highest by an overseas batter on Indian soil, surpassing Viv Richards and Matthew Hayden, both of whom had hit half a dozen maximums.

The South African innings lasted for 151.1 overs and the plight of the Indian bowlers could be gauged by the fact that this was also the first time that all five specialist bowlers had to bowl 25 or more overs in a single innings.

Rishabh Pant's captaincy didn't have a plan B and it also didn't help matters that the track at the Barsapara Stadium didn't show any signs of wear and tear.

While Kuldeep Yadav (4/115 in 29.1 overs) deviated from his plans from the opening day and bowled a lot faster, credit should be given to Muthusamy, Kyle Verreynne (45 off 122 balls) and Jansen for reading him well from the hand.

Since Kuldeep increased the speed of his deliveries it also curtailed the chances of getting drift which had yielded results on the



South Africa's Senuran Muthusamy with Marco Jansen celebrating his century during the day two of the second Test cricket match of a series between India and South Africa at ACA Stadium in Guwahati

opening day.

However what hurt India the most was the bowling of the two finger spinners, Ravindra Jadeja (2/94 in 28 overs) and Washington

Sundar (0/58 in 26 overs), whose figures wouldn't exactly narrate the whole story.

Time and again questions have been raised about

Jadeja and even Washington's ability to be penetrative on tracks that don't turn diabolical from day one. The second day was best for batting and neither

the off-spinner nor the left-arm orthodox got balls to either turn or bounce. They were trying to rush the batters but negligible zip from the pitch ensured they

had no difficulty in defending.

The only bowler, who looked a bit penetrative was Jasprit Bumrah (2/75 in 32 overs), who manfully led the attack and also briefly got the ball to reverse in second session. But no pressure applied by Jadeja and Sundar meant that after a certain point even his shoulder drooped.

The performance of the two finger spinners is a pointer towards the tendency of Indian team management — from the time of MS Dhoni, Virat Kohli to Rohit Sharma — to demand rank turners. Both Jadeja and Washington play a lot of white ball cricket which has actually diminished their ability to bowl slightly slower through the air that allows the ball to deviate in the air and also grip after pitching.

Too much of T20 style bowling brings in a certain kind of speed where the bowler is only looking to restrict the batter.

In white ball games, this style of bowling can either get the spinner a wicket as the batter would tend to attack

but in Tests one can wait till the bowler changes his line and length.

Once Muthusamy and Verreynne saw off the first session, the second became a cakewalk as Jansen would plonk his front-foot and smash Jadeja and Kuldeep over long-on repeatedly to completely destroy the confidence of the Indian unit.

The Indian team would hope that its batters also reap fruits of good batting conditions and try to make a match of it. Last time an opposition team scored 450 plus in this country and India still won happened in Chennai in 2016. It was the match where Karun Nair got a triple ton after England had scored 477 in first innings. But Jadeja had run through the England side with a seven wicket haul in the second innings.

The red soil tracks have a tradition of staying compact for first two days and in the last two days, it can crumble at a breakneck speed and one hopes Jadeja can relieve that magic in favourable conditions. (PTI)

## Lakshya ends title drought, emerges Australian Open champion

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Sydney

A fluent Lakshya Sen ended a difficult stretch on the international circuit by clinching his first title of the 2025 season, defeating Japan's Yushi Tanaka in the Australian Open men's singles final on Sunday.

The 24-year-old from Almora, enduring a tough phase after finishing fourth at the Paris Olympics, capped a resurgent week with a commanding 21-15 21-11 win over 26-year-old Tanaka.

Emerging champion after a 38-minute final of the \$475,000 Super 500 event, the Indian celebrated the moment by putting his fingers in his ears.

"I have seen a lot of ups and downs this season, with a few injuries at the start of the season. But I kept my hard work going throughout the season and I am very happy to end the season on a good note," said Lakshya.

"I'm very excited, looking forward to the next season now and I am really happy with the way I played today and this week."



Lakshya, a 2021 World Championships bronze-medallist, had last won a Super 300 title at the Syed Modi International in Lucknow in 2024.

However, a top-tier crown had eluded him since his triumph at the Canada Open the same year, though he came close at the Hong Kong Super 500 in September when he finished runner-up. Facing world No. 26 Tanaka, winner of two Super

300 titles this year at the Orleans Masters and the US Open, Lakshya displayed control, sharp placement and clean execution, wrapping up the contest without dropping a game.

With this victory, the reigning Commonwealth Games champion became only the second Indian to win a BWF World Tour title this season, following Ayush Shetty's maiden Super 300 triumph at the US Open.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty had reached the finals at the Hong Kong and China Masters, while Kidambi Srikanth also logged a runner-up finish at the Malaysia Masters earlier in the year.

Lakshya made a confident start, opening up a 6-3 lead as Tanaka committed a flurry of errors — hitting into the net, going wide and overcooking his lifts.

A 35-shot rally ended with the Japanese shuttler again finding the net, before a lucky net cord finally broke Lakshya's run of points. Two crisp cross-court smashes on either flank had Lakshya on the floor as Tanaka closed the gap to 7-9, but the Indian carried a three-point cushion into the mid-game interval after the Japanese sprayed another shot to the net.

Chants of 'Lakshya! Lakshya!' rang around the arena during the mid-game intervals, with a sizable Indian crowd turning up to support him. The Indian tightened his grip thereafter, dominating the net exchanges and keeping the shuttle flat and deep, denying Tanaka the length he needed to unleash his whipping smashes as he moved ahead 13-9.

Tanaka responded with a powerful smash, followed by a long error from Lakshya and a sharp net shot to make it 12-13. But Lakshya again pulled away, opening up a four-point lead at 17-13 with a backhand smash and another fierce cross-court winner.

## Kuldeep slams lifeless Barsapara pitch

**KUSHAN SARKAR**  
■ Guwahati

India's premier spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Sunday compared the 22-yard strip at the Barsapara Stadium to a "road" due to the benign nature of the surface that allowed South Africa's lower-order batters to take the team's first-innings score to 489 in the second Test.

Asked about his opinion on playing in Kolkata, where batters struggled and here in Barsapara where it became a nightmare for the spinners, Kuldeep's reply was laced with sarcasm.

"Kolkata ka wicket toh alag tha. Yeh to pura road tha (Kolkata's wicket was different and this was a whole road). So it's challenging and that's why it's called a Test wicket," said Kuldeep, who was the pick of the India bowlers with figures of 4 for 115 in 29.1 overs.

It will be interesting to see how BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia takes this statement as this is the first ever Test match being held at his home venue, and one of the senior players hasn't exactly been



too kind with his assessment of the track.

However, Kuldeep did maintain that one needs to show fighting abilities to counter adverse conditions.

"It is not always about domination but it is also very important how you come back on a good batting surface. It was a difficult wicket for the bowlers because I didn't feel that there was a lot of help in this wicket."

For Kuldeep, it is imperative that one moves on quickly and not stress oneself thinking about the

nature of the track.

"Even for fast bowlers it didn't seem like a lot of help, but yeah, this is Test cricket and you should enjoy it. You should enjoy, learn more and the more you mature, you shouldn't think too much about the wicket. You should go there and play. Next Test, there could be a better wicket, so no complaints."

He was quick to point out that after the opening session on the first day, when some underlying moisture was still at play, there was no help for the slow bowlers in the last five sessions. (PTI)

## Rahul to lead India in ODI series against SA; Jadeja back in mix

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ New Delhi

Senior batter KL Rahul was on Sunday named India's captain for the upcoming three-match ODI series against South Africa, while veteran all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja returned to white-ball set-up after an eight-month hiatus.

Rahul was handed the reins of the team after regular skipper Shubman Gill was ruled out of the series due to a neck injury that he sustained during the first Test against South Africa in Kolkata. Rahul has been given the captaincy with the short-term goal of the South Africa series in mind.

"Rahul's captaincy is one off and should be seen in isolation. Rishabh (Pant) wasn't considered as he has played only one ODI game in the last one year. The selectors expect that Shubman Gill's neck injury will heal and he will be



back against New Zealand (3 ODIs in January 2026)," a BCCI source told PTI on condition of anonymity. The series will begin on November 30 in Ranchi followed by matches in Raipur (December 3) and Visakhapatnam (December 6). Jadeja, whose last ODI appearance came against New Zealand in the Champions Trophy final in Dubai earlier in March, returned to the mix, primarily

because left-arm spin all-rounder Axar Patel has been rested for this series.

Axar, who was a part of India's recent white ball tour to Australia, was rested from the ODIs against the Proteas. The 31-year-old was also a part of the four-pronged spin attack that India fielded against South Africa in the Eden Gardens Test along with Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar and Jadeja.

## Boxing champion Arundhati receives warm welcome

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Kota (Rajasthan)

Boxing World Cup gold medallist Arundhati Chaudhary received a warm welcome on her return to hometown Kota on Sunday.

Arundhati won the medal in 70kg by defeating Aziza Zokirova of Uzbekistan on Thursday in the tournament held in Greater Noida.

She reached her home following a grand procession from the railway station, as thousands of people showered flower petals on her while extending a warm welcome.

Arundhati has won seven gold medals at the international level so far. According to Arundhati's Kota-based coach Ashok Gautam, this is her first international medal in the senior category. He said that Arundhati achieved this feat after recovering from a serious injury. Currently, Arundhati is



serving as a havaladar in the Indian army.

Arundhati's next goal is to win a gold medal for India in the 2026 Asian Games.

The 23-year-old, who was very good in academics, started out in sports as basketball player at 14.

Father Suresh Choudhary, a contractor, then recommended her to pursue individual game and that led her to choose boxing.

"By the age of 14, Arundhati had grown into a tall girl and the tendency to fight has been there in her since early days," Suresh told PTI at their residence.

"I recommended individual sports to her, she stuck to it and as soon as I returned home after a day's work, she started inquiring about boxing coach and facilities, which were not there the city," her father added.

## 5,000 athletes gear up for KIUG in 7 Rajasthan cities



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Jaipur

As many as 5,000 athletes, including the likes of Olympian swimmer Srihari Nataraj and renowned archer Bhajan Kaur, will compete in the fifth edition of Khelo India University Games, scheduled to commence in Rajasthan on Monday.

Athletes from more than 230 universities will compete in 24 disciplines, including one demonstration event, in the annual

event which will take place in Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Ajmer, Bharatpur and Bikaner. The new sports included in KIUG this year are canoeing, kayaking, cycling, and beach volleyball. Among those who will be favourites to win medals in their disciplines are double Olympian swimmer Srihari Nataraj and leading archers Bhajan Kaur, Parneet Kaur and Aditi Gopichand Swami.

Srihari, competing in his second KIUG, will take part in six events. (PTI)

## Coach gets clean chit from Hockey India in sexual misconduct probe

**SAUMJOYTI S CHOWDHURY**  
■ New Delhi

Hockey India on Sunday said its internal inquiry into allegations of sexual misconduct against a coach of the junior women's team found no evidence and they have cleared him to travel with the squad for

the World Cup in Santiago, Chile. In an exclusive statement to PTI, Hockey India (HI) said it had conducted an inquiry after certain media reports flagged the alleged misconduct. However, the federation said neither HI nor Sports Authority of India (SAI) had received any

formal complaint. "Some media reports have suggested sexual misconduct within the Indian junior women's team. However, no official complaint or incriminating information has been received by Hockey India," the HI statement said. "Despite this, the Internal

Complaints Committee under the POSH Act, 2013, conducted an enquiry on Friday based on these media reports."

HI said the committee spoke individually to all members of the team travelling to Chile, where the tournament will begin on December 1, and

found no evidence of wrongdoing. "The athletes reposed full faith in the accompanying coaches and support staff. Hockey India has zero tolerance towards sexual harassment or sexual misconduct and maintains high standards to ensure athlete safety, particularly of women and

minors," the statement added. The federation said it had also ensured deployment of female support staff with the contingent, as mandated under its Standard Operating Procedures (SoP).

senior HI official reiterated that no athlete had lodged any complaint and said the coach

in question would travel with the team. "We have received no formal complaint. Neither the sports ministry nor SAI has received anything. Still, we conducted a thorough internal inquiry and spoke to all players, but nothing came out of it," the official told PTI. "We are also in constant

touch with the ministry, which has confirmed that it has received no written or formal complaint. SAI never asked us to stop the coach from travelling on the basis of frivolous allegations."

The sports ministry also denied receiving any complaint. (PTI)