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PIONEER IN SHORT

800 DEAD IN AFGHANISTAN QUAKE

A powerful 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck eastern Afghanistan late Sunday, killing at least 800 people and injuring over 2,500, according to Taliban officials. The shallow quake, centered near Jalalabad in Nangarhar province, caused extensive damage across Kunar province, where entire villages were reduced to rubble. Desperate residents searched through debris for survivors using bare hands. Footage showed chaotic rescue efforts amid destroyed mud-brick homes. Communication lines are down, and officials fear the death toll may rise. Medical teams from Kabul and nearby provinces have been deployed. The disaster echoes last year's deadly quake, underscoring Afghanistan's vulnerability to natural calamities.

FULL REPORT ON P15

NEW IMMIGRATION LAW IN FORCE

The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, came into effect on September 1, replacing four older laws to regulate all matters related to immigration and foreigners in India. The new law mandates stringent penalties for using forged passports or visas, including imprisonment of two to seven years and fines up to ₹10 lakh. It also makes reporting by hotels, universities, hospitals, and airlines mandatory to track foreign nationals. Unauthorised entry into restricted areas can invite a jail term of up to five years. The Act gives the Central Government powers to control access to places frequented by foreigners. President Murmu approved the law in April.

FULL REPORT ON P5

PATWARI ATTACKED AGAIN IN MP

Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Jitu Patwari faced consecutive attacks during his anti-Government rallies, including stone-pelting near Ratlam and an ink-and-effigy protest in Neemuch. The violence followed Patwari's controversial remark that women in the state consume the most alcohol nationwide, prompting backlash from BJP's women's wing, which accused him of insulting women. BJP leaders demanded an apology, citing public outrage, while Congress condemned the attacks as orchestrated and aimed at silencing the Opposition. Despite heightened security concerns, Patwari vowed to continue his campaign against intoxication and electoral malpractice. Congress leaders say the BJP is resorting to mob tactics out of political insecurity.

FULL REPORT ON P6

HC FLAGS PROTEST RULE VIOLATIONS

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis on Monday assured that the Maharashtra Government will implement Bombay HC directives concerning the Manoj Jarangeled Maratha quota protest. The HC observed violations of permissions and asked the state to take lawful action.

FULL REPORT ON P6

The ByStander



Jagannath Temple committee meets CM



Pledges streamlined management

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The newly-appointed members of the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Lok Seva Bhavan on Monday and expressed gratitude for

the reconstitution of the body.

The members held discussions with the Chief Minister on ensuring discipline in temple rituals, smooth conduct of major festivals and accelerating the development of Puri town. Majhi assured that the government would extend all necessary support for the Lord's service as well as for temple development works.

"The government has already initiated steps to transform Puri into the country's foremost religious and tourism destination. Several new facilities will soon be made available for devotees and visitors," the CM said.

Committee member Madhusudan Singhari informed that the delegation thanked the CM for the reconstitution and emphasised

that the panel would focus on streamlining rituals and strengthening management practices in the days ahead.

Those who called on the CM included Suar Mahasaba Krushnachandra Samantaray, Mathadhish Raghurib Das, Pratihari Nijog Ramnarayan Gochhikar, Pushpalak Nijog Madhusudan Singhari and Jagannath Pujapanda.

Durga Puja in Twin City DJ, laser lights, firecrackers banned by police

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The Commissionerate Police on Monday imposed strict restrictions on the use of DJ music, laser lights and firecrackers for Bhasani (immersion procession) during the Durga Puja (Dussehra) festivities in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack:

This decision was taken during the Durga Puja preparation meeting and it was decided that only traditional musical instruments would be

allowed for the processions. The use of DJ, laser lights, and the bursting of firecrackers during immersion would be completely banned.

The police have warned that strict action would be taken against anyone violating these guidelines to ensure a peaceful and traditional celebration of Maa Durga's festival.

Notably, Khordha and Cuttack district Collectors, Twin City Police Commissioner, and some local MLAs, including the functionaries of

different Puja Committees, were present in the meeting.

Three BJD MLAs and a Mayor did not attend the Puja Committee meeting. Among them were Bhubaneswar-Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, North MLA Suman Kumar Rout, Jatni MLA Bibhuti Bhusan Balabantaray and Bhubaneswar Mayor Sulochana Das. Although everyone had been invited to the meeting by the Commissioner of Police, they were absent.

To mark PM Modi's birthday BJP to hold Seva Pakhya from Sept 17 to Oct 2

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The BJP will observe Seva Pakhya (fortnight of service) across Odisha from September 17 to October 2 to mark the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A State-level workshop was organised at the BJP State headquarters here on Monday to prepare for the campaign. It was attended by BJP State president Manmohan Samal, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, party's State in-charge

Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and Seva Pakhya observer Aravind Menon.

During the fortnight, the BJP will undertake a series of welfare and community-oriented activities, including cleanliness drives, blood donation camps, health camps, photo exhibitions on the life of Prime Minister Modi and distribution of books. The campaign aims to connect the party with people at the grassroots through service-oriented initiatives.

Party leaders said the Seva Pakhya would not only celebrate the Prime Minister's contribution but also reflect the BJP's commitment to social responsibility and inclusive development.

The BJP has been observing Seva Pakhya every year since 2014, but this time, party leaders said the scale of activities in Odisha would be larger and more structured with special focus on villages, towns and urban slums.

HUGE app scam

Police arrest ex-Army man from Baleswar

Alleged to be mastermind of racket

PNS ■ Cuttack

The Cuttack Cyber police on Monday arrested the alleged mastermind of the 'HUGE app' online fraud, which allegedly defrauded thousands of investors of Rs 20 crore.

The arrested, identified as Partha Sarathi Das, was picked up from Chandipur in Baleswar district.

The arrest followed nearly a week after the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Crime Branch took over the probe of the scam.

Cyber police officials said Das is an ex-Army personnel.

He had been staying at Rajendra Nagar of Cuttack while working as the Cuttack head of the 'Huge App' company.

Police further stated that Das initially persuaded people to open accounts on the app and then used them to bring in more customers. Victims were lured to deposit money, amounting to several lakhs. After collecting funds, Das shut down the firm's office at Badambadi and also closed the app.

The app, launched in November 2024, offered schemes such as daily returns of Rs 200 on an investment of Rs 5,500 and additional incentives for recruiting new members. Barring Cuttack, around 3,000 residents of Jagatsinghpur

alone are believed to have invested.

The platform stopped functioning after August 20 triggering panic and prompting large numbers of complaints. Repeated complaints from residents of Darghabazar of Cuttack city led to the investigation by Cyber police.

On August 24, the probe into the HUGE app scam was transferred to the EOW. Preliminary findings suggested that nearly four lakh people across the State invested in the platform, with the fraud amount estimated at over Rs 20 crore. Police confirmed that Das' arrest marks a breakthrough in the case though efforts are on to trace his associates and assess the full scale of the fraud.

Congress restructures State units to counter BJP's rise

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Acting on a directive of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) has launched an intensive organisational restructuring overhaul across all 35 party districts, pitching the move as a direct counter to the BJP's growing influence in the State.

OPCC president Bhakta Charan Das, addressing the media on Monday, said the restructuring is aimed at energising workers ahead of the next electoral battles. "The BJP is attempting to expand its footprint in Odisha, but the Congress has the organisational depth and legacy to resist this surge. This restructuring will infuse fresh blood and sharpen our fight," Das asserted.

Teams of AICC observers



have already fanned out across the State, visiting blocks and interacting with grassroots leaders. On Sunday, MP Shreyas M Patel and AICC secretary Gopinath Palaniyappan began their visits in Baleswar and Kendrapada while on Monday seven senior leaders including Charan Singh Sapra, Bimal Saha and Manoj Chauhan arrived to oversee the exercise in districts like Khordha, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj and

Nabarangpur. Observers are tasked with drawing up six-member committees of potential district presidents with a mandatory mix of SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities and women. The final selections will be made by the AICC. The process is expected to conclude by September 14.

Das stressed that the Congress is "not just revamping for namesake" but preparing to challenge the BJP's narra-

tive at every level. "This restructuring is our political counter-move. Odisha cannot be left to the saffron experiment," he said.

Party insiders admit the move is also designed to prevent further erosion of its traditional vote base to both BJP and BJD. By pitching the exercise as a grassroots-led democratic process, the Congress hopes to project itself as the "third force of revival" in the State's political battlefield.

5 days of Operation Anweshan 2,417 missing women, children rescued in State

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Cracking down on human trafficking and missing persons' cases, the Odisha Police has rescued 2,417 women and children during a five-day special drive, "Operation Anweshan".

The State-wide mission, conducted between August 18 and 22, traced 358 children (33 boys and 325 girls) and 2,059 women across districts. The initiative, led by the Crime against Women and Children Wing, was aimed at reuniting families and curbing organised trafficking rackets.

Among districts, Puri topped the list with 45 children and 504 women rescued followed by Bhadrak with 37

children and 318 women and Cuttack with 21 children and 304 women.

This was the fourth such drive in 2025. Between February and August, police traced 7,876 missing persons including 1,209 children and 6,667 women. The most notable was in April, when 3,494 persons were rescued in just eight days.

Police officials said the campaign reflects Odisha's zero-tolerance policy towards crimes against vulnerable groups. "Such operations will continue with greater intensity in the coming months," a statement said.

Rehabilitation and counselling of rescued victims will be taken up to ensure their safe reintegration into society.

New Bhubaneswar to come up on 800 acres

Singapore Govt preparing design

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

New Bhubaneswar, a new satellite city, will soon take shape on nearly 800 acres of land covering areas like Malipada, Daspur, Andharua and Gothapatna. The Singapore Government has been entrusted with preparing the drawings and design for the ambitious project, informed Urban Development Minister Dr Krushna Chandra Mahapatra on Monday.

He said that following the Chief Minister's announcement on Sunday, public curi-

osity about the project has risen significantly. The proposed city is being modelled on the lines of Gujarat's Dholera Gift City combining modern urban infrastructure with inclusive development.

According to the minister, the Singapore Government is currently preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for New Bhubaneswar, for which funds have already been provided. The DPR is expected to be submitted to the State Government within the next one to two months.

The planned city will feature an IT park, advanced medical facilities, residential complexes, commercial hubs, open public spaces, pedes-

trian-friendly pathways and zones for economic activity. Special focus will also be given to promoting industrial establishments within the new township.

Mahapatra said the city's growth would go hand-in-hand with redevelopment plans for existing urban areas ensuring a balanced and future-ready expansion of the State's capital city.

The proposed project aims not only to ease the pressure on the existing city but also to transform the capital region into a modern urban hub with state-of-the-art infrastructures, international design standards and opportunities for investment.

In Bhubaneswar Rs 14L houses for weaker sections being planned

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday celebrated THE Self-Governance Day 2025 with a slew of announcements aimed at addressing the city's growing challenges. Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said the government has set new targets for making Bhubaneswar more livable, affordable and sustainable.

Highlighting housing concerns, Mahapatra admitted that buying land or a house in Bhubaneswar has become nearly impossible with prices touching crores. He announced that the government would roll out affordable housing schemes with units

priced between Rs 14 lakh and Rs 50 lakh, primarily benefiting economically weaker families.

He also revealed that master plans are being prepared for roads, drainage and flood-control systems with a Rs 150-crore DPR already in process. The NICO Park would be redeveloped in three phases with an outlay of Rs 250-300 crore to restore it as a city landmark. Work is also underway on the Daya-Gangua canal with a technical team assigned for a new DPR.

MLA Babu Singh pledged to make Bhubaneswar drug-free. The event also saw the release of a "Work Speak-Abahan" report card and signing of MoUs to convert city waste into biogas.

IFS officers meet CM, discuss global opportunities

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

A delegation of senior Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers from the 2000 and 2001 batches met Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Lok Seva Bhawan on Monday and discussed Odisha's development trajectory and its global connect.

The team comprised Dr Manoj Kumar Mohapatra, Ambassador of India to Romania, Amit Narang, Ambassador to Slovenia, and Gloria Gangte, High Commissioner to Malta.

The envoys congratulated Majhi for his work over the past year, saying his pro-people initiatives have earned him an image of a "People's



CM". They also lauded the successful organisation of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Bhubaneswar earlier this year, which, they noted, has brought the Odia diaspora

closer to the State.

Highlighting the increasing demand for skilled professionals in Europe, the diplomats said Odisha's youths could make a

mark abroad. The Chief Minister responded that the State has taken proactive steps to prepare its workforce, adding that the Skilled-in-Odisha initiative has emerged as a globally-recognised brand. "The future looks bright for our young talent. Odisha will facilitate better opportunities for its aspiring youth in European countries," Majhi observed.

He further emphasised that promoting Odisha's cultural heritage, handloom and handicrafts in Europe would not only enhance the State's global identity but also provide livelihood support to artisans.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja and Principal Secretary to CMO Saswat Mishra were present.

BJD slams govt over fertiliser shortage, warns of stir



RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

As farmers across Odisha took to the streets over severe fertiliser shortage, the opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Monday hit out at the BJP-led State Government accusing it of apathy and mismanagement.

Addressing a press conference here, senior BJD leader and former minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak said farmers are reeling under distress due to lack of fertiliser and rampant black-marketing. "Instead of addressing the crisis, the Supply Minister kept claiming that stocks were adequate," he alleged.

Nayak said the situation became so alarming that Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik had to write to Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister JP Nadda urging immediate supply of the required quota to Odisha and expediting operations at the Talcher fertiliser plant. "Only after Naveenbabu's interven-

tion did the State Government wake up. The Chief Minister then convened a review and issued instructions for remedial measures," Nayak remarked.

Citing official data, he said irregularities were evident in distribution. Fertiliser sales at around 1,200 outlets were found unsatisfactory; 62 centres were suspended collectively; and 30 were shut permanently. Despite the official price of Rs 242 for a 45-kg bag, reports revealed it was being sold at Rs 800-1,000 in several places.

Terming this as "clear evidence of corruption", Nayak criticised Supply Minister Krushna Chandra Patra for denying shortages and irregularities. He also ridiculed Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, who handles Agriculture Department, for "lecturing farmers on fertiliser chemistry" instead of solving their problems. "This is like preaching the benefits of fasting to a starving person," Nayak quipped.

He said the BJP came to power promising "double-engine, double development", but its governance has been derailed. "The government must admit its failure and act swiftly. If the crisis persists, the BJD will intensify protests on the streets in support of farmers," Nayak warned.

BDA marks foundation day with new park, playground



RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) marked its 43rd Foundation Day on Monday by inaugurating a new park and playground at K9B in Kalinga Vihar. Housing & Urban Development and Public Enterprises Minister Dr Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, who also chairs BDA, dedicated the facilities to the public.

Spread over 2.3 acres, the playground is complemented by a 1.36-acre park developed at a cost of Rs 5.5 crore. Equipped with an open gym, yoga pindi, walking track, toilets, changing rooms, sprinkler irrigation system and compound wall, the project is part of the BDA's larger plan to develop 20 playgrounds across the city at a total outlay of Rs 98 crore. Nineteen of these are nearing completion, officials said.

BMC Mayor Sulochana Das,

Bhubaneswar Ekamra MLA Babu Singh, H&UD Principal Secretary Usha Padhee and BDA Vice-Chairman Dr N Thirumala Naik were present.

Later in the day, a Foundation Day programme was held at Jayadev Bhawan. Minister Dr Mahapatra underlined the need for strategic urban planning to manage Bhubaneswar's rapid growth and called for greater citizen participation in improving green cover, drainage and sewerage systems to make the capital a world-class city.

Mayor Das stressed inclusivity in planning and tackling climate-linked urban challenges while MLA Singh urged the BDA to prioritise housing for the homeless.

The minister also unveiled the BDA's Annual Report. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Establishment Additional Commissioner Snigdharani Dhal.

IIT-BBS camp: 195 blood units collected

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

The NSS Bureau, Pravaah and social and cultural teams of Students Gymkhana of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with NGO Sahaya and SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, organised a mega blood donation camp, namely 'Umeed 5.0' on Saturday. Total 195 units of blood were collected.

Dean (Student Affairs), Prof Rajesh Roshan Dash and Registrar of the Institute, Bamadev Acharya graced the occasion and motivated the donors.

Among others, Professor-in-Charge (Healthcare) Dr Seema Bahinipati, Chairperson, Pravaah Dr Santhoshkumar G, Faculty



Advisor Dr Suvradip Mullick, NSS Coordinator Chandra Sekhar, Blood Bank Officer Dr Samhati Tripathy and a team from SCB Medical College and Hospital, Cuttack, besides members from NGO Sahaya were present on the occasion.

While Dr Sivaiah Bathula coordinated the camp, members of the faculty, staff, students, and residents of the institute participated.

Odisha Yatri app adds 'Ama Bus'

And also Chilika boating ticketing

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

The Commerce & Transport Department announced on Monday expansion of the Odisha Yatri mobile app with two new features, Ama Bus ticket booking and digital ticketing for Chilika boating services at Satapada.

With the update, commuters can now book tickets for government-operated buses under Ama Bus through the app ensuring transparency and convenience. Also, tourists heading to Chilika can choose boating packages, select dates, pay online and receive QR-coded tickets. These tickets will be validated at the boating point,

where boats are assigned automatically through the integrated system.

The android rollout of the updated version has been completed while the iOS version is expected to go live shortly after App Store approval. Officials said further user-friendly refinements would be introduced in the coming days.

Commerce & Transport Department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said the initiative represents a step towards smarter and more inclusive mobility. "Odisha Yatri is more than a digital service it empowers citizens to travel and explore with confidence. With Ama Bus and Chilika boating, we are bringing mobility and tourism closer to people," she said.

Interview of the week

Many modern issues can best be expressed through vocabulary of Odishi dance



SUGYAN CHOUDHURY



ILEANA CITARISTI

Italian born Ileana Citaristi is a noted Odishi and Chou dancer and choreographer of international fame who is based at Bhubaneswar. Her life is a fascinating story of a rebel who migrated across continents from a nondescript town of Bergamo in the north Italy to the jostling and bustling Bhubaneswar. She has accepted an alien land, Odisha, and an alien language, Odia, as her own and mastered the delicate nuances of Odishi from her Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, who helped her in regaining the calm of her mind by quenching the inner thirst of her soul. In the process, she has abandoned the bohemian eccentricity and wild freedom of a foreigner to become a dedicated Shishya of the glorious Indian tradition. She was awarded the National Film Award for Best Choreography in 1996 for Yugant, a film directed by Aparna Sen, and was conferred Padma Shri in 2006 for her contribution to Odishi dance. She has also choreographed for MF Hussain's Meenaxi: Tale of Three Cities (2003) and Gautam Ghose's Abar Aranye (2004). A prolific writer too, she has authored many books, namely, My Journey: A Tale of Two Births, Martial Art Forms of Odisha, The Making of a Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra: His Life and Times, Odissi and the Geeta Govinda, Indian Traditional Martial Arts and Traditional Martial Practices in Odisha.

In an interview to *The Pioneer*, Ileana spoke to Sugyan Choudhury about her knack for Indian classical dance in general and of her love for Odishi dance and music in particular.

How your early childhood days in Italy shaped your career to be eventually an artist of international fame?

I grew up with the love of my parents and grandparents in Italy. My father and his six brothers were all amateur singers. My father used to sing chorus in Church.

For about two to three years, they sent me to classical ballet and then stopped. They did not think seriously about my dance. But I was very passionate about dance. However, I did not act against the will of my parents. Dance went out my life. But then, when I became 17 or 18 years, I became a rebel. I participated in theatre and started acting. There were physical movements very much akin to dance which I perform. Once I had been to a Kathakali dance programme and I found there were many physical movements, varied expressions and a larger vocabulary in this classical Indian dance. Then I decided to pursue a career in Indian Classical dance. That is how I took to dancing and have become eventually an Odishi dancer besides Kathak.

Many of your choreographies bring in contemporary themes. How do you decide which modern issues can be expressed through a classical vocabulary like Odishi?

Odishi dance has its own language and has its forms of expressions. If I am interested in the happenings around me then I visualise it and then express it to convey a message to the viewers. If something is real and you want to express it, you can do so through the language of Odishi dance. Many modern things or issues can best be expressed through the classical vocabulary of Odishi dance form.

You have written books like The Making of a Guru on Kelucharan Mohapatra and Odishi and the Geeta Govinda. What motivated you to document your journey as a writer?

I was writing articles only and had never written any book before. Once a publisher from New Delhi requested me that why don't you try to write on the life of the legendary Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra since you are associated with him. I discussed with Gururaji and he consented. I started writing on him interviewing octogenarians and nonagenarians Odishi dance maestros of his time.

How do you view the Guru-Shishya parampara or tradition of India?

Forty years back, when I came to Odisha, I visited my guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. Not only was he an unrivalled master in his own field, but he was loving, affectionate. He was like a friend, philosopher and guide to all of us. Some of his classical compositions shall always be refreshing; and like a thing of beauty, it would be a joy forever. But such traditions of Guru-Shishya parampara are declining by every passing day. The current generation with their technological engagements like a video, audio, e-mail, Whatsapp are remaining away from physical interaction with their gurus.

DAV Principal gets Odisha Gourab Samman

PNS ■ Bhubaneswar

For notable contribution to the field of education and the successful implementation of NEP-2020, Principal of DAV Public School, Kalinga Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Balam Mahapatra was conferred with Odisha Gourav Samman-2025 recently.

To mark the five years of the implementation of NEP-2020, a ceremony was held by the Centre for Educational Development, India in collaboration with Niti Aayoug at the Jayadev Bhawan here. Mohapatra was honoured with an Uttariya, a memento and a certificate.

Mohapatra joined the DAV institution in the year 1997 and is working with lots of innovations and implementation of the NEP-2020 as a teacher and principal. He has also played a major role in shaping of the educational needs and areas of



development of children and the growth of the institution.

Among others, MLA of Ekamra Babu Singh, director of foundation Dr AK Sharma, former Director of NCERT Dr Hrusikesh Senapati, Chairman of east zone Sahodaya Complex Schools Dr Priyadarshi

Nayak, social activist Smruti Patnaik, managing director of WOW Factors India Pvt Ltd Dr Sankar Goenka joined the occasion and emphasised on quality education, role of youths and dedicated service of teachers and encouraged the awardees.

At Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya State-of-the-srt Audio & Chroma Studio opened

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar

Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, Odisha's premier institution for arts and culture, added a new chapter to its legacy on Sunday with the inauguration of a state-of-the-art Audio and Chroma Recording Studio.

The facility was inaugurated by Odia Language, Literature and Culture Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, who said the modern studio would act as a powerful platform to project Odisha's cultural heritage globally. "This is a tribute to our vibrant traditions in music, dance and theatre. It will empower artistes to showcase their talent worldwide and preserve our legacy for generations to come," he said.

The minister announced that the Culture Department would soon release a Standard Operating



procedure (SOP) to ensure easy access to the studio for both government programmes and private institutions. He also underlined that the use of advanced technology would elevate Odisha's art and culture to the national and international stage.

Suraj witnessed the live recording of an Odishi performance in

the Chroma Studio. He urged students to deepen their commitment to enriching Odisha's literary, musical, dance and folk traditions.

The occasion drew several eminent personalities, including Culture Department Secretary Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya, Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya Principal Dr Bijay

Kumar Jena and celebrated Odishi dancers Aruna Mohanty, Sujata Mohapatra and Ileana Citaristi. Noted actor Asrumochan Mohanty, cultural administrator Pragyan Ranjan Khatua and several leading artistes from music, dance and folk art also joined in celebrating the landmark initiative.

BU's NAAC 'A grade' claim sparks political heat Leopard hide seized in Ganjam

RAJEEV RATHAN ■ Bhubaneswar The Berhampur University's claim of securing an NAAC 'A grade' has snowballed into a major controversy with questions being raised over the credibility of the accreditation and political demands surfacing for accountability.

Prof Mahapatra accused the authorities of indulging in a "cheap publicity stunt" just ahead of the university's 26th Convocation on August 9, which was attended by Governor and Chancellor Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. He also claimed to have spoken with senior NAAC officials, who suggested that the accreditation had not yet been finalised.

The issue has quickly taken on political overtones with Opposition leaders demanding an explanation from both the Vice-Chancellor and the Union Minister. "Why did Dharmendra Pradhan and the Governor highlight the 'A grade' on the convocation stage when the NAAC itself has kept it in abeyance? Was the convocation used to peddle false claims for political mileage?" questioned BJD spokespersons. Vice-Chancellor Prof Geetanjali Dash has, however, defended the university's stand.

She maintained that the NAAC awarded a 3.04 CGPA and the certificate was officially received via email on August 8 evening. She further clarified that the "kept in abeyance" status is linked to a reevaluation request filed by the university in anticipation of a higher score. But the Opposition is not convinced. Demanding a whitepaper on the issue, they have asked whether the Union Minister and the Governor were "misled by the university" or "willing participants in a misleading narrative".

7 including ex-SI of police held

Forest officials busted a leopard skin smuggling racket in the Jagannathprasad Range of Ganjam district and arrested seven persons, including a former police Sub-Inspector, on Sunday. Acting on a tipoff, a team of the Forest Department carried out a surprise raid at Gunduribadi village, where the accused were allegedly preparing to sell a leopard skin after performing puja. Officials seized the skin of a full-grown leopard, sharp weapons and mobile phones and detained three persons. Subsequent investigation led to the arrest of four more accused from Bhanjanagar, all allegedly linked to the illegal trade. The seized hide, measuring about seven feet in length, is believed to have been obtained from a leopard aged between five and six years that was shot dead around 20 days ago.



Full-grown leopard, sharp weapons and mobile phones and detained three persons. Subsequent investigation led to the arrest of four more accused from Bhanjanagar, all allegedly linked to the illegal trade. The seized hide, measuring about seven feet in length, is believed to have been obtained from a leopard aged between five and six years that was shot dead around 20 days ago.

ing about seven feet in length, is believed to have been obtained from a leopard aged between five and six years that was shot dead around 20 days ago. According to sources, the accused had planned to sell the skin in the international black market for several lakhs of rupees. "We have recovered a leopard skin which is 7-foot-long with a bullet injury marks. We believed the leopard died around 20 days ago. While three persons have been arrested from the puja spot, four other were arrested from Bhanjanagar," said North Ghumsar Forest Range DFO Himashu Sekhar Mohanty.

In Mayurbhanj Tehsildar suspended on corruption charges

The Revenue and Disaster Management Department has suspended Madhusmita Singh, Tehsildar of Jamda in Mayurbhanj district, over allegations of corruption and financial irregularities during her earlier tenure as the Executive Officer of the Belpahar Municipality in Jharsuguda. Singh was accused of irregularities in several projects, including the streetlight project, as well as discrepancies in the municipality's cash book. Following complaints, the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) had initiated an investigation into the scam.

disciplinary action has now been taken, leading to Singh's suspension. During the suspension period, she has been directed to remain at the district headquarters and would be attached to the office of the Sub-Collector, Rairangpur, until further orders. Singh, who was serving as Executive Officer at Belpahar Municipality earlier, was transferred to Mayurbhanj as Tehsildar of Jamda. However, the corruption allegations from her previous posting have now led to her suspension. The Revenue Department has made it clear that she would remain under suspension until the inquiry is completed.

BJD slams govt for ignoring 39 declared NACs

The BJD on Monday attacked the BJP-led Odisha Government for what it termed as a "blatant betrayal of people's aspirations" by ignoring 39 Notified Area Councils (NACs) that had been formally declared by the previous regime. On Self-Governance Day, the government announced 16 new NACs and upgraded seven to municipalities. But senior BJD leaders Debi Prasad Mishra, Pratap Jena and Pramila Mallik alleged that the government has "played a cruel joke" by selectively accepting only 18 of the 57 NACs declared by the Naveen Patnaik government in February-March 2024.



"This government has not issued even a single gazette notification for the NACs declared 15 months ago. Instead, it has cherry-picked a few and arbitrarily added some others. What is this if not discrimination?" Mishra thundered at a press meet here. Jena accused the BJP regime of deliberately stalling the upgradation of Kantabanji into a municipality, saying, "By denying Kantabanji its due status, the government has insulted the people's mandate," he stated. Opposition Chief Whip Pramila Mallik charged that the denial of NAC status is "an attack on the rights of rural citizens to access urban facilities."

FMU Geology Dept holds landslide assessment talk

A two-day national workshop on "Landslide Hazard Assessment: Geo-science Approaches and Analytical Software Tools" was held on August 29 and 30 at the PG Department of Geology, Fakir Mohan University, in collaboration with the Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC). It was inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Prof Santosh Kumar Tripathy, in the presence of Prof Santosh Kumar Agarwal ((In-charge)-Chairman, P.G. Council), Prof. Ranindra Kumar Nayak, (Director, HRDC), and Arun Kumar Naik, Program Coordinator, along with HRDC members Dr Rajashree Dutta and Dr Prahlad Khilla, and faculty of the PG Department of Geology, including Dr Smrutirekha Sahoo and Dr Pankajini Mahanta.

Over 80 participants from prominent institutions including Utkal University, MSCB University, MPC Autonomous College, and Kendrapara Autonomous College engaged in the workshop. Renowned experts Dr Rajesh Kumar Dash (CSIR-CBRI, Roorkee), Dr Yunus Ali Pulpadan (Central University of Kerala), and Dr Bankim Chandra Mahanta (IIT Bhubaneswar) led technical and hands-on sessions covering landslide hazard analysis, remote sensing applications, and the use of geo-scientific software tools such as Google Earth Engine, Weka, RAMMS, and Rocscience. The workshop concluded on Saturday with a valedictory session presided over by the Vice-Chancellor Prof Tripathy, where participants lauded the programme for its academic rigor and practical orientation. Certificates were distributed in the end.

In Malkangiri Stranded 24 hrs, youth saved in daring chopper rescue

In what locals called nothing short of a miracle, 28-year-old Irma Sodi of Kotamateru village in Malkangiri district was rescued on Monday after spending nearly 24 harrowing hours stranded on a rock in the middle of the raging Saberi River. The ordeal began when Irma set out in a traditional boat to visit Telawari village in neighbouring Chhattisgarh's Sukma district. On his way back, strong currents overturned his small vessel. Battling the swirling waters, Irma clung desperately to a tree branch before hauling himself onto a lone rock, a precarious perch that became both his refuge and his prison. Through the night, villagers on the banks could only watch helplessly as Irma remained marooned, with the swollen river cutting off any chance of immediate help. "We were praying he would hold on till dawn," recalled a resident of Katameta.

At daybreak, locals alerted the fire department. Rescue teams from both Odisha and Chhattisgarh rushed to the spot but were repeatedly thwarted by the river's fury. It was then that Malkangiri MLA Narsingh Madkami stepped in, informing the government and coordinating with Sukma authorities. His urgent appeal paved the way for a helicopter mission. Hours later, as hundreds watched with bated breath, the chopper hovered above the Saberi before winching Irma to safety. The moment drew cheers and tears of relief across Kotamateru. "This is a story of human courage, community solidarity and timely intervention," said MLA Madkami, whose efforts earned heartfelt gratitude from villagers.

18 months after stone-laying Chhatrapur crematorium makeover not started yet



Due to the negligence and lack of will power of Chhatrapur Notified Area Council (NAC) authorities, the crematorium located near Palia Chhatrapur has been lying neglected. It is alleged that the NAC office has shown no real intent to develop the facility. The residents of most of the 14 Wards under Chhatrapur NAC, along with people from Palia Chhatrapur, depend on the crematorium. Daily cremations take place here. Notably, the Chhatrapur NAC had announced the upgradation of the crematorium, with an estimated expenditure of Rs 1 crore, and its foundation stone was laid on January 26, 2024. However, even after 18 months, the work has not started. In fact, according to office sources, even the tender process has not been completed yet. Meanwhile, questions were raised as to how a foundation stone could have been laid by the NAC authorities without even issuing a tender.

At present, the crematorium faces several issues, including lack of proper lighting. Locals and public representatives are demanding that the NAC authorities take immediate steps to resolve the situation. Especially at night, due to the absence of lighting arrangements, people are facing great inconvenience. While NAC officers and junior engineers seem busy with unnecessary beautification projects, the question remains when will their attention finally turn towards the crematorium? The school has neither adequate number of classrooms nor required number of teachers. Consequently, the students are bearing the brunt. According to sources, there three teachers posted in the school but due to lack of classrooms, they are taking class in one room only. The school has classes from standard one to five whereas total 33 students are studying. But MDM is not prepared for the students due to no room for cooking. There is also no water supply facility in the school. As a result, toilets are lying unused. Meanwhile, the locals have demanded that the administration should look into the grave issues.

G'pati school has no sufficient classrooms, kitchen

A primary school in the interior Konda Parsamba village under Gumma block of Gajapati district is facing serious infrastructure and manpower issues. The school has neither adequate number of classrooms nor required number of teachers. Consequently, the students are bearing the brunt. According to sources, there three teachers posted in the school but due to lack of classrooms, they are taking class in one room only. The school has classes from standard one to five whereas total 33 students are studying. But MDM is not prepared for the students due to no room for cooking. There is also no water supply facility in the school. As a result, toilets are lying unused. Meanwhile, the locals have demanded that the administration should look into the grave issues.

In Jagatsinghpur Woman dies 'without oxygen' in ambulance

Locals vandalise vehicle. Tension prevailed as irate locals vandalised a private ambulance carrying a woman after she succumbed on the way to hospital in Jagatsinghpur district on Monday. The damaged vehicle was later seized by the Jagatsinghpur police. While the exact cause of the woman's death was yet to be ascertained, family members alleged that she died due to unavailability of oxygen in the ambulance. The patient, identified as Kamala Panda (58) of Brahmanakhanda village under Aula panchayat in the district, had complained of chest pain. She was first rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH). But when her condition deteriorated and Kamala was referred to the SCB Medical College Hospital, family members contacted a private ambulance to take her to Cuttack. However, when the ambulance was en route to the hospital, Kamala's condition suddenly got worse necessitating ventilator support. But as the vehicle was not equipped with oxygen facility, Kamala's health became critical and she succumbed before they could reach the hospital. Following her death, chaotic scenes unfolded as Kamala's relatives and villagers smashed the windows of the ambulance and vandalised the vehicle in a fit of rage. They also filed a police complaint alleging that lack of life-saving facility in the ambulance claimed the woman's life.

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Vedanta Aluminium boosts rural economy in J'suguda



A range of farmer-centric interventions undertaken. The Vedanta Aluminium has been playing a pivotal role in strengthening rural prosperity in Jharsuguda through a range of farmer-centric interventions. By promoting modern farming techniques and climate-smart practices, the company is helping transform agriculture from subsistence into a driver of sustainable growth. The initiatives cover eight villages, engaging over 1,000 households. Key measures include renovating water harvesting structures, deploying solar-powered borewells, and introducing advanced methods such as the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). These have resulted in a 45% rise in productivity, 20% reduction in cultivation costs, and assured irrigation over 30 acres. Skill development remains central, with more than 290 farmers trained in integrated nutrient and pest management, reducing reliance on chemical

fertilisers and improving soil health. Farmers are being organised into producer groups, linked with government schemes, and encouraged to adopt climate-resilient practices. Success stories, such as that of Surendra Patel from Kumudapali, reflect the impact. By shifting to solar irrigation and diversified farming, Patel doubled his income and turned his land into a model of productivity. As Odisha marks Nuankhai, Vedanta's work resonates with the festival's spirit of hope, renewal and community strength.

'Mahtab notable figure in India's freedom struggle'

Nat'l talk held to mark ex-CM's 125th birth anniversary. A two-day national seminar to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Utkal Kesari Dr Harekrushna Mahtab kicked off here on Saturday.

The programme was undertaken by Fakir Mohan University, in collaboration with the Harekrushna Mahtab Resource Centre, Bhubaneswar, and Odia Language Literature and Culture Department, Government of Odisha. Head of the Department of Language and Literature, FMU Professor Debasish Patra extended the welcome address and outlined the objectives of the seminar. Baleswar MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi described Dr Mahtab as an indelible figure in India's freedom struggle and political history, not only of Odisha but of the entire nation. He highlighted Mahtab's contributions across politics, literature, journalism, and education, calling them a source of enduring inspiration for the younger generation. MLA (Nilgiri) Santosh Kumar Khatua observed that Mahtab's courageous leadership redefined Odisha's identity and earned him the title Utkal Kesari. He urged today's youth to emulate Mahtab's courage, integrity, and vision. Eminent writer and columnist Das Benhur, delivering the keynote address, portrayed Mahtab as a people's leader, a literary voice, and a symbol of humanity and nationalism. Citing his literary works in both fiction and history, Benhur noted that Mahtab's writings continue to resonate with meaningful relevance today. Presiding over the ceremony, FMU VC Prof Santosh Kumar Tripathy hailed Dr Mahtab as a multifaceted statesman and the "architect of modern Odisha," observing that Odisha's independent identity is unimaginable without him. He expressed pride that the University's Central Library is named after Mahtab and reaffirmed the institution's commitment to carrying his values to the younger generation. Secretary of the Harekrushna Mahtab Resource Centre, Prof Upendra Padhi expressed gratitude to participants and pledged to advance Mahtab's vision in education, literature, and society through sustained research and dialogue. He also proposed the installation of a statue of Dr Mahtab and further strengthening of research initiatives in his name. Over the course of two days, five thematic sessions will explore themes like "Dr Harekrushna Mahtab: A Guiding Light of Odia Literature," "New Horizons of Odia Journalism," "Freedom Struggle," "Architect of Modern Odisha," and "Politics in Post-Independence Odisha."



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Delhi not in danger, authorities placed on high alert, says CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday assured that the national Capital is not in danger amid the rising level of the Yamuna River, even though authorities have been placed on high alert in view of the situation.

"This time, despite a high discharge of over 3 lakh cusecs, the level is expected to go up to 207 metres or above. But I can assure the people that they need not worry, as flooding will not occur beyond the floodplains. We are receiving hourly reports and are monitoring the situation. Delhi is not in danger," the Chief Minister emphasised.

"The large-scale desilting of the Yamuna and its drains over the past six months has significantly strengthened

flood defences. All barrage gates have been opened to ensure smooth flow, preventing any stagnation. The water is flowing out as swiftly as it enters in 2023, the water level had reached 208.66 metres, she noted.

"There is an average of 72 hours for the water to reach here. We are fully prepared. The preparation is such that as much water comes in, it will be drained out. In the last six months, we have done the desilting of drains and there is no blockage," Gupta told reporters on the sidelines of an event. The Chief Minister further stated that the Yamuna floodplains will be affected and that the residents will face issues; however, she also stressed that the inundation will be restricted to that area.



DELHI CHIEF MINISTER REKHA GUPTA

I CAN ASSURE THE PEOPLE THAT THEY NEED NOT WORRY, AS FLOODING WILL NOT OCCUR BEYOND THE FLOODPLAINS. WE ARE RECEIVING HOURLY REPORTS AND ARE MONITORING THE SITUATION. DELHI IS NOT IN DANGER

minister Parvesh Sahib Singh, in a statement, echoed similar views. "All sector officers, district administration and police

have been placed on high alert. Preparations have begun to shift people living in vulnerable areas along the flood-

plains to safer places. Round-the-clock patrolling has been initiated on embankments and regulators and pumps are under constant supervision," he added.

Urging citizens to stay alert and extend full cooperation to the authorities, Singh remarked, "Timely action and collective responsibility will ensure that every precaution is taken in the interest of public safety."

The minister highlighted that the Delhi Government is closely monitoring the rise in the Yamuna's water level. "With discharge from the Hathnikund barrage crossing 3 lakh cusecs and the river at the Old Railway Bridge flowing at 204.87 metres, forecasts suggest the level may cross the danger mark of 206 metres within the next 36 to 48 hours," he said.



Pankaj Kumar

Loha Pul temporarily closed for traffic

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The old iron bridge popularly known as *Loha Pul*, over Yamuna has been temporarily closed for traffic movement from Tuesday evening, as the Yamuna River is expected to reach the evacuation mark of 206 metres.

The Delhi Government's Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) department issued two flood warnings on Monday, with the peak hourly discharge crossing the three lakh cusecs threshold for the first time this season at Haryana's Hathnikund barrage. Water released from these barrages typically takes 48 to 50 hours to reach Delhi. Even smaller discharges from upstream are contributing to the rising water level, which is nearing the warning mark in the city.

The warning mark for Delhi is 204.50 metres, the danger mark is 205.33 metres and evacuation of people begins when the water level reaches 206 metres. The Old Railway Bridge serves as a key observation point for tracking the river's flow and potential flood risks.

The Government has advised people living in the Yamuna floodplain of Delhi to move to safety as the water level of the river here rose steadily and is predicted to reach the evacuation mark of 206 metres by Tuesday evening. Around 15,000 people reside in low-lying areas across six districts of Delhi, while around 5,000 people stay in the floodplain.

WARNING SIGNS

- The warning mark for Delhi is 204.50 metres, the danger mark is 205.33 metres.
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- Around 15,000 people reside in low-lying areas across six districts of Delhi, while around 5,000 people stay in the floodplain.

"In view of possible flooding in Yamuna River due to increase in its level beyond the danger mark, you are hereby directed to close down the traffic and public movement on the bridge with effect from September 2 at 5 pm," read the order issued by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). The order was marked to Delhi Police and railways officials.

A heavy discharge of water from the Hathnikund Barrage led to the Yamuna swelling to 204.87 metres of the Old Railway Bridge (ORB) on Monday at 12 pm. It was forecast to touch 206.50 metres in the next 36 to 48 hours, the latest order by the I&FC department said.

A flood warning issued said, "As the water level at ORB may cross the danger level and is likely to reach 206.50 metres, all officers are hereby advised to keep a vigil in their respective areas and to take necessary action at vulnerable points." "People residing within the river embankments shall be warned, and arrangements must be made to shift them to safer places," it stated.

The document warned that in view of the amount of water being released from the Hathnikund Barrage and heavy rainfall in the upper

catchment area, the water level at Delhi Railway Bridge may cross 206 metres around 5 to 8 pm on September 2.

"The first warning is issued when the peak hourly discharge crosses one lakh cusecs, and a second warning is issued when the discharge is three lakh cusecs. The three lakh threshold was crossed at 8 am and until noon, it remained over three lakh every hour," said a flood control room official.

According to the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, the Hathnikund barrage discharged 3,29,313 cusec of water at 9 am, while the Wazirabad barrage discharged around 38,900 cusec at the time the flood warning was issued. Before Monday, the highest hourly discharge was 178,996 cusecs on August 17. On Monday, it touched 1,65,512 cusecs at 4 am; 2,10,359 cusecs at 5 am, 3,11,029 cusecs at 8 am, and a season-high level of 3,29,313 cusecs at 9 am.

Delhi divisional commissioner Neeraj Semwal said it is expected that over three lakh cusecs of water will be discharged from the barrages over the next couple of days.

Rain brings Delhi to a grinding halt



Pankaj Kumar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Huge traffic jams, heavily waterlogged roads, vehicles breaking down, scores of people stuck threw life out of gear as heavy rain lashed parts of the national Capital on Monday afternoon, with the city placed under a yellow alert for thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and moderate to heavy showers.

Till 5:30 pm, the city's primary weather station at Safdarjung recorded 18.6 mm of rainfall, while other stations reported 30.8 mm at Palam, 48.9 mm at Aya Nagar and 16.2 mm of rainfall at Lodhi Road, IMD data showed. The weather department had also urged residents to follow the dos and don'ts it circulated for weather conditions. Heavy congestion was reported

THE CITY IS PLACED UNDER YELLOW ALERT FOR THUNDERSTORMS ACCOMPANIED BY LIGHTNING AND MODERATE TO HEAVY SHOWERS

from several key roads and intersections, with commuters stranded for hours in long queues of vehicles. The situation was particularly grim in South Delhi and along major ring roads, with waterlogging further worsening the traffic flow.

In Northwest Delhi, traffic was heavy near Lala Jagat Narayan Marg around Netaji Subhash Place in Pitampura, with a significant stretch of the Outer Ring Road experiencing slow-moving traffic. Parts of South Delhi, including the busy Mahatma Gandhi Road,

NH-48 and Captain Gaur Marg from Lajpat Nagar to Bahapur, were also severely congested.

The other major routes affected by the rainfall-induced traffic included Pankha Road in Janakpuri, Mathura Road, Vikas Marg, Lodhi Road, Rajaram Kohli Marg, New Rohtak Road, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Marg and Najafgarh Road. Traffic was also severely affected on the stretch from Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Setu to Jangpura towards Sarai Kale Khan, causing delays for daily commuters.

Massive jams were reported on Mathura Road, Old Rohtak Road, parts of ITO and the corridor from Mahatma Gandhi Road to GT Karnal Road, leaving thousands of vehicles stranded due to the ongoing downpour. Several low lying areas reported waterlogging due to rain.

Delhi Metro witnesses third technical snag within week

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Metro witnessed its third technical snag within a week on Monday, causing delays on the Yellow and Blue lines and leading to overcrowding at several stations. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said the delays were also reported between Barakhamba and Indraprastha stations on the Blue Line due to a signalling issue.

The signalling issue in the metro system was a technical failure in the automated safety mechanism that regulates train movement, forcing trains to slow down and operate in manual mode.

Earlier in the day, train services on the Yellow Line were also affected in the afternoon due to a signalling issue at Millennium City

Centre, Gurugram. "Due to a signalling issue at the terminal station Millennium City Centre Gurugram, the reversal of trains for onward service towards Samaypur Badli is taking a little extra time," the DMRC said in a post on X.

Train movement was disrupted between Sultanpur and Millennium City Centre, leading to long waiting times for passengers.

A huge crowd gathered at the Hauz Khas, Rajiv Chowk, Mandi House, Yamuna Bank and Kashmir Gate metro stations, with platforms so packed that there was hardly any space left between commuters, and passengers struggled to board trains.

This was the third such incident in the past week, with a similar glitch reported on Friday morning on the Yellow Line.



Rain triggers severe waterlogging, traffic chaos in Gurugram

PARVESH SHARMA
■ Gurugram

A few hours of rain on Monday brought Gurugram to a standstill as severe waterlogging was reported from more than 60 locations across the city, disrupting traffic and causing hardship to commuters.

The downpour, which began around 2 pm and intensified until 5:30 pm, inundated several arterial stretches, including key points along the Delhi-Jaipur

Expressway near the Delhi-Gurugram border. Traffic at this crucial junction slowed to a crawl, with two-wheeler riders facing the maximum inconvenience. Movement along the Delhi-Jaipur-Mumbai highway was also severely affected.

According to rainfall data shared by the district administration, Gurugram tehsil received 67 mm rainfall, Kadipur and Harsaru 80 mm each, Wazirabad 85 mm, Badshahpur 25 mm, Sohna 23 mm, Manesar 22 mm, Pataudi

13 mm, and Farrukhnagar 10 mm. The worst-hit areas included Rajiv Chowk underpass, Hanuman Chowk, Sohna Chowk, District Court, Sector 17-18 road, Narsinghpur, Jharsa Crossing, Sarhaul, Golf Course Extension Road, Vatika Chowk, Subhash Chowk, Dwarka Expressway, Udyog Vihar and parts of Old and New Gurugram.

Frustrated residents took to social media to share pictures of flooded roads and long traffic snarls, blaming civic



authorities for their failure to manage the situation.

"The district administration, Gurugram, must stop fooling people and start working on the ground. A few kilometres of travelling turned into hours, which is disgusting," said Sanjay Siwan, a resident of Subhash Nagar. Authorities, however, claimed they had taken measures to address the waterlogging.

"Teams have been deployed for clearing water at all locations. Pumps have been activated at Sheela

Mata Road, Rajiv Chowk and Narsinghpur," a GMDA official said. A civic body representative added, "We have improved upon our city infrastructure in the last three years, which kept the city running even during heavy rain. Teams have been activated to deal with waterlogging spots."

Traffic police also assured that personnel were on the ground to manage the situation. "Vehicle flow in larger parts of Gurugram was slow, but no complete jam

was reported. Our personnel have been directed to ensure smooth traffic movement," said a senior traffic police officer.

Rajesh Mohan, DCP (Traffic), added, "Sufficient traffic personnel have been deployed at major junctions. We also coordinated with civic authorities to drain water for smooth movement." Despite the assurances, residents complained of hours-long delays, exposing once again the city's fragile infrastructure against heavy rains.

DDA plans to hire landscape architecture firms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

To better manage, upgrade its parks and future green spaces, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is planning on hiring landscape architecture firms to provide professional services. Under the project, the design for upcoming green spaces and parks and recreational spots, such as Banseera along the Yamuna River, will be planned and upgraded by the firm; till now, this work was done in-house by the authority.

"The empanelled landscape architects or firms will be responsible for designing and redeveloping plazas and public open spaces and suggesting sustainable growth of parks," an official said.

The DDA also plans to interconnect all its existing and upcoming parks along the



Yamuna floodplain. Over the past two years, several recreational spaces have come up on the Yamuna floodplain, which includes parks and cafes, all developed by DDA along the 22-kilometre stretch of the river starting from Wazirabad barrage and ending at Okhla barrage.

The projects developed by the DDA are Asita East and West and Kalindi Aviral, which include Baansera Park, Vasudev Ghat, Amrut Biodiversity Park, and Yamuna Vatika near Rajghat that have already been developed in a combined area of 740 hectares officials said.

"Designing floodplain projects, wetland parks, and biodiversity parks will be one of the many requirements for the architect. Delhi Development Authority seeks to infuse upcoming projects with diverse design sensibilities, technical expertise, and innovative approaches to landscape planning," the tender issued by DDA said.

Several of the parks developed by the DDA are now available for cultural programming and artistic events, fostering social engagement while supporting self-sustaining models of urban green space, the official added.

The DDA has developed over 16,000 acres of green cover, which includes seven biodiversity parks, 11 major ecological restoration projects along the Yamuna floodplains, and over 773 urban parks.

Delhi witnesses best AQI for January-August period

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi and NCR continues to witness an improving trend in the overall air quality and for the period between January — August during the current year, the national Capital registered its best ever average AQI (Air Quality Index) during the 8 years ie, from 2018 to 2025 (barring 2020 — the year of lockdown due to Covid), according to Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Monday.

Aided by favourable meteorological conditions and efforts by different stakeholders, the average AQI of Delhi for the month of August during the current year has been recorded as 172 as against 187 in 2024, 174 in 2023, 194 in 2022, 192 in 2021, 147 in 2020, 199 in 2019, 203 in 2018 respectively, during the corresponding period; This year, 'Good-



The CAQM said average AQI of Delhi during the period January — August during the current year has been recorded as 172 as against 187 in 2024, 174 in 2023, 194 in 2022, 192 in 2021, 147 in 2020, 199 in 2019, 203 in 2018 respectively, during the corresponding period; This year, 'Good-

Satisfactory' days for the month of August were 23 as against 19 days in 2018, 22 days in 2019, 31 days in 2020, 11 days in 2021, 18 days in 2022, 08 days in 2023, and 29 days in 2024;

400 ('Severe' or 'Severe+' categories). There were 06, 07, 02, 06, 01, 03 and 03 such days during the years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 respectively.

Moreover, this period also witnessed highest number of 'Satisfactory' days ie 65 such days (barring 2020 - the year of lockdown due to Covid), as against 40 days in 2018, 35 days in 2019, 87 days in 2020, 42 days in 2021, 50 days in 2022, 50 days in 2023 and 48 days in 2024;

The period from January — August (upto 27th August) has seen the lowest levels of PM2.5 concentration in Delhi compared to the corresponding period since 2018 (barring 2020 — the year of lockdown due to Covid); Delhi witnessed PM2.5 running average of 74 µg/m3 in the current year as against 86 in 2024, 78 in 2023, 85 in 2022, 90 in 2021, 68 in 2020, 91 in 2019 and 95 in 2018 respectively;

CBI takes over investigation in lawyer couple murder case



The CBI has registered an FIR into the killing of a lawyer couple in Telangana's Peddapalli four years ago, taking over the investigation from the Ramagiri police on the directions of the Supreme Court, officials said.

RCC tunnel lining of Rishikesh project completed in a month

Over 500 metres of an RCC tunnel lining in an escape tunnel of the ambitious Rishikesh-Karnaprayag Rail Project was built in a month, the L&T said in a statement. The company said this feat was achieved last month last month, claiming it marks the highest known monthly progress globally for RCC tunnel lining using a single gantry system.



Power discoms launch 1kW rooftop solar scheme in Odisha



The Tata Power-led Odisha discoms on Monday launched a 1kW rooftop solar scheme, enabling households to generate around 100 units of electricity per month, officials said.

Dibang hydropower project to ensure jobs: Pema Khandu

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Monday asserted that the 2,880MW Dibang Multipurpose Project (DMP) will go far beyond electricity generation, promising employment, development funds and new opportunities for people of the state. Khandu, during the day, inspected preparatory work at the project site along with NHP Chairman and Managing Director Sanjay Kumar Singh.



New Immigration & Foreigners Act, 2025 comes into effect

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A new Act that regulates matters related to foreigners and immigration and has provisions for heavy punishment for carrying a forged passport or visa came into effect on Monday. The Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, was passed by parliament during the Budget session, and President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent on April 4, 2025. "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025 (13 of 2025), the central Government hereby appoints the 01st day of September, 2025, as the date on which the provisions of the said Act shall come into force," said a notification issued by Nitesh Kumar Vyas, additional secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

ACCORDING TO THE LAW, ANYONE FOUND TO BE USING A FORGED PASSPORT OR VISA WILL BE PUNISHED WITH A JAIL TERM OF UP TO SEVEN YEARS

According to the law, henceforth, anyone found to be using a forged passport or visa for entering into India or staying in or exiting from the country will be punishable with a jail term of up to seven years and a fine to the extent of ₹10 lakh. The Act also provides for mandatory reporting of information about foreigners by hotels, universities and other educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes to enable tracking of overstaying foreigners. All international airlines and ships will also be

required to submit at a port or place in India to a civil authority or immigration officer the passenger and crew manifest, the advance information of passengers and crew on board such aircraft, vessel or other mode of transport. "Whoever knowingly uses or supplies a forged or fraudulently obtained passport or other travel document or visa for entering into India or staying in or exiting from India, shall be punishable with an imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than two years, but may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine which shall not be less than one lakh rupees, but may extend to ten lakh rupees," according to the Act. It also says that any foreigner who enters into any area in India without a valid passport or other travel document, including visa required for such entry in contraven-

tion of provisions of the law or of any rule or order given in pursuance thereof, shall be punishable with an imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with fine which may extend to five lakh rupees or with both. The legislation empowers the Central Government to exert control over places that are "frequented by any foreigner" and require the owner to close the premises, permit its use under specified conditions, or refuse admission to all or a "specified class" of foreigners. It is comprehensive legislation to regulate all matters relating to foreigners and immigration which were till now administered through four Acts, i.e. The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000. All these laws have been repealed.

60 departmental action cases pending against CBI officers: CVC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Sixty cases of departmental action were pending against CBI officers as of December 31, 2024, the latest report by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has said. Of these cases, 22 are pending for more than four years. "Pendency of cases against CBI officers reflects on the reputation and image of the country's premier investigation agency," said the recently released CVC's annual report 2024. As of December 31, 2024, as many as 39 departmental cases against Group 'A' officers and 21 cases against Group 'B' and 'C' officials of the CBI were pending at various stages, it said. The CVC exercises superintendence over the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the agency's probe into offences alleged to have been committed under

Pendency of cases against CBI officers reflects on the reputation and image of the country's premier investigation agency
— CVC ANNUAL REPORT 2024

the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act, 1988. In its report, the probity watchdog also reviewed the progress of cases pending with respective authorities for the want of sanction to prosecute corrupt Government officials. The CBI reported that at the end of 2024, a total of 200 cases were pending for grant of prosecution sanction under the PC Act, 1988, which belong to 46 different organisations, the report said. In these cases pending with various organisations, 534 requests have been made for granting prosecution sanction, as some of the cases involved more than one accused person, it said. Of the total, 106 cases were pending prosecution sanction for over three months.

Competent authorities are expected to decide on cases of sanction of prosecution within three months. Another month can be provided in cases where there is a requirement for consultation with the Attorney General or any law officer in the attorney general's office. The commission regularly reminds the authorities concerned in the central Government departments and organisations to expedite decisions in cases pending for sanction for prosecution beyond the mandatory time limit given in the Act, it said. As of December 31, 2024, a total of 72 references involving 171 officers were also pending with different organisations for previous approval sought by CBI under Section 17 A of the

PC Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018), for conducting an investigation, the report said. The Section makes prior approval of an appropriate authority mandatory before initiating any enquiry or investigation into any corruption-related offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant. "The commission, on its part, advises the authorities concerned on a regular basis, for prompt disposal of requests for conducting investigation, as received by them from CBI," the report said. Over 1,500 posts were lying vacant in the CBI, according to the CVC report. "The total sanctioned strength of CBI as on December 31, 2024, was 7,300, against which 5,798 officials were in positions; 1,502 posts were lying vacant." The highest of 887 posts lying vacant were of "executive ranks", 503 of "ministerial staff", 57 of "technical officers", 48 of "law officers" and seven of "canteen staff", the report said.

Dharmasthala rally targets anti-Hindu conspiracy: Joshi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Monday said the BJP organised the 'Dharmasthala Chalo' rally in this temple town to "unearth the conspiracy of the ultra-left wing" in the Congress Government in Karnataka, which he alleged was trying to "defame Hindu centres of faith and their beliefs". He was speaking on the sidelines of the rally, organised to condemn what the party called a smear campaign against Dharmasthala. The BJP has also demanded an NIA probe into the case. "Dharmasthala Chalo is to unearth the conspiracy of the ultra-left wing in the Congress Government, who are trying to defame all Hindu centres of faith and beliefs in the country. They always target Hindu society, indulge in one-sided vote-bank politics," Joshi claimed. "To expose all these things, we are here today," he told reporters here. The union minister described the Dharmasthala case as "100 per cent a conspiracy", pointing out that Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar himself had said there was a "conspiracy". "Based on a complaint by



Union Minister Pralhad Joshi with party legislators and leaders during BJP's 'Dharmasthala Chalo' rally

a person whose background is not known, an SIT was constituted to probe the matter. This was done despite the local police suggesting that his background should first be verified. After the SIT was formed, digging began everywhere in Dharmasthala. We had welcomed the SIT to conduct an inquiry, not to carry out excavations across the region," Joshi said. Rejecting the Congress charge that the BJP was politicising the issue, Joshi countered, "It is you (Congress) who have made it political. We are here to expose you. You did the same on the Waqf issue and the CAA (Citizenship

Amend-ment Act)." The controversy erupted after a complainant, later identified as C N Chinniah and arrested on charges of perjury, claimed that over the past two decades, several bodies — including those of women showing signs of sexual assault — had been buried in Dharmasthala, with allegations pointing to the administrators of the local temple. The SIT set up by the state Government has since carried out searches at multiple sites along the Netravathi River in forested areas of Dharmasthala identified by Chinniah. Skeletal remains were recovered at two locations, officials said.

My rival not visible, does not speak: Reddy's swipe at NDA VP nominee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Hyderabad

Alleging that his rival and ruling NDA nominee CP Radhakrishnan is "neither visible, nor speaking", Opposition's Vice Presidential candidate B Sudershan Reddy on Monday said a healthy debate would have been possible if he had spoken. Addressing a press conference, which was also attended by Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and the ruling Congress leaders, Sudershan Reddy said he favoured a healthy debate and that his intention is not to speak lowly about his rival. "My rival is not visible. He does not speak. It is not known where he is, what he is doing. If both candidates speak, there will be a debate, a conversation. There would have been an opportunity to introduce to the people. Not only to the voters. Somehow, I did not get that opportunity," he said. Asked to elaborate his comments, he said he made the remark with the view that a healthy conversation would have taken

place if Radhakrishnan also spoke. Responding to a question on the most pressing Constitutional challenge that India faces today, Reddy said the greatest concern is the "deficiency" in the functioning of the Election Commission of India. "If it continues in the same direction, the democracy in this country would be in peril. That's what I believe," he said. Clarifying a remark by the CM describing him as a candidate of the INDIA bloc, Sudarshan Reddy said he is now the "candidate of opposition parties". He noted that he has support from non-INDIA bloc parties like AAP, other smaller parties and also Independent members. Sudershan Reddy, a former Supreme Court judge, said the contest for Vice President's post is part of his 53-year journey with the Constitution. He said the VP election is going to be one of the most fair, decent elections ever fought in the recent history of India. "Ours is not a majoritarian state. Ours is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-reli-



Opposition's vice presidential candidate B Sudershan Reddy

gious society. The Constitution does not give power to anyone. The Constitution's job is to limit your power," he added. On accepting the proposal to contest for the Vice President's post, he said it is the duty of every citizen, not just his, to speak up at a time when the Constitution and democratic systems are losing their sheen in the country. On the occasion, the CM released a letter written by Sudershan Reddy to all MPs. The opposition's Vice Presidential candidate said the letter makes a person-

al appeal (for support) to the MPs. He said he has the right to such a letter as he does not belong to any political party. However, the letter was not immediately shared with the media at the press conference. In his address, the CM said Telugu leaders, including Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, PV Narasimha Rao, NT Rama Rao, S Jaipal Reddy and M Venkaiah Naidu had played an active role in national politics but Telugu leaders are now almost non-existent at the national level. He urged TDP Chief N Chandrababu Naidu, Jana Sena Party president and Andhra Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan, YSR Congress president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, BRS president K Chandrasekhar Rao, AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi to support Sudershan Reddy's candidature. He personally appealed to the 42 Lok Sabha members and 18 Rajya Sabha members in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to vote as per their conscience to promote the importance of a Telugu leader in national politics.

LEFT PARTIES WELCOME BREAKTHROUGH IN INDIA-CHINA RELATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Left parties have welcomed the breakthrough in India-China ties as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the SCO summit on Sunday. In a statement issued on Monday, the CPI welcomed the "positive outcome" of the meeting between Modi and Xi. "The Communist Party of India welcomes the positive outcome of the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping of China. The engagement between the leaders of India and China, two of the most ancient civilisations of the world, reaffirms that our countries are destined to be partners, not rivals," it said in a statement. The Left party said the dialogue signals a commitment to move towards better understanding at all levels — political, economic, cultural and people-to-people. "Such cooperation is of great importance not only to our two nations, but also to the strengthening of the unity of the Global South and to the advancement of multipolarity in international relations," it added. "At a time when imperialist forces seek to divide and dominate, the unity and cooperation of India and China will provide a powerful impetus to an alternative world order based on equality, justice and mutual respect among nations. The CPI calls upon all sections of the people to support this positive momentum in India-China relations," the party said. In a post on X on Sunday, CPI(M) general secretary M A Bapu welcomed the "breakthrough in India-China relations and the agreements on border management, resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and direct flights". "On the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, strengthening friendly ties and cooperation between two of the world's most populous nations and ancient civilisations is a very positive development," he said.

World running out of time to act on climate change: COP30 President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The world risks "running out of time" to act on climate change without cooperation, COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago warned on Monday and stressed on the need to bridge the political and financial divide between developed and developing nations. He also criticised US President Donald Trump's reluctance to engage in climate negotiations. "We understand that President Trump is not going to listen to me. And the problem is that he does not want to talk about the emissions of specific countries," Correa do Lago told reporters. Trump has withdrawn the United States from the Paris Agreement on climate change. This is the second

time he has directed the US to exit the agreement. He had done so during his first administration and the US rejoined under the Biden administration. Correa do Lago acknowledged that climate negotiations have long been marked by a sharp divide between developed and developing nations. "The problem of the negotiation of climate change since the beginning is divided very much the developed countries and the developing countries, because the developing countries insist very much on the necessity of the rich countries to provide the way for developing countries to have a cleaner development," he said. "And on the other side, developed countries only want commitments from the

developing countries without giving the means to evolve. So this divide is very strong," he said. The COP30 chief stressed that bridging the gap is urgent. "We have to try to bridge that, because science tells us we have very little time. The world risks running out of time to act on climate change without cooperation between developed and developing countries," he said. "So I think that we have to start to think that the main issue is not to be right, but the main issue is really to combat climate change and to have an effective way of making development something that is cleaner and to bring jobs, to bring new jobs, and to improve the quality of life of people." Noting that the challenge



COP30 President Andre Correa do Lago

is immense, Correa do Lago said the scale of climate change makes it impossible to address financial and structural issues in the same way it was thought possible 30 years ago.

"Today, climate change is impacting the entire global economy. Most of our activities will need to be transformed. This is not just about environmental action but it is about investment, innova-

tion, and building a new economy," he said. "Ultimately, climate change demands economic solutions. Our countries are rich in talent, entrepreneurs, and capable Governments

who can imagine and lead this new path of development," he said. He also said that COP30 has to be a meeting of the entire world corresponding to the seriousness of the situation. "This is not just about climate change this time. This will have an impact on jobs, economy. We need to exchange many plans and ideas with the Government as well as the civil society," he said. COP30, scheduled to take place in Belem, Brazil, in November 2025, will mark the first time the UN climate summit is hosted in the Amazon region. "The agenda started with pollution. Now we talk about climate change, which is a much bigger and more complex phenomenon. But the first direct impact on people is pollution," he said.

States Focus

Rahul insulting voters, belittling LoP's position: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The BJP on Monday mocked Rahul Gandhi's claim that he will soon come out with a "hydrogen bomb" as part of his vote theft charge, saying that his "atom bomb" had turned out to be a damp squib, and accused him of demeaning his position of the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha with irresponsible comments.

Taking on Rahul Gandhi, whose Vote Adhikar Yatra concluded in Patna, for his barbs at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Congress leader and his party have a history of "abusing" Modi. But people, he added, have repeatedly rejected Gandhi and reposed faith in the prime minister.

By alleging fraud and deceit behind the BJP's victories under Modi's leadership, the Congress leader has been



insulting voters, he said. "This is arrogance and we will tell voters to punish him for his arrogance," he said.

The former Union minister took repeated jabs at RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav as

well for playing "second fiddle" to Gandhi in Bihar despite the Congress lacking a political base in the State. Yadav has claims over the chief minister's chair but has ceded the front seat to

Gandhi, he added. The Yatra, he asserted, will have no impact on the Bihar assembly polls, expected to be held in October-November.

Defending the ongoing Special Intensive Review of

electoral rolls in the State, Prasad claimed that the Opposition's campaign against it is solely driven by two reasons. Opposition leaders want "right and might to capture booths" and that infiltrators should be allowed to vote, he said, recalling the State's history of poll violence and incidents of booth-capturing.

Gandhi's campaign, he asserted, is born out of his frustration over the Congress' repeated poll defeats, and if he carries on with a similar conduct, then his party will suffer an even worse fate.

The BJP leader noted that the ruling party suffered setbacks in States like Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections due to the Opposition's "false" campaign that the Modi Government would change the Constitution if it were re-elected.

However, people soon realised the truth and voted

the BJP to record wins in Haryana and Maharashtra, he added, asserting that the ruling alliance will notch up a similar victory in Bihar.

The SIR removed from electoral rolls 22 lakh dead voters and eight lakh duplicate voters, he said, wondering if their names should have been allowed on the voters' list.

The BJP's sharp attack on Gandhi and his allies came after he said his party will soon come out with a "hydrogen bomb" of revelations about vote theft and that Modi will not be able to show his face to the country afterwards.

"We will not let them (BJP) murder the Constitution and that is why we took out a yatra. We got a tremendous response. People came out in large numbers and raised the slogan 'vote chor gaddi chhor'," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said.



NINE MAOISTS SURRENDER WITH ARMS IN JHARKHAND

Nine members of the banned Maoist splinter group, Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP), surrendered before the security forces with their arms and ammunition in Latehar district on Monday, police said. Among the nine red rebels were a self-styled zonal commander and four sub-zonal commanders carrying rewards of a total of ₹23 lakh on their heads, they said.

The Maoists surrendered with 12 firearms, including four AK-47 rifles, one AK-56 rifle and three SLRs, besides 1,782 cartridges and 26 magazines. "Nine JJMP members surrendered before the security forces. I urge all Maoists to surrender and avail of the benefits of the surrender policy, or be ready to face the consequences," IG (Operations) of Jharkhand Police, Michael Raj S, said while addressing reporters.



IIT-GUWAHATI DEVELOPS SENSOR FOR CANCER CAUSING POLLUTANTS

Researchers at IIT-Guwahati have developed nanosensor from milk protein and thymine for instant detection of cancer-causing water pollutants, the institute said on Monday. Using carbon dots and ultraviolet lights, the sensor can detect mercury and harmful antibiotic contamination in less than 10 seconds, it said.

With rapid urbanisation, industrial activities and overuse of pharmaceuticals, water contamination is becoming a pressing issue, putting ecosystems and human health at risk worldwide, the institute said in a Statement.

Hydrogen bomb of revelations on vote theft coming: Rahul Gandhi

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA ■ Patna

At the end of his Voter Adhikar Yatra in Patna, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi announced that his party would soon release a "hydrogen bomb" of evidence about vote theft. He claimed this would expose Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who would then be unable to show his face to the country.

Rahul Gandhi stated that vote theft was happening in elections, citing the Mahadevapura assembly in Karnataka as an example.

He explained that vote theft is not just about votes; it's about "stealing rights, stealing democracy and stealing employment." He warned that the BJP would take away people's ration cards and other rights. The march, which marked the end of the



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren and others during a march marking culmination of Vote Adhikar Yatra in Patna on Monday

1,300-km Voter Adhikar Yatra covering 110 Assembly seats, brought together top leaders from the INDIA bloc.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav were among those who addressed the crowd. The march was

scheduled to reach Baba Saheb Ambedkar's statue near the Patna High Court, but it was rescheduled and leaders addressed the gathering near Dak Bungalow roundabout. Kharge cautioned the people of Bihar about the intentions of PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, saying they would be

"doomed" if they didn't heed the warning. He criticised Modi for having time to visit other countries but not for visiting Manipur. Kharge also claimed that the BJP and the RSS would "dump" Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after the State elections and a new Opposition Government would come to power.

Tejashwi Prasad Yadav of the RJD called the Nitish Government a "copycat" for copying his policies and asked the crowd if they wanted a "duplicate CM or original CM," once again positioning himself as the chief ministerial candidate for the INDIA bloc.

Other leaders, including Hemant Soren, Ashok Gehlot, Supriya Sule, D Raja, Dipankar Bhattacharya, Yusuf Pathan, and Sanjay Raut, also participated in the march.

TEJASHWI CALLS NITISH BHISHMA PITAMAHA

Patna: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Monday described Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as the "Bhishma Pitamaha of corruption" as his Government is allegedly involved in several irregularities. In a veiled attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, Yadav claimed that the "two BJP leaders with the help of the Election Commission of India want to finish democracy" in the country.

"The Bihar CM is not in a conscious State of mind. He is lacking vision. In fact, the CM does not have a vision for the State. People will oust his Government from power in the upcoming assembly polls," Tejashwi claimed while addressing a public rally at the culmination of Congress' Voter Adhikar Yatra in Bihar.

He also alleged, "The Bihar CM has become Bhishma Pitamaha of corruption and he should not speak about irregularities," the RJD leader said. Bhishma Pitamaha is a central figure in the epic Mahabharata and is considered a Statesman and military commander of the ancient Kauravas. "Engineers in Bihar were caught with ₹100 crore in cash. The CM should stop talking about 'illegal practices' in Government departments in the State," he said.

Will follow HC orders on Maratha stir: Fadnavis



People gather during a hunger strike by Maratha quota agitation leader Manoj Jarange in Mumbai on Monday

GOVT FAILED TO HANDLE SITUATION: SULE

Pune: NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule on Monday accused the Maharashtra Government of ignoring Maratha quota leader Manoj Jarange, who has been on a hunger strike in Mumbai since August 29.

She criticised the authorities, stating, "The Government knew Jarange was coming to Mumbai and it should have taken steps to avoid the stand-off, but it failed to handle the agitation". The Baramati MP reiterated her demand that the Government convene an all-party meeting over the reservation issue.

"A decision on the Maratha reservation should be taken in the cabinet and a resolution be passed in the State assembly. If any Constitutional amendment is needed (to remove the Supreme Court-mandated ceiling on quotas), it should be sent to the Centre," she told reporters.

On a day Jarange stopped drinking water, Sule claimed no representative from the Government had met him since Sunday. On Saturday, a delegation led by retired High Court judge Sandeep Shinde met Jarange at Azad Maidan.

"It is my moral responsibility to listen to the woes of people and find a solution," she said on Monday, a day after she was mobbed by Maratha protesters when she went to meet Jarange at the protest venue.

Sule also slammed the BJP for criticising her father and ex-Union minister Sharad Pawar amid the quota row. "On one hand, the people in the State Government ridicule NCP (SP), calling it a finished party, but when such a big agitation takes place, they blame Pawar saheb. They are in power with 250 MLAs and still, they criticise him," she said.

Mumbai, he said.

"I was travelling, so I do not know exactly what the court observed. I got to know that the court has observed that some violations have taken place regarding the permissions given to the protest in Mumbai.

The court has expressed displeasure over whatever is happening on the roads of Mumbai," he said.

On resolving the protest, Fadnavis further said that discussions can't take place on the mic, and we should know whom to hold talks with.

Ink, stones hurled at MP Congress president Jitu Patwari's convoy again

GIRISH SHARMA ■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari once again came under attack on Monday, this time in Neemuch, where BJP workers hurled ink and black cloth at his convoy and set his effigy ablaze. On Sunday, his convoy was attacked by pelting stones on his way to Ratlam.

The incident occurred at 4-Zero Square as Patwari was on his way to address the 'vote thieves, abdicate your seat' rally.

Several women workers of the BJP Mahila Morcha led the protest, waving black flags and shouting slogans, accusing Patwari of insulting the dignity of women with his recent remark.

The controversy was triggered when Patwari, in one of his public addresses, claimed that women in Madhya Pradesh consume more alcohol than anywhere else in the country.

The BJP seized on the Statement as an affront to the beneficiaries of the Ladli Behna scheme, using it to fuel anger on the



ground. On Monday, Neemuch MLA Dilip Singh Parihar said the protest was a reflection of "public fury" against Patwari and demanded that he apologise unconditionally for his words.

The Congress, however, condemned the attack and alleged that the BJP was orchestrating violence to divert attention from real issues.

Senior Congress leader PC Sharma demanded stronger security for Patwari, pointing out that this was the second consecutive day he had been targeted.

On Sunday, while Patwari was travelling to Ratlam for a major protest rally, his car was attacked

near Mangrol Phata by a group of assailants who smashed its window. Though he escaped unharmed, the Congress alleged that the attack was carried out by BJP supporters at the behest of a local leader. A formal complaint was later filed at the Station Road police station. Madhya Pradesh Congress Media Department Chairman Mukesh Nayak also strongly reacted to the incident, saying the repeated attacks on Patwari exposed the ruling BJP's nervousness.

"The BJP has lost the trust of the people and is now resorting to mob protests and violence against our leaders. Jeetu Patwari has raised serious questions about the government's failures, its politics of deception and the menace of intoxication that is spreading across the State. Instead of answering those questions, the BJP is trying to silence him by intimidation. This is nothing but a cowardly attempt to crush the voice of the Opposition," Nayak said.

Congress alleges ₹1 lakh crore scam in Kaleshwaram project



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Hyderabad

Telangana Congress on Monday said collapse of the Kaleshwaram Project has once again exposed the massive corruption and criminal mismanagement of former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) and his BRS team.

"What they projected as a lifeline for Telangana has now turned into a monument of corruption and betrayal. With over ₹1 lakh crore looted, the only place left for KCR and his team is jail, not bail," said Bandi Sudhakar Goud, TPCC Official Spokesperson.



Meghalaya CM Conrad K Sangma visited the cemetery to pay tribute to his father, Purno A Sangma on his 78th birth anniversary

Vaishno Devi yatra remains suspended for 7th day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Jammu

Amid heavy rainfall in Katra town on Monday, the pilgrimage to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine remained suspended for the seventh consecutive day in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district since a landslide on a yatra route claimed 34 lives last Tuesday.

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board said it has cancelled all bookings, including helicopters and accommodations, with a 100 per cent refund until the yatra is resumed.

"Yatra has remained suspended for the past one week. Bad weather conditions still persist, so the decision to continue the suspension of yatra has been



taken keeping in view the safety of pilgrims," an official said. Heavy rains began in Katra and the Trikuta hills, the abode of the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, on Monday. Helicopter services from Katra to Bhawan, ropeway rides from Bhawan

to Bhairon Ghati, hotel accommodations, and other yatra-related bookings have all been cancelled, officials said. "All bookings stand cancelled with 100 per cent refund until the yatra is suspended. Send cancellation requests with details to

refund@maavaishnodevi.Ne t. "Earlier self-cancellations will receive pending refunds within 15 days," the Board announced on X.

Reasi district is one of the worst-hit areas in the Union Territory due to the current spell of heavy rains. A landslide triggered by a cloudburst struck the route to the shrine at Adhkuwari in the Trikuta hills of the Katra belt last Tuesday, killing 34 pilgrims and injuring 20 others.

The yatra was suspended on Tuesday last till further orders. It was followed by the constitution of a high-level three-member inquiry committee by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The committee will be spearheaded by Shaleen Kabra, Additional Chief

Secretary of the Department of Jal Shakti, J&K, and will also include the Divisional Commissioner and the Inspector General of Police, Jammu.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary had accused the Lieutenant Governor administration of allowing the yatra to the cave shrine despite a warning on the weather front.

The Shrine Board has refuted allegations of allowing the yatra to proceed in disregard of weather advisories and at the cost of pilgrim safety, saying that the pilgrimage was suspended at noon on August 26, ahead of the cloudburst that triggered the landslide.

SC rejects plea against construction of new passenger jetty at Gateway of India



The construction of a new passenger jetty and terminal at the iconic Gateway of India in south Mumbai would continue as the Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea against the Bombay High Court verdict allowing the project. The High Court on July 15 had dismissed three petitions challenging the construction of the ₹229 crore passenger jetty and terminal facility proposed by the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) near the Gateway of India.

A bench comprising Chief Justice BR Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran dismissed the appeal filed by one Laura D Souza against the High Court verdict, saying the issue fell under the policy domain of the Government. The project in the sea, approximately measuring 1.5 acres, will be nearly 280 metres from the Gateway of India, located near the Radio Club in south Mumbai.

According to the plea, the project plan involves parking of 150 cars, VIP lounges/waiting areas, amphitheatre and ticket counters/administrative areas along with a huge tennis racket-shaped jetty on stilts in the sea. It was alleged that the project would cause inconvenience to locals as the issue of traffic congestion has not been considered.

SC extends status quo in Sambhal mosque row



The Supreme Court on Monday extended by two weeks its order directing status quo over the Sambhal mosque dispute in Uttar Pradesh. A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and Alok Radhe said two appeals were filed in the matter by Committee of Management Jami Masjid Sambhal represented by its secretary and vice president, respectively. The top court subsequently directed its registry to enquire into the matter and submit a report.

Appearing for the Hindu plaintiffs in the suit, advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain opposed the extension of the status quo. Senior advocate Huzeifa Ahmadi, who was representing the mosque management, however, sought the extension till the report's submission. The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the Masjid committee against an order of the Allahabad High Court which dismissed its plea against the survey ordered by a Sambhal court in the Shahi Jama Masjid and Harihar Temple dispute, upholding the civil court's direction for the survey.

Delhi HC bar association expresses concerns to CJI, collegium over transfer of judges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Delhi High Court Bar Association (DHCA) on Monday written to Chief Justice of India BR Gavai and the Supreme Court Collegium expressing concerns over the recent spate of transfers of judges in and out of the Delhi High Court. Bar Association has said that these transfers have generated unease among lawyers practicing before the Delhi High Court as well as the institution itself.

"The transfers of several judges from this court to other jurisdictions have generated unease, not only within the institution but also amongst the members of the bar. Judges who have risen through the ranks of the Bar, carry with them an invaluable understanding of the pulse of the city and its courts, and the recent trans-



Delhi High Court

fers underscore how essential judicial continuity is, and how deeply the Bar values judges who have journeyed alongside it over the decades," said DHCA, urging for greater transparency and consultation when it comes to appointment and transfer of judges.

DHCA said that there is now a prevalent perception that the members of the Delhi High Court Bar are being overlooked for eleva-



HC directs IAF to appoint women on unfilled posts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre and the Indian Air Force to appoint a women in one of its 20 unfilled flying branch vacancies, underscoring present times when a distinction could not be made between male and female candidates in the Indian Armed Forces. The court was hearing a women's plea for filling up the 20 unfilled vacancies not earmarked for women candidates and her appointment in one of them.

The petitioner said she was seventh in the merit list of women candidates after the two candidates appointed against the two earmarked vacancies. A bench of Justices C Hari Shankar and Om Prakash Shukla noted of the total of 92 vacancies, 70 were filled by male candidates and two women were appointed in the vacancies earmarked for females.

"The respondents are directed to appoint the petitioner, forthwith, against one of the unfilled 20 Air Force (i) Flying vacancies relating to the examination notification dated May 17, 2023. She would be entitled to be treated at



par, for all service benefits including seniority and other associated benefits, with the 70 male and two female candidates who have been selected and appointed," the August 25 verdict said.

The Union Public Service Commission, which conducts the exam, in the May 17, 2023 recruitment notification advertised 92 vacancies for the Air Force flying branch, including two earmarked for women. Two vacancies earmarked for women candidates were filled, of the 90 remaining vacancies, only 70 vacancies were filled by male

candidates, leaving 20 vacancies unfilled. The High Court refused to accept the contention of the authorities which argued the petitioner had full knowledge about only two seats being reserved for women candidates.

Having failed to qualify on merit for the appointment against those two vacancies, they said, the women couldn't challenge the allocation of vacancies in the advertisement.

"The construction being placed by the respondents on the stipulation in the examination notice, regarding the

90 vacancies which were not earmarked for female candidates is, in our view, untenable. The notice does not state that 90 vacancies were reserved for male candidates and two were reserved for female candidates," the bench held.

"The verdict went on, 'Indeed, were it so to state, the stipulation might have been vulnerable to challenge on the ground of being gender skewed. We are, mercifully, no longer in those times in which discrimination could be made between male and female candidates so far

as entry into the Armed Forces — or, for that matter, anywhere else — is concerned (sic)."

The court said the only requirement for candidates who desired to be appointed as "Air Force (i) Flying" was the possession of a "Fit to Fly" certificate and the petitioner "unquestionably was in possession" of such a certificate.

The court said once it was held that the 90 vacancies that were not earmarked for female candidates were open to all candidates — both men and women — the "sequitur" or logical conclusion was obvious. "Only 70 male candidates qualified. 20 vacancies are, therefore, going abegging," it added.

While noting there was no dispute about the 20 vacancies not earmarked for female candidates remaining unfilled and the petitioner being 7th in the merit list of women candidates after the earmarked vacancies were filled by two women, the court found no basis not to appoint her against one of the remaining 20 vacancies.

Observing there were eligible female candidates and the authorities were not justified in keeping the 20 vacancies unfilled, the bench ruled

they were ought to fill the vacancies with female candidates lower in merit to the two candidates who were selected against the two earmarked vacancies.

"If, after appointing the successful women candidates against the remaining 20 vacancies, any vacancy still remains unfilled, it would be open to the respondents to fill up those vacancies by any other mode of recruitment. That, however, is not an issue with which we are concerned," the bench said.

The High Court also referred to several Supreme Court verdicts on the aspect of gender neutrality and said it was not permissible for anyone to interpret or administer any stipulation, advertisement or notification in a manner which would be "gender skewed".

The distinction between male and female was stated to have been reduced to nothing more than a chance chromosomal circumstance in the present times. The bench said ascribing to it, any greater relevance, would be "illogical as well as anachronistic". It is time, to adopt a somewhat pedestrian adage, that one woke up and smelt the coffee, the verdict added.

Maratha stir not peaceful, vacate all Mumbai streets: High Court

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Monday said the entire city has been brought to a standstill due to the ongoing Maratha quota agitation led by activist Manoj Jarange, and the protest has not been peaceful and violated all conditions.

The HC urged for normalcy to be restored in Mumbai, and gave an opportunity to Jarange and his supporters to rectify the situation and ensure all streets are vacated by Tuesday noon.

Jarange has been staging a hunger strike at Azad Maidan in south Mumbai from Friday, demanding a 10 per cent reservation to the Maratha community in Government jobs and education under the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category. He stopped drinking water from Monday, his supporters claimed.

A bench of Justices Ravindra Ghuge and Gautam Ankhad, in a special hearing, said the protesters have not remained at Azad Maidan —

the designated place for the agitation — and blocked several vital areas in south Mumbai. "The situation is grim and the city of Mumbai has been practically brought to a standstill," the court said.

The protestors have gathered at vital places such as the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) and Churchgate railway stations, Marine Drive promenade and even the high court building, it said.

The court noted the agitation was not peaceful and that Jarange and the other protesters have violated each and every condition laid down by authorities when permission was granted to hold a peaceful protest at the Azad Maidan in south Mumbai. "We are giving Jarange and his supporters an opportunity to rectify the situation immediately and ensure the streets are vacated and cleaned up by Tuesday noon," the bench said. The court said since Jarange and his supporters have prima facie vio-



Maratha quota protest by Manoj Jarange

lated the conditions and since they do not have valid permission to continue the protest, it expects the state Government to follow the due procedure laid down in law by initiating appropriate steps. The Government shall also ensure that no more protesters, as claimed by Jarange, shall enter the city henceforth, it said.

The bench, while posting the matter for further hearing on Tuesday, said if by then Jarange's health worsens, then the Government shall administer medical assistance to him. Advocate

General Birendra Saraf told the court that permission for the protest at Azad Maidan was granted only till August 29. Jarange and his supporters have violated every single condition and undertaking, he added.

The bench said Jarange's undertaking to the police that he would abide by all conditions laid down in the rules for public gathering, agitation and protest was merely a "lip service". "We can see how peaceful the protest is. The High Court building is surrounded. The entry gates for the judges and

lawyers are blocked. The cars of High Court judges were blocked today and prevented from coming to court today. The entire city has been blocked," it said. If Jarange's statement that lakhs of more such protesters will come in, then how does the state Government plan to deal with the situation, the court asked.

"He has said he will go on a fast till death and will not leave Mumbai till his demands are met. He (Jarange) is giving a clear threat. Why is the state Government not getting the roads cleared? As per the assurance given by Jarange, life in Mumbai will not come to standstill. Every assurance is violated," the bench said. Why are the protesters not sitting only at Azad Maidan and loitering everywhere else, the court sought to know.

"We want normalcy. Protestors are bathing and cooking and defecating on the streets," the HC said. The bench said it, too, was worried about Jarange, who

has been staging an indefinite hunger strike, and said while every citizen has the right to protest, it has to be done in a peaceful manner and within permissible limits. The HC reiterated the order passed on August 26 which said any protest held has to be done while strictly abiding by the rules.

When the court questioned how the Government plans to tackle the situation, Saraf said the Government and police had to strike a balance in the situation considering the ongoing Ganapati festival. "Exercise of brutal police force would be easy but the consequence of the same would be bad. We need to manage a delicate balance between the protesters and citizens on the road," Saraf said. The High Court has been on holiday since August 27 for the Ganesh festival and is to resume on Tuesday.

The bench took up for hearing the issue after several petitions were filed raising concerns over the protests going out of hand and bringing the city to a standstill.

Nitish Katara murder: SC extends interim bail of convict Vikas Yadav

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday extended by a week the interim bail of convict Vikas Yadav, undergoing a 25-year jail term in the 2002 Nitish Katara murder case.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh was hearing a plea filed by Yadav against an August 22 order of the Delhi High Court which refused to extend his interim bail granted by the top court on July 29. As the hearing com-

menced, Justice N Kotiswar Singh recused from hearing the matter. Justice Sundresh informed the lawyers appearing for the parties that the matter will be heard a different bench after getting orders from Chief Justice BR Gavai.

When Justice Singh recused, the lawyer appearing for Yadav sought extension of the interim bail, saying that his client's marriage was scheduled. The submission was opposed by the counsel appearing for Neelam Katara, mother of Nitish Katara, saying that he has already

married in July. The bench, however, extended his interim bail by one week.

Yadav (54) who has spent over 23 years in jail, also sought interim bail on the grounds that his marriage was fixed for September 5 and he had to arrange for ₹54 lakh, the fine imposed on him at the time of sentencing.

Earlier, a bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and AG Masih had agreed with the view of the high court and said the matter should be heard by the bench headed by Justice MM Sundresh, who passed

the July 29 order extending Yadav's interim bail.

The High Court on August 22 adjourned the matter till September 2 being "hesitant as to whether it has jurisdiction to extend the period of interim bail".

The top court observed the same was done keeping in mind the fact that the conviction of the petitioner by the trial court — affirmed by the high court with sentence of imprisonment for 25 years without remission — stood approved even by the Supreme Court not only

when the appeal was decided appeal but also when the review petition was dismissed.

"The High Court prima facie seems to be justified in its opinion that once this court had affirmed the decision of the High Court that the petitioner would not be entitled to any remission, it lacked the jurisdiction to grant the petitioner's prayer. If at all, it is this court which can consider and grant relief," the bench said. Yadav is the son of Uttar Pradesh politician DP Yadav. His cousin

Vishal Yadav was also punished for the kidnapping and murder of business executive Katara.

The duo was against Katara's alleged affair with Bharti Yadav, sister of Vikas, as they belonged to different castes.

Another co-convict Sukhdev Pehalwan was given a 20-year jail term without any remission benefit. On July 29, the top court ordered his release from jail, noting that he had completed his 20-year sentence in March this year.

SC sets aside ₹18 crore environmental compensation imposed on Triveni Engr

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday set aside NGT orders imposing a ₹18 crore fine on a company for the alleged violation of environmental norms by its sugar mill in UP and said "in the quest for doing justice, NGT has ended up doing just the reverse".

A bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Ujjal Bhuyan allowed the appeals of M/s Triveni Engineering and Industries Ltd as it set aside two orders of the National Green Tribunal of February 15, 2022 and September 16, 2022, observing the NGT passed the verdicts in violation of statutory procedure and the principles of natural justice.

Justice Bhuyan, who authored the 64-page verdict was critical of the NGT's orders and said, "Ordinarily, in a case where there is vio-

lation of the principles of natural justice, parties are relegated to the adjudicatory forum to re-do the exercise after following the due process. But in this case, the entire exercise has been vitiated because of non-conforming to the laid down procedure contemplated under Sections 21 and 22 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974." Finding fault with the procedures adopted by the NGT, the verdict said relegating the parties back to the green tribunal would serve "no useful purpose".

"As we have noticed above, this is a classic case where in the quest for doing justice, NGT has ended up doing just the reverse," it noted. The bench, however, clarified the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) could carry out an inspection and take remedi-

al measures over the alleged violations.

"It is crystal clear that the impugned decisions which entail adverse civil consequences upon the appellant were passed without following the due procedure laid down under the statute as well as the elementary principles of natural justice. We, therefore, have no hesitation in declaring such orders to be illegal and null and void," it held. The top court underlined it was all the more necessary for the NGT, which exercises judicial functions, to adhere to a fair procedure which was statutorily laid down and of which principles of natural justice were an "inalienable part".

The bench said the NGT constituted a joint committee to carry out an inspection of the sugar mill of the appellant vis-a-vis maintenance of pollution control mea-

sures and discharge of effluents. "This is an adhoc committee when the Water Act, more particularly Sections 21 and 22 thereof, clearly prescribe a statutory procedure to be followed while carrying out such inspection to examine pollution, if any, or the extent of pollution caused by the project proponent and to suggest remedial measures," it said. The joint committee report was found to have been "silent" on whether it had followed the procedure laid down in the Act.

"NGT did not deem it appropriate to get the appellant impleaded as a party respondent. Though the entire proceedings were directed against it," the top court said. The bench further observed no opportunity was granted to the appellant to contest the report of the joint committee.



Editor's TAKE

Modi, Xi meet amid tariff turmoil

India and China edge closer after years of hostility, as Narendra Modi meets Xi in Tianjin amid Trump's tariff shocks, reshaping Delhi's foreign policy choices

India and China are coming closer by every passing day. After the 2020 border clashes, the two countries had taken strong positions against each other, and India had tilted towards the US as China frowned upon the growing Indian affinity towards the US. Now the tables have turned – India is moving closer to China as the US President frowns and his administration is out to discredit India's new foreign policy choices. But the irony is that it is Trump who is responsible for pushing India towards China and Russia. When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Tianjin for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, it was more than just a routine diplomatic engagement. His meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping has come at a time when global economic turbulence – especially from the Trump administration's tariff strikes – has redrawn the calculus of India's foreign policy.

Earlier, the 2020 border clashes had cast a long shadow, and Beijing's continued support to Pakistan's military which raised doubts in Delhi about the viability of long-term cooperation.

But now the situation has changed drastically. For Modi, cavorting in to American demands would have meant abandoning a trusted ally in Moscow and undermining his strongman image at home. Instead, he has chosen to assert himself by diversifying his partnerships. And there is no bigger partner in sight than China – the world's second-largest economy and India's immediate neighbour. The Modi-Xi meeting in Tianjin reflected this pragmatism. There is a discernible change in the air: resumption of direct flights, simplification of visa processes, and some other goodwill gestures. These are modest but symbolic steps, signalling intent to mend ties. For Modi, the visit is an opportunity to reset relations that he once personally invested in with great zeal. Between 2014 and 2018, he visited China five times. That momentum was derailed by the bloody border clashes of 2020, which left both sides wary.

The SCO platform now offers a stage for cautious re-engagement. For Xi, too, there is incentive. China's slowing economy, increasing strategic rivalry with the US, and a need for stable regional ties make improved relations with India desirable. However, challenges remain: Border disputes, mistrust over Pakistan, and competing ambitions in the Indo-Pacific are formidable roadblocks. Yet the current global environment, where old alliances appear shaky and protectionist impulses run high, has created a window for India and China to rediscover pragmatism.

By putting India under economic pressure, Washington has inadvertently accelerated Delhi's search for alternatives – making Beijing a necessary, if uneasy, partner. The Tianjin meeting may not have produced dramatic breakthroughs, but it has restarted a stalled conversation.

For Modi and Xi, both seasoned leaders with strong domestic mandates, the coming months will test whether they can translate gestures into substance. And on their decisions rests the future of Asia.

India's Growth Shows Resilience

A growing workforce with rising incomes provides not just near-term support for consumption but also long-term confidence in India's demographic dividend



ROUHN DEB

The month of August has delivered a resounding message from India – one that stands out amid the turbulence of the global economy. The recently released GDP data for the first quarter of FY 2025-26 confirms what many had intuited but few expected to see so strongly: India's economy is resilient, reform-oriented, and ready for renewed growth.

Data from MOSPI shows that India's real GDP grew at 7.8 per cent in April-June 2025, far exceeding analyst expectations and marking a five-quarter high. This performance makes India not only the fastest-growing major economy but also one that is steadily widening its lead over peers.

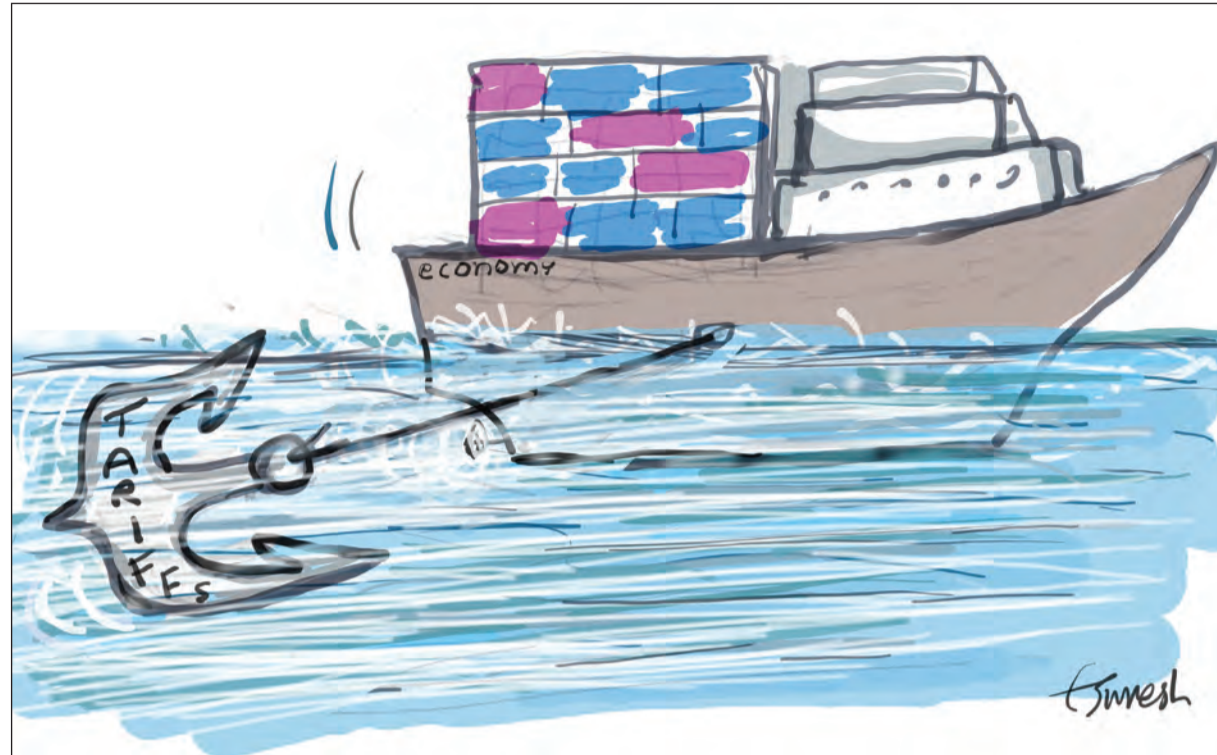
The numbers are encouraging not merely for their scale but for what they signify about the underlying health of the economy. Supply-side drivers – manufacturing, construction, and services – recorded strong expansion, reflecting broad-based momentum.

On the demand side, robust private consumption and investment provided the bedrock of growth. Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) grew by 7 per cent, pushing its share of GDP to 60.3 per cent – the highest first-quarter level in 15 years.

Several recent policy steps have buoyed household sentiment: Income tax reliefs announced in the Union Budget, a 100 basis point cut in the repo rate, and healthy progress in Kharif sowing, each of which has amplified disposable incomes and eased financial conditions. Meanwhile, Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) grew by 7.8 per cent, underpinned by a surge in both public and private investments. The Government's capital expenditure in Q1 was 30.1 per cent higher than the average for the same quarter in the past three years, reflecting its continued focus on infrastructure.

The private sector, too, showed renewed confidence, with new investment announcements rising 3.3 times year-on-year. With RBI data showing that capacity utilisation has risen both sequentially and year-on-year, the manufacturing sector appears poised for further expansion.

Equally heartening is the macroeconomic stability accompanying this growth. Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation eased to an eight-year low in July 2025, giving households greater spending power and businesses more predictable cost structures. The Union government's fiscal deficit-to-GDP ratio is expected to moderate further to 4.4 per cent in 2025-26, showing steady consolidation from the pandemic-fuelled high reached in FY 2020-21. The labour market



The Pioneer SINCE 1865

THE IMPOSITION OF FRESH US TARIFFS HAS UNSETTLED EXPORTERS, AND THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT REMAINS FRAUGHT WITH GEOPOLITICAL

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is showing encouraging signs. Formal sector job creation in Q1 FY26 was 1.6 times higher than a year ago. Urban unemployment remains well below pre-pandemic levels, while hiring activity has stayed buoyant – the Naukri JobSpeak index points to continued recruitment momentum.

A growing workforce with rising incomes provides not just near-term support for consumption but also long-term confidence in India's demographic dividend.

Concerns about the deflator being low are also unfounded. Converting nominal GDP (valued at current prices) into real GDP (valued at constant prices) by applying an inflation indicator is a longstanding and globally accepted practice. A small gap between real and nominal GDP growth is simply a statistical reflection of the prevailing low-inflation environment, not a data anomaly.

The GDP deflator covers the full spectrum of goods and services in the economy, unlike CPI (limited to household consumption) or WPI (which excludes services). One of the former Chief Statisticians has even noted that the GDP deflator is "possibly the most accurate measure of inflation." If inflation is low, the deflator will naturally also be low. This is precisely the case in Q1 FY 2025-26.

Beyond the numbers, August brought a symbolic milestone. S&P upgraded India's long-term sovereign credit rating to 'BBB' from 'BBB-', the first upgrade in 18 years. The recognition was underpinned by strong economic growth,

enhanced monetary policy credibility, and a clear government commitment to fiscal consolidation.

For India, this upgrade holds real economic consequences. Lower borrowing costs, higher investor confidence, and increased foreign capital inflows are likely to follow. Of course, India is not immune to global headwinds. The imposition of fresh US tariffs has unsettled exporters, and the external environment remains fraught with geopolitical uncertainty and shifting trade alignments.

Yet, the government and industry appear to be preparing themselves for the brace, with reports of constant engagement between them. Growth may moderate in the quarters ahead as the base effect wanes, but the baseline is now higher.

With reforms deepening, investment gathering pace, and macroeconomic stability intact, India looks to sustain growth well above global averages. India's Q1 FY26 print is, however, not a finish line. The recovery is broadening, but sustaining higher growth will depend on further reforms, keeping inflation expectations anchored, and raising productivity.

With the GST Council due this week, locking in GST rationalisation with a stable, lower-rate structure becomes important. If both steady macro anchors from the Centre and a competitive reform push from all the states move in lockstep, India can convert resilience into a higher, more stable growth path.

PIC TALK



"Garba" dance group rehearses in Ahmedabad ahead of the nine-day Navratri festival.

PHOTO: PTI

Rediscovering the Art of Restful Sleep



RAVI VALLURI

THE PIONEER 2ND OPINION

There are four sources of energy which ensure our sustenance on planet Earth. These include food, breath, rest or sleep, besides a calm and meditative state of mind. These virtues are dealt with extensively in various programmes of the *Art of Living*. Unfortunately, humans generally pay scant attention to this sagacious advice at their own peril. Consequently, they suffer from various physical and psychological disorders.

On account of the modern-day lifestyle, we are popping sleeping pills. Because of deprived sleep, one feels enervated, not refreshed, which interferes with working and maintaining social contacts. Excessive sleep results in grogginess, headaches, mood swings, obesity, diabetes, and even back problems. Zen teachings adv-

ocate that sleep is remaining in the present and not permitting the mind to wander into the past or future. Aeons ago, a tutee asked a Zen master how to achieve peace of mind. The master replied: "When I eat, I eat. When I walk, I walk. When I sleep, I sleep." The postulant pointed out that everyone does those things. The master explained that a majority of people eat while thinking or walking; they sleep while thinking about eating or other things. The monk learned to stop combating the wind by observing the bamboo grove. The bamboo, while bending and swaying, did not resist the wind.

The core message in these stories is that true sleep, like true mindfulness, involves living in the present and not dwelling on thoughts, but rather allowing the mind to settle into stillness.

Adequate sleep is extremely important due to the impact it has on our health. Appropriate sleep is salutary for our mental focus and memory, for combating stress, maintaining proper body weight, boosting the immune system, and a host of other wellness needs. It is interesting that infants and young children require 12-16 hours, depending on their age. Teenagers invariably need 8-10 hours of sleep. On the other hand, adults between the ages of 18 and 64 are refreshed with 7-9 hours of sleep. Lastly, those aged 65 years and above feel rejuvenated with around seven hours of sleep. Some

golden rules to enhance sleep quality include regular physical exercise. Merely walking 10,000 steps is not enough. It should be accompanied by practices like Surya Namaskars, Padmasadhana, pranayama, Sudarshan Kriya, and meditation.

Equally important is maintaining fixed sleeping timings daily. Avoid smoking, alcohol, and caffeine before bedtime. The stomach should be light, as a heavy meal often causes restlessness and impairs sleep. A short walk before sleeping aids digestion and relaxation.

The sleeping environment also matters: A cool, pleasant, and dark room ensures deep rest, while zero screen time before bed enhances the natural rhythm of sleep. Sleeping direction has been emphasised in traditional practices. South is considered the best, as it aligns with the Earth's magnetic field and promotes restful sleep. East benefits students and professionals by boosting alertness and concentration. North is discouraged, as it disrupts alignment, heightens agitation, and hampers sleep. West is said to favour professionals and leaders, fostering stability and financial well-being.

"Sleep is the golden chain that ties health and our bodies together." – Thomas Dekker

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COACHING CULTURE ERODING EDUCATION AND FAMILIES

The fast-expanding trend of coaching has ruined parents' budgets. Coaching is increasingly being accepted as a requirement for students.

According to a recent Government of India survey, almost one in every four schoolchildren in the country receives private coaching. Overall, 27 per cent of the students in the country take private coaching. This percentage is higher in cities, where it was found to be around 31 per cent. In rural areas, it is about 25 per cent less than in urban areas.

The survey also shows that 56 per cent of students in the country are studying in Government schools. In such a situation, the growing prevalence of coaching is more a sign of systemic weakness than

of aspirations. Due to lack of proper teaching in classes, the attention and money of students are being diverted to coaching centres that run parallel to schools.

These coaching centres, whose sole aim is to earn profit, are creating an artificial competition in society. Instead of focusing on holistic learning, students are being driven into a race for marks. Parents, under pressure, are forced to spend beyond their means. Unless the education system itself is strengthened, this trend will only deepen inequality.

Unless schools regain their central role in quality learning, coaching will continue to thrive at the cost of both students and parents.

ABHIJIT ROY | JAMSHEDPUR

Judiciary must punish hate

MP staged a comeback as MP in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. But politics cannot be cleansed unless the judiciary takes cognisance of hate speeches and awards punishments proportionate to the severity of the statements made by political leaders.

The judiciary alone can uphold accountability when political rivalries cross the limits of decency. Criticism in democracy should be confined to policies and programmes of the government. Unfortunately, in today's political atmosphere, personal attacks and abusive language against individuals dominate the discourse, weakening the democratic spirit. Such conduct erodes public trust and sets a damaging precedent for younger generations, who begin to view politics as little more than mudslinging contests. The judiciary, as the guardian of constitutional morality, must intervene firmly. Hate speeches and communal remarks must invite exemplary punishment to ensure deterrence. Unless leaders are held to account, divisive rhetoric will deepen social fault lines. India deserves a politics rooted in debate and constructive criticism, not one poisoned by personal attacks. If our democracy is to remain vibrant, the judiciary must act swiftly against hate speech, restoring dignity to public life.

KV SEETHARAMAIAH | BENGALURU

India China relations wary

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Sunday meeting with President Xi Jinping in China is less a breakthrough than a tactical necessity.

India and China may talk, but mistrust runs deep. Just three months ago, Indian officials accused Beijing of supplying Pakistan with intelligence and weapons during the May clashes – a reminder that China never hesitates to arm India's enemies while preaching "friendship." In Tianjin, Modi chose restraint, citing fragile calm after years of Chinese provocation between 2020 and 2024. But his silence was strategic, not trusting. Xi's claim that friendship is the "right choice" rings hollow when set against Beijing's record of border incursions, shielding terrorists, and expanding influence in the Indian Ocean. China speaks of cooperation while practicing coercion.

For India, engagement with Beijing is less optimism than compulsion, driven by Donald Trump's tariff shocks and shifting global alignments. New Delhi's caution is visible: The Agni V missile test on August 20, and Modi's refusal to attend Xi's September 3 World War II parade, are deliberate signals. This is not reconciliation, but a wary handshake with an adversary India cannot afford to trust.

N SADHASIVA REDDY | BENGALURU

War journalism's heavy price

Reporting from a war zone is never easy. Many courageous journalists risk their lives to bring news from such places. People often assume that they are provided with safety measures, but in reality, most of the time no such protection exists.

Journalists take responsibility for their own safety while reporting the hardships and struggles that ordinary people face.

Al Shifa is a well-known hospital in Gaza. Outside this hospital, a tent accommodates many foreign journalists, as Al Shifa has become the most significant reporting centre in Gaza. Since the war between Hamas and Israel began, hundreds have been killed or injured, with most of them brought here.

The serious issue is that around 200 journalists covering the war have already lost their lives. To understand the intensity of the conflict and to communicate it to the world, Al Shifa hospital has become a vital hub. Both local and foreign journalists gather here, risking their lives in the line of duty.

The work of these journalists is no less dangerous than that of soldiers – in fact, sometimes the risk is greater. The death of nearly 200 journalists is indeed a tragic and alarming reality.

DATTAPRASAD SHIRODKAR | MUMBAI

Please send your letter to the info@dailyopinioner.com. In not more than 250 words. We appreciate your feedback.

India's silent disaster: Road accidents demand urgent action

Road accidents remain outside the ambit of India's disaster management framework, weakening the urgency of response. It is time to treat road safety as a national priority, anchored in science, governance reforms, and adhering to principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

FIRST Column



SATENDRA SINGH | **TANUSHREE**



a generation of mindful road users. Programmes for workplace safety should also focus on employees, particularly within the transport and logistics sectors. Technology once more provides creative avenues. Simulators that utilise AI can aid in driver training, allowing individuals to encounter realistic situations prior to driving. Applications offering instantaneous traffic and hazard notifications can enable travellers to make more secure decisions.

India has been struggling with the menace of road accidents for a long time, an issue that has grown into one of the most serious public health and development crises of our time. A recent news item, published in *The Pioneer* on August 29, 2025, titled India Tops Global Road Accident Deaths, highlighted that in 2023 alone, India witnessed over 4.8 lakh road accidents, resulting in more than 1.72 lakh fatalities — an alarming average of 20 deaths every hour. This amounts to an average of twenty fatalities every hour. Even more concerning is that nearly two-thirds of the victims were aged between 18 and 45 — the most active segment of society and often the breadwinners for their households.

EXCESSIVE SPEED ON BADLY DESIGNED HIGHWAYS, ABSENCE OF PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES, POOR SIGNAGE, AND INADEQUATE LIGHTING INHERENTLY RENDER INDIAN ROADS UNSAFE

The information depicts a bleak scenario. India, representing roughly 1 per cent of the global vehicle count, contributes to nearly 11 per cent of worldwide road fatalities, positioning its roads among the most perilous globally. Reasons are diverse — reckless driving, excessive speed, driving under the influence, inadequate road design, weak enforcement of traffic regulations, insufficient emergency response, and lack of public awareness. Included in this are systemic issues like insufficient coordination between agencies, absence of data-informed planning, and inadequate incorporation of technology.

These events are not merely unfortunate occurrences; they represent the most severe type of human-induced disaster in India. They seize young lives, destroy families, hinder livelihoods, and diminish national productivity. Nevertheless, ironically, road accidents are not distinctly classified as disasters according to the regulations of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Due to their scale, frequency, and impact on people, this oversight diminishes the urgency of tackling them in the national disaster management system. It is crucial to reshape road safety as a key focus for disaster risk reduction, and the most effective method to do this is by coordinating India's

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approach with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). The SFDRR, supported by the United Nations, highlights four priority areas that can act as the foundation of an all-encompassing strategy to lower road accident hazards.

Understanding Disaster Risk

The foundation of any strategy is rooted in understanding the extent and characteristics of the problem. Ensuring road safety demands strong, immediate, and evidence-based data gathering. India should progress past antiquated records and disjointed statistics to create a unified road safety data system that incorporates information from police, hospitals, transport departments, and local agencies. In this context, tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing can accurately identify accident hotspots. By overlaying traffic patterns, road conditions, land usage, and population data, officials can pinpoint high-risk areas and prioritise measures.

Public awareness is equally crucial. Campaigns must be consistent, data-informed, and focused, especially on young audiences, rather than being seasonal or merely symbolic.

Disaster Risk Governance

A major obstacle in India is the fragmented management of road safety. Responsibilities are dispersed among transport departments, law enforcement, local authorities, and the healthcare sector, often leading to unclear account-

ability. Effective risk reduction requires organisational cohesion and strong legal backing.

Establishing a National Road Safety Authority, legally authorised and responsible for results, could provide essential integration. Governance should also encompass state and district levels, with disaster management agencies considering road accidents as a fundamental responsibility.

Here again, technology can strengthen governance. AI-driven traffic surveillance systems can detect violations in real time — whether it is speeding, lane violations, or running red lights — and initiate automatic fines. This diminishes corruption, guarantees consistent implementation, and fosters deterrence. Likewise, a blockchain-based system can improve transparency in vehicle registration and licensing, reducing fraudulent activities.

Global instances emphasise the significance of robust governance. Sweden's Vision Zero succeeded not solely due to technology but because the government dedicated itself to the principle that "no loss of life is acceptable" as a national principle.

Disaster Risk Reduction

A significant factor contributing to road accidents in India is the hazardous design of roads and vehicles. Excessive speed on badly designed highways, absence of pedestrian amenities, poor signage, and inadequate lighting inherently render Indian roads unsafe. Consequently, invest-

ment in sensitive risk infrastructure is vital.

Roads should be designed with safety prioritised — segregating traffic flows, ensuring secure pedestrian crossings, and implementing intelligent traffic management systems (ITMS) that adjust to traffic and weather changes. GIS and remote sensing aid in road design by considering terrain, land use, and environmental hazards.

Simultaneously, there is a pressing need to enhance emergency response systems. Numerous accident victims perish not because of the accident itself, but due to holdups in receiving medical care — the "golden hour" is missed. India should allocate funds for AI-driven emergency call systems, automated accident detection in vehicles, and real-time tracking of ambulances. Drone technology can be utilised to swiftly evaluate accident sites in isolated or crowded locations, guaranteeing quicker triage.

Investments must prioritise public transportation and non-motorised movement, decreasing reliance on dangerous two-wheelers that lead to most road fatalities in India.

Preparedness for Effective Response

Preparedness extends beyond emergency response. It involves enhancing the capabilities of communities, institutions, and systems to foresee and handle road safety hazards efficiently. Educational programmes should incorporate road safety instruction from a young age, cultivating

Road Safety Driven by Science

Road accidents in India are more than mere figures — they symbolise a quiet catastrophe that takes more lives each year than numerous natural disasters together. However, in contrast to cyclones or earthquakes, this calamity can be avoided. By categorising road accidents as a form of disaster and implementing the four priorities of the Sendai Framework systematically, India can develop a strong, science-based, and compassionate approach.

Science and technology — ranging from GIS mapping and AI monitoring to drone evaluations and predictive analysis — have the potential to change how we plan, oversee, and utilise roads.

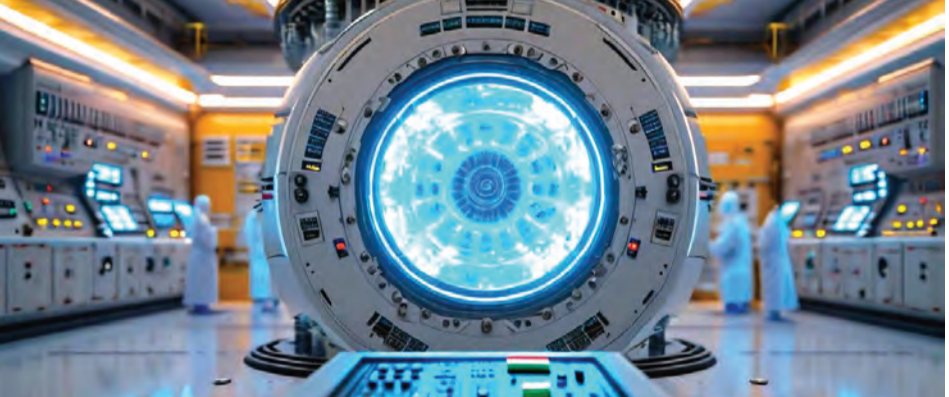
However, technology by itself is not enough. It must be integrated into governance reforms, legal structures, cultural transformations, and ongoing investments. Japan's implementation of AI for live traffic monitoring demonstrates the strength of creativity. India possesses the necessity and ability to carve its own route towards safer roads, driven by its demographic dividend and digital transformation.

The time has come to declare that no life lost on the road is acceptable. Only then can India truly transform its highways from death traps into lifelines of progress.

India-Russia nuclear partnership offers a blueprint for the Global South energy future



SITAKANTA MISHRA



The India-Russia nuclear energy partnership represents a significant case study in global energy cooperation, offering a replicable template for developing economies. In the context of unprecedented energy demand driven by demographic shifts in the Global South and the exponential growth of artificial intelligence (AI), this collaboration provides a model for achieving energy security, promoting technological transfer, and advancing climate objectives.

The future of global energy consumption is disproportionately tied to emerging and developing economies. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), these nations account for over 80 per cent of the increase in global energy demand. Specifically, India and China are forecast to drive 60 per cent of the global electricity consumption increase between 2025 and 2026. This surge is not merely a consequence of population growth but is fundamentally linked to rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and rising living standards. India's per capita electricity consumption, which reached 1,395 kWh in 2023-24, demonstrates a clear upward trajectory as millions of citizens join the middle class and integrate into the digital economy.

This baseline growth is compounded by the burgeoning energy requirements of emerging technologies, most notably AI. Data centres, the physical infrastructure of the digital age and the core of AI operations, are projected to more than double their electricity demand by 2030, reaching approximately 945 TWh — an amount comparable to the current electricity consumption of Japan. While projections vary, some estimates suggest that by 2027, servers dedicated to AI could alone consume between 85 and 134 TWh of electricity annually.

This presents a critical challenge for developing nations: to meet this colossal, non-negotiable power demand while simultaneously decarbonising their energy mix to meet global climate commitments. In this environment of soaring demand and climate pressure, nuclear energy emerges as a strategic, high-capacity solution. Nuclear power offers a high capacity factor (often exceeding 90 per cent), providing consistent, baseload power 24/7. This stability is critical for industrial processes and, most importantly, for powering energy-intensive data centres that cannot tolerate interruptions. From a cost perspective, the levelised cost

of Electricity (LCOE) for advanced nuclear power was estimated at approximately \$110/MWh in 2023, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

This is higher than the LCOE for utility-scale solar PV, which was estimated at around \$55/MWh in the same year.

However, LCOE models often fail to account for the "value" of dispatchable power — the ability to generate electricity on demand — which is a key attribute of nuclear energy. The reliability and stability provided by nuclear plants justify a higher LCOE, particularly for nations seeking energy independence and robust industrial growth. For developing economies, nuclear power is about providing the foundational energy security required for sustained economic and technological development. The India-Russia nuclear partnership, centred on the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KNPP), serves as a robust blueprint for this model. Unlike traditional arrangements where a foreign vendor simply sells a reactor to a client nation, this partnership is defined by a deep, long-term commitment to technology transfer and capacity building. The formal collaboration began with an intergovernmental agreement in 1988 for the construction of two 1,000 MWe reactors. This foundational agreement was later formalised with a 1998 intergovernmental agreement and a subsequent 2010 framework agreement on additional nuclear power plant units at Kudankulam and new sites.

This sustained, multi-decade timeline of agreements underscores a commitment that transcends short-term political fluctuations. The KNPP project in Tamil Nadu, India, is the most tangible outcome of this partnership. The project utilises Russian-designed VVER-1000 pressurised water reactors. Crucially, the collaboration extended beyond the physical construction. Russian state-owned company Rosatom worked directly with India's Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). This joint endeavour facilitated significant technology

transfer, allowing Indian engineers and scientists to gain first-hand exposure to advanced light water reactor technology.

This process was not about simply operating a foreign-built plant, but about developing the indigenous expertise required to design, construct, and operate a complex nuclear programme independently.

The partnership also included Russian support in strengthening India's nuclear safety and regulatory frameworks, ensuring compliance with international standards set by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Russian side benefited from knowledge of construction in a tropical monsoon climate. This co-development model differentiates the India-Russia partnership from a one-way vendor-client transaction. The success and structure of this partnership have already been applied elsewhere. The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Bangladesh is a direct example, featuring two VVER-1200 reactors with a total capacity of 2,400 MWe. A significant portion of the project is funded by a Russian loan, with India providing technical and operational support. This trilateral arrangement, with Russia as the primary technology provider and India as a trusted partner, validates the model as a blueprint for other nations in the Global South seeking nuclear energy programmes. India, having absorbed knowledge from this partnership, is leveraging its enhanced capabilities to pursue ambitious energy goals. The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) aims to nearly treble installed nuclear capacity from 8,180 MW to 22,480 MW by 2031-2032. The co-development approach equips India with strategic autonomy, enabling it to meet surging domestic energy needs and participate in the global nuclear energy market.



Building the future of Indian healthcare with preventive care



SHARAN SHIVRAJ PATIL



The Indian healthcare system is currently standing at a pivotal moment. With the continuous rise in expectations, rapid urban migration of people, and increasing disease burden, hospitals should go beyond traditional treatment to stay relevant to the community they serve. Healthcare should be community-centric, technology-driven, and future-ready as well.

Healthcare is not only based on treatment; it is also about belonging. In India, rapid urbanisation of cities is taking place, and communities are too diverse, dynamic, and evolving as well. Understanding these demographics helps us shape care delivery models that feel personal and inclusive. For instance, when residents come from different states and cultures, the environment of the hospital — ranging from diversity of staff to simple details like food menus — must all reflect that inclusivity. Nowadays, the modern hospital must be more than just a treatment centre. It must be a super-specialty ecosystem.

A variety of advanced services ranging across cardiology, liver, kidney and lung transplants, robotic joint replacements, paediatrics, obstetrics and oncology must exist alongside a strong preventive and primary care system. All these integrations ensure that hospitals can serve both routine needs and highly complex cases, creating continuity of care which provides benefits to patients throughout their life journey.

At Sparsh Hospitals, this philosophy is already in practice at all our eight units, including the recently launched Hennur Road unit, which has established itself as a hub for advanced, multi-specialty care. The upcoming Sarjapur unit continues this vision, bringing together comprehensive specialities under one roof to ensure patients experience seamless care — from routine consultations to the most complex surgeries. Technology is the backbone and foundation of the new healthcare system. Paperless hospitals with interoperable patient records provide seamless access across all branches. Efficiency can be improved through command centres and real-time monitoring, while AI tools and applications — from predicting patient flow to supporting clinical decisions — make care more precise.

Digital apps also empower patients through registration, payments, consultations, and even emergency services at the tap of a screen. In combination, all these elements form a transparent, data-driven ecosystem that prioritises safety and

trust. As cities grow, accessibility automatically becomes a challenge. Telemedicine outreach centres in residential and corporate campuses are transforming how healthcare is delivered to the public. Patients can also consult with specialists through virtual means while the local staff can manage diagnostics and prescriptions, reducing the need to visit the hospital frequently. By making healthcare accessible in the areas where people live and work, telemedicine reduces the gap between high-quality expertise and community-level delivery. The rising burden of non-communicable diseases makes early detection more critical than ever. Prevention and prediction supported by large-scale screening and data analytics are the way forward. Government should also take initiatives to lead mass preventive programmes, while private hospitals should regularly bring advanced diagnostics and treatment. Three vertical models of India reflect this philosophy, such as predictive and preventive care; curative care with advanced interventions and surgeries; and rehabilitation, palliation through recovery, long-term support, and dignity in end-of-life care.

India is currently standing on the threshold of becoming a global leader in the healthcare sector, just in the same way it did in IT.

The availability of skilled professionals, well-maintained patient data, and innovative care models is unmatched.

The missing link is research and innovation investment. Through the innovation of affordable, indigenous solutions tailored to Indian needs, we can create models that will grab the attention of the world. The future of healthcare belongs to those who combine affordability with innovation, the relevance of community with global standards, and prevention with cure — and India is ready to lead that future.



Cannot wish away \$100 billion deficit



SUTANU GURU
■ Bhubaneswar

Big ceremonial events invite and trigger hype. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi flies back to Delhi after the SCO Summit, the hype is noisier. Of particular interest is his bilateral meeting with Xi Jinping, China's president, the first one in eight years. The optimists and hyper-nationalists are overjoyed at how Modi has stood up to the bully Donald Trump. The pessimists and anti-Modi hordes are screaming blue about Modi surrendering to Xi, after they accused him of surrendering to Trump. The realists are relieved that the bilateral dialogue resumed in a meaningful manner. There is hope of economic cooperation between the two giants even as the border disputes persist. Some have stuck their necks out to suggest that Xi will take concrete steps to open the Chinese economy to Indian goods. This will start the process of addressing the concerns over the massive trade deficit that India racks up with China, close to \$100 billion in 2024-25.

But here is a reality check even for the mildly-optimistic analysts who think 'Make in India' can make inroads into the homes of the Chinese consumers. As of today, the scheme and slogan have no hope in hell of penetrating the massive Chinese market. The simple fact is: There is hardly anything that India manufactures that can compete with 'Made in China' goods in terms of cost competitiveness, innovation or premium quality.

Virtually nothing. Forget about China playing games by imposing non-tariff barriers and making things difficult for Indian exporters. It does. But the real issue is manufacturing scale and cost competitiveness. The Chinese consumer market is an El Dorado. About 287 million smartphones were sold in China in 2024. More than 700 million Chinese took a domestic flight in the same year. More than 20 million Chinese purchased a passenger vehicle in 2024. Some estimates suggest that the annual value of domestic textile sales in China is more

THE CHINESE MARKET IS EL DORADO. IT ABSORBS 300 MILLION SMARTPHONES A YEAR, AND 20 MILLION CARS. LOCAL TEXTILES SALES ARE \$200 BILLION, AND PHARMA SALES \$470 BILLION A YEAR

than \$200 billion. The domestic pharmaceuticals market is worth more than \$470 billion. These are just some examples. In a normal scenario, these numbers would be tempting and alluring for Indian companies like Tata Motors, Mahindra, Maruti, Indigo, Raymonds and many more.

But the top bosses in these companies know deep down that they simply cannot manufacture and export a product that is of at least the same quality and cheaper than a 'Made in China' product. BYD is a Chinese EV company that has come out of nowhere in the last decade. According

to data released by analysts in Europe, it is beating the miracle American EV car maker Tesla in the European market. What hope do Indian car makers have?

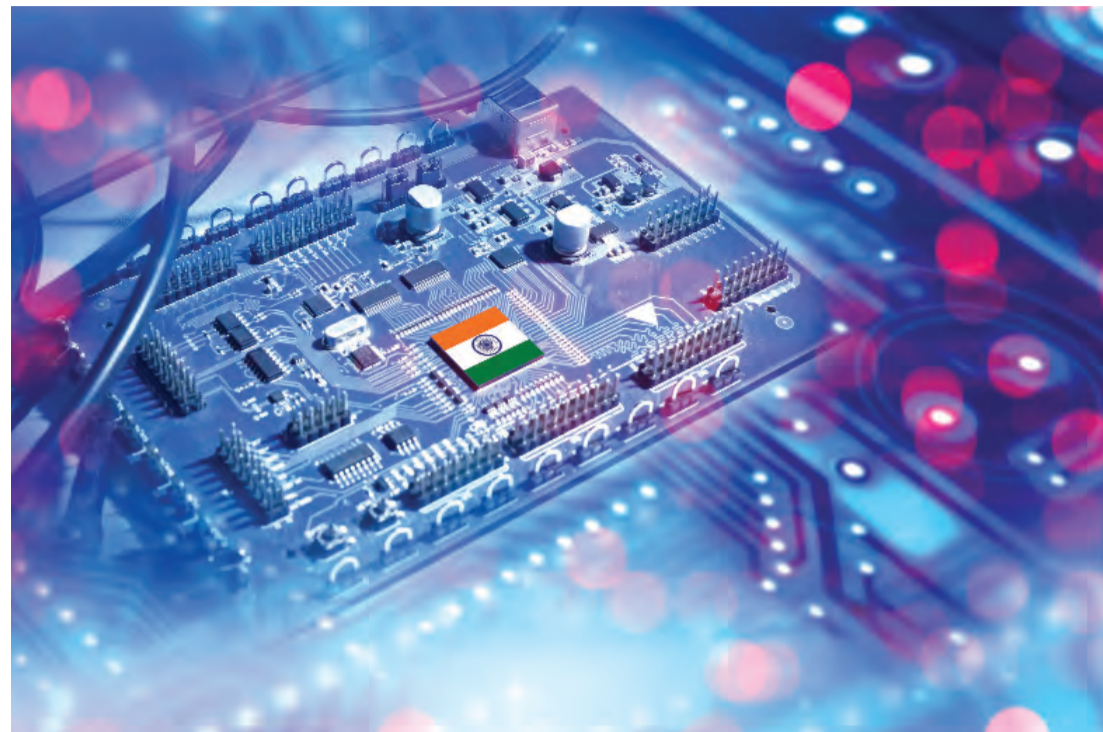
What hope do the Indian makers of textiles, readymade garments and leather accessories have when every major global brand ranging from Prada to Armani to Gucci has Chinese factories supplying them at unimaginable prices? The iPhone ecosystem in India is a big success. But China still makes more than 70 per cent of these phones in the world at a very competitive price.

One hope for India is that as China keeps moving up the value chain in manufacturing, it may let go of simple things like old-fashioned cars, cheap garments, toys, steel, aluminium, refrigerators and TV sets. After all, countries like the US, the UK, Germany, Japan and South Korea followed a similar trajectory in different periods.

But then China has a labour force of 600 million plus. A majority will still need to be employed in "sweat shops" or massive factories churning out products for global markets. So, China is not going to easily let go of the mass manufacturing of cheap goods. After a decade of 'Make in India', manufacturing as a share of GDP in India is less than the figure in China. Indian policy makers will have to think out of the box to even begin to fathom how to cut the \$100 billion trade deficit with China.

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

GDP on a fast lane but how long is the highway



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Coming at the heels of higher-than-expected GDP growth figures in the first quarter (April-June) of this fiscal, the HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) indicated the "fastest improvement in operating conditions for 17-and-a-half years." At 59.3 in August, the figure was superseded last in mid-2008. Earlier, the country's quarterly real GDP growth rate "comfortably beat expectations," as it clocked 7.8 per cent, compared to 6.5 per cent in the same period last year.

According to the HSBC report, "Indian manufacturing growth gained momentum in August, with ongoing improvements in demand continuing to underpin robust increases in factory orders and position." It added, "Companies upped the pace at which additional materials were bought, and more jobs were created, partly reflecting positive expectations regarding the outlook. Incoming new orders rose to broadly the same extent as July, which was the fastest in 57 months."

Couple this with the huge uptick in GDP, which reflects the size and health of an economy. Real GDP growth rate is an important figure as it measures the economic output after removing the effects of inflation. In the last quarter, the three sectors of the economy, primary (agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishing, and quarrying), secondary (manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply and other

utilities, and construction), and tertiary (services) showed robust performances. Thus, there was momentum in the entire economy.

Primary sector grew by 3.7 per cent, up from 1.5 per cent in the same period last fiscal. Manufacturing (7.7 per cent) and construction (7.6 per cent) led the growth in the secondary sector. Tertiary sector performed the best with a growth of 9.3 per cent, much above 6.8 per cent in Q1 '25. "On the supply side, we have seen an all-round growth. On the demand side, the primary drivers have been domestic.

EXPORT ORDERS GREW AT A SLOW PACE IN AUGUST. THE HIKE IN THE US TARIFF MAY HAVE HAD ITS IMPACT. THE US BUYERS MAY HAVE REDUCED ORDERS DUE TO UNCERTAINTY

In our economy, net exports do not contribute so much," said Anuradha Thakur, economic affairs secretary, finance ministry.

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which tracks a basket of industrial products, grew by 3.5 per cent in July 2025, against 1.5 per cent in the previous month, "driven by 5.4 per cent growth in the manufacturing sector." According to a Government press release, "Within the manufacturing sector, 14 out of 23 industry groups recorded positive growths.... The top three positive contributors... were basic metals, electrical equipment

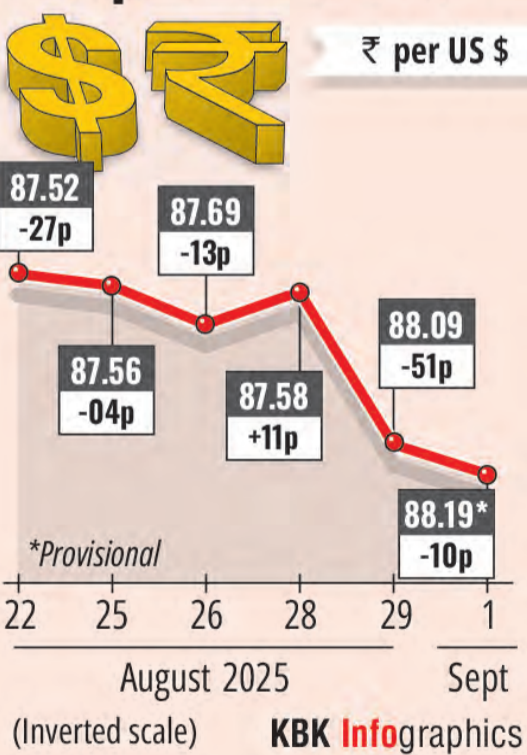
and non-metallic minerals."

What is important is that the PMI report indicated a slower increase in export orders, which grew at the slowest pace in the past five months. This implies that the impact of the US tariffs was felt in August. "The increase of the US tariff... might have contributed to the slight easing in new export orders growth, as American buyers refrain from placing orders in the midst of tariff uncertainty," said Pranjul Bhandari, chief India economist, HSBC.

Both private and government consumption seem to be on track in the first quarter of this fiscal. Although private consumption showed a decline, to seven per cent this time from 8.3 per cent in the corresponding period last year, there was a rebound in rural demand. The villages made up for the decline in urban areas to an extent. But in the case of government consumption, the growth rate was 9.7 per cent compared to the earlier four per cent. This implies that the Government spending on goods and services to "directly satisfy the collective needs of its population has bounced back."

Although the latest quarterly figure for core inflation was higher, up from 3.1 per cent to 4.3 per cent QoQ, both food inflation and consumer-linked inflation took huge dips. Food prices increased by a meagre 0.6 per cent, with a negative growth of nearly two per cent in July 2025. Consumer inflation declined from 4.9 per cent to 2.7 per cent QoQ, and further to 1.55 per cent in July 2025.

Rupee vs Dollar



Re-rating stocks due to re-accelerating earnings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Despite the stocks of FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) companies being a safe bet on the stock markets, the numbers show mixed signals. The Nifty FMCG Index returned a negative return of 0.04 per cent in the past month, a negative return of 10.68 per cent over the past year, and a positive return of 1.61 per cent over the past three years as of September 1, 2025.

Yet, FMCG counters witnessed defensive buying in the recent week compared to the Nifty 500, which turned negative. Investors turned to consumer staples for stability amid choppy global cues, foreign fund outflows, and concerns about equity market volatility. This defensive positioning provided some support to FMCG stocks, despite the sector's broader performance remaining muted.

The biggest near-term trigger for GMCG is the proposed GST rate cut. The impact is expected to play out in multiple ways. According to a media report, products such as talcum powder, face powder, hair oil, shampoo, toothpaste, dental floss, soap and toothbrushes may see a reduction from the earlier rate of 18 per cent to five per cent.

A lower rate translates into cheaper consumer staples and packaged goods. This can spur consumption across urban and rural households. Lower prices lead to higher demand. FMCG companies may see an uptick in volumes, especially in segments like packaged foods, personal care and home essentials. While companies may pass on the benefit of lower taxes to customers, the expansion of volumes can offset margin pressures, thereby supporting earnings growth.

In the recent past, Hindustan Unilever reported four per cent sales growth in

the previous quarter, which was entirely volume-led (four per cent), with pricing support in the personal care segment. Godrej Consumer Products' consolidated revenue grew by 9.9 per cent YoY (+1.8 per cent QoQ) to ₹36,619 million, which was above the estimated figure due to higher-than-expected revenues in Africa, Middle East and the US. Dabur reported market share gains across 95 per cent of its product portfolio. Britannia's consolidated revenues grew 8.8 per cent YoY to ₹4,622 crore.

Overall, the tax relief will improve affordability, especially in rural India, which is the backbone of FMCG consumption. In recent years, this had slowed due to high inflation, weak agricultural incomes and the pandemic aftereffects. The GST cut may provide a timely push to revive rural consumption. Cheaper products mean deeper penetration in villages and semi-urban towns, particularly for smaller pack sizes that dominate rural sales. Moreover, the Government's support to agriculture and rural welfare schemes are improving disposable incomes. Good monsoons this year are expected to boost farm output, and strengthen rural purchasing power.

If these factors play out, rural markets may drive the next growth cycle for the FMCG companies. Britannia Industries stated that it had created a war chest to expand in rural areas. "We are going to fight many battles in smaller territories. And we are doing a specific analysis on each one of these competitors. And I think we are in a very good place to be able to do so now with the inflation, deflation cycle sort of behind us and our having been able to mitigate inflation with all the measures, including cost efficiency programmes," the company's senior most executive told analysts.

Another factor supporting FMCG consumption is the decline in interest

rates. Lower EMIs for home loans, auto loans and personal loans leave more disposable income in the hands of households. This surplus is often spent on discretionary items such as packaged foods, personal care and household products. This trend can benefit companies with strong discretionary product portfolios.

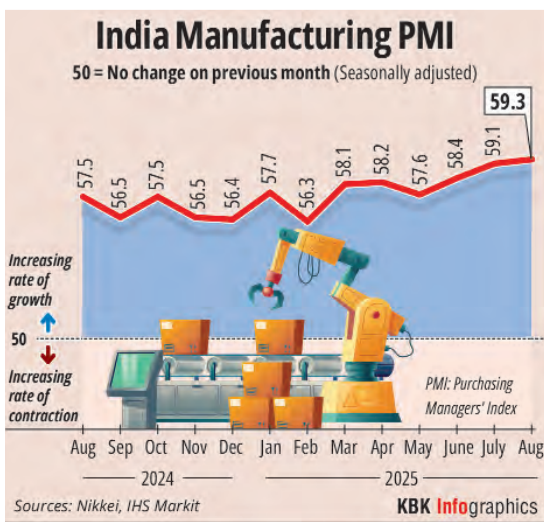
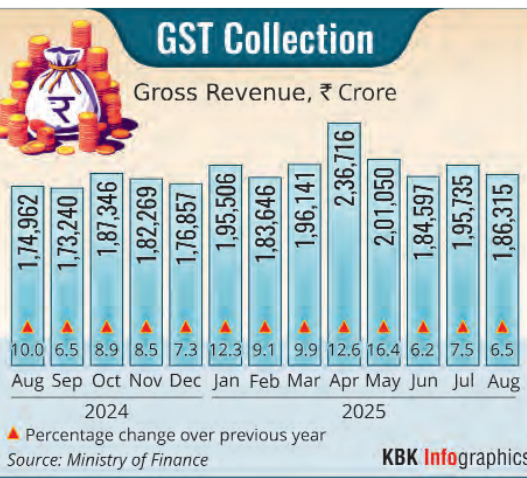
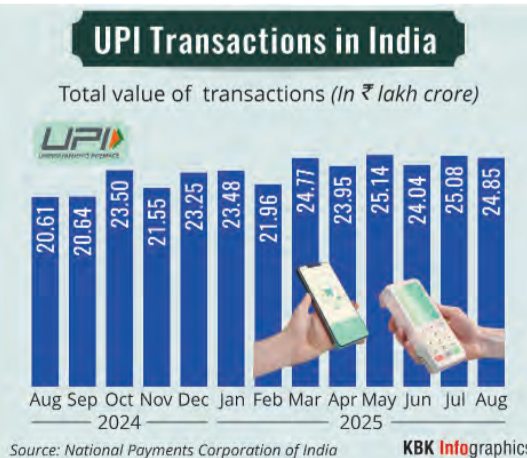
High inflation had been a major headwind for FMCG firms in the recent years, leading to both cost pressures and weakened consumer sentiments. Now, with inflation showing signs of easing, two positives emerge. Lower costs of raw materials (edible oils, packaging and chemicals) can improve margins. Affordable product pricing supports demand recovery among price-sensitive rural buyers.

Hence, for the investors, FMCG stocks remain an attractive defensive strategy. The above factors may lead to short-term re-rating of stocks as analysts revise earnings expectations upward. There may be a renewed focus on rural-centric players, especially those with strong distribution networks in Tier-2 and Tier-3 towns, and villages. Stable cash flows and lower volatility may attract domestic and foreign institutional investors.

However, investors need to be mindful of the risks. Global market volatility, foreign fund outflows, and potential regulatory changes can impact valuations. If companies absorb the GST cut without passing on the benefits to consumers, the demand push may be muted. According to Elara Capital: "India is not without catalysts. A supportive macro environment, like easing rates, income tax cuts, upcoming GST normalisation, post-election fiscal push, improving liquidity, and a potential rural consumption revival post-monsoon, could set the stage for an earnings re-acceleration in H2-FY26."

The inflation outlook this year has become more benign than expected. Large favourable base effects, healthy kharif sowing, adequate reservoir levels, and comfortable buffer stocks led to moderation

Sanjay Malhotra
RBI Governor





Sun-Kissed Salmon, Bold and Fresh



TEAM VIVA

The evening shimmered like a tide swept in from the Pacific, only it carried not waves but salmon — plump, glistening, kissed with that elusive brininess which whispers of snow-fed rivers. AquaChile's foray into India at The Taj Mahal Hotel filled the air with the perfume of char, spice, and citrus.

Chef Vicky Ratnani cooked with flair that bordered on performance. Flames rose around fillets as mustard oil laced through tandoori marinades, the fragrance curling into every corner. A bite of that salmon — smoky outside, silken within — felt like tradition meeting audacity. Then came a lime rice, zested into brightness, cradling salmon glossed with "coca moly" and slyly nudged by pickled cucumber.

Suddenly, Chilean waters and Indian kitchens were speaking the same language. The crowd leaned in with each unveiling: gourmands, hoteliers, chefs like Saby Gorai and Nishant Choubey-stalwarts tasting, nodding, whispering about textures, balance, adaptability. It became a manifesto that salmon belongs not only to distant coast-

lines or rarified fine dining — it can belong here, in a masala-soaked, coriander-scented kitchen. José Miguel Ugarte of AquaChile spoke of journeys — how salmon conquered Japanese tables, then Chinese, then Middle Eastern feasts.

Salmon arrived in India with quiet majesty, ready to swim through curries, kebabs, family spreads, and festive thalis. As plates emptied and aromas settled into memory, salmon proved itself the star, each bite a celebration of oceanic freshness and flavour. If you're reading this now, it's the perfect moment to plan a salmon date or finally treat yourself to a day of indulgent, silken fillets, because some experiences are best savoured one delicious bite at a time.

SUN-KISSED SALMON

Under the sun, people enjoyed salmon with delight. Its soft, smoky taste and fresh flavors brought smiles, laughter, and joy, turning every bite into a shared moment of happiness and love for the ocean.



THIS PICTURE IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY

COFFEE COMFORTS

Once a college canteen staple, cold coffee has taken over café menus with endless flavour options. Sipping these carefully picked choices feels like magic, writes ABHI SINGHAL

Wanna have coffee but Starbucks and Tim Hortons feel overrated and overhyped? That's where cold coffee steps in to save the day, offering an indulgence that is refreshing, versatile and far more exciting when explored beyond the mainstream chains. Who doesn't love a chilled glass on a warm afternoon or even as a quick pick-me-up in the middle of a busy day? For many, it is more than just a drink, it's a comforting ritual and an obsession that blends taste, energy and nostalgia in one tall, frothy serving. Whether you prefer yours creamy and indulgent, light and airy, or crafted with a modern twist of flavours, the city's cafés and coffee houses have taken this humble beverage to a whole new level.

Over the years, cold coffee has moved from being a basic menu item to a signature café offering. No longer confined to a simple blend of coffee, milk, ice and sugar, it has transformed into a creative statement drink. Today's versions often come with indulgent additions such as scoops of ice cream, swirls of whipped cream and a range of flavoured syrups including hazelnut, caramel,



vanilla and even more adventurous options like brownie or Nutella. As demand has grown, so has its place in café menus, with prices climbing steadily. What was once a pocket-friendly college treat now sometimes touches the ₹300 mark, reflecting both premium ingredients and the rising culture of gourmet coffee experiences.

Its appeal cuts across age groups. Students sip it down after classes as an affordable indulgence, young professionals swear by it for a mid-day caffeine boost and families see it as a shared pleasure. From iconic hangouts serving the same nostalgic frothy blends for decades to chic new-age cafés experimenting with international brewing techniques, there's something here for every coffee enthusiast.

Among the must-visit places is *Dough & Cream* in *Subhash Nagar*, where you can enjoy a Classic Cold Coffee at just ₹129. For those wanting to experiment, their hazelnut and Irish flavours come at ₹149, offering both variety and value.

Then there's *Bistro* in *Kamla Nagar*, a student favourite, where a classic glass is priced at ₹140. For something richer, their flavoured frappes like the Nutella or Brownie Frappe are available at ₹180, perfect for anyone craving that dessert t—like indulgence in a glass.

For those willing to spend a little more, *Third Wave Coffee Roasters* has made quite a name. Their Classic Cold Coffee, priced at ₹270, is made with a double shot of in-house espresso, milk and vanilla. It might be on the higher side, but regulars swear it's worth every penny.

Blue Tokai, another name synonymous with speciality coffee, offers an equally tempting range. Their Iced Latte at ₹275 is simple yet smooth, while the Iced Cappuccino at ₹250 adds a unique touch with date syrup. For something truly indulgent, the Triocchino Frappe at ₹335 stands out, blending speciality instant coffee, cold brew and espresso with vanilla ice

THIRD WAVE COFFEE ROASTERS HAS MADE QUITE A NAME. THEIR CLASSIC COLD COFFEE, PRICED IS MADE WITH A DOUBLE SHOT OF IN-HOUSE ESPRESSO, MILK AND VANILLA. IT'S WORTH EVERY PENNY

cream for a decadent, creamy finish. Finally, *Dunkin' Donuts & Coffee* offers its Iced Café Latte at ₹275. A strong espresso shot combined with milk and served over ice, it's clean, classic and pairs beautifully with their flavoured syrups. The no-fuss glass bottle presentation without whipped cream makes it a convenient choice for those who prefer a straightforward caffeine hit.

Cold coffee today is about savouring an experience. With so many cafés stepping up their game, it has rightfully claimed its place as both a comfort drink and a gourmet indulgence. Whether you lean towards the tried-and-tested or want to splurge on creative blends, one thing is certain — cold coffee here never fails to deliver.



COFFEE IS AN EMBRACE IN A CUP. IT SOOTHES THE SOUL, SPARKS CONVERSATIONS, AND MAKES EVEN ORDINARY DAYS FEEL ALIVE AND SPECIAL

COFFEE, BREWED WITH LOVE, FRESHENS YOU UP AND ADDS A DASH OF FUN TO YOUR DAY. IT BECOMES A PERFECT BLEND OF TASTE, ENERGY AND JOY

Spiced Roasted Eggplant



TEAM VIVA

Eggplant rarely gets crowned the hero of the kitchen. Some call it bland, others find it heavy, but under the right touch it becomes velvet on the tongue — smoky, spiced, and layered with flavour. This Spiced Roasted Eggplant is the most tasty way to convert skeptics, edges caramelised to a gentle char, centres collapsing into buttery softness, and every bite carrying a whisper of heat and earthiness. Paired with cool yoghurt and a sprinkle of herbs, its indulgence dressed as simplicity.

the grill until charred and tender.

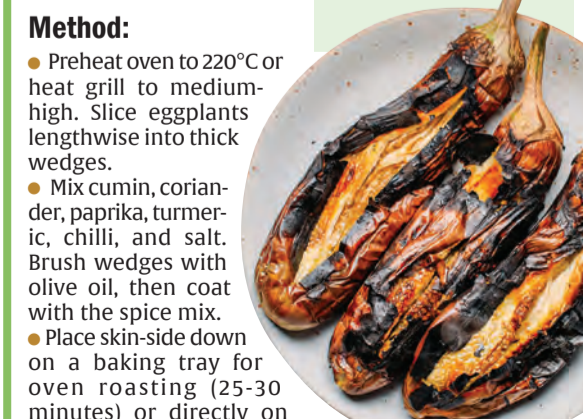
- Whisk yoghurt with garlic and lemon juice.
- Drizzle over the eggplant, finish with fresh herbs, and serve warm.

INGREDIENTS:-

- 2 medium eggplants
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp chilli powder
- Salt, to taste
- ½ cup yoghurt
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Fresh mint or coriander leaves

Method:

- Preheat oven to 220°C or heat grill to medium-high. Slice eggplants lengthwise into thick wedges.
- Mix cumin, coriander, paprika, turmeric, chilli, and salt. Brush wedges with olive oil, then coat with the spice mix.
- Place skin-side down on a baking tray for oven roasting (25-30 minutes) or directly on



WHETHER OVEN-ROASTED OR GRILL-FLAMED, THIS DISH PROVES EGGPLANT CAN BE MOST TASTY. BEST ENJOYED WITH FLUFFY RICE, WARM FLATBREADS, OR EVEN AS A SIDE TO GRILLED MEATS

From Persia with Love

Experience the charm of one of India's most vibrant culinary traditions

TEAM VIVA

Parsi food carries with it the fragrance of journeys across seas, of communities that left their homeland in Persia and found refuge on the western shores of India centuries ago. It is food that remembers where it came from yet embraces where it has been, fusing Persian subtlety with Indian boldness. Sweet meets savoury, dried fruits dance with fiery masalas, and every dish is as much memory as it is sustenance.

For generations, Parsi households have nurtured these recipes not only as nourishment but as expressions of identity, warmth, and togetherness. Now, for a few days, Delhi diners have the opportunity to step into this world and experience it on their own tables. The *Radisson Blu Marina* in Connaught Place is presenting the Parsi Royal Feast, curated by chefs Firozi Karanjia and Rashna. The festival brings an elaborate spread of dishes that reflect the distinctiveness of this rare cuisine. From the comfort of *mutton pulao* paired with the slow-cooked richness of *Dhansak dal* to the *golden crisp of*



Chicken Farcha, the feast promises flavours that are both familiar and unexpected. *Patra Ni Macchi*, fish marinated in chutney and steamed in banana leaf, reveals its secrets in a fragrant cloud of steam the moment the leaf is unwrapped. *Sondhiya masala prawns* balance spice with tang, while *Jardalu ma gosh* shows how apricots can tenderly sweeten a lamb curry. *Salli chicken*, with its bed of crisp potato straws, offers crunch with every bite, while *Bhaji dana ma gosh* harmonises meat with vegetables. Then there is *Bhatia ni chicken*, a dish less known outside Parsi homes but deeply loved within them, a reminder that the most treasured recipes are often those that do not leave the family kitchen.

Behind this showcase are chefs Firozi Karanjia and Rashna, widely regarded for their commitment to authentic Parsi cooking. Their philosophy is that Parsi food may appear simple, but beneath its apparent modesty lies a depth of flavour and a wealth of history. Alongside the food, there are storytelling sessions that recount the migration of the Zoroastrians and the way their cuisine evolved on Indian soil.

Live recipe walkthroughs allow diners to observe how the dishes are prepared, offering insights into techniques that have been guarded within households for centuries. In this way, the feast is not only about taste but also about knowledge, making it as much an educational experience as it is a culinary one.

General Manager Sudhanshu Yadav has described the festival as a celebration of community as well as cuisine. "Parsi cuisine is a beautiful expression of heritage, community, and warmth. With the Parsi Royal Feast, we are proud to bring these authentic flavours to the heart of Delhi."

Parsi cuisine is never just one thing — it is layered, adaptive, and rooted in multiple cultures. As Chef Firozi Karanjia explains, "Parsi food is Persian at its heart, but it carries the comfort of Gujarati kitchens and the zest of Maharashtrian flavours. It has absorbed what the land gave us, while still retaining its own character." Alongside her, Chef Rashna brings the same depth of understanding and a passion for presenting this cuisine with fidelity. For many in Delhi, this may be the first real encounter with Parsi food. Outside of Mumbai and a handful of Iranian cafés, opportunities to experience the cuisine are limited. Festivals such as this are therefore significant, for they preserve recipes that might otherwise remain confined to private kitchens. The apricot's sweetness in *Jardalu ma gosh*, the *crisp potato straws* of *Salli chicken*, the green chutney of *Patra Ni Macchi* — they all remain in memory, but so does the sense of entering into a tradition that is intimate yet open to sharing. The Parsi Royal Feast preserves heritage, history, flavour, and community warmth.



PARSI CUISINE IS A BEAUTIFUL EXPRESSION OF HERITAGE, COMMUNITY, AND WARMTH



FACT SHEET

Event: Parsi Royal Feast
Venue: Radisson Blu Marina, Connaught Place, New Delhi
Dates: Till 2 September 2025
Chefs: Firozi Karanjia and Rashna
Experience Add-ons: Parsi-themed décor, heritage storytelling, live recipe walkthroughs



FROM THE WORLD

NEPAL
Police bust kidney racket, arrest five

Nepal Police have busted an illegal kidney racket and arrested five people, including the kingpin, police said on Sunday. Shyam Krishna Bhandari, 38, the kingpin of the racket and his accomplice were arrested on Saturday, while three others were arrested earlier, the Anti Human Trafficking Bureau of Nepal Police said. All those arrested are Nepali nationals. Bhandari was involved in the kidney racket for the last five years. He had sent around 100 Nepali Nationals from Nepal to Delhi, where their kidneys were removed and transplantation was performed in some private clinics.

BRITAIN
New book on the British royal family

Queen Camilla fought off an indecent attack when she was a teenager by taking off her shoe and bashing the assailant in the groin, according to a new book on the royal family. Camilla was on a train to London's Paddington Station in the mid-1960s when the man next to her reached out and attempted to touch her, according to an excerpt from "Power and the Palace" by Valentine Low, a former royal correspondent for The Times of London. She told former PM Boris Johnson about the attack. "Camilla said, I did what my mother told me, I took my shoe off and whacked him in the nuts with the heel".

Putin blames West for Ukraine conflict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Tianjin

The West's constant attempts to draw Kiev into NATO is one of the main causes of the Ukrainian conflict, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit.

Putin claimed that the crisis arose largely because of the "coup d'etat in Kiev in 2014, which was provoked by the West" Russian news agency Tass reported.

"The second reason for the crisis is the West's constant attempts to draw Ukraine into NATO. As we have repeatedly emphasised, this poses a direct threat to Russia's security," he said.

In February 2014, deadly clashes between protesters and state forces in the capital Kyiv culminated in the ousting of then president Viktor Yanukovich. According to the



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaking at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Tianjin, China on Monday.

Russian president, "as a result of the coup in 2014, the political leadership of the country that did not support Ukraine's accession to NATO was removed."

Putin arrived in Tianjin on Sunday to take part in the summit of the 10-member bloc.

He later attended the opening banquet hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

His presence at the SCO summit shifted focus on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, unsuccessful attempts by US President Donald Trump to work out a ceasefire and pressuring India with heavy tariffs for buying Russian oil.

The SCO was founded on June 15, 2001, in Shanghai. Initially, it consisted of six countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

India and Pakistan joined in 2017, followed by Iran in 2023 and Belarus in 2024.

Five Pak army personnel killed in helicopter crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Islamabad

Five Pakistan army personnel, including two officers, were killed on Monday after their helicopter crashed in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir's Gilgit-Baltistan region.

An MI-17 helicopter, on routine training, attempted to "crash-land" after developing a technical fault, the army said in a statement, adding that the accident occurred at around 1am near Hudor village, about 12 kilometres away from Thakdas Cantonment, in Diamer.

Those killed were identified as Major Atif, pilot in command; Major Faisal, copilot; Naib Subedar Maqbool, flight engineer; Havilar Jahangir, crew chief and Naik

Amir, crew chief. "Training missions are part of routine activities of army aviation to maintain operational readiness for performing tasks varying from operational support to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief," it said.

Earlier, Gilgit-Baltistan Government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq said, "one of our helicopters" crashed in Chilas area of Diamer district, killing five crew members.

His statement gave an impression that the helicopter belonged to the Gilgit-Baltistan Government and that those killed also belonged to the regional Government. However, hours later the army's media wing confirmed that it was an army aviation aircraft.

SCO summit approves setting up of Development Bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Tianjin

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Monday announced that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states have decided to set up a Development Bank to increase the efficiency and social development of the region. The approval to set up the bank, a Chinese proposal, came after 10 years of deliberations among the member countries, Wang said.

He added that the new bank will increase the efficiency and social development of the region.

He, however, did not indicate any timeline to set up the bank. The SCO will launch this important process, and there will be one more multilateral platform in the EuroAsian region, he said. It is a good thing to celebrate not only for the member states but also for our region, Wang said. Chinese President Xi Jinping,

in his inaugural address earlier, urged SCO member states to accelerate the creation of a development bank, considering the growing appeal of the 10-nation bloc.

China had been pushing the grouping to set up a development bank on the lines of the New Development Bank (NDB) of the BRICS and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, in which India is the second largest shareholder.

Both banks, based in China, which were initially regarded as competitors to the IMF, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), are now working with them with a co-financing pattern. Wang said SCO has also approved the admission of Lao as a new SCO partner.

Also, the summit has decided to merge the observer states and dialogue partners into one unified state as the SCO partner. This is aimed at improving the efficiency of the organi-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, along with other world leaders, as they arrive for the SCO Heads of State Council Summit

sation, he said. Founded in 2001 in Shanghai, the SCO now includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran and Belarus. Afghanistan and Mongolia are observer states, and 14 other countries serve as dialogue partners.

The SCO has an extended family of 27, Wang said. In another development,

Pakistan and Armenia have agreed to establish diplomatic relations, shedding their differences, Wang said.

Wang said the leaders witnessed the unveiling of the four security centres - the SCO universal centre for countering security challenges and threats, the information security centre, the centre combating transnational crimes, and the SCO

anti-drug centre. Terming the summit under the Chinese Presidency as a milestone and highly successful, Wang said that major progress has been made in SCO security cooperation. He said that three cooperation centres will be set up for China-SCO cooperation in energy, green industry and the digital economy. The SCO has grown into the world's

largest regional organisation, with the participation of 26 countries, cooperation covering more than 50 areas, and a combined economic output of nearly \$30 trillion, Xi said in his inaugural address of the 25th summit here attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin, among others. SCO's "international influence and

appeal are increasing day by day," Xi told the gathering of 20 foreign leaders who converged here to take part in the SCO Plus summit, which is the largest held by the grouping so far.

Xi spoke twice at the SCO Summit and later addressed the SCO Plus summit, where he announced more initiatives from China to benefit the member states.

Giuliani injured in New Hampshire car crash

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Washington

Rudy Giuliani is recovering from a fractured vertebra and other injuries following a car crash in New Hampshire in which he was a passenger, a spokesperson for the former New York City mayor said Sunday.

Giuliani was being driven in a rented Ford Bronco by his spokesperson Ted Goodman when their vehicle was struck from behind by a

Honda HR-V driven by a 19-year-old woman late Saturday evening, New Hampshire State Police said in a statement. Troopers witnessed the crash, which caused both vehicles to hit the highway median and left them "heavily damaged," state police said. Goodman and the 19-year-old suffered "non-life-threatening injuries" and were taken to hospitals for treatment, the agency added. State police said they are investigating

the crash and no charges have been filed.

Giuliani, 81, was taken to a nearby trauma center and was being treated for a fractured thoracic vertebra, multiple lacerations and contusions, as well as injuries to his left arm and lower leg, according to a statement posted on X by Michael Ragusa, Giuliani's head of security.

Giuliani "sustained injuries but is in good spirits and recovering tremendously,"

Ragusa said, adding: "This was not a targeted attack."

Prior to the accident, Giuliani had been "flagged down by a woman who was the victim of a domestic violence incident" and contacted police assistance on her behalf, Ragusa said. After police arrived, Giuliani continued on his way and his vehicle was hit shortly after pulling onto the highway in a crash that was "entirely unrelated" to the domestic violence incident, Ragusa told

The Associated Press said in an emailed statement. State police said troopers were investigating a domestic violence report on the southbound Interstate 93 highway shortly before 10 pm.

And observed the crash, which occurred on the northbound lanes. New Hampshire State Police declined to comment on whether Giuliani had contacted the agency regarding the account of a domestic violence incident.

EU leader plane jammed out Bulgaria

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Brussels

A plane carrying European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was hit by GPS jamming over Bulgaria in a suspected Russian operation, a spokesperson said on Monday.

The plane landed safely in Plovdiv airport, and von der Leyen continued her planned tour of the EU nations bordering Russia and Belarus, said the commission's spokesperson Arianna. "We can indeed confirm that there was GPS jamming," said Podesta. "We have received information from the Bulgarian authority that they suspect that this was due to blatant interference by Russia." Von der Leyen, a fierce critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Moscow's war in Ukraine, is on a four-day tour of the EU nations bordering Russia and Belarus.

"This incident actually underlines the urgency of the mission that the president is carrying out in the front-line member States," Podesta said. She said that von der Leyen has seen "firsthand the everyday challenges of threats coming from Russia and its proxies."

Houthi raid UN offices in Yemen

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Cairo

Iran-backed Houthi on Sunday raided offices of the United Nations' food, health and children's agencies in Yemen's capital, detaining 11 UN employees, officials said. The rebels tightened security across Sanaa following the Israeli killing of their prime minister and several Cabinet members.

Abeer Etefa, a spokesperson for the World Food Program, told The Associated Press that security forces raided the agencies' offices in the Houthi-controlled capital on Sunday morning.

Also raided were offices of the World Health Organization and UNICEF, according to a UN official and a Houthi official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media. The UN official said armed forces raided the offices and questioned employees in the parking lot. Ammar Ammar, a spokesperson for UNICEF, said a number of the agency's staffers were detained, and UNICEF was seeking additional information from the Houthis. Both

THE REBELS TIGHTENED SECURITY ACROSS SANAA FOLLOWING THE ISRAELI KILLING OF THEIR PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET MEMBERS

Etefa and Ammar said their agencies were conducting "a comprehensive head count" of their employees in Sanaa and other Houthi-held areas.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres in a statement late Sunday said at least 11 personnel had been detained. He condemned that and the "forced entry into the premises of the World Food Program, the seizure of UN property and attempts to enter other UN premises in Sanaa." He called for the immediate and unconditional release of the personnel. The raids were the latest in a long-running Houthi crackdown against the UN and other international organisations working in rebel-held areas in Yemen. They have detained dozens of UN staffers, as well as people associated with aid groups, civil society and the now-closed US Embassy.

North Korean leader inspects new missile factory

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Brussels

North Korea said Monday leader Kim Jong Un inspected a new weapons factory that's key to his plan to accelerate mass production of missiles in a weekend visit before he departs for a major military parade in China.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency did not disclose the location of the factory Kim visited Sunday, but it may be in Jagang province, a hub of the country's munitions industry that borders China.

Both China and North Korea confirmed last week that Kim will make his first



visit to China in six years to attend a military parade in Beijing on Wednesday, which marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and China's resistance

against Japanese wartime aggression. The 26 foreign leaders invited by Chinese President Xi Jinping also include Russia's Vladimir Putin, who has received

major wartime support from Kim in his invasion of Ukraine, making the Beijing event a show of three-way alignment against US efforts to strengthen security cooperation with South Korea and Japan.

South Korean media speculated Kim could depart for China by train sometime Monday, pointing to heightened security measures at the Chinese border town of Dandong, where rail traffic was reportedly halted and hotels stopped receiving foreign guests. KCNA said the factory had assembly lines to speed missile production and reported that Kim praised scientists and workers and ratified plans for improve-

ment. South Korean officials say Kim has pushed to accelerate munitions production as he supplies Russia with large quantities of military equipment, including artillery and ballistic missiles. Kim has also sent thousands of troops since last fall to fight alongside Russian forces against Ukraine, as he prioritises Moscow as part of a foreign policy aimed at expanding ties with nations confronting the United States.

Since aligning with Russia, North Korea has become more vocal in international affairs beyond the Korean Peninsula, issuing diplomatic statements on conflicts in the Middle East and in the Taiwan Strait.



Minouche Shafik tapped as UK economic adviser

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday appointed economist and former Columbia University president Minouche Shafik as his chief economic adviser. It's part of a staff shakeup aimed at strengthening the Government's response to a sluggish economy and a heated political debate over immigration. Starmer's centre-left Labour Party Government has struggled to boost economic growth and curb inflation, leaving Treasury chief Rachel Reeves facing unpalatable choices about taxes and spending in her budget this fall. Shafik, a former deputy governor of the Bank of England, has held senior academic and civil service roles in Britain, and served a brief, tempestuous term as Columbia president.



Singapore Prime Minister urges civic engagement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Singapore

Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong has called on new citizens to contribute to the society by participating actively in the community of six million people of the city State. The new citizens can also do so by getting to know their neighbours and building bonds with people of different backgrounds, said Wong at the National Citizenship Ceremony held on August 31. The ceremony saw 300 new Singapore citizens receive their certificates of citizenship, as well as affirm their commitment to the Republic and to working with fellow Singaporeans to build a shared future together. Manpower-short with below one per cent local birth-rate, Singapore takes in about 22,000 new citizens annually. "By participating actively, you will be Singapore citizens not just in name, but also in spirit and heart," Wong as saying.

PROSPECT

SANJAY SINGHAL APPOINTED NEW SSB DG, TAKES CHARGE IN DELHI



Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Sanjay Singhal on Monday took charge as the new director general (DG) of the Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB), India's federal border guarding force along Nepal and Bhutan. Singhal, 57, took charge at the headquarters of the about 80,000 personnel strong force in the R K Puram area of Delhi after he was accorded a ceremonial guard of honour by the troops, a force spokesperson said. The vacancy at the top SSB post arose following the retirement of former DG A M Prasad on August 31. The Union government had issued an order on July 29 appointing Singhal as the new SSB chief. The SSB, which functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), is primarily tasked to guard unfenced international Indian borders with Nepal (1,751 km) and Bhutan (699 km), apart from rendering a variety of duties in the internal security domain of the country. The 1993-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer from the Uttar Pradesh cadre has served in various capacities in his home state, apart from serving in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Border Security Force (BSF) at the Centre.

AGRICULTURE MINISTRY TO CREATE DEDICATED PORTAL FOR FARMERS'



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday announced creation of a dedicated portal to address farmers' complaints and also asked his officials to quickly resolve their problems. According to an official statement, the minister held a high-level meeting to review the resolution of complaints received from farmers through call centres and other portals. In the meeting, Chouhan "instructed the officials to create a single dedicated portal for farmers' complaints, suggestions, and other assistance instead of multiple portals, for the convenience of farmers, and to ensure early and proper resolution of problems." The minister would regularly review the complaints received from farmers to ensure quick redressal. Chouhan said there should be no delay in resolving issues of farmers. The minister sought information from officials about the complaints received from farmers, many of which pertained to spurious or substandard fertilisers, seeds, and pesticides. "We must save farmers from being looted and, for this, the sale of substandard fertilisers, seeds, and pesticides must be strictly stopped," he said.

Individualistic feelings and ideology of Bhupen Hazarika



An artist's primary obligation is towards his or her audience and the spectators. His popularity and greatness depend on their estimation. It has been observed that sometimes great artist need to shift from one to another ideology just to adjust himself with the demand of changing and varied popular taste. No doubt, the saying goes that masterminds think alike. It has been proved by the ideals, opinions and writings of the eminent thinkers, writers and artists throughout the ages and all over the world. Assam is proud of her illustrious son Dr Bhupen Hazarika whose position in popular estimation is somewhat nearer, if not similar to the great Srimanta Sankardeva, the founding father of modern Assamese culture. Bhupen Hazarika is the worthy inheritor of that culture.

In the western world, Paul Robeson is his match. Both Robeson and Bhupen Hazarika wanted to usher in ideal changes in their respective countries through music. For Robeson the guitar was a means of social change. So also, Bhupen Hazarika too visualised ushering in an ideal society free from exploitation which he wanted to do through music. Even at the tender age of 13 Bhupen Hazarika composed and sang the song — "Agni Jugar Firingoti Moi Natun Axom Garhim Xarba Harar Xarbaswa Punar Phirai Anim Dr Hazarika in his later life proved

himself a worthy creation of what he at the age of thirteen predicted about himself as "I am the spark of the age of fire" (Agni Jugar firingoti Moi). The ideals of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and Bishnu Prasad Rabha instilled in him at an early age, the spirit of looking at things freely and independently which is the basis of his revolutionary thoughts.

While pursuing higher education at Banaras Hindu University, brought him into contact with many a luminaries of then India; his contact with Paul Robeson may be called a rare fortunate occasion. At the Columbia University he came into contact with Paul Robeson, the great Afro American artist, who believed that music could be a powerful instrument for social transformation.

He declared that Guitar was not a musical instrument, it was a social instrument. Robeson's revolutionary utterings, his songs and his public speeches convinced Dr Hazarika that art and music could really be powerful forces, which might be utilised for social transformation. In spite of such inspiration derived from Paul Robeson, it must be said with due respect to Dr Hazarika that he could not elevate himself to the height of Paul Robeson as far as their aims and objectives were concerned. While Paul Robeson remained steadily sticking to his avowed purpose, Dr Hazarika diverted his attention to some other artistic activities such as filmmaking, literary activities and also to politics. Such diversion of Hazarika deviated him from his avowed purpose of attaining social transformation.

Dr Hazarika claimed, "I am really a believer of Marxist philosophy and



I have grown up believing in the philosophy of saint Sankardeva. My ideals are Paul Robeson, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Junior; I am a believer in socialism". However, he could not confined himself solely into it.

Dr Hazarika's song "Bistirna Parare" may be called a translation though not literal of Paul Robeson's song 'Old Man River'. While Robeson sings on the theme of Mississippi, Dr Hazarika does so taking the Brahmaputra as the theme of his song. While the Mississippi is described as witnessing the toil and hardship of the Blacks because of the exploitation by the Whites, Dr Hazarika blames the mighty Brahmaputra for helplessly witnessing the miseries of the dwellers on its sprawling banks.

In 'Old Man River' Robeson has personified the river Mississippi, attributing on it human qualities. The river is imagined as an old man helplessly witnessing the hardship of life experienced by the Blacks who remained perpetually exploited by "the rich man boss", who is

no other than the white man. Going a step ahead of Paul Robeson, Dr Hazarika wants the Brahmaputra to inspire the people to revolt against the ruthless oppressors. Elevating the river to the status of fatherhood, he wants it to inspire the sons who are none other than the dwellers on its banks.

In Robeson's 'Old Man River' the singer has neither directly questioned nor asked the river to inspire the Blacks — the toiling masses on its banks, to revolt against the oppressor. This amply proves that Hazarika's revolutionary zeal for social transformation is somewhat more forceful than that of Robeson. Dr Hazarika wants the Brahmaputra to install the spirit of rebellion in the hearts of the oppressed lots.

Although want of space has restricted any more comparison between the songs of Paul Robeson and Dr Bhupen Hazarika, it must be said that Dr Hazarika may be called a soul no lesser than Paul Robeson, so far his talent and popularity are concerned. It is a fact that Robeson by virtue of his unwavering faith and

unity of purpose proved himself a greater revolutionary artist. He remained sticking to his mission of life — that was to gain equal social status for the Blacks. On the other hand, Dr Bhupen Hazarika, in spite of his superior talent and academic excellence, is said to have not attained the status of Paul Robeson. This is possibly because of diverting his talent to various other artistic activities as mentioned earlier.

Yet another reason for Robeson's wider popularity is his identification with a cause having international ramifications — the age old conflict between Blacks and white. Incidentally, Dr Hazarika did not have the scope to associate himself with any International cause, as a result of which his popularity remained confined to his country. Had he got an international platform like that of Robeson, probably with his superior talent Dr Hazarika too could have elevated himself to a height not lower than that of Paul Robeson.

In fine it must be said that Dr Bhupen Hazarika proved himself a more popular artist than Robeson. This has been amply proved by the millions of his patrons and fans who rushed out to pay homage to his mortal remains.

If in death Dr Bhupen Hazarika could attract millions of his patrons and his fans, one can guess what sort of popularity he used to have while alive. The mourning millions wept bitterly worrying if ever Mother Assam would be blessed with another son of Dr Bhupen Hazarika's worth.

Writer is an Associate Professor, Sonapur College

Ashok Leyland to invest in the battery ecosystem for a Sustainable India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Ashok Leyland, the Indian flagship of the Hinduja Group and the country's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer on Monday announced its plans to invest in development and manufacturing of next-generation batteries, for both automotive and non-automotive applications, including energy storage systems. This reinforces Ashok Leyland's ambition to be a leading player in creating an electrification ecosystem in the country, in alignment with Government's vision of creating a sustainable and green economy. In the backdrop of improving bilateral relations, Ashok Leyland has entered into a long-term exclusive partnership with CALB Group, one of



the foremost battery technology companies in China. The agreements were signed by Shenu Agarwal, Managing Director & CEO, Ashok Leyland and Jacky Liu, CEO, CALB (HK) Co. Ltd, in presence of Shom Hinduja, President, Alternative Energy and Sustainability Initiatives, Hinduja Group.

Ashok Leyland will invest in battery localisation in India. This will not only provide for Ashok Leyland & Switch's own electric vehicle portfolio but will also cater to non-captive demand in the entire automotive sector as well as in energy storage sector. This business would entail investments over

₹5,000 crore over the next 7-10 years. Dheeraj Hinduja, Chairman, Ashok Leyland said, "Ashok Leyland is deeply committed to shaping the future of sustainable mobility in India in full alignment with Government's vision. Our strategic partnership with CALB is a significant step towards creating a localised battery supply chain in India to accelerate adoption of electric vehicles in India and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels."

This partnership marks yet another milestone for Ashok Leyland and Hinduja Group's ongoing commitment towards electrification, with investments across Electric Vehicles, Electric Mobility-as-a-Service, Charging Equipment, Vehicle Financing and Leasing, and other areas.

Farmers to receive fair payout for land used in Power Project: Delhi cm

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's efforts to ensure adequate compensation to farmers will pave the way for faster land acquisition and timely completion of the Rajasthan-Delhi transmission system, an official statement said on Monday. The Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL) is implementing an inter-state transmission system project for power supply from Rajasthan to Delhi, the chief minister's office (CMO) said in the statement. The transmission line will pass through nearly 20 villages in North and North-West Delhi, including Auchandi, Harewali, Mungeshpur and Qutubgarh. It will further boost power supply in the national capital, it said. As a part of this project, a sub-station is also to be

established in Narela, besides laying of the transmission lines, it said.

Previously, several rounds of discussions failed to achieve a consensus over land valuation and compensation rates, thereby risking delays to the project. Significantly, even after receiving compensation, farmers would retain ownership rights over their land, said the statement. The Chief Minister, to break this impasse, recently convened a high-level meeting attended by senior officials from the PGCIL and the Delhi government's revenue and power departments.

She made it clear that her government is fully committed to safeguarding the interests of farmers and emphasised that the success of any project is only possible when there is trust and fair participation from the local community.

Khadi : Swadeshi movement of developed nation



Monday the whole world is entangled in the 'Chakravayuh of Tariff War'. Every country is raising walls of duty on imports and exports to fulfill its own interests. In this era of global diplomacy, economic competition has created new strains and the balance of global trade is getting shaken. Every country is looking for ways to break this Chakravayuh. But to get out of this, India has an eternal solution tried in the past - Swadeshi. During the freedom struggle, after returning from South Africa, PujyaBapu had blown the trumpet of self-reliance through Swadeshi through the Charkha (spinning wheel). Monday, the same spinning wheel has become the basis of the 'Swadeshi Revolution' with the determination of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Recently, from the land of Gujarat, OPrime Minister had said - "This land of Gujarat belongs to two Mohans—one Sudarshan Chakradhari Dwarkadish Shri Krishna and the other Charkhadhari Mohan, Saint PujyaBapu of Sabarmati." India is continuously getting stronger under the sanctifications of both of them. In true sense, I would say that this is the Modi era of Swadeshi Revolution through Khadi. Monday, when the humming sound of spinning wheel and loom resonates in villages, it does not only weave yarn, but also weaves the fabric of the soul of developed

India. The same Charkha (spinning wheel) which Mahatma Gandhi had made the 'weapon of freedom' has been made the 'foundation of developed India' by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Khadi is no longer just a fabric, but has become the 'flag bearer of Swadeshi Revolution'. The leader of Swadeshi Revolution, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has been continuously appealing to the people on the Nation from numerous platforms to adopt Khadi and Swadeshi products. On 31 August 2025, in his popular program 'Mann Ki Baat', he said, "There will be a lot of festival celebrations in the coming days. Never forget Swadeshi in these festival season - gifts should be made in India, clothes should be woven in India, decorations should be made from goods made in India, lighting should be made from garlands made in India. There should be Swadeshi in every need of life and say with pride - this is Swadeshi." Similarly, during his address from the Red Fort on 15 August 2025, he appealed to all shopkeepers and traders to put up boards in their shops which read, "Swadeshi goods are sold here". Recently, in a program organized in Delhi, he said, "Whenever we have taken a pledge, we have proved it. Khadi is the biggest example of this. Khadi was on the verge of disappearance, there was no one to ask about it. When I got the opportunity to serve, I appealed to the country and people took a pledge. The result was that the sale of Khadi has increased almost seven times in a decade. The countrymen have adopted Khadi with the mantra of 'Vocal for Local'."

This is the time of festivals in India. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's appeal is that this festive season should not only be a celebration of culture but also a celebration of self-reliance. His mantra is clear - "Whatever we buy, it will be Made in India, Swadeshi and whatever we sell will also be Swadeshi." Let us all take a pledge to build a developed and prosperous India of Amritkaal with messages like promoting Self-Reliant India, Made in India. Keep in mind that we will have to lay the foundation of developed India from our own units of the Nation producing Swadeshi products. We 144 crore Indians should take a pledge that we will buy and sell onlyswadeshi products, which will help in building a self-reliant, prosperous Nation.

In the last 11 years, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission has achieved historic achievements. The business has surpassed ₹1.75 lakh crore for the first time. Khadi sales have increased by seven times. Today, about 2 crore people across the country are getting employment by joining Khadi and Village Industries. These are not just figures, but a precedent of the 'Swadeshi Revolution'. Under the leadership of Modi ji, Khadi and Village Industries is not only the voice of 'Vocal for Local', but has also become a precedent of 'Make in India', 'Make for the World'. The Prime Minister has applauded Khadi everywhere, from 'Mann Ki Baat' to Parliament and International forums. He has said — "When you buy Khadi, it is not just cloth, but a step that strengthens the lives of crores of people." This Khadi has become the basis of the 'Developed India @ 2047' campaign today. Inspired by the policy of Nation

first and the spirit of the interests of the deprived, our Prime Minister has always been concerned about small entrepreneurs, livestock farmers, peasants and working brothers and sisters.

I can say from my personal experience that Hon'ble Prime Minister is such a unique leader of the world, who himself inspires and endorses the products of his small businessmen and artisans. Only he can give such a sturdy and clear message that 'the sweat of the countrymen should be reflected in the production of the country.' This feeling revamps 'Vocal for Local' and 'Swadeshi'.

Today we all should have only one mantra 'One resolution, Swadeshi is the only option' — 'Every festival, gift only Swadeshi'.

I believe that this is the time to test India's patience. The blood and sweat of our artisans is nourishing the economy with full enthusiasm and proficiency.

This proficiency will take the wheels of developed India to that altitudes where even the superpowers of the world will be forced to accept India's immense power. If not today, then definitely tomorrow, India will be recognised as a 'Vishwa Guru'. This recognition will become a proof of the vibrant energy and cultural strength of our democracy. This will become the basis of our Swadeshi system. No matter how much pressure comes, we will bear it and become stronger and stronger.

This is the message of the Prime Minister and this is also the mantra of 'Khadi-Shakti Se Swadeshi Kranti'.

Writer is Chairman, Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

MoU between Railways and SBI on rail employees salary packages



MoU for railway package was signed between India Railways CEO Satish Kumar and SBI Chairman C S Setty in the presence of Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at an event in Rail Bhawan on Monday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

An MOU was signed between the Indian Railways and State Bank of India (SBI) for Railway Salary Package account holders to give insurance protection of Rs one Crore in the event of accidental death (on duty and also off duty) without paying any premium and by just having salary account in SBI. At present, around Seven lakhs accounts of railway employees are with SBI. During the agreement event, a symbolic cheque was handed by Chairman SBI to the Railway Board Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar and SBI CEO C S Setty. According to a Press release, all the benefits under Railway Salary Package will be in addition to other benefits through other Government

schemes/insurance schemes/Policies to which Railway employee is part of. Some of the add on features of the beneficiaries will be access to personal, home, car, and education loans at attractive interest rates, with 50 percent to 100 percent off on processing fees. "Up to 50 percent discount on annual locker rental charges for salary account holder and his four family members; Zero balance requirement and free unlimited ATM transactions, including across any bank's ATM network, autoSweep/eMulti Option Deposit facility; automatically move surplus funds to multi-option deposits for better interest; Zero fee drafts, multicurrency cheques, SMS alerts, and zero charges on NEFT/RTGS; airport lounge access - domestic and International up to three visits a quarter on debit cards are

some of the additional features," said a statement by Railways. This proposed arrangement is purely voluntary in nature for all SBI account holders (Railway Employees) and also Railway administration will continue to enter similar/more attractive scheme with the other banks, added the statement. At present, railway employees are covered under CGEGIS under which insurance is covered upto ₹30 thousand for Group C, ₹60 thousand for Group B and ₹1.20 lacs for Group A employees in the event of death during service. Maximum workforce/front-line Railway Servicemen belong to Group C category. The insurance coverage ₹30 thousand is considered hardly sufficient to give financial support to the survived dependents.



Earthquake rattles Afghanistan, over 800 killed

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Kabul

Desperate Afghans clawed through rubble in the dead of the night in search of missing loved ones after a strong earthquake killed some 800 people and injured more than 2,500 in eastern Afghanistan, according to figures provided Monday by the Taliban Government.

The 6.0 magnitude quake late Sunday hit towns in the province of Kunar, near the city of Jalalabad in the neighbouring Nangarhar province, causing extensive damage.

The quake at 11:47 pm was centered 27 kilometres east-northeast of the city of Jalalabad in Nangarhar province, the US Geological Survey said. It was just 8 kilometres deep. Shallower quakes tend to cause more damage. Several aftershocks followed.

Footage showed rescuers taking injured people on stretchers from collapsed buildings and into helicopters as people frantically dug through rubble with their hands. A Taliban Government spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said at a press conference Monday that the



death toll had risen to 800 with 2,500 injured. He said that most of the casualties were in Kunar province.

Buildings in Afghanistan tend to be low-rise constructions, mostly of concrete and brick, with homes in rural and outlying areas made from mud bricks and wood. Many are of poor construction.

One resident in Nurgal district, one of the worst-affected

areas in Kunar, said nearly the entire village was destroyed. "Children are under the rubble. The elderly are under the rubble. Young people are under the rubble," said the villager, who did not give his name.

"We need help here," he pleaded. "We need people to come here and join us. Let us pull out the people who are buried. There is no one who can come and remove dead

bodies from under the rubble." Eastern Afghanistan is mountainous, with remote areas. The quake has worsened communications.

One survivor described seeing homes collapse before his eyes and people screaming for help.

Sadiquillah, who lives in the Maza Dara area of Nurgal, said he was woken by a deep boom that sounded like a big storm approaching. Like

many Afghans, he uses only one name.

He ran to where his children were sleeping and rescued three of them. He was about to return to grab the rest of his family when the room fell on top of him.

"I was half-buried and unable to get out," he told The Associated Press by phone from Nangarhar Hospital. "My wife and two sons are dead and my father is injured and in hospital with me. We were trapped for three to four hours until people from other areas arrived and pulled me out."

It felt like the whole mountain was shaking, he said. Rescue operations were underway and medical teams from Kunar, Nangarhar and the capital Kabul have arrived in the area, said Sharafat Zaman, a health ministry spokesman. Zaman said many areas had not been able to report casualty figures and that "the numbers were expected to change" as deaths and injuries are reported. The Taliban Government's chief spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said "all available resources will be utilized to save lives." Nearby Jalalabad

is a bustling trade city due to its proximity with neighboring Pakistan and a key border crossing between the countries. Although it has a population of about 300,000 according to the municipality, it's metropolitan area is thought to be far larger.

Jalalabad also has considerable agriculture and farming, including citrus fruit and rice, with the Kabul River flowing through the city.

A magnitude 6.3 earthquake struck Afghanistan on October 7, 2023, followed by strong aftershocks. The Taliban Government estimated at

least 4,000 people perished in that quake.

The UN gave a far lower death toll of about 1,500. It

was the deadliest natural disaster to strike Afghanistan in recent memory.

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66
Notice Inviting Short term Tender www.verka.coop

Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
For Cattle Feed Plant, Bhattian Khanna Purchase of By Pass Fat at CFP, Khanna and GKB	Three Months/ 150 Mts for Khanna 75 Mts for GKB

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e-procurement portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Contingendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

1018/12/2025-26/2763 General Manager (Purchase)

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.
SCO 153-155, SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022, EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66
Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

tenders are hereby invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy a) Disposal of unserviceable scrap material and machinery one time basis. b) Outsourcing of all activities of city supply despatch dock.	Annual/ As per site Annual
2.	For Verka Bathinda Dairy a) Design, supply installation, testing & commissioning of ammonia based refrigeration chilling plant for milk chilling centre talwandi sabo under Verka Bathinda Dairy. b) Hiring of insulated road Milk tankers (Cap.20 ton & above) for transportation of milk within/outside Punjab.	01 Complete Job 03 No's
3.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy a) Hiring of Vehicles for supply of Fresh Milk and Milk Products at:- i. Local Army Route- 02 ii. Beas Route iii. Tam Taran & Goindwal area b) Hiring of vehicles for transportation of Verka ambient products like SMP/WMP/GHEE/PIO etc in the Punjab and other states.	Annual Annual
4.	For Verka Faridkot Dairy a) Hiring of insulated road milk tanker for transportation of milk from MCC's to various Milk Plants in Punjab etc. on rate contract. i. Cap.10000 kg ii. Cap.15000 kg b) Hiring of two vehicles for procurement, Marketing & AI activities in the field. i. Bolero ii. Swift Dzire or its equivalent.	04 No's 01 No. 02 No's
5.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy a) Supply of food grade aluminium foil lids for dahi matka for 450gm/500gm, 5 kg & 15 kg. b) Supply of printed laminated film for packaging SMP in 500 gm & 1 kg. c) Outsourcing of various activities of city supply despatch dock.	Annual Annual One year with extension upto 3 months

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e-procurement portal i.e. eproc.punjab.gov.in.
2. Contingendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

1018/12/2025-26/2755 General Manager (Purchase)

Australia will pay Nauru to resettle foreign-born criminals

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Melbourne

Australia will pay the small Pacific island of Nauru to resettle foreign-born criminals who the courts have ruled cannot be imprisoned indefinitely, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said on Monday.

Nauru has become a political solution for the Government after Australia's High Court ruled in 2023 that non-citizens with no prospects of being resettled outside Australia could no

longer be held indefinitely in immigration detention. Albanese did not confirm media reports that Australia would pay the tiny Pacific Island nation, population 13,000, AUD 400 million (\$262 million) to establish the deal, then AUD 70 million (\$46 million) annually to maintain it. "People who have no right to be here need to be found somewhere to go, if they can't go home," Albanese told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "If they can't be sent back to their country of origin because of

refoulement provisions and obligations that we have, then we need to find another country for them to go to," Albanese added.

Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke surprised Australian media on Friday by visiting Nauru, where he signed a memorandum of understanding with Nauruan President David Adeang.

Adeang said in a statement on Sunday that the agreement "contains undertakings for the proper treatment and long-term residence of people who have no legal

right to stay in Australia, to be received by Nauru." "Australia will provide funding to underpin this arrangement and support Nauru's long-term economic resilience," Adeang said. The agreement will be activated when Nauru receives the first "transferees," who will be given long-term visas, the president said.

Australia's Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, an advocacy group, reported that Nauru planned to issue 280 visas to non-citizens that Australia wanted to deport.

The centre said legislation to be introduced to Parliament on would strip the right of fairness from deportation decisions under the new Nauru deal. Cancelled visas that are under appeal in court would be cancelled by the new law. He test case was brought by a member of Myanmar's persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority identified in court as NZYQ. He was brought to Australia in a smuggler's boat in 2012, and raped a child soon after being released into the Australian community.

DSPL-245



Shri Narendra Modi

Prime Minister



Shri Mohan Charan Majhi

Chief Minister, Odisha

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BRIEFLY

VEER AHLAWAT FINISHES 33RD IN EUROPEAN MASTERS



India's Veer Ahlawat finished the week with an up-and-down final round of two-under 68 to finish Tied-33rd at the European Masters, here.

Ahlawat, who has steadily been finding his feet on the DP World Tour, had rounds of 69-64-70-68 for a nine-under total. It was the fourth successive cut he made and in those four starts he has once been T-25 at Nexo Championship and twice in the 30s in the final standings. Ahlawat is now 129th in the standings and a few other good finishes could see the lanky star keep his DP World Tour status. Overall Ahlawat has made 11 cuts in 18 starts with T-13 at Austrian Alpine and T-17 in Hero Indian Open as his best results.

Shubhankar Sharma continued to struggle and again missed the cut this week. It was his 13th straight missed cut and is 201st in Race to Dubai standings.

ASHWIN INTERESTED IN PLAYING IN IRLT20: REPORTS



Having retired from all forms of Indian cricket, spin great Ravichandran Ashwin has now confirmed his interest in being part of the auctions for the next edition of International League T20 (ILT20), which will be held in the UAE from December 2 to January 4, 2026. Ashwin, who will turn 39 in another couple of weeks, had recently announced his retirement from the IPL, which has now made him eligible to play in franchise-based T20 leagues across the globe.

India's second-highest wicket-taker across formats with 765 scalps from 287 international games, will be the most high-profile name to play in a global league outside IPL if any franchise happens to pick him at the auctions. "Yes, I am in talks with the organisers. Hopefully, I will have a buyer if I register for the auction," Ashwin was quoted.

MAHANARYAMAN SCINDIA ELECTED AS PRESIDENT OF MPCA



Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia's son and Gwalior Division Cricket Association vice-president Mahanaryaman Scindia was on Monday unanimously elected president of the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association (MPCA), an official said.

The 29-year-old member of the erstwhile Gwalior royal family has become the youngest chief of the MPCA, established in 1957, and is a third-generation royal to head the cricket body, he said.

The MPCA's chief administrative officer, Rohit Pandit, said that all posts were filled unopposed in the association's elections.

The newly-elected executive will be formally ratified during the annual general meeting on Tuesday, after which office-bearers will assume charge, he said.

Pandit said the new executive includes Vineet Sethia as vice-president, Sudhir Asnani as secretary, Arundhati Kherkire as joint secretary and Sanjeev Dua as treasurer. Sandhya Agarwal, Prasoon Kanamdiakar, Rajiv Risodkar, and Vijesh Rana are elected committee members, while the cricket committee comprises Pradeep Banerjee, Ramnik Patel and Abhay Laghate.

Outgoing MPCA president Abhilash Khandekar told PTI, "In the last six years, the MPCA has garnered several milestones. I hope the newly elected executive under Mahanaryaman Scindia's leadership will take the association to new heights."

ASSAM CM HIMANTA VISITS SILCHAR TENNIS CLUB



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday visited the historic Silchar Tennis Club, established in 1944, interacted with the trainees and took stock of its infrastructure facilities.

India thrash Kazakhstan 15-0 in Asia Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Rajgir (Bihar)

Fancied India produced a dominant performance to crush Kazakhstan 15-0 in an utterly lopsided game and march into the Super 4 stage of the Asia Cup hockey tournament with an all-win record here on Monday.

Abhishek (5th, 8th, 20th and 59th), Sukhjeet Singh (15th, 32nd, 38th), Jugraj Singh (24th, 31st, 47th), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (26th), Amit Rohidas (29th), Rajinder Singh (32nd), Sanjay Singh (54th), Dilpreet Singh (55th) scored the goals for India.

Pool A toppers India found the net four times in the second quarter and led Kazakhstan 7-0 at half time, even as Abhishek completed his hat-trick five minutes into the second quarter in a thoroughly dominant showing by the home team.



India's captain Harmanpreet Singh passing the ball during the Men's Hockey Asia Cup 2025 match between India and Kazakhstan in Rajgir, Bihar

ABHISHEK'S STRIKING PARTNER SUKHJEET AND JUGRAJ ALSO SCORED HAT-TRICKS IN THE ONE-SIDED MATCH

Abhishek's striking partner Sukhjeet and Jugraj also scored hat-tricks in the one-sided match. India had beaten China and Japan in their first two matches.

The winner of the continental tournament will qualify for next year's World Cup to be jointly hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands.

Earlier, Malaysia and Korea won their respective Pool B matches convincingly to progress to the Super 4 stage of the men's Asia Cup hockey tournament on Monday.

While Malaysia thrashed Chinese Taipei 15-0, Korea

prevailed over Bangladesh 5-1. Malaysia topped the pool with three wins from as many matches, while Korea finished second with six points.

Bangladesh finished third with three points, while Chinese Taipei remained winless. In the second match of the day, Malaysia scored through Ashran Hamsani (8th, 15th, 32, 54th minutes), Akhimullah Anuar (10th, 20th, 29th, 45, 56th), Norsyafiq Sumantri (20th, 40th, 60th), Abu Kamal Azrai (22nd), Andywalfian Effrynus (24th), and Aiman Rozemi (32nd).

In the day's first Pool B match, Dain Son (9th, 11th) scored a brace, while Seungwoo Lee (16th), Seyong Oh (22nd) and Jihun Yang (60th) struck a goal each for Korea.

Bangladesh's lone goal came from the sticks of Sohanur Sobuj in the 22nd minute.

Rana powers West Delhi Lions to DPL 2025 title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Dubai

Former KKR skipper Nitish Rana once again showed his prowess in the shortest format with an unbeaten 79 off 49 balls as he propelled West Delhi Lions to its maiden Delhi Premier League (DPL2025) title beating Central Delhi Kings by six wickets.

Their unbroken stand not only nullified the Kings' bowling attack but also carried the Lions over the finish line.

Earlier, batting first, the Central Delhi Kings produced a remarkable turnaround after a shaky start to post a competitive 173/7 in 20 overs with skipper Rana doing the star turn by bringing himself into the attack. He bowled tight off-breaks to end with figures of 1/16 in four overs.



Chasing 174, the Lions were jolted early as Central Delhi Kings' bowlers Simarjeet Singh and Arun Pundir struck in quick succession, leaving them in tatters at 48 for 3 inside the fifth over.

The pressure of a big final was evident, but captain Rana stepped up when it mattered the most. Alongside Mayank Gusain, he steadied the chase with a 42-run partnership. Gusain (15 off 11) fell to leg-spinner Tejas Baroka, but by then, the skipper had already seized control.

Rana then found an ideal ally in former MI player Hrithik Shokeen, and the pair ensured there were no further setbacks. While Shokeen anchored with a composed 42 not out off 27 balls, Rana unleashed a master-class of controlled aggression, hitting as many as seven sixes.

The Kings' top order faltered under pressure, with wickets tumbling at regular intervals. At one stage, they were left reeling at 78/6, and the West Delhi Lions looked firmly in control.

But the script changed dramatically when Yugal Saini and Pranshu Vijayran came together at the crease. The duo showed grit, composure, and smart shot selection to stitch a game-changing 78-run partnership for the seventh wicket. Yugal anchored the innings with a determined 65 off 48 balls, mixing steady accumulation with timely boundaries. At the other end, Pranshu played the perfect aggressor, smashing a brilliant unbeaten 50 off just 24 deliveries.

Djokovic overcomes Struff, pain in the neck

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ New York

Novak Djokovic was cruising along with a big early lead in his US Open fourth-round match on Sunday night when his neck started bothering him. That didn't stop Djokovic from dominating 144th-ranked qualifier Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-3, 6-2 to reach his record 64th Grand Slam quarterfinal.

"What gives me a lot of encouragement right now, and positivity, is the way I played tonight," Djokovic said. "Best performance of the tournament so far. Hopefully I can keep that going."

Djokovic was ahead 4-0, 15-love when he hit a nicely angled volley winner to go up 30-love in that game. The 24-time Grand Slam champion immediately grabbed at



the back of his neck and started turning his head.

The 38-year-old Djokovic kept trying to stretch his neck or flex his right shoulder between points, and he went on to drop that game and the next one, too. But he soon regained the upper hand against Struff, who beat Frances Tiafoe in the previous round and was

trying to get to a major quarterfinal for the first time.

After improving to 8-0 against Struff, Djokovic now carries a 10-0 head-to-head record into his quarterfinal on Tuesday against 2024 US Open runner-up Taylor Fritz.

The No. 4-seeded Fritz, the last American man in the bracket, moved into the quarterfinals with a 6-4, 6-3,

6-3 victory Sunday against No. 21 Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic.

JESSICA PEGULA IN LAST 8: Jessica Pegula is back in the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam tournament, which used to be her roadblock.

The way Pegula is playing at this US Open, it may be just another stop on the way back to the final.

The No. 4 seed rolled into the last eight by routing fellow American Ann Li 6-1, 6-2 in just 54 minutes on Sunday. She will face Barbora Krejickova on Tuesday after the two-time Grand Slam champion fought off eight match points in a second set that ended with a 25-minute tiebreaker and beat Taylor Townsend 1-6, 7-6 (13), 6-3.

Townsend was trying to reach her first quarterfinal in her 31st Grand Slam appearance.

ICC Women's WC winner to get ₹40 crore as prize

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Dubai

The winners of the upcoming ICC Women's Cricket World Cup will receive the biggest-ever prize money in the history of the tournament, a massive hike from \$1.32 million (₹11.65 crore) in the previous edition to \$4.48 million (₹39.55 crore), the sport's global governing body announced on Monday.

The 13th edition of the global showpiece event, beginning on September 30, is being jointly hosted by India and Sri Lanka.

Overall, the eight-team event will witness nearly a three-fold increase in prize money, with the ICC announcing a total prize purse of \$13.88 million (₹122.5 crore approx) for the mega event. "The

International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday announced a staggering four-fold increase in prize money for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 to be hosted by India from 30 September to 2 November. The ICC sets a new benchmark for women's cricket as champions walk away with a record \$4.48 million in prize money," said a statement from the global cricket body.

"The overall prize money at the eight-team tournament totals USD 13.88 million, which is a rise of 297 per cent from the \$3.5 million (₹31 crore approx) at the last edition held in New Zealand in 2022. The total prize pot eclipses the prize money at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023, which had total prize money of \$10 million (₹88.26 crore approx)."

OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, KODALA
Odisha, Pin- 761032, e-Mail:- nackodala@gmail.com
Lt. No. 2682 / Dev / 2025 Dated: 30.08.2025
C-978 e- NOTICE

BID IDENTIFICATION No. KOD-NAC-11/2025-26

The Executive Officer, NAC, Kodala, on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites for bidders of eligible class registered with the State Govt. and bidders of equivalent grade/ class registered with central Govt./ MES/Railways according to norm of e-procurement system in online mode for the work as per DTCN.

1. Name of the Work :- Civil Work
2. Number of Work :- 10 Nos.
3. Estimated cost :- As per DTCN
4. Period of Completion :- As per DTCN
5. Date and Time of availability of Bid Document in the Portal :- From 10.00AM of Dt. 01/09/2025 to 5.00PM of Dt. 09/09/2025
6. Last date and time for receipt of Bid in the Portal :- 5.00PM of Dt. 09/09/2025
7. The bid received online shall be opened on 11.00 AM of dt. 10/09/2025
8. Name and Address of the Officer inviting Bid: Executive Officer, NAC, Kodala.

Further details can be seen from the Procurement Portal: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Executive Officer,
Kodala NAC

CIPR-12203/11/0048/2526

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