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Russia appoints ex-CJI Chandrachud arbitrator in Ukraine row



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Frame policy on regularisation of illegal constructions, SC to states



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Coal India, AMNS sign pact for synthesis gas utilisation



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GLOBAL

Putin threatens retaliation over seized Russian vessels



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SPORTS

R Praggnanandhaa beats Javokhir Sindarov in Sinquefield Cup



Panel finds Justice Varma guilty

With Varma’s resignation, removal proceedings are virtually moot, but findings put the cash row on record

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Justice Yashwant Varma has been found guilty by a panel constituted by the Lok Sabha Speaker to probe allegations of discovery of cash at his official residence with the committee saying the charges of unexplained cash, disturbing evidence and evasive explanation against him “are proved”.

In its report submitted in both houses of Parliament on Wednesday, the three-member committee constituted under the Judges (Inquiry) Act said the former Delhi High Court judge failed to furnish satisfactory explanation on the presence, source or ownership of cash found in the store room of his official residence.

The panel also said that material evidence was not secured or preserved and the evidentiary condition of



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla receiving the Judges Inquiry Committee report concerning Justice Yashwant Varma, in New Delhi on May 18

PTI

the storeroom was disturbed before the lawful sealing and inspection.

It also found that the explanation by Justice Varma did not exhibit candour, transparency and institu-

tional responsibility expected in the circumstances.

“It remained evasive and unsatisfactory when tested against the evidence of independent official witnesses and corroborative materi-

al,” the panel said in its final report.

“The Committee therefore records its final findings that Articles of charges I, II and III are proved,” the probe panel said in its con-

solidated findings on the articles of charge against Justice Varma.

The report is in two volumes along with oral and documentary evidence recorded during the course of the investigation.

The three-member probe panel had submitted its findings to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in May.

As nearly 200 MPs pressed for his removal by Parliament, Justice Varma has since resigned. His resignation has not yet been notified by the law ministry.

A fire broke out in the official residence of Justice Varma on the night of March 14, 2025. Firefighters called to douse the blaze allegedly discovered massive amounts of burnt currency in a storeroom.

Since Justice Varma resigned, removal proceedings against him have virtually become infructuous.

The ByStander



PIONEER IN SHORT

FOOD PRICES PUSH INFLATION HIGHER

Retail inflation rose to 4.45 per cent in July from 4.38 per cent in June, driven by a sharp increase in prices of key kitchen staples, including onions and ginger, Government data showed on Wednesday. The July reading was the highest since the new CPI series, with 2024 as the base year, was introduced in January. Food inflation accelerated to 5.52 per cent from 5.32 per cent in June. Onion inflation surged to 22.54 per cent from 4.73 per cent, while ginger prices jumped 83.62 per cent. Garlic inflation also rose sharply. In contrast, potatoes, ladyfinger, peas and tomatoes recorded negative inflation. Retail inflation remained above the Reserve Bank of India’s 4 per cent target for a second straight month, though core inflation excluding precious metals remained benign.

HILSA MAKES COMEBACK IN GANGA

The hilsa fish has returned to the middle and upper stretches of the Ganga after being virtually absent from these reaches for decades, marking a significant milestone in river restoration and aquatic biodiversity conservation, officials said. The Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute (ICAR-CIFRI) said two hilsa, weighing a combined 740 grams, were found near Markandey Mahadev Temple in Uttar Pradesh’s Chandauli district. The species had historically migrated from the Bay of Bengal through the Ganga up to Varanasi, Prayagraj and beyond, but the commissioning of the Farakka Barrage in 1975 disrupted its migration route. Since 2019, ICAR-CIFRI and the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) have undertaken a restoration programme involving river ranching, artificial breeding, egg and spawn releases, tagging and monitoring.

CHANDRA TO EXIT TATA SONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

N Chandrasekaran will step down as chairman of Tata Sons when his current term ends on February 20, 2027, wrapping up a nine-year tenure that transformed the scale and breadth of one of India’s most influential conglomerates but ended with a standoff with Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata over his reappointment.

“I have completed 40 years of professional life at the Tata Group. I am grateful for the immensely satisfying opportunity to contribute to this venerable institution,” Chandrasekaran,



Tata Sons Chairperson N Chandrasekaran

PTI

widely known as Chandra, said in a statement.

Chandrasekaran, 63, who has spent 40 years with the Tata Group, told the Tata Sons board on Wednesday that he would not offer himself for another term and asked the directors to decide on a successor soon to ensure an orderly transition. His decision comes after a six-month impasse over his reappointment and marks the end of what would have been an unprecedented third five-year term at the helm of Tata Sons.

CONTINUED ON >> P5



PM Modi speaking at the launch of former president Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

PM asks Gen Z to read more

RAHUL DATTA ■ New Delhi

Stepping up his efforts to reach out to Gen Z in the aftermath of the Jantar Mantar protests last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi cautioned the youth on Wednesday that in the era of reels, social media influencers could take them down certain paths, but a “shortcut will cut you short.”

“This is the era of reels. Social media influencers often pull you in and take you down certain paths. In this age of shortcuts, let us remember a message often displayed at railway stations: A shortcut will cut you short. This is written because some people have a habit of jumping onto the

tracks instead of using the railway bridge. However, if there is a shortcut you should take to get ahead in life, it is to read the autobiography of someone you admire,” he said.

He also appealed to them to read autobiographies as they offer an opportunity to understand a particular period through the life of someone who experienced it.

In recent weeks, PM Modi himself has posted reels more frequently, addressing young people. Last month, after the NEET protests, the PM had also asked his ministerial colleagues to actively use Instagram and post reels to connect with young people.

CONTINUED ON >> P5

LG approves Master Plan for Delhi 2047

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu approved the Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) 2047 at the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) meeting on Wednesday. Earlier, the DDA was working on MPD 2041 after the expiry of the MPD 2021, which has now been changed to MPD 2047 to align with the Union Government’s vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Announcing the approval on social media, Sandhu posted on X: “The new Master Plan for Delhi 2047 was approved for further consideration, aligning



Delhi LG Taranjit Singh Sandhu chairing a meeting of the DDA on Wednesday

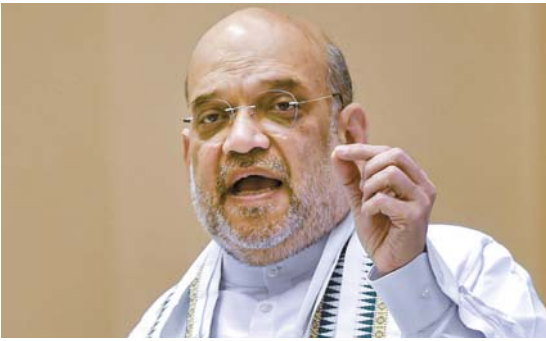
VIA X.COM

Delhi’s long-term vision with Hon’ble PM Shri @narendramodi Ji’s mission of #Viksit_bharat@2047. Deliberated on a roadmap for sustainable and inclusive urban growth, with greater Ease of Doing Business, Ease of Living, and a cleaner,

greener capital for all.”

The document will end a five-year delay and set the course for how the Capital grows, houses its population and manages its environment for the next two decades.

CONTINUED ON >> P5



Union home minister, Amit Shah

PTI

Shah offers debate, Rahul says resign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Union home minister, Amit Shah who has been in the Opposition’s line of fire since the crackdown on students in Delhi on July 20, made an offer for a debate in Parliament promising a detailed statement. It was, however, rejected by Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi and sought his resignation.

“Let’s start the debate from 3 pm today. I will sit in the House and will give a detailed reply at 3 pm on Thursday,” Shah said in his first statement on the Opposition protests against him. He accused the Opposition of running away from debate and stalling the Parliament. He further dared the Opposition to let

the discussion take place in the Parliament on the students’ issue and assured that he will give a detailed statement after the debate.

He said dialogue and discussions are the only ways to find solutions in a democracy and he has full faith in democracy and democratic institutions. The home minister said the debate should facilitate the views of the Opposition and treasury benches on the important issue of students’ protests.

Shah also wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to consult the Opposition on holding a debate on the students’ protests over the NEET paper leak and consequent protests, saying he is ready to answer all questions in the House.

CONTINUED ON >> P5

PAN-PAN call before Delhi adds new clue to AI altitude drop probe

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

A new detail has emerged from the investigation into the Air India (AI) Phuket-Delhi flight that suddenly lost around 300 feet in altitude on August 4. The cockpit crew reportedly sought priority handling from the Air Traffic Control (ATC) before the aircraft reached Delhi, prompting air traffic controllers to give the flight priority.

A senior official associated with Delhi ATC told *The Pioneer* that the pilot of flight AI2379, operating from Phuket to Delhi, communicated a PAN-PAN alert before landing. According to the official, ATC subsequently accorded priority handling to the aircraft. The development could provide investigators with an important timeline of what happened inside the aircraft after the sudden altitude loss.

A PAN-PAN call is an internationally recognised aviation urgency signal. It indicates that an aircraft is facing a situation requiring urgent assistance but that the cockpit crew does not consider it an immediate threat to life or the continued safety of the aircraft. It is different from a MAYDAY call, which is reserved for situations involving grave and imminent danger.

The reported PAN-PAN communication is significant because AI initially described

FCRA Bill sent to JPC for review

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government on Wednesday sent the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 to a Joint Committee of Parliament (JPC) for a detailed review and possible suggestions amid strong protest by the Opposition.



Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session on Wednesday

PTI

The committee is proposed to be comprised of 31 members, with 21 from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha. It will submit a report to the Lok Sabha in the first week of the Winter Session.

The Bill empowers the Government to create an authority to take over the management of foreign contributions and assets created using foreign contributions when an organisation’s FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered, or ceases because it is not renewed.

CONTINUED ON >> P5

The Pioneer Exclusive



The aircraft’s post-flight maintenance on August 4 records low-pressure warnings involving all three hydraulic systems, an autopilot disconnect and an elevator flight-control fault around 04.02 UTC PIONEER PHOTO

the August 4 event as a brief turbulence-related incident that resulted in a momentary change in altitude. The airline later revised its account and acknowledged that the aircraft had experienced a sudden loss of altitude.

CONTINUED ON >> P5

Delhi Police goes kuchu-puchu to warn against deadly manjha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

There is something mildly surreal about a police force going kuchu-puchu. That particular term, scraped from the bottom of the internet’s affection jar, has in recent weeks been deployed against politicians, bureaucrats, and anyone else the algorithm decides deserves a soft verbal prod. Delhi Police, watching all of this, apparently decided that if the nation was already talking in this register, there was no reason it could not too.

So it did. “Dear Kuchu Puchu,” the post began, “Patang udaao but say NO to Chinese manjha. Samjhe?”

The tone was nothing like what Delhi Police usually sounds like when it wants you to stop doing something. It was lighter. It was almost fond. It had the texture of an older relative who has finally, after years of resistance, figured out what a meme is and is now deploying one with slightly too much enthusiasm.

The internet, as it does, took notice. “Gen-Z mode of Delhi Police,” one commenter wrote. “They are updating,” said another. Both were correct. And the smile that the post invited is, in a way, the point. Because the thing behind the joke is not funny at all.



Representative image

ISTOCK

Chinese manjha, which is made from synthetic or plastic material and coated with abrasive substances, does not behave like the cotton string it has largely replaced in kite markets across the country. Cotton string breaks. It yields. It does not hold an edge. Chinese manjha does not break easily, and it does hold an edge, a wire-thin line of cutting capacity that remains taut in the air long after the kite has flown. When it falls across a road, and a person on a two-wheeler rides through it at speed, the string does not give way. The neck does.

In Uttam Nagar in southwest Delhi, a 32-year-old man sustained a cut to his neck

from Chinese manjha when he was on his way to Mundka for work. He survived. A seven-year-old girl in Paschim Vihar in west Delhi in 2023 did not. She was on a scooter with her father, going to a market, when the string found her. She was seven.

These are not accidents in the way a slipped step is an accident. They are the predictable consequence of a product designed to cut, deployed in an uncontrolled airspace, by people who have not always understood what happens when a kite string made of glass-coated plastic meets a human throat at the speed of a commute.

CONTINUED ON >> P5

STF arrests Nigerian linked to online scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Special Task Force of the Uttar Pradesh Police has arrested a member of a notorious Nigerian gang operating a sophisticated online scam network.

The STF arrested 37-year-old Nwogu Obed Osinachi, a native of Imo State in Nigeria, from a house in Kamal Vihar in Delhi's Burari around 1:50 pm on Tuesday.

The Nigerian national, allegedly linked to the gang, was living illegally in Delhi after his business visa expired in 2022. The arrest came following STF's intelligence-led operation targeting persons involved in massive financial frauds through social media platforms.

According to the STF, the gang created fake profiles on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp using the identities of foreign nationals, particularly those of the USA and the UK, and befriended Indian men and women. The victims were allegedly promised expensive gifts, dollars or

pounds and were later told that the gifts had been intercepted at airports.

The fraudsters would then allegedly pose as customs or income tax officials and demand money in the name of customs duty, income tax, or GST to release the gifts or currency. They would coerce the victims into depositing huge amounts of money into various bank accounts.

According to the STF, the investigation gained momentum following a complaint registered at Madeyanj police station in Lucknow. A young resident of the Daliganj area was allegedly duped of around Rs 68 lakh by a person using a fake Facebook profile in the name of 'Doris William', and claiming to be a resident of England. The scammers even sent him a fake Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) certificate to make the fraud look authentic.

Through intensive technical surveillance and digital tracking, the STF had earlier arrested two other Nigerian gang members, Uchenwa on May 15 and Obase Prosper on July

18. During questioning, Osinachi allegedly told the STF that he had come to India on a business visa in 2022 but had been staying illegally in Delhi after his visa expired the same year.

Continued interrogation and intelligence gathering led the cyber team to the remaining prime suspect, Nwogu Obed Osinachi (37), a native of Imo State in Nigeria, who was living illegally in Delhi.

The STF claimed that Osinachi had admitted during interrogation that he, along with gang members Uchenwa and Prosper, had defrauded the Lucknow man of ₹68 lakh.

He allegedly told investigators that some of his associates were still operating from Delhi and targeting Indians through fake profiles, and that the gang had 'rented' bank accounts belonging to Indians to receive the proceeds of fraud.

The STF recovered 11 mobile phones, a laptop, four ATM cards linked to rented bank accounts used

for channelling extorted money, and a passport from the accused. They also found 34 screenshots, photographs, and videos allegedly used to create fake social media profiles and impersonate customs officials.

STF officials disclosed that the investigation indicates that the gang may have cheated people in several states. The agency is examining bank accounts and wallets allegedly used by the accused and is trying to trace other gang members.

Forensic examination of the seized electronic gadgets is currently underway, and authorities are actively searching for other members operating within the wider nexus across different Indian states.

The electronic devices recovered from Osinachi will also be sent for forensic examination.

Osinachi has been booked at Madeyanj police station under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act.

Man arrested for abetting wife's suicide in Maal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Maal police arrested a man on Wednesday for allegedly abetting his wife's suicide after a case was registered against him and his family members.

The accused, identified as Amit Kumar of Maal police station area, was arrested on a tip-off from an informer.

On Tuesday, the complainant, Shankar Yadav of LD Colony, Sector F, Kanpur Road, Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow, had filed a complaint stating that his daughter, Manisha Yadav, wife of Amit Kumar, had died by suicide.

According to the complainant, this tragic step was allegedly taken due to constant harassment and mental torture inflicted upon her by her husband and other members of her in-laws' family.

Acting on the complainant's statement, the Maal police registered a case under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against the husband, Amit Kumar and other family members.

A police team nabbed the accused Amit Kumar when he was near the Pipri Tiraha under the Maal police station on Wednesday.

Man blackmails woman over obscene videos, extorts money

A man from Barabanki, after befriending a woman from Mohanlalganj through the internet, threatened her and made obscene videos of her. He then blackmailed her and extorted thousands of rupees.

When she refused to pay more, the accused sent the obscene videos to her husband.

Acting on the victim's complaint, the police have registered a case and launched a search for the accused. The woman belongs to a village in Mohanlalganj, and her husband works abroad. Jawad alias Javed of Barabanki befriended the woman through the internet and made obscene videos of her by threatening to kill her children.

It is alleged that the accused blackmailed the woman and extorted ₹60,000 from her.

When she refused a subsequent demand for money, Javed allegedly sent the obscene videos to her husband to defame her. When she protested, the accused went to her home and assaulted her.

The woman reported the entire matter to the police. Station House Officer Rambabu Singh stated that an FIR has been registered based on the victim's complaint and an investigation is underway. A police team has been deployed to search for the accused.

Man held for assault, criminal intimidation

In a swift operation targeting crimes against women, the Binjor police on Wednesday arrested an accused wanted for allegedly establishing physical relations with a woman under the false pretext of marriage, followed by physical assault and criminal intimidation. The victim in the complaint filed on August 3 stated that a man named Annu Yadav had formed a relationship with her by promising to marry her. However, when she later asked him to fulfil his promise, he allegedly subjected her to verbal abuse, physical violence and life-threatening intimidation.

Thieves target two shops in Mohanlalganj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Thieves targeted two shops in the Fatehkheda and Gaura areas of Mohanlalganj and escaped with goods and cash worth lakhs of rupees.

On Saturday night in Gaura

area, thieves broke the shutter of an electronics shop and made off with goods worth thousands of rupees. In Fatehkheda, thieves targeted a pan masala shop and stole cash worth lakhs along with a sack of pan masala. A complaint regarding the matter

was lodged with the police. However, it is alleged that the police kept stalling the matter under the pretext of an investigation. After the issue went viral on social media, the police finally registered a joint FIR for both incidents on Wednesday, the fourth day.

Youth arrested for abducting minor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Mahanagar police arrested a youth accused of abducting a 17-year-old minor girl under the false pretext of marriage.

The police also recovered the victim.

According to the police, a woman had filed a complaint at the Mahanagar police station on Tuesday stating that her 17-year-old minor daughter had been lured and taken away from home by their neighbour, Ishthyay, a native of Barabanki. Based on her complaint, the police registered a case invoking Section 137(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the accused.

During the initial investigation, Section 87 of the BNS was also added to the case.

On receiving information on Tuesday evening that the missing girl was standing with a man near the Sarvoday Nagar bandha, seemingly waiting to leave the city, the Mahanagar police team rushed to the location. The police successfully rescued the minor girl and took the accused into custody around 8:35 pm.

During preliminary questioning, the accused confessed that he had lured the minor girl with the intention of marrying her and was attempting to take her away. Necessary legal actions and formal proceedings are currently underway against him.

4 held over video of minor assault

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Lucknow Police have arrested four youths in connection with a viral social media video showing a minor being assaulted, abused and paraded half-naked inside a closed room.

The matter came to light on Tuesday after a video circulated on Facebook and X via the user ID 'Save Lucknow'.

The footage captured several individuals beating a teenager, subjecting him to verbal abuse and forcing him onto the streets in a semi-nude state.

Police officials identified the victim as Sameer of Dhobipurwa under the Gilloula police station of Shravasti.

The Chowk police registered a first information report, invoking relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),

including provisions for rioting, wrongful confinement, voluntarily causing hurt and criminal intimidation.

The cops apprehended four named accused near the Irfania Madrasa in Chowbdari Mohalla.

They were identified as Mohammad Rizwan (30), Jan Mohammad and Irfash, all of Chowbdari Mohalla in Chowk and Mohammad Shaban (42) of Chowbdari Mohalla in Shahganj area of Chowk, A fifth suspect, Ehtisham, remains at large. The arrested persons were taken into custody and presented before a competent court under Sections 170, 126, and 135 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNS).

The police stated that further investigation is underway and efforts are ongoing to trace and arrest the remaining accused involved in the incident.

Police arrest accused for land fraud

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Madiyaon police arrested a wanted accused involved in creating forged documents, posing as a landowner and illegally selling land on Wednesday.

He was identified as Mahendra Pratap (29) from Sitapur, who works with an auto sales company and was named in the case being investigated by the Madiyaon police.

The complainant, Vimal Chandra Jain, a resident of an area near Daliganj railway station under Hasanganj police station in Lucknow, had submitted an application on October 10, 2024.

He had alleged that the opposite parties had committed fraud and forgery by preparing fake sale deeds, falsely claiming to be the actual owners of the land and selling it unlawfully.

Based on the complaint, a case was registered at Madiyaon police station, invoking Sections 318(4), 338, 336(3), and 340(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). During the investigation, based on the collected evidence, Section 61(2) of the BNS was further added to the case. On Wednesday, police nabbed the wanted accused Mahendra Pratap.

Police are verifying his criminal background across other police stations and districts, and further legal proceedings are underway.

The accused, in collusion with his associates, prepared

forged documents to sell victims' land for personal financial gain illegally.

Motorcyclist killed in hit-and-run case

A 49-year-old motorcyclist was killed in a hit-and-run accident late Tuesday night under the Banthra police station. The victim was struck by an unidentified vehicle, the driver of which fled the scene after the crash. The accident occurred near a petrol pump, right in front of Apex Hospital, around 11 pm.

The victim, Shailendra Agnihotri, was returning home to Kailashpuri, under the Alambagh police station, after finishing some personal work in Banthra. While he was riding his motorcycle, the unknown speeding vehicle rammed into him from behind. The impact of the collision was so severe that he sustained fatal injuries.

On receiving information, a team from the Banthra police station rushed to the spot. The police rushed Shailendra to a nearby hospital, where the attending doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival. Police have taken the body into custody and sent it for a post-mortem examination.

Meanwhile, a search has been launched to trace the absconding vehicle and its driver using nearby CCTV footage and eyewitness accounts. Shailendra's uncle said that he had gone to Banthra for some work and was heading back home when the tragedy occurred. Some bystanders at the scene claimed that the victim was allegedly under the influence of alcohol at the time of the crash.

The Pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

EX Service Man No-JC403869F NB/SUB Siddh Nath Kushawa Resident H/No-309 Virat Nagar Ahirwa Harjinder Nagar Kanpur Nagar-208007 my wife's correct name spelling is Meera Devi.

NOTICE

EX Service Man No-JC403869F NB/SUB Siddh Nath Kushawa Resident H/No-309 Virat Nagar Ahirwa Harjinder Nagar Kanpur Nagar-208007 my correct name spelling is Siddh Nath Kushawa.

NOTICE

It is hereby informed that I have changed my name from SAYAD JAMAL to SAYYAD JAMAL S/o Abdul Rahim R/o 88/576, Prem Nagar Chamanganj Kanpur Nagar for future purposes.

NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the correct name of my daughter is Swati Verma (daughter of Sanjay Verma), as recorded in all her educational documents however, due to an error, her name was recorded as Trisha Verma on her Aadhaar card (No. 95722455943), which is incorrect. Therefore, in the future, my daughter should be known and recognized solely by her correct name, Swati Verma (daughter of Sanjay Verma). Sanjay Verma, Resident: Village Mirzapur, Post Behajam, District Lakhipur Kheri.

REQUIRED

Required
Adharshila Law College of Professional Courses
Rajnagar (Ataaura Buzurg), N.H.232, Raebareilly.
Post - Asst. Professor for LL.B. 3 Year Courses & B.A.L.L.B. 5 Year Courses - Economics-01, English-01, Sociology-01, History-01, Psychology -01 & Law-06
Eligibility - Asst. Professor 55% in LL.M. with NET/Ph.D. as per UGC/ BCI/ Luck now University Norms
Pay Scale - As per UGC/ BCI/ Lucknow University Norms. Contact-9453848622, 8299214485.
(Chandraprabha Singh) Manager

NOTICE

That Original Allotment Letter, Original Registered Power of Attorney dated 19-12-1989, Original Registered Free Hold Deed dated 30-12-2005, Original Registered Sale Deed dated 31-12-2005, Original Registered Sale Deed dated 17-01-2007 and Original Registered Sale Certificate dated 25-04-2016 with respect to House No. 548, Block-B, Scheme-EWS-3, Barra (KUDP) Kanpur Nagar has been lost by its previous owner Smt. Manjula, W/o Sri Suresh Maheshwari, R/o 32/105, Ghummi Bazar, Kanpur Nagar and the same was not provided by her to the undersigned. Now the undersigned is selling its aforesaid property to Sri Vishwajeet Singh, S/o Sri Ramdas Singh who is mortgaging the property with Bank of Baroda, RAPC, Ghumti No. 5 Kanpur Nagar against the property loan. Whosoever has any objection can send its written objection before the Chief Manager, Bank of Baroda, RAPC, Ghumti No. 5 Kanpur Nagar or on its Mobile No. 7518021952 within 07 days of publication of this notice. After expiry of this notice period, the Bank shall proceed with the loan and have first charge over the property.
Smt. Kamlawati Messey W/o Late A.B. Messey R/o House No. KB-74, Manohar NagarBarra-2, Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

It is hereby informed all of you to that I have changed my name from Birendra Singh to Virendra Singh, S/o Vijay Bahadur, for future purposes. Address: Bhagwantpur Shah, Fatehpur.

NOTICE

I, MULAY VIKRAM BABAJI, declare that my mother's name is "KANTA BAI" in Army Records and "KANTABAI BABAJI MULE" as per Aadhaar Card. Both refer to the same person. Kindly make the necessary correction.

NOTICE

I, hitherto known as VINITA BIJLANI, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as HIMANI, which may be amended accordingly.HIMANI, Adult, W/o Late Deepak Kumar R/o.117/802, Block M, Kakadev, Rawatpur, Kanpur No.7985528165

NOTICE

I Mohammad Dilshad Quraishi, S/o Abdul Rasheed Quraishi, declare that my father's name is wrongly mentioned as Abdul Rasheed Qureshi in Passport No.R2520928. His correct name is Abdul Rasheed Quraishi, which shall be used in all future records. Mohammad Dilshad Quraishi, S/o Abdul Rasheed Quraishi, R/o 44/189, Kamal Kha Ka Hata, Nai Sarak, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I LOVELY KUMARY, spouse of No 15420696X, Rank-NK, LALENDRA UPADHYAY (name of hasband) resident of Vill+post -Gahmar, Teh-zamamaya, Dist-Ghazipur UP 232327 have changed my name from LOVELY KUMARY to LOVELY KUMARI proposed/adopted New Name) videos Affidavit dated 12/08/2026 before collectorate campus Lucknow.

NOTICE

This is to inform everyone that my name is mentioned as Ram Mahesh S/o Radha Raman in my Passport & in all my documents Ram Mahesh Mishra S/o Radha Raman Mishra is mentioned so here by Ram Mahesh and Ram Mahesh Mishra both are same person. In my Passport my old address mentioned as 179 Ram kutir Alaknanda parmarth Niketan Rishikesh Paudi Garhwal 249304, but now my address is 11/1107 Indira Nagar Lucknow 226016 -Ram Mahesh Mishra S/o Radha Raman Mishra 11/1107 Indira Nagar Lucknow 226016

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Waseem Uddeen to WASEEMUDDIN S/o Ajaz Uddin R/o MG S/5, KDA Colony Jajmau Kanpur for all further purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mantasha Warsi to MANTASHA SIDDIQUI W/o Mohammad Zeeshan Warsi R/o 40/74 Hospital Road Parade Kanpur for all further purposes.

NOTICE

The Allotment Letter dated 25.04.1966 and Possession Letter dated 03.11.1971 pertaining to Plot No. 13, Block-D, Scheme 39, Defence Colony, Jajmau, Kanpur Nagar, have been lost somewhere. Any use thereof shall be illegal. Mohd. Arif, S/o Bashir, R/o 231-D, Defence Colony, Jajmau, Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I, RANGNATH, is Father of Name, THORAT VIJAY RANGNATH, presently residing at Vill/ Po- Warenaon Teh- Phulmbri, Dist- Aurenagabad State- Maharashtra, Pin - 431111, have changed my Name from RANGNATH to RANGNATH DHONDIBA THORAT, vide affidavit no IN-UP27914180743031Y, dated 12/08/2026, before notary Jhansi.

NOTICE

I, SHINDHUBAI, is Mother of Name, THORAT VIJAY RANGNATH, presently residing at Vill/ Po- Warenaon Teh- Phulmbri, Dist- Aurenagabad State- Maharashtra, Pin - 431111, have changed my Name from SHINDHUBAI to SHINDHUBAI RANGNATH THORAT, vide affidavit no IN-UP27918740275004Y, dated 12/08/2026, before notary Jhansi.

NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that my correct name is AMAR SINGH, S/o BAJNATH, as recorded in my educational records. However, due to an error, my name has been recorded as MAHESH CHANDRA SACHAN in Aadhaar Card No. 3440 3891 3738, which is incorrect. Henceforth, I shall be known and identified by my correct name AMAR SINGH, I hereby certify that all legal formalities in this regard have been completed by me, Amar Singh S/o Baij Nath, R/o 107, G- Block, Part 3rd, Panki Pankbahadur Nagar, Panki Gangaganj, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh- 208020

The Pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my son name from Baba Musa Nabi to MUSA NABI S/o Yasir Nabi R/o 112/94 Benajhabar Kanpur for all further purposes.

NOTICE

It is hereby informed that I have changed my name from Shabina to Sabiha Iqbal W/o Iqbal Ahmad R/o 132/200, Babu Purwa T P Nagar Kanpur for future purposes.

estranged husband and wife reunited, preventing their family from breaking apart.

The Mission Shakti team at the Maal police station was tasked with resolving domestic discord, and they started working in this line.

In this particular case, a deeply troubled couple locked in a domestic dispute was brought to the police station for counselling.

Rather than opting for legal escalations, the counsellors focused on positive dialogue, bridge building and mutual understanding to thaw their hostility. Through continuous persuasion and empathetic counselling, the couple managed to set aside their ego, differences and misunderstandings. Following successful mediation, both husband and wife agreed to bury the hatchet and willingly decided to resume living together in harmony and to respect each other's sentiments and feelings. Locals and community members have praised the Lucknow Police and the Mission Shakti initiative for their proactive approach to saving families and promoting domestic peace.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY VADODARA
Block No. 9, c/o Government Engineering College Campus,
Sector 28, Gandhinagar, Gujarat – 382028.
URL: www.iiitvadodara.ac.in

No.: IIITV/ESTT/RECT/FACULTY/26-27/01 August 2026
SPECIAL RECRUITMENT DRIVE FOR SC/ST/OBC/EWS CANDIDATE FOR FACULTY POSITIONS

1. IIIT Vadodara (presently located at Gandhinagar, Gujarat and at International Campus Diu (U.T.)) invites applications from the Indian Nationals for filling up the faculty position at Assistant Professor Grade-II (Pay Level – 10).

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Pay Level (7th CPC)	No. of Post
(a)	Assistant Professor Grade – II	Level – 10 (Rs. 70,900 – 98,200)	SC - 07 ST - 03 OBC - 11 EWS - 04

2. The applications invited in the department of Computer Science & Engineering, Electronics & Communication Engineering, Maths & Computing.

3. Last date of receipt of online application is 15th September 2026 and hard copy of the same to Institute address by 25th September 2026.

4. Interested candidates may download the Qualifications, Experience, General Details, Application Form and Formats of various certificates from the institute's website (<http://www.iiitvadodara.ac.in>).

CBC 21346/11/0004/2627

Director

Intensified monsoon activity likely from today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lucknow

Monsoon activity is expected to intensify across Uttar Pradesh from August 13, with widespread rainfall and isolated spells of heavy rain likely in the state till August 18, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The fresh spell of monsoon rainfall is expected to begin over eastern Uttar Pradesh on August 13 and gradually spread to central and adjoining western parts of the state on August 14. The weather department said a

low-pressure area over northwestern Madhya Pradesh and another system over the northern Bay of Bengal are influencing the monsoon trough. The low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal is likely to strengthen into a well-marked low-pressure area within the next 12 hours and further intensify into a depression during the following 24 hours before moving northwestwards and crossing the West Bengal-Bangladesh coast. The monsoon trough is expected to shift northwards from its present position, strengthening monsoon flow over Uttar Pradesh and trigger-

ing another widespread spell of rainfall. The IMD's forecast issued on Wednesday said that rain or thundershowers were very likely at isolated places over western Uttar Pradesh and at a few places over eastern Uttar Pradesh on Thursday. Heavy rain is very likely at isolated places over eastern Uttar Pradesh, while thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are also possible at isolated places across the state. For Lucknow, the forecast indicated mainly clear skies becoming partly cloudy, with light rain likely towards evening or night on August 13. The maximum and minimum

temperatures are expected to remain around 35 and 28 degrees Celsius, respectively. Lucknow recorded a maximum temperature of 36.9 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, 3.4 degrees above normal, while the minimum was 27.4 degrees Celsius, 1.6 degrees above normal. No rainfall was recorded in the city between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm. The renewed rainfall activity is likely to provide relief from the prevailing heat in several parts of the state, while the possibility of heavy rain and lightning warrants caution, particularly in eastern districts.

Army dedicates indoor sports complex to Dhan Singh Thapa

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lucknow

In a befitting tribute to one of India's legendary war heroes, the Indian Army dedicated the state-of-the-art Indoor Sports Complex at Surya Khel Parisar in Lucknow Cantonment to Param Vir Chakra recipient Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa, immortalising his extraordinary courage and indomitable spirit. The dedication ceremony was attended by the daughters of late Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa as chief guests. The dedication plaque was unveiled in the presence of Surya Command GOC-in-C Lt Gen Anindya Sengupta, senior military officers and family members of Late Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa. The occasion symbolised the Indian Army's enduring tradition of remembering its war heroes and preserving their legacy for future generations.

FICCI FLO partners with BJP MLA to train 100 women as ‘drone pilots’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Lucknow

About 100 women will be trained as 'drone pilots' through a joint collaboration between the FICCI FLO and UP BJP MLA Rajeshwar Singh so they can pursue employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The declaration was made on Tuesday at an interaction event organised by the women's organisation with the legislator

titled 'From Policing to Politics, Power to People: Dr Rajeshwar Singh, MLA'. Singh represents the Sarojini Nagar assembly seat. Discussing his journey from being a police officer to a politician, the first-time MLA said empowering people has been his aim. That is why, Singh said, he has written about 20,000 letters to various state government departments, including the Municipal Corporation,

Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) and transport and health agencies, to pursue the resolution of public grievances. Talking about women's empowerment in his constituency, the former Enforcement Directorate (ED) officer said he established 170 women's centres named 'Tara Shakti Kendras' where over 2,000 sewing machines were provided to skill women and offer them self-employment opportunities.

Adityanath greets youth on Youth Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday greeted the youth on International Youth Day, describing them as the strong pillars of a "developed India" and assuring that the BJP-led state government would stand by them in realising their dreams. In a post on X, Adityanath said, "Our young companions, full of energy, enthusiasm

and limitless possibilities, are the strong pillars of a 'developed India'." Greeting the youth on the occasion, he said, "May you touch new skies of success with your talent. Wherever you are, keep the basic mantras of skill, values and spirit of service in your heart." The CM added, "The double-engine government will stand with you at every step to realise your dreams." Adityanath prefaced

his message with a Sanskrit verse from the Bhagavad Gita: "Shreyan swadharmo vigunah paradharmat swanushtithat, swadharme nidhanam shreyah paradharmo bhayavahah", which broadly emphasises following one's own duty rather than another's. International Youth Day is observed every year on August 12 to draw attention to issues concerning young people and celebrate their potential as part-

ners in today's global society. The United Nations has designated "Different Contexts, Common Aspirations" as the theme for International Youth Day 2026. The theme recognises that while young people's lives are shaped by different national and local realities, they share aspirations for dignity, opportunity, meaningful participation, decent work, quality education and a sustainable future.

INDIAN RAILWAY CATERING AND TOURISM CORPORATION LTD.
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STATEMENT OF UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS
(STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED) FOR THE
QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2026

The Board of Directors of the Company, at its meeting held on August 12, 2026 has approved the Un-audited Financial Results for the quarter ended June 30, 2026.

The aforesaid Financial Results along with the Limited Review Report have been uploaded on the Company's website and websites of BSE and NSE. The same is available at <https://lirctc.com/assets/images2/OutcomeBMHeld12August2026.pdf> and can be accessed by scanning the QR code.

For & on behalf of the Board of Directors
Sd/-
Rahul Himalian
Chairman & Managing Director
DIN: 10393348

Place : New Delhi
Dated : 12 August, 2026

Note: The above intimation is in accordance with Regulation 33 read with Regulation 47 (1) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

IRCTC Ltd., 4th Floor, Tower-D, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110029 Tel. 011-35464045

बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda

Ratan Lal Nagar Branch : 572 Block-R.N.
Yojna No. 2, Ratan Lal Nagar, Kanpur-208022

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)
(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)
Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand Notice dated 04-05-2026 calling upon the Borrower : Shri Ramakant S/o Shri Pramod Kumar and Smt. Deepika W/o Shri Ramakant, Both R/o : 229C, Baba Nagar, Chaturvedi Building Road, Khatu Shyam Dudh Dairy, Naubasta, Kanpur to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 13,41,579.12 (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Fourty One Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Nine & Twelve Paise Only) as on Dated 04-05-2026 along with further Interest and other charges, if any within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower/Mortgagor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this the 11th day of August of the Year 2026.
The Borrower/Mortgagor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Bank of Baroda, Ratan Lal Nagar Branch, Kanpur for an amount of Rs. 13,41,579.12 (Rupees Thirteen Lakhs Fourty One Thousand Five Hundred Seventy Nine & Twelve Paise Only) along with further interest and other charges, if any till realization. The Borrowers/Mortgagors attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.
Description of Immoveable Property :
Freehold House No. 3D-466 EWS, Yojana No. 2, Hanspuram, Naubasta, Kanpur Nagar in the name of Shri Ramakant S/o Shri Pramod Kumar and Smt. Deepika W/o Shri Ramakant, Area : 30.15 Sq. Mtr., **Bounded-North** : House No. 3D-465, **South** : House No. 3D-467, **East** : 4.50 Mtr. Road, **West** : House No. 3D-457
Date : 11-08-2026 **Place : Kanpur** **Authorised Officer**

इस मानसून, सेहत के संकेतों को नज़रअंदाज़ न करें।
पारस हेल्थ, कानपुर प्रस्तुत करता है
निःशुल्क स्वास्थ्य शिविर
बुखार • संक्रमण • दंत स्वास्थ्य

इन लक्षणों को नज़रअंदाज़ न करें

तेज़ या लगातार बुखार, ठंड लगना

थकान, चक्कर या शरीर में दर्द

सूजन या असामान्य दर्द

पेट दर्द या भूख न लगना

पीलापन या असामान्य कमजोरी

दांतों में दर्द या अन्य दंत समस्याएं

10 से 14 अगस्त तक

सुबह 10 से 2 बजे तक

निःशुल्क सेवाएं

परामर्श

बीपी जाँच

ई.सी.जी.

शुगर जाँच

लैब टेस्ट और रेडियोलॉजी पर 65% छूट *

सभी प्रकार की सर्जरी की बुकिंग पर 20% छूट*

फार्मसी दवाओं पर 10% छूट*

कैशलेस सेवाएं:

TPAs एवं स्वास्थ्य बीमा • मुख्यमंत्री राहत कोष (CMRF) • CGHS • ECHS • रेलवे • पंडित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय योजना आयुष्मान कार्ड योजना • उत्तर प्रदेश पुलिस • CAPF • ऑर्डिनेंस फैक्ट्री • विधायक निधि • भारत संचार निगम लिमिटेड

शिविर में उपलब्ध विशेषज्ञ इंटरनल मेडिसिन

डॉ. अभिषेक अग्रवाल
MBBS, MD (Medicine)

डॉ. सोनी व्यास
MBBS, MD (Internal Medicine)
Fellowship in Critical Care

डॉ. सरस्वती कुशवाह
MBBS, MD (Internal Medicine)

दन्त रोग

डॉ. साक्षी पांडेय
BDS, MDS

शिविर में उपलब्ध जाँचों पर 65% की छूट*

सीबीसी

एसजीपीटी

सीआरपी

मलेरिया

यूरिन आर/एम

टाइफाइड

पारस हेल्थ, बिठूर रोड, कोठारी चौराहा, कानपुर

रजिस्ट्रेशन के लिए संपर्क करें 7835084924

PARAS HEALTH

शिविर में उपलब्ध विशेषज्ञ इंटरनल मेडिसिन

डॉ. अभिषेक अग्रवाल
MBBS, MD (Medicine)

डॉ. सोनी व्यास
MBBS, MD (Internal Medicine)
Fellowship in Critical Care

डॉ. सरस्वती कुशवाह
MBBS, MD (Internal Medicine)

दन्त रोग

डॉ. साक्षी पांडेय
BDS, MDS

शिविर में उपलब्ध जाँचों पर 65% की छूट*

सीबीसी

एसजीपीटी

सीआरपी

मलेरिया

यूरिन आर/एम

टाइफाइड

पारस हेल्थ, बिठूर रोड, कोठारी चौराहा, कानपुर

रजिस्ट्रेशन के लिए संपर्क करें 7835084924

Tiranga Yatra organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kanpur

As part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign, a grand Tiranga Yatra was organised from Sarasaiya Ghat to Green Park Stadium on Wednesday.

With the tricolour waving proudly in their hands and a sense of pride for the country on their faces, thousands of people marched forward together, painting the entire route with the colours of patriotism. Public representatives, administrative officials, students, youth, security personnel, personnel from various departments and the general public participated enthusiastically and spread the message of national unity and integrity.

The band of students and scouts accompanying the procession enthralled the audience with patriotic tunes. The enthusiasm of the children and youth was palpable. Chants of '*Bharat Mata ki Jai*' and slogans paying homage to the immortal martyrs echoed continuously.

Waving national flags in their hands, the band's patriotic tunes and slogans filled



District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh taking part in the Tiranga Yatra on Wednesday.

the atmosphere with patriotism. MLA Surendra Maithani, MLA Saroj Kuriil, MLA Neelima Katiyar, District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh, Chief Development Officer Abhinav J Jain and trainee IAS officer Sandeep Kumar participated in the Tiranga Yatra. The participation of school students, ITBP and other security forces personnel, NCC cadets, scouts, personnel from various departments, and a large number of city residents gave the Yatra the character of a public festival.

A special attraction of the

Tiranga Yatra was the tableau of Bharat Mata. In it, girl students played the roles of Bharat Mata along with scientists, lawyers, police officers and administrators.

The tableau effectively depicted the achievements from the First War of Independence in 1857 to the implementation of the Constitution of India in 1950, and the subsequent transformation towards a developed India through continuous progress. The tableau brought to life the glorious story of modern India, from

the sacrifices of freedom fighters to its confident march forward.

District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh stated that the tricolour was a symbol of the nation's pride, self-respect and unity.

He appealed to the district residents to hoist the tricolour with full respect at their homes, establishments, and institutions, and to ensure widespread public participation in the campaign. The Tiranga Yatra reached Green Park Stadium amid patriotic tunes and slogans. The national song, Vande Mataram, and the national anthem were sung collectively. Selfie points designed with the tricolour theme in Green Park also attracted a large crowd.

Students, youth, and the general public took selfies to preserve memories of the campaign.

On this occasion, District Panchayat Raj Officer Manoj Kumar, Project Director DRDA Alok Kumar Singh, District Programme Officer Preeti Sinha, along with officers and employees of various departments, were present.

SI ARRESTED FOR RAPING WOMAN ON PRETEXT OF MARRIAGE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Pratapgarh

A police sub-inspector has been arrested from Varanasi for allegedly raping a woman on the promise of marriage, police said on Wednesday.

An additional Superintendent of Police (East) Alok Kumar said the accused, Arjun Singh, who was posted at Mandhata police station, was arrested from the Taktakpur area of Varanasi Cantonment late on Tuesday evening. A woman from Gautam Buddh Nagar had lodged a complaint with the Superintendent of Police, accusing Singh of raping her on the promise of marriage.

Following the SP's directions, the women police station registered a case against him on June 27.

Orientation programme held at VSIPS



Orientation programme being inaugurated at VSIPS on Wednesday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kanpur

An orientation programme was organised on Wednesday for newly admitted female students at Dr Virendra Swarup Institute of Professional Studies (VSIPS), Kidwai Nagar.

Principal Dr Poonam Madan inaugurated it by garlanding the statue of Goddess Saraswati and lighting a lamp. The principal addressed and inspired the BED students of the 2026-28 batch. She stated that teaching is not just a profession, but the creation of a society where inclusive education is provided, and by educating students on self-

reliance, an advanced society can be built.

Professor Nazish Khan presented a PPT showcasing the institute's history and highlighting the college's unique features. Instructor Dr Sarla Mandhyan provided information regarding the institute's scholarships and book bank. Dr Asha Awasthi provided information regarding internal and external evaluations in the BED programme.

Professor Ankita Tripathi highlighted the practical work required for teacher training and provided information about the first and second internships. Dr Seema Mishra provided information about programmes under the

National Service Scheme and special camps held throughout the year. Dr Shipra Mishra presented a detailed outline of the compulsory and optional subjects taught in the BED programme and grading, and also provided information on placement. Dr Seema Mishra delivered the vote of thanks.

The programme concluded with the national anthem. Prof Ankita Tripathi, Prof Aniruddh Yadav, Prof Usha Mishra, Prof Varsha Kaushal, Dr Jyoti Sengar, Prof Jasneet Kaur, Dr Purnima Dwivedi, Prof Kaneez Fatima, Shivani Aghahari, Poonam Yadav, Akanksha, Nidhi and the entire staff were present at the event.

‘Tiranga Mahotsav’ held at school

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Sonbhadra

A 'Tiranga Mahotsav' was organised on Wednesday at Harsevanand Public School, Churk, as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign.

The event was attended by the chief guest, Uttar Pradesh Minister of State for Micro and Small Enterprises Hansraj Vishwakarma, guest of honour, Minister of State for Social Welfare and Scheduled Castes and Tribal Welfare Sanjeev Gond, Sadar MLA Bhupesh Chaubey, Chief Development Officer Jagrati Awasthi, Bharatiya Janata Party district president Nandlal Gupta and others.

The guests inaugurated the programme by observing the 'rangoli' and exhibition prepared by the stu-

dents of various schools. The guests appreciated the students' efforts.

During the 'Tiranga Mahotsav' programme, students from various institutions, including Harsevanand Public School, DAV School, Basic School, Raump, and the Social Welfare Department's Ashram-style school, presented vibrant cultural programmes related to patriotism. The chief guest, Hansraj Vishwakarma, stated that the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign was a vital medium for emotionally connecting every citizen with the national flag and strengthening the spirit of patriotism.

He remarked that the young generation is the future of the country and it is our collective responsibility to cultivate patriotism,

discipline and a sense of duty towards the country among children.

He appealed to the people of the district to participate enthusiastically in the campaign by hoisting the tricolour respectfully at their homes. Sadar MLA Bhupesh Chaubey stated that the Tricolour was not merely a national flag but a symbol of the emotions, sacrifices, struggles and national pride of cores of Indians.

The Tricolour flying at every home demonstrates respect and dedication towards the nation. District Magistrate Charchit Gaur stated that 'Har Ghar Tiranga' is not just an event but a campaign to connect the masses with the nation's glory, the sacrifices of freedom fighters and national duties.

Big relief to KDA from HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kanpur

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday awarded 12,008 square yards at Barasirohi village in Sadar tehsil of Kanpur to the Kanpur Development Authority.

The land is valued at ₹49,65,8000 as per the residential circle rates.

The said land - Arazi Nos. 357, 358, 359 and 360 having a total area of 12,008 square yards at Barasirohi village - was declared over-limit

under the provisions of the Urban Land Ceilings (Ropar) Act, 1976, and its possession was handed over to Kanpur Development Authority.

However, Krishna Kumar Mishra and others filed a writ petition (No 12144/2010) in the High Court, challenging the land ceiling order.

The petitioners had pleaded that they had not received compensation for the land and presented other grounds, requesting that the land be exempted

from the ceiling.

The court ordered maintenance of status quo at the site and stayed the ceiling order for 16 years, due to which the KDA was unable to dispose of the land.

On Wednesday, the High Court dismissed the writ petition, vacated the stay order and awarded the land in favour of the KDA.

The KDA now has physical possession of the land in question. The process of planning and disposal of the land is underway.

Man kills wife in domestic dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kanpur

A man allegedly killed his wife by hitting her on the head with a heavy object during a domestic dispute in Devrampur village under the Qadri Gate police station of Farrukhabad late Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Meera (35) alias Reena Devi. The accused husband fled the scene after the crime. Police have taken the body into possession and sent it for a post-mortem

examination.

Sunny Verma of Devrampur village had been arguing with his wife, Meera alias Reena Devi (35), over a domestic matter for several days.

Late Tuesday night, Sunny took Meera to a room on the roof where the two argued for a long time.

Meera's daughter, Durga, said that her mother came downstairs at night, told her grandparents she was going to sleep and then went upstairs.

After a while, her parents

calmed down. Suspicious, they went upstairs to check and found Meera's head pressed against a pillow. When they removed the pillow, they saw blood coming out of her head.

Durga informed her maternal uncle Bhanu Pratap of Ganjundwara village under Kasganj police station. Her maternal family reached the village in the morning and have accused the husband of murder. The police have taken the body into possession and sent it for an autopsy.

UP govt frees over 2 lakh acres of land from encroachment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh government's anti-land mafia campaign has freed more than 84,005 hectares of land from illegal encroachment over the past nine and a half years, according to the Revenue Department.

The area is equivalent to approximately 2.08 lakh acres. Alongside removing illegal occupations from public properties, the campaign has focused on resolving complaints, pursuing cases in courts and taking criminal action against identified land mafia. To strength-

en action against illegal occupation of public properties, the government has constituted Anti-Land Mafia Task Forces at four levels — state, division, district and tehsil.

The task forces are responsible for identifying encroachments, initiating action against encroachers and ensuring that the affected land is freed from encroachment. An Anti-Land Mafia Portal has also been developed to enable people to lodge complaints online and monitor the status of action taken. According to the Revenue Department, a total of 4,34,016 complaints related to encroachment have been

received through the Anti-Land Mafia Portal. Of these, 4,31,697 complaints — more than 99 per cent — have been disposed of, while 2,319 complaints remain pending. The online monitoring mechanism has enabled authorities to track complaints from registration through disposal and monitor action taken by officials at different levels. One of the major achievements of the campaign has been the removal of illegal encroachments from more than 84,005 hectares of land across Uttar Pradesh.

The government says the recovered land, including government land that can form

part of the state's land bank, can now be systematically utilised for development projects and other public purposes. The campaign has also been accompanied by extensive legal action. During the period, authorities registered 25,068 revenue cases, 1,168 civil cases and 4,751 FIRs in connection with encroachments.

A total of 1,413 encroachers have been identified as land mafia, of whom 144 are currently in jail, according to the department. The Revenue Department pointed out that action has been initiated against encroachers under various legal provisions. This includes 1,621 cases under the

Indian Penal Code, proceedings against 109 people under the Code of Criminal Procedure, action against three people under the National Security Act, 70 under the Gangsters Act, 206 under the Goonda Act, and action against 1,745 people under other provisions.

The government plans to use the land freed from encroachment as part of its broader land-bank strategy. Such land could be made available for industrial investments, pharmaceutical and manufacturing units, logistics parks, universities, medical colleges and other major infrastructure projects.

Gorakhpur shines in Niti Ayog's ABP rankings, Bansgaon on top

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Gorakhpur

The Uttar Pradesh government has created a new chapter in the history of Gorakhpur district's development. Bansgaon development block of Gorakhpur district has been selected as 'Number One' in the Aspirational Blocks Programme rankings by NITI Aayog. Upon securing the top position, the block was awarded a cash prize of ₹1.5 crore. This achievement of the Bansgaon block has brought immense pride to Gorakhpur as well as the entire state of Uttar Pradesh.

Gorakhpur District Magistrate Deepak Meena and Chief Development Officer Shashwat Tripurari credited this exceptional accomplishment to the inclusive development initiatives being carried out under the guidance of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In the Aspirational Blocks Programme Delta Rankings

for the January-March 2026 quarter conducted nationwide by NITI Aayog, Bansgaon block of Gorakhpur district successfully secured the first position in Northern India (Zone-2).

This information was communicated through a letter sent by NITI Aayog CEO Nidhi Chhibber to the chief secretary of Uttar Pradesh.

In recognition of this stellar performance, Gorakhpur was awarded a prize amount of ₹1.5 crore.

Deepak Meena stated that NITI Aayog's Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) focuses on enhancing ease of living, improving quality of life, and elevating overall living standards through inclusive development.

Under this programme, the participating aspirational blocks are evaluated across 39 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) spanning five main themes: health & nutrition, education, agriculture & allied

sectors, basic infrastructure, and social development.

The district magistrate shared that under the chief minister's guidance, Bansgaon block achieved a 100 per cent weightage by delivering outstanding performance across all 39 KPIs in these five themes during the January-March 2026 quarter.

Bansgaon, a region that once faced development challenges, has today emerged as a 'Model Development Block' for the entire nation through administrative efficiency and innovation. This success has not only elevated the pride of Gorakhpur district but has also set an inspiring example for other aspirational blocks across Uttar Pradesh.

Shashwat Tripurari remarked that securing the top rank in the Delta rankings is not merely a numerical statistic, but a testament to the positive transformation brought into the lives of the people of Bansgaon block.

Waterlogging at Noida airport after rain; Akhilesh slams govt, BJP hits back

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Waterlogging at the newly-built Noida International Airport following heavy rain has triggered a political spat, with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav taking a dig at the BJP government, while the airport authorities said the "temporary accumulation of water" was cleared within 30 minutes.

Videos circulating on social media purportedly showed water accumulated at a stretch connecting the terminal with the parking area at the airport located in Jewar, with airport personnel working to drain the water. Yadav, a former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, shared one such video on X on Wednesday morning and posted, "Will boats now operate at the airport? Wherever there is a BJP government, there is mega-corruption!" The airport authorities, however, said the waterlogging occurred temporarily after a spell of extremely heavy rain on Tuesday and did not disrupt flight or passenger movement.

According to a statement issued by the Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday night, water accumulated for some time on the road connecting the terminal and parking area following intense rainfall.

"The airport teams immediately swung

into action and ensured drainage within 30 minutes, following which movement on the route became completely normal," it said.

The authorities said flight operations and passenger movement at the airport continued smoothly and teams were keeping a close watch on weather conditions.

Amid the political row, Jewar BJP MLA Dharendra Singh on Wednesday inspected the waterlogged site near the airport and directed officials to review the drainage arrangements, address shortcomings and ensure a permanent solution.

"Those who cannot see the unprecedented development of Jewar can see only potholes and waterlogging," Singh said, accusing the opposition of trying to divert public attention from the development taking place in the state.

He said that while the opposition could see potholes and waterlogging after the rain, it was overlooking the international airport, world-class roads, industrial investment and employment opportunities being created for thousands of youths in the area. The greenfield airport, which was inaugurated on March 28 this year, has been developed under a public-private partnership with the Uttar Pradesh government and has been projected as being built to international standards.

Auto driver's body found hanging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kanpur

The body of an auto driver was found hanging from a tree on Wednesday morning under suspicious circumstances in an area under the Barra police station.

Initial investigations suggest a dispute over a love affair as the cause.

The police have sent the body for a post-mortem examination and have seized the mobile phone of the deceased and started an investigation.

The deceased was identified as Sonu (25) of Karrihi Kachhi Basti. He supported his family by driving an auto-rickshaw.

According to family members, Sonu came home on Tuesday night. After dinner, he left the house, saying he was going for a walk. When he did not return until late at night,

they began searching for him, but he was nowhere to be found.

On receiving information about his body being found hanging in the field behind his house on Wednesday morning, the family members and locals rushed to the scene. After receiving the information, the Barra police arrived at the scene and began an investigation.

During police interrogation, locals revealed that Sonu was seen talking to someone on his mobile phone in the field late Tuesday night.

Based on this information, the police seized his mobile phone and began investigating call details and other aspects. Police station in-charge Samar Singh said that preliminary investigations indicate a dispute over a love affair. However, all aspects are being investigated.



भारतीय खेल प्राधिकरण
SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
भारत सरकार / **GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**



खेल विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS
(An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports)
(युवा कार्यक्रम और खेल मंत्रालय के तहत एक स्वायत्त निकाय)
(मानव संसाधन प्रभाग - II)

मुख्य कार्यालय, द्वार सं.10
(पूर्वी द्वार), जवाहरलाल नेहरू स्टेडियम
लोधी रोड, नई दिल्ली - 110003

File No. 01-04001(02)/3/2026-66
Date: 21-07-2026

एलपीडी माइनस पेंशन आधार पर सहायक निदेशक (राजभाषा) पद हेतु नियुक्ति

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ऑनलाइन आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने की समय-सारणी निम्नानुसार है:-

- ऑनलाइन आवेदन प्रारंभ होने की तिथि: 23.07.2026
- ऑनलाइन आवेदन की अंतिम तिथि: 22.08.2026

विस्तृत विज्ञापन, पात्रता शर्तें, नियुक्ति के नियम एवं शर्तें, आवेदन प्रपत्र तथा अन्य आवश्यक निर्देश भारतीय खेल प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट www.sportsauthorityofindia.nic.in पर उपलब्ध हैं।

CBC 47103/11/0021/2627



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Ministry of Education
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The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) invites online applications for the empanelment of **Standing Counsel(s), including Advocates and Advocates-on-Record (AORs)**, to represent AICTE before the **Supreme Court of India**, various High Courts, and other judicial and quasi-judicial fora across the country.

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Interested advocates may submit their online applications, along with the requisite supporting documents, on or before **07.09.2026**. A signed hard copy of the application must also reach **Director (Legal)**, All India Council for Technical Education, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070 on or before **21.09.2026**.

The envelope should be superscribed: "**Application for Empanelment of Advocate for _____ (Name of the Court).**"

Advt. No. AICTE/Legal Cell/08(01)/2026

CBC 21300/11/6605/2627

Prof. Shyama Rath
Member Secretary, AICTE

■ States Focus ■



HAR GHAR TIRANGA A POWERFUL MOVEMENT NOW: NITIN NABIN

BJP president Nitin Nabin on Wednesday said that the ‘*Har Ghar Tiranga*’ initiative has transformed into a powerful public campaign with every section of society joining it to express national pride.Addressing a Tiranga Yatra at Kartavya Path here, Nabin said the Tricolour is a symbol of India's valour, sacrifice, unity and self-respect, as he called upon the youth to resolve to build a developed India by 2047.

Nabin urged people to participate in the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign on August 13, 14 and 15 by hoisting the national flag at their houses and taking selfies with it. “On 13, 14, and 15 August, for 3 days, the honour of Tricolour must be carried forward in every home. The Tricolour must be hoisted at our homes, selfies must be taken with it,” he said. (PTI)



CHHATTISGARH GOVT COMMITTED TO FARMERS' WELFARE: CM SAI

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday said his government was committed to the welfare and economic empowerment of farmers and has taken several measures to strengthen the agriculture sector.

Addressing a Hareli festival celebration at his official residence in Nava Raipur Atal Nagar, Sai said the agrarian festival reflects Chhattisgarh's deep bond with agriculture, nature and rural life.

Hareli, one of the major traditional festivals of Chhattisgarh, is celebrated on the new moon day (amavasya) of the month of Savan. Sai said the Centre and the state government have taken several important steps to strengthen farmers economically. (PTI)

■ BJP slams Rahul over police action on students in Ranchi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday over police action against protesting students in Ranchi, alleging that the Congress-led Opposition is unwilling to demand a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in Jharkhand's recruitment examinations.

The remarks came as ruling NDA MPs staged a protest on the Parliament premises over alleged police action against protesting students in Ranchi. They carried placards that read “Jharkhand *me chhatron par lathicharge par Rahul Gandhi jawab do*” and “Jharkhand *me chhatron par hue anyay par Rahul Gandhi jawab do*”.

Speaking to reporters in the Parliament House complex, Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth demanded CBI and ED probes into the alleged irregularities.

“You may issue as many Tughlaq-style orders as you



Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth

want, you may adopt as much of an authoritarian approach as you want, but a CBI inquiry and an ED inquiry will have to be conducted,” Seth said.

He alleged that the entire scam in Jharkhand is worth around ₹400 crore.

“Whether it is through the TDPL, the JPSC or the JSSC, this is a scam worth hundreds of crores. The students are asking: who received a share of this money? Why are they not ordering a CBI investigation? Because people close to the chief minister and people associated with senior

Congress leaders are caught up in this web.

“That is why, out of sheer obstinacy, they are not ordering a CBI investigation. They know that the JMM Government will be in jeopardy,” Seth alleged.

The Congress is part of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led Government in the State.

Seth slammed Gandhi over the issue, alleging that the Congress leader lacks the courage to demand a probe in Jharkhand.

Seth claimed that the Jharkhand agitation is different from political protests in Delhi and is being led by stu-

dents and youngsters.

“The Jharkhand movement is non-political. This is an agitation by students and youngsters. There is no politics behind it,” he said.

“We are public representatives, so naturally we will raise our voice,” Seth added.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader alleged that electricity supply at the protest site is being cut off at night and claimed that police have removed a generator set arranged by the students at their own expense.

“Last night, the electricity supply was cut off. Early this morning, the students had arranged a generator with their own money to ensure electricity supply, but police also removed that generator. This shows an authoritarian approach, a Tughlaq-style order,” he said.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey hit out at Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge over the students' protest in Ranchi and questioned why the party is not demanding a CBI probe now.

Karnataka bans sale of tobacco products for one year

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bengaluru

The Department of Food Safety and Drug Administration has issued a notification prohibiting the sale and distribution of products containing tobacco and/or nicotine in Karnataka in the interest of public health, officials said on Wednesday.

The notification, dated August 10, 2026, will remain in force across the State for one year from the date of its issuance, they said.

The Food Safety Division of the Department of Food Safety and Drug Administration, Health and Family Welfare Department, Government of Karnataka, is undertaking stringent enforcement measures against products containing tobacco and/or nicotine, officials said.

Special inspection and enforcement operations are being conducted under the leadership of Food Safety Officers, targeting the manufacture, storage, transportation, distribution and sale of



gutkha, pan masala and other prohibited products containing tobacco and/or nicotine, they said.

“In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 30(2)(a) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and Regulation 2.3.4 of the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011, the Department of Food Safety and Drugs Administration has issued a Government Notification dated 10-08-2026,” Srinivas K, Commissioner, Department of Food Safety

and Drugs Administration, said in a statement.

The notification prohibits the sale and distribution of products containing tobacco and nicotine in Karnataka in the interest of public health, he said.

The department has appealed to the public to inform the concerned authorities if they come across the manufacture, sale or distribution of prohibited tobacco and nicotine products and to extend their cooperation in building a healthy and addiction-free Karnataka.

PM asks Gen Z to read more

The PM was speaking at the launch of former president Ram Nath Kovind's autobiography *Triumph of the Indian Republic: My Life, My Struggles*. PM Modi said Kovind's life showed how determination could help a person overcome adversity and rise to the highest constitutional office. Highlighting Kovind's continuing public engagement, PM Modi said the former president had not rested after demitting office and was working on the “One Nation, One Election” initiative, which could “open a new chapter in Indian democracy”. Kovind's efforts on the issue were part of his continued contribution to strengthening Indian democracy.

The PM said Kovind's autobiography would become a “heritage for Indian democracy” and the new generation has much to learn from it. “We need many more young people who would be like Kovind in future; people who are not defeated by circumstances, but possess the determination to overcome every challenge. They will pave the way for a self-reliant India, and this autobiography will serve as a source of inspiration for the youth,” Modi said.

He said the title of the book was apt because while Kovind's life and struggles were personal, “the victories of those struggles belong to the Indian democracy”.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who was present at the book launch, described Kovind as a “living sketch” of determination and lauded him for strengthening India's diplomatic relations.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and several Union ministers attended the event.

Shah offers debate, Rahul says resign

“I want to request you to kindly consult the Opposition. With everyone's consent, allocate as much time needed for the debate. I will sit through the entire discussion and respond to all questions from the opposition during the debate,” Shah said. Rahul turned down the proposal and asserted that the youth want to know who ordered that “protesting students be shot” at with pellet guns. He said the Opposition was not interested in listening to Shah's imagination and lecture in Parliament. If Shah ordered that students be shot at, he is culpable, and if he did not, he is incompetent, Gandhi said. “In both the cases he should resign,” the LoP said.

When the Lok Sabha reassembled at 3 pm after two adjournments on Wednesday, the Opposition resorted to protests. Amid the turmoil, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Kiren Rijiju announced in the House that the Government was ready to start a debate immediately on the student protest, and Shah had already written to the speaker. He said the Opposition should not run away from the debate when the home minister was ready to answer all their questions.

Rijiju addressed a hurriedly convened Press conference after the Lok Sabha was adjourned

for the day and said it is “unthinkable and incomprehensible” that the Opposition is avoiding a discussion when the Government is ready to respond.

Chandra to exit Tata Sons

Tata Sons is the principal investment holding company and promoter of the Tata Group, controlling more than 30 companies, including Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors and Air India. Tata Trusts collectively own about 66 per cent of Tata Sons, giving the philanthropic arm decisive influence over the group's governance.

Chandra said the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and Sir Ratan Tata Trust, which together hold 51.54 per cent of Tata Sons, had unanimously recommended extending his term by five years. The recommendation was recorded and backed by the Tata Sons Nomination and Remuneration Committee and board before being put to directors on February 24.

“However, the proposal was not carried through because one of the Board Members did not support it, and in the absence of unanimous support, I chose to defer the decision,” he said. “It has been 6 months since that Board meeting, and no resolution has been reached till date.”

While he did not name the board member, Noel Tata, who took over as chairman of Tata Trusts in 2024 following the death of Ratan Tata, had wanted certain assurances from Chandra before giving him another term.

Noel sought greater clarity on the group's five-year strategic roadmap, the handling of losses at newer businesses and a way to provide an exit to the Shapoorji Pallonji Group without taking Tata Sons public, according to people familiar with the matter. He also sought Chandra's position on the long-debated question of listing Tata Sons. Chandra was reportedly unwilling to commit that Tata Sons would never be listed, making the potential IPO one of the key fault lines between the operating company and its controlling trusts. The two sides have also differed over board representation and capital allocation.

The board's differences, however, did not completely paralyse its functioning. A Tata Sons meeting in May was described by people familiar with the deliberations as constructive, with Noel Tata focusing on businesses, including Air India and BigBasket, while Chandrasekaran led reviews of group companies.

But with no agreement even after reached after six months, Chandra said the uncertainty could no longer continue.

“Tata Sons is a very large institution and there are many strategic projects that are under critical stages of execution,” he said. “It is not only necessary to have a leader in place to lead the Group beyond February 2027, but also clarity on leadership is important for employees, investors, partners and other stakeholders.”

“Under these circumstances, earlier today, I have communicated to the Tata Sons Board, that I have decided not to offer myself for reappointment when my term ends on February 20, 2027. I have asked the Board to decide on the succession soon to ensure a proper transition.”

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Chandrasekaran joined the Tata Group in 1987 as an intern at TCS, rose through the ranks to become the IT company's chief executive in 2009 and was appointed Tata Sons chairman in 2017, succeeding Ratan Tata's interim tenure after Cyrus Mistry's ouster. He was the first non-Parsi chairman of Tata Sons and was credited with bringing stability to the group after the bruising 2016 boardroom battle.

Under him, the group expanded aggressively into aviation, electronics, semiconductors, batteries and digital commerce while strengthening its traditional technology, automotive and steel businesses. Tatas acquired Air India from the government in 2022 and subsequently consolidated Air India, Vistara, Air India Express and AIX Connect into a major airline operation.

The scale-up has been reflected in the group's financial footprint. Tata companies reported aggregate revenue of more than \$180 billion in 2024-25, employed more than one million people, and the group's 26 listed companies had a combined market capitalisation of more than \$328 billion as of March 31, 2025.

LG approves Master Plan for Delhi 2047

The plan will now be sent to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for final approval and subsequent notification. The first master plan for Delhi was promulgated in 1962 under the Delhi Development Act of 1957, followed by the master plans of 2001 and 2021, the last of which was also delayed and eventually notified in 2007.

A master plan is a long-term planning document that is supposed to provide a conceptual layout to guide a city's future growth and development. It includes analysis, recommendations and proposals covering a city's population, economy, housing, transportation, community facilities and land use.

With Delhi's population projected to grow significantly by 2047, the Master Plan adopts an integrated approach towards housing, economic growth, mobility, environmental sustainability, infrastructure, heritage conservation, urban regeneration and citizen-centric governance.

The new plan is expected to move the needle forward on some of Delhi's most contested urban questions, including the land pooling policy meant to unlock large tracts of Outer Delhi for planned development; the Green Development Area (GDA) policy; and the fate of unauthorised colonies in the Yamuna's O-Zone, an ecologically sensitive floodplain housing over five lakh people, which the Delhi High Court ruled in May cannot legally have residential colonies.

Apart from this, important decisions included, Policy for Reconstruction and Redevelopment of Old DDA-built Two-Storey Units, and Change of Land Use for development of Metro Depot of Rithala-Kundli Corridor in Narela Sub-City for expansion of metro corridor. Amendments to Unified Building Bye-Laws (UBBL)-2016 were also approved to reduce compliance burden and improve Ease of Doing Business.

PAN-PAN call before Delhi adds new clue...

The aircraft subsequently stabilised and continued towards Delhi, where it landed safely. According to the latest reports, passengers and crew members were injured during the event and received medical attention after landing. AI had put the number at 13 passengers and four crew members.

The reported PAN-PAN call comes amid scrutiny of technical indications recorded by the aircraft. According to the maintenance information cited in reports, the aircraft generated multiple warnings involving hydraulic systems, flight controls and other components. Among the reported indications were low-pressure warnings affecting the aircraft's hydraulic systems and low fluid indications in two hydraulic reservoirs. Autopilot disconnects and indications involving elevator-control systems were also reportedly recorded.

These systems are important to the operation of an Airbus A320 family aircraft. The aircraft has multiple hydraulic systems providing redundancy for functions including flight controls, landing gear and braking.

However, the presence of individual warnings does not by itself establish that the aircraft suffered a complete hydraulic or flight-control failure. Determining whether any of the indications were connected to the sudden altitude change will require examination of the aircraft's recorded data and technical history.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has taken custody of the aircraft's Flight Data Recorder and Cockpit Voice Recorder as part of the investigation. Airbus has also said it will send specialists to assist investigators.

India's civil aviation authorities have said the captain of AI2379 returned an initial positive result for psychoactive substances during post-flight screening. As per reported that the initial screening prompted further laboratory testing. Reports have subsequently said that a confirmatory test also returned positive for marijuana.

Separately, reports have raised questions about the pilot's sleep and medication. The circumstances surrounding fatigue, any prescribed medication, the screening results and the pilot's fitness for duty are now among the issues investigators are expected to examine.

The reported communication with ATC could become an important piece of evidence because radio transmissions can help investigators reconstruct the crew's assessment of the situation in real time.

If the PAN-PAN call was made after the altitude loss, investigators will examine what information the pilots communicated to ATC, what assistance was requested and why priority handling was sought while the aircraft continued towards Delhi.

The call, however, should not be interpreted on its own as proof that the aircraft was in an uncontrolled or life-threatening emergency. PAN-PAN specifically denotes urgency rather than the imminent danger associated

with a MAYDAY declaration. The exact wording and timing of the communication will therefore be crucial. The investigation has also widened to include the cockpit crew.

Delhi Police goes kuchu-puchu to...

Delhi Police has not been treating this lightly despite the playful post. The Crime Branch recently seized more than 1,300 rolls of Chinese manjha in an enforcement operation. Central Delhi Police recovered around 120 rolls separately. The banned string is not difficult to find in the capital's kite markets, which means the bans have not been followed by the kind of enforcement that makes bans meaningful. The social media post and the seizures are two ends of the same policy problem: how do you make people understand that a thing they associate with festivity is also capable of killing a child on her way to buy vegetables with her father.

The kuchu puchu post is one answer to that. Not the entire answer. Not even most of the answer. But in a city where public attention is fought for in three-second windows, a police force that can make you smile before it makes you think has at least solved the first half of the problem. The second half is the string still for sale around the corner.

FCRA Amendment Bill sent to JPC for review

The Opposition has been claiming that the Bill will target NGOs and minority institutions, while the Government has rubbished the charge. Congress leader KC Venugopal and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav dubbed the bill “anti-minority” and demanded its withdrawal.

“The Bill is against NGOs and minority institutions who are doing good work,” Venugopal said. He was joined by Yadav, who said: “The entire Opposition is against the Bill and it must be withdrawn.” The Opposition also questioned the absence of Home Minister Amit Shah, as the resolution on sending the FCRA bill to the JPC was earlier listed against his name in the Supplementary List of Business of the Lok Sabha.

Amid mounting criticism, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) clarified on July 22 that the designated authority would manage only assets created from foreign contributions, and only after an organisation's registration has lawfully ceased. As Minister Rai rose to move the resolution to send the Bill to JPC, the Opposition benches opposed it vehemently. Responding to the Opposition's charge, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the Opposition should welcome the move to send the bill to the JPC, as they will get a chance to put across their points before the panel.

He also rejected the contention that the bill is anti-minority. “Show me one provision in the bill which is against the minorities of the country,” he challenged the Opposition.

You have changed: Modi, Kharge exchange banter at social event

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

High temperatures in the current monsoon session of Parliament notwithstanding, bonhomie between political opponents was on display at a social event. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge exchanged banter, with the former commenting, “*Aap badal gaye ho* (you have changed)” in response to the latter saying, “I am just the same as always.”

The friendly chat took place at the wedding reception of NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule's daughter in New Delhi on Monday. Who's who of politics were present at the gathering. A video has now emerged showing Kharge and Modi engaging in a light-hearted conversation.

Political rivalry took a backseat; the Prime Minister, Congress chief and the Gandhi siblings shared the same frame at the reception. Rare as the sight was, a video



of the leaders sharing a light-hearted exchange has now gone viral on social media.

The interaction began with Modi asking Priyanka Gandhi Vadra about how she was doing. “How is Priyanka doing?” he can be heard asking in the clip. “I am doing well, sir! How are you?” Priyanka, who is not visible in the video, replies.

To this, the Prime Minister said, “I am just the same as always”. Modi's reply drew a chuckle from the Congress president who was standing nearby. “*Bhai saab, aap thoda*

badal gaye saab (Brother, you have changed a bit),” Kharge was heard telling PM Modi. He, however, did not elaborate on his remark.

The Prime Minister appeared amused by Kharge's quip. “Oh really?” he responded before both sides broke into laughter. Rahul Gandhi is also seen in the frame smiling at the interaction between the two leaders.

The light-hearted exchange happened as political leaders from across the spectrum attended the wedding reception of Supriya Sule's daugh-

ter Revati at Sharad Pawar's 6, Janpath, residence in New Delhi. Another photo of PM Modi and Sharad Pawar engaged in an intense discussion at the wedding reception also grabbed attention, coming amid speculation of NCP(SP) warming up to the BJP. However, Sule has previously clarified that the party's recent engagements with PM Modi were strictly regarding issues related to Maharashtra.

The high-profile gathering came as Parliament witnessed a logjam amid protests by the Congress over the police crackdown on students during their ‘Sansad Chalo’ march on July 20.

The high-profile reception at 6 Janpath in Delhi celebrated Revati Sule's marriage to Nagpur-based industrialist Sarang Lakhani. The couple married in Mumbai in June, with the Delhi gathering marking a grand reception.

The reception witnessed a galaxy of political stars who turned up to bless the newlyweds.

West Bengal passes delimitation laws for Kolkata, Howrah

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

The Bengal Assembly, through a special one-day session on Wednesday, passed two civic delimitation amendment bills aimed at delimiting the civic areas under the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Howrah Municipal Corporation.

The first bill is the Howrah Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the second one is the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

Following the gubernatorial assent, the number of wards under Kolkata Municipal Corporation would go up from 144 to 209, whereas the number of civic wards in Howrah would go up to 68 from the existing 50. Apart from this, the Bally municipal area would be separated from Howrah Corporation.

The on-ground delimitation exercise would be taken up by the State Election Commission in cooperation with the Kolkata district administrative authorities, Chief Minister Suvendu



West Bengal Legislative Assembly

Adhikari said, referring to a question raised by senior opposition MLA and former Mayor Firhad Hakim.

“It seems that the honourable member is ill-informed about the delimitation exercise... presently only the numbers of the two municipal corporations have been fixed whereas actual delimitation exercise will take place subsequently... The State Election Commission will mark the boundaries of the wards... based on the number of voters, population and other details,” the Chief Minister said, referring to Hakim's

apprehensions of a “politically motivated delimitation” targeting certain specific wards or communities.

Hakim, however, said that he was not opposed to the delimitation of the wards in principle “but it should be made clear on what policy or criteria the entire process is being carried out.”

The Chief Minister said that apart from the SEC, the Land and Land Reforms Department and officials responsible for the administration of Kolkata district would be involved in the process before a draft notification was issued.

SIA raids 9 locations in 1990 Kashmiri Pandit murder probe

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Thirty-six years after the merciless killing of renowned Kashmiri Pandit scholar and poet, Sarwanand Koul ‘Premi’ and his son Virender Koul, the Jammu and Kashmir State Investigation Agency on Wednesday conducted raids across nine locations in Baramulla, Rajouri and Jammu to gather vital evidence against the perpetrators behind the targeted killing at the peak of militancy in April 1990.

The searches were carried out after obtaining search warrants from the competent court in connection with FIR No. 45/1990 registered at Police Station Dooru, relating to the killing of Premi and his 27-year-old son.

According to official sources, searches were conducted across 6 locations in Rajouri, 2 in Jammu and 1 in Baramulla.

After filing a 737-page chargesheet in the abduction, torture and brutal killing of Sarla Bhat, a staff nurse at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Srinagar, the SIA has launched a fresh probe to identify the killers and key conspirators behind the gruesome murder of Premi and his son.

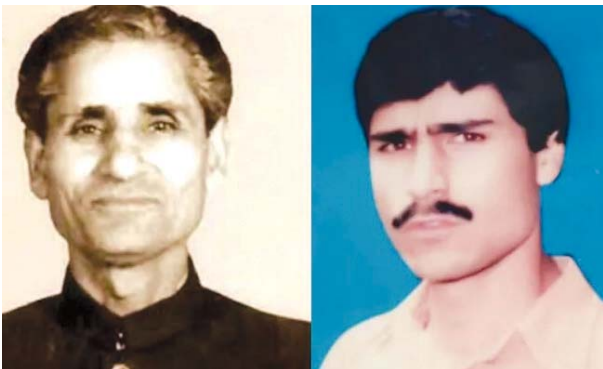
Sarla Bhat was killed by JKLF terrorists on 18 April 1990. Eleven days later, three terrorists stormed the residence of a social activist and freedom fighter of the Quit India Movement, Sarwanand Koul, in Anantnag and

abducted him on the night of April 29-30, 1990. The terrorists allegedly looted valuables and cash and ordered him to accompany them to their commander. His younger son, Virender Koul, insisted on going with his father, reportedly out of concern for his safety.

On May 1, 1990, the family recovered the mutilated dead bodies of their head of the family and a young son. Eyewitness and media reports claimed that part of Premi's forehead, where he used to apply sandalwood, was cruelly pierced by a sharp weapon and the skin was peeled off. The entire body bore the marks of cigarette burns. The limbs were found broken, and the eyes of both the father and the son were gouged out. They were later hanged and, to be doubly sure, shot dead too.

Sarwanand Koul ‘Premi’ was a respected school headmaster from Soaf Shali in Kokernag. A celebrated literary figure, he authored and translated more than three dozen works. Among his notable literary contributions were translations of Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali into Kashmiri, the Bhagavad Gita into Urdu and the Ramayana into Kashmiri.

At the peak of militancy, when terrorists started targeted killings of members belonging to the minority community, Premi had decided to stay put in the Valley, believing that the goodwill and personal rela-



Sarwanand Koul ‘Premi’ and his son Virender Koul

tionships he had built across communities would protect him. His merciless killing became one of the most chilling episodes associated with the targeting of Kashmiri Pandits in the valley and triggered a mass exodus of hapless families.

Official sources told The Pioneer that the SIA team investigating the double murder case of Sarwanand Koul and his son is on the job to collect evidence and identify individuals who may have participated in, facilitated or assisted the perpetrators of the 1990 crime.

Without identifying the dreaded terrorist behind the killing of Sarwanand Koul, a senior officer revealed that the terrorists behind the gruesome murder had been eliminated long ago. The raids were conducted at the residences of close relatives and their associates.

Speaking to The Pioneer over the telephone, Rajinder Koul, the elder son of

Sarwanand Premi, said this is the struggle for the last 36 years, which I have been personally pursuing not only with the government of Jammu and Kashmir but also with the Union Government. The promises the government made to us were broken. Not a single promise of assurance given to us at that time was kept. “When we left Kashmir after the killing of my father and brother, we stayed in Jammu for a very brief time period and then went to Delhi after completing the rituals. There was no communication with the government”. He said my struggle dates back to 1991. When we started pursuing our matters with the Jammu and Kashmir government. “Our local temple was demolished by the mob in 1992, our two houses in our native village were burnt down in 1998, and an FIR was also registered”. He said the State Human Rights Commission was approached; they deliv-

ered a decision after almost five years. “A comprehensive and considered judgment was given by the two-member bench of the commission. The recommendations were not translated into action by the government. Many meetings were held in the state government. Nothing conclusive happened. Then we moved to the National Human Rights Commission. The NHRC also made certain recommendations. They heard me for four or five long years. They said, ‘Nothing doing’. The NHRC has no business to intervene in our matter. We don't have the manpower to look into all this. The files have gathered dust, and we cannot dig out the old record. Koul claimed they requested the NHRC to keep this matter in abeyance. I have no hesitation in saying that my family has been a victim of bureaucracy, Koul said. According to him, on 18 April 2024, the NHRC delivered a final judgment in the matter. They said the whole case should be looked into afresh purely on a humanitarian angle, not from any other angle, because they could understand that this was political victimisation.

Koul also welcomed the raids, hoping that all cases would be handled this way.

Rajender further demanded justice for everyone. “I appeal to the State Government that all the cases should be handed over to the SIA for expeditious and effective investigation.

Opposition slams Suvendu’s move for anti-conversion law in West Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

The Opposition parties have questioned the “intention behind” Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari's announcement that his Government was planning to bring legislation to prevent forced conversions in tandem with the proposed Uniform Civil Code.

While senior pro-Mamata Banerjee Trinamool Congress leader Kunal Ghosh said that such laws were only a “diversionary tactic to hide the Government's failure to implement the social programmes that were promised before the elections,” CPI(M) central committee member and former MP Sujan Chakrabarty said “both the proposed UCC and anti-conversion laws are a part of the BJP's divisive agenda... but that will not succeed in a State like



TMC leader Kunal Ghosh

Bengal... here you have to work and win by ideological appeal and nothing else because the people are politically conscious.”

Adhikari had on Tuesday told reporters at Bankura that his Government was planning to introduce a bill to prevent forced religious conversions in the state. Informing that the Uniform

Civil Code would be implemented in the state shortly, he said that the draft bill in this regard has already been prepared and was being scrutinised by an expert committee.

The State Government

had formed a nine-member high-level committee led by former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai to examine the draft UCC law.

Alleging that funds that were coming to Bengal from abroad in the name of setting up religious institutions were in fact being used for religious conversions, Adhikari said that his government was planning a new law to stall such activities.

He also said that a new and strict law would be brought on transfer of property through transaction of lands.

“A strict law is also in the offing to control the sale and purchase of lands,” he said, apparently against the backdrop of reports of large swathes of lands belonging to a particular community getting transferred to another community in some minority dominated districts or areas along the international borders.

Maharashtra ATS busts inter-state methamphetamine network

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ Mumbai/New Delhi

Maharashtra's Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized 4.738 kg of methamphetamine worth Rs 9.4 crore in an inter-state operation that started in Bhandra East and ended at a hidden factory in Greater Noida. Police arrested one Israeli man and two foreign women, and sealed the manufacturing unit.

On Tuesday, the ATS Kalachowki unit got a tip that a courier would be near Amber Hotel. Officers set up a trap on Anant Kanherekar Marg, near Bhandra Court, and caught the suspect. They found 2,050 grams of the drug, worth Rs 4 crore. He was arrested under the NDPS Act. During questioning, he admitted he bought the drugs from a factory in Greater Noida to sell in Mumbai.

An ATS team, with help from local Uttar Pradesh police, raided the site the same day. Officers seized another 2,688 grams of the drug, worth Rs 5.4 crore, along with materials used for making it, and shut down the premises. Nawal Bajaj, Additional Director General of Police, ATS Maharashtra, confirmed both seizures and the three arrests.

During questioning, the arrested man said he bought the drugs from a factory in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, to sell in Mumbai. The ATS, with help from local police, raided the factory and found another 2,688 grams of methamphetamine worth Rs 5.4 crore, along with materials used for making the drug. The factory was sealed. In total, officers seized 4.738 kg



of methamphetamine, valued at about Rs 9.4 crore.

ATS is looking for women who are co-accused and are still missing, showing that the investigation is still in its early stages. This operation shows how synthetic drug networks are spreading across state borders. Methamphetamine, also known as crystal meth, is a growing concern for law enforcement because it is valuable and easy to produce in small units.

Greater Noida has been involved in several past cases with foreign nationals and secret drug facilities, partly because it is well connected to the National Capital Region. Officials said the ATS is now looking into where the raw materials came from, how the drugs were transported to Mumbai, and the exact roles of those arrested and any other people involved.

The involvement of foreign nationals has prompted investigators to look into possible transnational links. Because foreign nationals are involved, investigators are now checking for possible international connections. They are

also trying to find out if the network reached other cities or distribution channels in Maharashtra. The NDPS Act has strict penalties for cases involving large amounts of these drugs. Authorities said sealing the Greater Noida factory was a clear blow to the supply chain. Still, they warned that synthetic drug operations often change locations quickly. They challenged traditional narcotics in both volume and profitability. The agency continues to work with counterparts in Uttar Pradesh to map the full extent of the racket.

Additional arrests and recoveries cannot be ruled out as custodial questioning and forensic examination of the seized materials progress. This case shows why police from different states need to work together to fight modern drug syndicates that take advantage of gaps between jurisdictions. Law enforcement agencies across India have increased their efforts against synthetic drugs because of growing worries about addiction and social problems, officials said.

34-point questionnaire: Inside Ram temple’s search for CEO

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Ayodhya

The application process for Ayodhya Ram Mandir's first full-time CEO was much more thorough than usual. The 18 shortlisted candidates for the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust had to fill out a detailed 34-point online questionnaire about their personal background, work experience, and religious beliefs.

The form sought full name and date of birth. The form asked for basic details like full name, date of birth, age, address, contact information, and email. Candidates also had to share their language skills in Hindi and English, highest education level, current or past job status, and details about their employer. It included questions about years of management or administrative experience, the sector they worked in, and the size of teams they managed. Organised or supervised events, including estimated attendance, duration, year, event name and the candidate's role, vital for handling large religious gatherings.

Applicants disclosed any prior association with religious institutions, monasteries, social organisations or temples, along with duration and scale. A key query asked whether the candidate considered themselves a “staunch Hindu,” “true Hindu” or “hardline Hindu,” versus simply a believer, plus details of links to Hindu religious institutions. The form also required a vision statement for the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, a proposed work plan and suggestions for temple management, plus names, positions and contacts of



at least two reputable references for verification of professional, social or religious experience.

The form also collected family and personal information. During the closed-door interviews, which lasted 40 to 50 minutes or more, the three-member panel asked more questions about personal and religious practices. Some of the reported questions were: “Are you a staunch Hindu?” “Do you eat non-vegetarian food?” “Are you a pure vegetarian?” “Do you keep a shikha (tuft of hair)?” “Do you wear a janeu (sacred thread)?” “Do you consume alcohol or are you a teetotaler?”

Candidates were also questioned about their comfort with traditional Hindu attire, their faith in Lord Ram, and their understanding of the temple's religious and social importance. The panel asked about their experience managing large crowds, family background, personal prefer-

ences, people skills, and their overall vision for running the temple's administration, finances, security, and daily operations.

These questions show that the Trust wants the CEO to be a practising Hindu between 50 and 70 years old, follow Hindu traditions, be a strict vegetarian and teetotaler, have at least 20 years of relevant experience, speak Hindi and English fluently, and live in Ayodhya. The job comes with a three-year initial term and involves managing the temple's daily administration, finances, legal matters, security, and operations.

The search for a full-time CEO began after allegations of embezzlement of temple donations came up in June 2026, leading to closer checks on financial management. Over 5,200 applications were received from all over India. After about 20 days of screening, which included the Google Form and some online meetings,

the panel shortlisted 18 candidates. Most of them are retired bureaucrats, former senior corporate executives, retired defence officers, or people with experience managing temples or religious trusts.

Interviews started on 11 August 2026 at the temple complex and continued for several days. The selection panel includes retired Supreme Court Justice Pramod Kohli, retired Lt Gen Vishnukant Chaturvedi, and Suresh Haware, former chairperson of the Shri Saibaba Sansthan Trust in Shirdi. The panel will recommend three candidates to the Trust, which is expected to decide at its meeting around 2 September 2026. The full list of the 18 shortlisted candidates has not been officially released, keeping the process confidential.

Only a few names have been shared by sources so far: former IPS officer Rajesh Kumar Pandey (sometimes called an encounter specialist and linked to Lucknow's Hanuman Mandir), Dinesh Chandra (former Jaunpur District Magistrate), Yogeshwar Ram Mishra (retired IAS officer and former Faizabad district magistrate), and Sameer Pandaya. On the first day of interviews, three former IAS officers, one former IPS officer, and four former military officers reportedly took part.

The detailed questionnaire and personal questions show that the Trust is looking for someone who is both professionally skilled and closely aligned with the spiritual values of the Ram Mandir. The person chosen will need to manage complex logistics, finances, and meet the expectations of millions of devotees.

TN House passes resolution to freeze Lok Sabha seats at 543

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chennai

The Tamil Nadu Assembly on Wednesday adopted a resolution moved by Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, urging the Union Government to permanently fix the strength of Lok Sabha members at 543.

The resolution, which battled for the implementation of 33 per cent reservation for women in the next Lok Sabha polls to be held in 2029, and in elections to legislative assemblies, was passed after an intense debate that went on for about two hours.

Underlining that “mothers and sisters” were a key reason for his growth in life, the CM said that 33 per cent reservation for women must not be delayed anymore.

He said: “We urge the Union Government to implement the 33 reservation for

women without further delay. This is not a concession for women; it is their democratic right. This is not a victory for one person; it is a victory for Indian democracy.”

Providing a background to the delimitation issue, including the defeat in April of the Constitution Amendment Bill in Parliament, the resolution said that if delimitation is carried out based on any census taken after 1971, the parliamentary representation of southern States, including Tamil Nadu, which have effectively controlled their population, will be permanently affected.

“As per the assurance given by the Union Government, it is its primary duty to ensure that no State that has efficiently implemented population control programmes, achieved good economic growth, and carried out proper healthcare and public

welfare schemes is adversely affected by the delimitation.” The resolution urged the Centre to make permanent the existing strength of Lok Sabha at 543 and “to maintain the inter-state distribution of seats permanently, to maintain the current LS-RS ratio at 2.2:1.

“The existing number of seats in the Lok Sabha allocated to the States should be made permanent at the current level, ie proportional distribution among the States,” according to the resolution.

Simultaneously, 33 per cent women reservation should be implemented in the 2029 polls to the Lok Sabha, without delay, based on the existing 543 LS seats.

Vijay said although a law providing one-third reservation for women in Parliament and state legislatures had been passed, the delay in implementing it makes the



Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker JCD Prabhakar looks on, as State Chief Minister Vijay speaks during the State Assembly session in Chennai PTI

objective unfulfilled and denies women their political rights. Therefore, reservation for women should not be postponed by linking it to the census and delimitation. “The Government of Tamil Nadu urges the Union Government to take appropriate measures to implement the reservation swiftly,” he said.

The resolution wanted the women reservation to be effective in the next LS polls

and subsequent polls to the legislative Assemblies.

Main Opposition DMK, ruling TVK's friendly parties — the CPI and CPI-M — supported the resolution.

Leader of the Opposition, Udhayanidhi Stalin, said pioneering initiatives were undertaken by his party over the years in order to protect the interests of Tamil Nadu in the matter of delimitation.

“The DMK was the first to

point out the great danger if delimitation was done on the basis of the current Census,” he said, adding that the defeat of a bill related to delimitation in April in the Parliament was due to the DMK's stiff opposition.

He said: “It is expected that the Centre may reintroduce a bill for delimitation...if delimitation is proposed to be carried out for the sake of the Women's Reservation Bill, it should strictly be based on the 1971 population. Should there be any change, we must not allow Tamil Nadu's proportion/representation of MPs in Parliament to be reduced below its current 7.18 per cent.”

Ex-chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami said the AIADMK supports only the clause in the chief minister-moved resolution that demands reservation for women. Palaniswami underscored that “while there is no

indication of a bill on the delimitation getting introduced in Parliament, it is our view that the TVK regime has hurriedly proposed this resolution for political reasons.”

“AIADMK opposes this resolution as nothing is known if the proposed delimitation will have a beneficial or adverse impact for Tamil Nadu. At the same time, we support quota for women reservation,” Palaniswami said. PMK, an NDA constituent, opposed the resolution and urged that it be withdrawn.

BJP's lone member M Bhojarajan said the Centre's delimitation initiative was considering the future generations' welfare.

On delimitation, DMK's ally DMDK MLA Premalatha Vijayakanth said there was scope for more women MPs getting elected if the number of MPs were to be increased.

However, an assessment of the matter would be appropriate only after the Centre introduces a Bill in this regard, she said.

Minister Vanniarasu (VCK) said any initiative of the BJP-led Centre must be viewed wearing the “glasses of Periyar EVR or Dr BR Ambedkar to see through the conspiracy.” Minister A M Shahjahan (IUML) welcomed the move, saying it is based on the principle that prevention is better than a cure.

M Thamimun Ansari (elected on DMK symbol; Manithaneya Jananayaga Katchi chief), proposed an amendment seeking internal reservation for SCS/OBCs in women's reservation.

On August 8, a Vijay-led meeting of Tamil Nadu MPs belonging to the alliance and friendly parties decided to oppose, in total, the proposed delimitation exercise of the Union Government.

Over 36,000 firms shut operations in Maharashtra in 5 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Opposition leaders have sharply criticised the Maharashtra Government after data disclosed in the Lok Sabha showed that over 36,000 private companies were liquidated, dissolved, or struck off in the State over the last five financial years.

They claimed excessive Government interference, widespread corruption, and an increasingly unfavourable business environment as key drivers pushing commercial and industrial activity away from Maharashtra.

The information was shared in the Lok Sabha by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on August 10, in response to a question asked by Shiv Sena (UBT) Lok Sabha member Rajabhau Waje.

Waje on Wednesday said that the closure of more than 14,000 companies in business services and nearly 6,500 in manufacturing was particularly alarming, as these sectors generate substantial employment.

“Some 14,000 companies in business services and some 6,500 companies from manufacturing sectors have closed down in the last five fiscal years. These sectors generate significantly higher employment, and such higher numbers of closures are shocking,” he told reporters.

Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant said that political interference and corruption under the current regime are severely harming the State's economic trajectory. He also raised concerns over the



Government's alleged failure to create a conducive climate for enterprise, stressing that the closure trends directly contradict the rhetoric around utilising India's demographic dividend.

“The current regime in Maharashtra has a lust for power and nothing else. Its increased interference in where new businesses or

industrial units would come is adversely affecting the State's growth in this sector. The widespread corruption and unfavourable environment for the business sector are now reflected in this Lok Sabha answer,” he said.

As per the data, 36,211 private companies underwent liquidation, dissolution or were struck off in Maharashtra over the past

five financial years. Business services accounted for the largest share at 14,613, or about 40 per cent of the total, followed by manufacturing, mining, quarrying and others at 6,582; trading at 4,196; community, personal and social services at 3,361.

A total of 2,356 companies from the construction sector faced the same fate, followed by storage and communications at 1,336; agriculture and allied activities at 1,178; real estate and renting at 1,149; finance at 1,012; electricity, gas and water companies at 387; and insurance at 41, the data showed.

Among the districts, Mumbai City recorded the highest number at 12,009, followed by Pune at 6,433 and Thane at 4,704. Nagpur accounted for 1,478 compa-

nies that went out of business, Nashik 840, Raigarh 822 and Aurangabad 654. Kolhapur recorded 429, Ahmednagar 308, Solapur 262, Sangli 247, Jalgaon 215, Satara 196, Bandra Suburban 172, Nanded 169, Latur 163 and Amravati 151. The 'Others' category accounted for 5,636 companies, it said.

Mumbai City, Pune and Thane together accounted for 23,146 companies, or nearly 64 per cent of the Maharashtra total.

Referring to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's recent remarks that young people could not all seek jobs and some would have to start businesses, Sawant said data shared by the Corporate Affairs Ministry were at odds with that message.



GP Singh, IPS, DG, CRPF, visited the Martyrs' Memorial at GC Guwahati to pay solemn tributes to Veer Balidani PIONEER PHOTO

8th BRICS Oceanic-Polar Science and Tech meet begins in Goa

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Panaji

The eighth meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Oceanic and Polar Science and Technology (OPST) began in Goa on Wednesday, where scientists and officials from eight member countries will discuss scientific cooperation and future collaborative programmes in ocean and polar research.

The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR), under the Ministry of Earth Sciences in South Goa, is hosting the three-day meeting being held under India's BRICS Presidency 2026.

Delegations from Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and India are participating in the meeting. The meeting was inaugurated in the presence



of Dr M Rajeevan, Vice Chancellor of Atria University and former Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, along with directors and scientists of MoES institutes, officials from the Ministry of Earth Sciences and Department of Science and Technology, and delegations from BRICS member countries. Dr Thamban Meloth, Director, NCPOR and chair of

the working group for 2026, welcomed the participants, following which Rajeevan delivered a keynote lecture on “India's Blue Economy Initiatives”.

The working group will discuss ongoing national programmes, areas of common scientific interest and opportunities for future cooperation in ocean and polar science and technology.

7 killed in landslide at Mumbai's Ghatkopar after heavy rains

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Seven persons were killed and as many others were injured after a landslide struck Mumbai's Ghatkopar area early on Wednesday following heavy rains, civic officials said.

The deceased included three children in the age group of two to 14 years.

The landslide was reported at Gaushiya Chawl (row tenement) in the Ashok Nagar locality of Chirag Nagar at 3.48 am, they said.

A portion of soil and debris from the hillside collapsed onto two to three houses, causing casualties and damage, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials said.

Seven persons were declared brought dead at the civic-run Rajawadi Hospital in Ghatkopar, they said.

The deceased have been



Rescue operation underway after a landslide struck Gaushiya Chawl, killing six people and injuring four others in Mumbai's Ghatkopar area on Wednesday PTI

identified as Mohammad Samir Ansari (14), Sahil Husen Abdul Kazi (19), an unidentified person aged around 45, Aban Arif Shaikh (2), Manat Arif Shaikh (4), Marjina Arif Shaikh (27) and Viket Ramesh Yadav (27), a

civic official said.

Three injured persons — Farana Dilber Khan (28), Dilber Amnulla Khan (38) and Shamin Muslim Khan (26) — were admitted to Rajawadi Hospital, where their condition was reported to be stable, the official said. Four other injured persons, identified as Sohel Ansari (18), Mohammad Ansari (14), Naimuddin Egbal Khan (28) and Sajid Ansari (16), were admitted to the civic-run Bhabha Hospital in Kurla. Their condition is also stable.

Challenges are being faced in the rescue operation as the route to the affected area is extremely narrow, allowing only one person to pass through at a time and making it difficult to deploy heavy machinery, according to officials.

Search and rescue operations are underway, with teams of the fire brigade, police, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), ambulance service and civic ward staff deployed at the site. Mumbai Mayor Ritu Tawde visited the spot to supervise the rescue operation. She also met the affected families and offered them

support. The mayor announced immediate financial assistance of ₹4 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 towards the medical treatment of each injured person.

She directed the agencies involved in the rescue operation to intensify their efforts and maintain coordination.

The administration was closely monitoring the situation and the ongoing rescue operation.

The BMC said it regularly alerts residents and advises them to vacate and relocate from vulnerable areas prone to landslides or rockfalls. Notices are also issued as part of pre-monsoon precautionary measures.

The civic administration had similarly issued warnings and conducted awareness drives for residents in the area around Tekdi No. 3 in Ashok Nagar in Ghatkopar regarding the risk of landslides, it said.

Gujarat plans new tourism policy ahead of 2030 Commonwealth Games

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

The Gujarat Government is expected to unveil a new tourism and hospitality policy aimed at accelerating investment and expanding the State's tourism infrastructure ahead of the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

According to sources, the proposed policy may offer incentives such as tax concessions, higher Floor Space Index (FSI) and faster regulatory approvals to encourage investment in the hospitality sector. The Government is reportedly working towards adding more than 300 hotels with around 60,000 rooms before the Commonwealth Games.

The proposed framework is expected to cover not only Ahmedabad and other major urban centres but also smaller cities and emerging tourist destinations across Gujarat.

The policy is also likely to promote medical tourism through targeted incentives.



Wellness centres could be brought within the scope of the new framework, a relatively emerging concept for Gujarat compared with southern states, where such facilities have gained greater prominence.

A single-window clearance mechanism and time-bound approvals are also being considered to reduce delays in setting up new hospitality projects. Industry stakeholders are seeking an early announcement, pointing out that hotel projects require considerable time for planning, financing and construction.

Another component under consideration is the promotion of large-scale concerts and entertainment events. The Government is examining incentives and facilitation measures to attract major events to Gujarat, with the broader activity being described as part of the “Orange Economy”.

Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat have witnessed several major concerts in recent years. Officials believe that a stronger events ecosystem could generate business across hospitality, transportation, food services and event management.

JINDAL

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Regd. Office: A-11 (7), Udaya Society, Sector-3, Tatibandh, Dharsiya, Raipur- 492099, Chattisgarh

Corp. Office: Jindal ITF centre, 28, Shivaji Marg, New Delhi- 110015

EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2026

(₹ Lacs)

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated			
		Quarter Ended		Year Ended		Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
		30.06.2026 Unaudited	31.03.2026 Refer Note 1	30.06.2025 Unaudited	31.03.2026 Audited	30.06.2026 Unaudited	31.03.2026 Refer Note 1	30.06.2025 Unaudited	31.03.2026 Audited
1	Total Income from operations	95.23	93.98	82.07	353.43	67,649.76	91,342.84	55,963.63	285,399.91
2	Net Profit/(loss) before tax and share of profit/(loss) of joint venture and exceptional items	7.99	7.90	9.86	29.76	3,376.72	4,127.30	1,433.39	10,059.93
3	Net Profit/(loss) before tax and after share of profit/(loss) of joint venture and exceptional items	7.99	7.90	9.86	29.76	916.94	638.28	1,429.34	5,538.30
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period/year after Tax (after Exceptional items)	5.85	6.20	7.38	22.51	(208.28)	(784.08)	(479.85)	(993.47)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period/year [Comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period/year (after tax) and Other Comprehensive income (after tax)]	5.85	5.37	7.38	22.79	(271.72)	(787.74)	(485.59)	(1,005.66)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07	514.07
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as at Balance Sheet date	-	-	-	31,564.61	-	-	-	(51,841.88)
8	Earnings Per Share (of ₹2/- each) (*Not annualised)								
	(1) Basic (₹)	0.023*	0.024*	0.029*	0.09	-2.13*	-6.94*	-4.33*	(18.73)
	(2) Diluted (₹)	0.023*	0.024*	0.029*	0.09	-2.13*	-6.94*	-4.33*	(18.73)

Note:

- The figures of the quarter ended March 31, 2026 are the balancing figures between the audited figures for the financial year ended March 31, 2026 and the published unaudited figures for the nine months ended December 31, 2025.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Standalone and Consolidated financial results for the quarter ended on 30th June, 2026 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Standalone and Consolidated results for the quarter ended on 30th June, 2026 are available on the websites of stock exchanges (www.nseindia.com/www.bseindia.com) and on the Company's website (www.jindalinfra.logistics.com).

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to view Results

On behalf of Board of Director of JITF Infra Logistics Limited

Sd-

Amarendra Kumar Sinha

Whole Time Director

DIN : 08190565

Place : New Delhi
Date : August 12, 2026



Editor's
TAKE

What the Mecca defence pact really means

While the agreement offers no NATO-style collective defence, the military capabilities of its members – especially Turkey – warrant close attention

On August 7, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif signed the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement, declaring that an attack on any one of the three would be treated as an attack on all. Coming after nearly a year of negotiation, and building on the bilateral Saudi-Pakistan defence pact signed in Riyadh last September, the accord instantly drew comparisons to NATO's Article 5. Predictable label – "Islamic NATO," – followed within hours.

The comparison is tempting but loose. Unlike NATO, the Mecca pact creates no integrated command, no standing joint forces, no automatic deployment mechanism. Riyadh itself has publicly denied this is a military alliance or a religious bloc. Pakistan has downplayed any suggestion of extending its nuclear umbrella to its new partners, and tellingly, Islamabad did not act militarily when Iran struck Saudi Arabia even after the bilateral pact was already in place.

What exists today is closer to a political signal of intent than a binding war-fighting compact. Yet the signal matters. The pact's timing – amid a widening US-Israel-Iran war, missile and drone strikes on Saudi oil infrastructure, and Gulf doubts about Washington's staying power – makes clear this is about hedging, not theology. Each partner brings something real: Saudi capital and geography astride two vital chokepoints, Turkey's NATO-standard military-industrial base, and Pakistan's battle-tested, nuclear-backed forces. Turkey has already said the door is open to more members; Egypt was courted but has stayed out, wary of binding commitments. The pact's chief strength, complementary capability, is also its weakness, since ambiguity over who must do what, and for whom, will only deepen as membership widens.

For India, the calculus is more complicated than the headlines suggest. The Ministry of External Affairs has responded with calibrated caution, saying only that it is "examining implications" for national security and regional stability. That restraint is sensible: no clause here extends Pakistan's nuclear deterrent, and Riyadh has too much invested in its India partnership, from energy to expatriate remittances, to want the pact read as anti-India. Still, two concerns are real. Turkey's role as a steady supplier of drones and defence hardware to Pakistan gives Islamabad a deeper-pocketed partner in modernising its arsenal. And a closer Ankara-Riyadh axis could complicate the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, a project Turkey was pointedly excluded from and has actively worked to counter with a rival route. Both push New Delhi toward tightening its own hedges – with Israel, the UAE and Qatar, all now watching Riyadh's new company closely. The Mecca pact is not NATO, and treating it as an existential threat would be an overreaction. But it is a marker of a post-American security order taking shape on India's western flank, assembled by a nuclear-armed neighbour with newly diversified backers. That deserves sober, sustained attention – not alarm, but not complacency either.

A fitting response to Mecca pact

The Saudi Arabia-Pakistan-Türkiye defence pact may be premature to call an 'Islamic NATO', but it signals a changing security architecture in West Asia. For India, the challenge is not to counter the emerging grouping with another alliance, but to leverage its strategic autonomy, strengthen its maritime capabilities and deepen its partnerships across the region



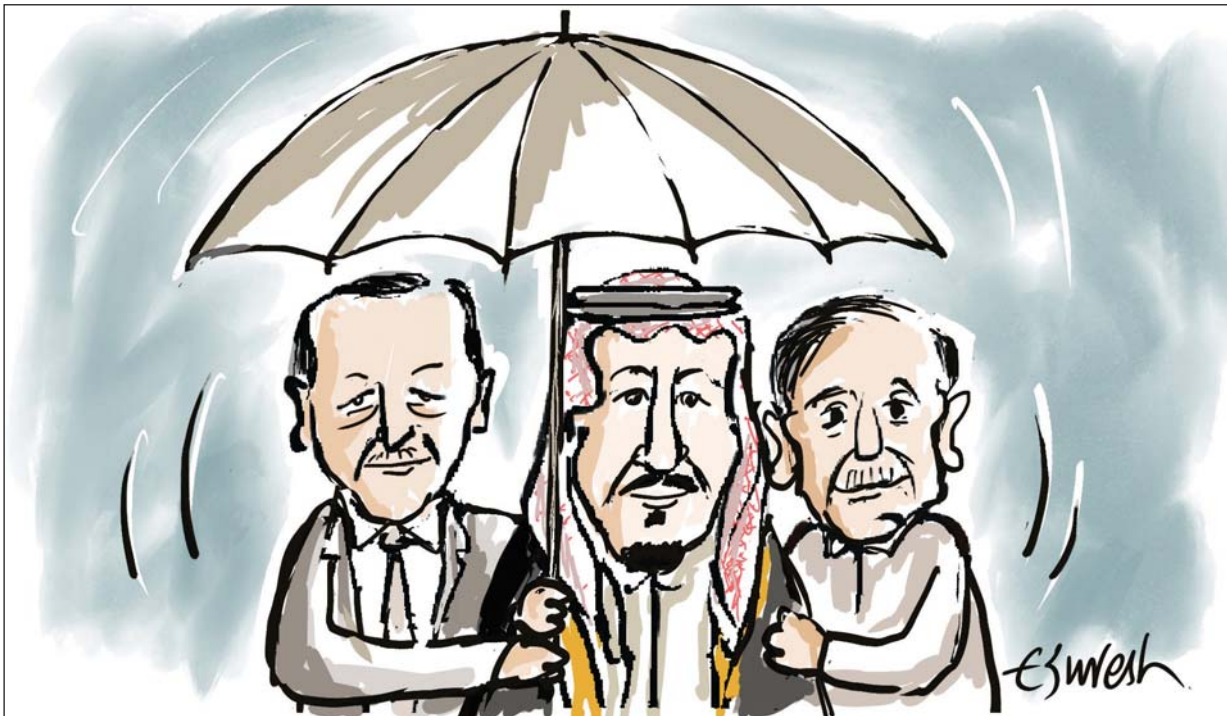
SATHOSH
MATHEW

The new defence pact between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye has opened a new chapter in West Asian geopolitics. It is already being called an "Islamic NATO", though that description may be premature. The three countries bring different strengths to the table. Pakistan is a nuclear-armed state with a large military, Türkiye is a NATO member with a growing defence industry, and Saudi Arabia is an oil-rich power with enormous financial resources and influence in the Muslim world. Their closer security cooperation is significant because it comes at a time when the old security architecture of the Gulf is changing rapidly. For India, Pakistan's role in this new arrangement makes the development particularly important.

For decades, the United States provided the main military shield for the Gulf. American bases, naval forces, aircraft and missile-defence systems offered protection to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Recent conflicts involving Iran, Israel and the United States have exposed the limitations of depending entirely on an external power for regional security. Gulf countries are increasingly looking for their own partnerships and security arrangements. The Mecca pact reflects this wider search for strategic independence. It does not have NATO's permanent command structure or integrated military forces, but the direction is clear: West Asia is moving towards a more complicated system of regional security partnerships.

India cannot ignore this change. A stronger Pakistan-Saudi military relationship, combined with Türkiye's defence capabilities, could give Islamabad greater strategic and diplomatic space. At the same time, India has enormous interests in the Gulf. Millions of Indians live and work there, the region is crucial for India's energy security, and the Strait of Hormuz remains vital for global trade and oil supplies. Any major military confrontation in the Gulf can quickly affect India's economy, energy prices and maritime trade. India therefore needs to watch the new security equation carefully without treating it as an immediate military threat. The biggest danger would be a wider regional conflict in which Pakistan becomes directly involved.

India's answer should not be to create another military bloc. New Delhi's greatest advantage is its ability to maintain relation-



ships with competing powers. India has strong partnerships with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, strategic relations with the United States and Israel, and important ties with Iran and other West Asian states. This diplomatic flexibility should become a strategic asset.

The American experience also provides a lesson: decades of military protection did not eliminate instability in the Gulf. India should therefore strengthen its own capabilities rather than depend on another country's security umbrella. Dharma diplomacy, understood as responsible, balanced and dialogue-oriented statecraft, can complement India's traditional strategic autonomy.

The most natural arena for India's growing influence is the Indian Ocean. India's movement from SAGAR-Security and Growth for All in the Region to MAHASAGAR-Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions-should become the centre of its maritime strategy.

The Arabian Sea links India directly with the Gulf, while the wider Indian Ocean connects India with Africa, Southeast Asia and Europe. India can strengthen maritime surveillance, protect commercial shipping, expand naval cooperation, conduct humanitarian operations and help smaller countries build their maritime capabilities. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the idea that the world is one family, can give this strategy a wider diplomatic purpose: India's secu-

PAKISTAN-SAUDI MILITARY
RELATIONSHIP, COMBINED WITH
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ISLAMABAD GREATER STRATEGIC
AND DIPLOMATIC SPACE

urity need not depend on permanent confrontation with another country.

India also has another strategic opportunity-artificial intelligence. The future balance of power will not be decided only by nuclear weapons, fighter aircraft and naval fleets. AI, semiconductors, data, cyber technology and advanced computing will increasingly determine national power. India's MANAV approach, centred on moral and ethical systems, accountable governance, national sovereignty, accessibility, inclusion, validity and legitimacy, can provide a distinctly Indian voice in the global AI race.

Pakistan may have nuclear weapons, Türkiye may have advanced defence technology, and Saudi Arabia may possess immense financial power. India's answer can be a combination of technology, economic strength, maritime power and diplomacy. The message from Mecca should therefore push India towards MAHASAGAR-not towards another military alliance, but towards becoming a stronger maritime, technological and diplomatic power.

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The writer is Professor Centre
For South Asian Studies, School
of International Studies &
Social Sciences Pondicherry
Central University, India

The quiet strength that builds civilisations



SIDDHARTH
ROY

2ND OPINION

Every civilisation leaves behind monuments that reflect its ambitions. Towers, temples, universities, bridges and highways become visible symbols of achievement, inspiring future generations to admire the societies that built them. Yet the true foundations of enduring nations are rarely made of concrete or stone. They are created through habits, values and attitudes that cannot be photographed, inaugurated or measured easily. Among these invisible assets, self-discipline remains the quiet strength that distinguishes temporary success from lasting national greatness.

Modern society has grown increasingly uneasy with the idea of discipline. It is often dismissed as restrictive, outdated or incompatible with individual freedom. We celebrate spontaneity, reward disruption and admire stories of overnight success. Social media reinforces the belief that

recognition should come instantly, while consumer culture encourages immediate gratification instead of patient effort. In such an environment, discipline appears unfashionable. Yet history repeatedly demonstrates that every nation which achieved sustained prosperity treated discipline not merely as a personal virtue but as a shared social value.

India's philosophical traditions recognised this truth centuries before economists began measuring productivity or competitiveness. The Bhagavad Gita teaches that mastering oneself is the highest victory. Swami Vivekananda argued that disciplined character forms the basis of national regeneration. Mahatma Gandhi transformed personal restraint into a powerful instrument of political and moral leadership. Though they lived in different eras, they shared one enduring conviction: societies become stronger only when individuals learn to govern themselves before attempting to influence others.

The experience of successful nations reinforces this lesson. Japan's remarkable recovery after the Second World War was sustained not only by financial assistance or industrial policy but also by a culture of punctuality, precision and continuous improvement. Germany's engineering excellence reflects generations of commitment to quality and accountability. Singapore's transformation into a global economic hub owes as much to civic responsibility as to visionary leadership. Infrastructure and institutions matter immensely, but they succeed only when citizens practise disciplined conduct in everyday life.

India today stands at a decisive moment. Massive investments are being made in infrastructure, manufacturing, technology and digital transformation. These initiatives are essential, but they cannot replace responsible behaviour. Roads become safer when traffic rules are respected. Public services improve when efficiency replaces delay. Businesses become globally competitive when employees pursue excellence instead of minimum compliance. Economic development depends as much on culture as it does on capital.

Self-discipline should therefore be regarded as national infrastructure. It requires little public expenditure, yet its returns are extraordinary. It strengthens institutions, discourages corruption, improves governance and builds workplaces where excellence becomes routine rather than exceptional.

Above all, it nurtures trust, the invisible currency upon which every successful economy and democracy ultimately depends. Civilisations seldom decline because they suddenly lose resources; they falter when responsibility yields to entitlement and discipline gives way to convenience. India's journey towards becoming a developed nation will ultimately be secured not only by visionary policies but by millions of ordinary citizens choosing disciplined action every single day.

The writer is a consultant to Rashtriya Raksha University under the Ministry of Home Affairs, a short story writer, columnist and contemporary affairs commentator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Make or break situation of potholes

The number of potholes across Mumbai is growing day by day. Within a week of rains, 1,051 new potholes have cropped up, causing considerable inconvenience to road users. It is notable that the funds allocated for pothole repairs have been slashed to ₹14 crore this year, a reduction of Rs 11 crore compared with last year.

Mumbai appears to be fast acquiring the dubious distinction of having one of the highest numbers of potholes in the world. The BMC has to spend additional money every year during the monsoon to keep vehicles in good condition. Garages across the city remain busy as vehicles frequently break down on these damaged roads, while the condition of commuters worsens every time they venture out.

Potholes can damage tyres from the side and cause punctures. The effective way to address this problem is to identify badly affected roads and repair them using better, more durable technology. Roads deteriorate rapidly after even a few days of monsoon rain, making urgent repairs essential to prevent accidents.

It is high time Mumbai considered concrete roads for greater strength and durability, particularly as heavy traffic and monsoon conditions put additional pressure on the city's roads.

JAYANTHY S MANIAM | NAVI MUMBAI

Building the future for young India?

Apropos 'Today's youth: The torchbearers of tomorrow' (August 12, 2026) This International Youth Day reminds us that young people are not just passive recipients of our decisions. From Malala's fight for education to the recent student protests in India, they are actively shaping the national conversation with courage and clarity. Their actions show that age is no barrier to moral leadership, and we must listen carefully.

However, we must not romanticise their struggles. This generation faces rapid automation, climate change and an online world that often fuels anxiety. Their passion is inspiring, but they need strong institutional support to address systemic challenges

The response from governments and employers must go beyond symbolic acknowledgement. We need education systems that reward reasoning over rote memorisation and job markets that offer genuine opportunities, not just temporary fixes. Mental health support must also be treated as a serious public priority, not a private weakness. Ultimately, youth are indeed torchbearers, but we must provide the sturdy foundation they need to walk safely. If we match their idealism with concrete action, their path forward will be far less difficult. Only then can their potential truly transform our collective future.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

The politics of changing sides

Apropos 'Sparks fly in TN Assembly' (August 18). Neither Panneerselvam nor Sengottayan can claim the high moral ground on the issue of shifting alliances. While the former shifted to the DMK, the latter moved to the TVK from the AIADMK on the eve of the state elections. Evidently, both felt that their original party had become a sinking ship and it was time to move on to greener pastures. However, the actions of some other MLAs who switched over to the TVK after its electoral triumph are indefensible. None would object to a politician switching alliances or forming a new political party for ideological reasons or due to irreconcilable policy differences with the leadership. In 1950, Syama Prasad Mookerjee resigned from Nehru's Cabinet in protest over the Liaquat-Nehru Pact, alleging that it had failed to protect Hindu minorities in East Pakistan and compromised India's sovereignty. He went on to form a new party, the Jana Sangh.

In 1959, Rajaji resigned over the Congress government's socialist policies and nationalisation, calling it a 'Licence-permit-quota Raj'. He later founded the Swatantra Party, championing individual freedom. Despite their differences, neither he nor Nehru indulged in personal attacks or could be accused of selfishness or power-mongering.

V JAYARAMAN | CHENNAI

CHILDREN'S SAFETY: META FACES TOUGH QUESTIONS

At a time when the Indian government has recently issued a notice regarding advertisements containing child sexual content, Meta is also facing major legal trouble in the United States. Meta has been accused of adversely affecting the mental health of young people through Facebook and Instagram, and a New Mexico court has imposed a massive fine of approximately ₹5,400 crore on the company. Since March, the total amount of fines imposed on Meta has reportedly reached ₹9,030 crore. The court has ordered that the money be used for the mental health treatment of children.

The court compared Meta's operations to those of a factory causing toxic pollution. Just as a polluting factory poses a threat to public health, the court

observed that Meta's platforms similarly create risks to children's health. Meta will now develop a special AI-based age-verification system to identify unauthorised users under 13. Teachers and healthcare workers will also receive training to identify digital addiction.

A significant portion of the penalty will be spent on counselling and psychiatric treatment for children suffering from depression, anxiety and eating disorders. Following the court's action, Meta will also be required to disable push notifications at night for users under 18 and limit their monthly usage time. However, the real question is how effectively these restrictions will be implemented in practice.

ASHASWI BAIRAGI | UJJAIN

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Guarding against cognitive warfare and grey zone tactics

A positive outcome of the democratic contagion is the vindication that Parliament is the self-correcting and self-healing mechanism and is the barometer of people's hopes, aspirations, nay, frustrations. Indian Parliament is the unique institution to turn challenges into opportunities. Its resilience is its strength



RUP NARAYAN DAS

The protests against the paper leak last month, which snow-balled into a political agitation, can be seen through the prism of 'cognitive warfare' and grey-zone tactics. Cognitive warfare has gained traction in the age of new media. The agitation reached a crescendo on 20 July, when the Monsoon Session of Parliament started. The agitation was pre-planned and was not coincidental with the commencement of the Parliament session. In a democratic polity of a 'soft state' like India, protests and agitation within and outside Parliament are aspects of democratic discourse. What is bemoaned is the organised effort to ask for regime change of an elected government. Its execution was meticulously orchestrated with moral and material support from within and outside, including inimical forces in India's neighbourhood and beyond. The simultaneous demonstrations abroad in support of the agitation are intriguing, suggesting a wider network in connivance with domestic political forces to destabilise India and stymie India's growth and development. The biased news reports and write-ups in foreign media outlets were suggestive of the jaundiced outlook of the Western media. While the paper leak issue is a serious issue and the bona fide students' angst warranted urgent remedial action, the anger and anguish of students were very adroitly calibrated and reinforced in the political space, when Parliament was in session, to create an optic of mayhem.

IF THE RECENT PROTESTS WERE MOTIVATED TO FIX SYSTEMIC LACUNAE, ONE CAN EMPATHISE WITH THE STUDENTS; BUT THE FACT IS THAT THE AGITATION AIMED AT DESTABILISING AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT

When an agitation of such magnitude occurs, some law-and-order issues are bound to crop up. Although there have been some cases of injuries sustained by both the students and the police, the agitation was deftly handled by both the government and the police without serious casualties. The revelation by the police that there was a sizeable chunk of hardcore criminal elements, as identified by a facial recognition system, is intriguing.

Political protests and agitation are part and parcel of India's adversarial and contested politics, which has been in existence since the country's protracted freedom struggle. Post-independent India has also witnessed such protests and movements, the most important in our recent memory being the 'Total Revolution' in Bihar and the Navnirman Movement in Gujarat, spearheaded by Jayaprakash Narayan in 1974, which eventually brought the first non-Congress government in the country in 1977 after the National Emergency. The Mandal agitation of 1990 is also in our minds. All these agitations had the strong support of the student community. But none of these movements ever had any overt or covert support from abroad, as is alleged in the recent protest against the paper leak. All the previous movements, except the farmers' agitation of 2020, were home-grown and were led by towering leaders of impeccable credentials.

While wars have been transformed from conventional warfare to nuclear warfare to drones, the battlefields themselves have been expanded to trade war, cyberwar and cognitive warfare, and what the Chinese often resort to as 'united front' tactics. Strategists of cognitive warfare aim to exploit people's resentment, frustrations and cynicism to unseat a ruling regime. They attempt to paint a narrative of defeatism, taking advantage of the vulnerability of a soft state, democracy and constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, including freedom of protest, and the existence of an independent and zealous judiciary and civil society. Though the paper leak was a serious issue and students had genuine grievances, the issue was effectively chore-



POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA HAS ALSO WITNESSED SUCH PROTESTS AND MOVEMENTS, THE MOST IMPORTANT IN OUR RECENT MEMORY BEING THE 'TOTAL REVOLUTION' IN BIHAR AND THE NAVNIRMAN MOVEMENT IN GUJARAT, SPEARHEADED BY JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN IN 1974, WHICH EVENTUALLY BROUGHT THE FIRST NON-CONGRESS GOVERNMENT IN THE COUNTRY IN 1977 AFTER THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY

The writer is a former Senior Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research and currently a Consulting Editor of the Journal of Parliamentary Information

ographed through a ragtag coalition of forces and endorsement by celebrities.

It is no exaggeration to say that while gullible students were hypnotised, lumpen elements were hired to indulge in arson and vandalism. The masterminds of the protest and agitation have done a great disservice to Gen Z, who are in adolescence and at an impressionable age. There is a need to understand their socio-psychological state of mind and engage them creatively in their career-building, in alignment with nation-building. Unlike their previous generations, Gen Z have grown up in relatively better economic security, some even in affluence. Consumerism under the impact of globalisation has induced their material aspirations, added to and abetted by demonstrative effects. Their desires have become demands. This 'wired generation' has not seen the hard way their parents brought them up and their tenacity to fight against adversities, including hunger and poverty. They almost got things on a platter. Growing up in a protective environment, they lack the killer instinct or fire in the belly.

If the recent protests were purely motivated to fix systemic lacunae, one can empathise with the students; but the fact is that the agitation aimed at destabilising and changing an elected government. Taking the fight to the streets may be a democratic way of protest, but taking the law into one's hands and vandalising public property is not acceptable. Constitutional rights are not a licence to take the law into one's hands and indulge in filthy and abusive verbiage. No wonder, therefore, that the builder of modern Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, lamented the 'exuberance' of democracy as detrimental to development. It is ironical that while the West criticises India's 'messy democracy', it has no qualms about instigating instability in the country. The hidden agenda of the West behind awarding leaders of civil society and litterateurs with coveted honours such as the Magsaysay Awards, Fulbright Scholarships, Ford Foundation awards or Booker Prizes are concealed, and these are long-term investments in individuals to incubate narratives to destabilise the country. This, however, does not reflect on the merits of the awards.

One need not be a rocket scientist to identify such Trojan horses.

A positive outcome of the democratic contagion is the vindication that Parliament is the self-correcting and self-healing mechanism and is the barometer of people's hopes, aspirations, nay, frustrations. Indian Parliament is the unique institution to turn challenges into opportunities. Its resilience is its strength.

The stairs to the podium



VIRENDRA SACHDEVA

It is not a story written slowly, by athletes who trained day and night, by coaches who worked relentlessly, by parents who gave their everything. But it is impossible to tell the new India's story without placing Prime Minister Narendra Modi close to its centre. Who, more than any leader before him, chose to treat sport as a national priority rather than an afterthought. By providing support to athletes who had never been funded, building the schemes that changed their odds, and lending the prestige of his office to a boxer or a javelin thrower the way earlier prime ministers reserved for statesmen.

After the lone 1934 bronze, the medals came slowly. It took until 1958, in Cardiff, for India to win its first Commonwealth gold, and it was won by a man whose life had begun in tragedy. Milkha Singh, the 'Flying Sikh,' had survived the horrors of Partition as an orphaned teenager before he ever set foot on a track. When he stormed to victory in the 440 yards, he became the first Indian to top a Commonwealth podium. The same Games saw Stephanie D'Souza and Elizabeth Davenport become the first Indian women ever to compete at the event, a quiet milestone that took a full generation to fully bloom.

Through the 1960s, '70s and '80s, India's fortunes rose in fits and starts, carried mostly on the backs of wrestlers and, later, weightlifters and shooters. Jaspal Rana's shooting brilliance and Raghavan Chandrasekaran's weightlifting hauls kept the tricolour flying. But for most of these decades, the story of the Indian athlete was a story of scarcity: sport was something you pursued despite the system, not because of it. Lack of facilities, foreign exposure was rare, and funding was an afterthought. To understand how much has changed, it helps to sit with one story. Saikhom Mirabai Chanu grew up in a village in Manipur, the kind of place where a child's first "weight training" is carrying firewood up a hill. As a teenager training in Imphal, her childhood coach has recalled, there were days Mirabai did not have even ₹10 for the bus fare home. She would say she had gone home for just five days in five years, so complete was her devotion to the sport. But the new India tells another story.

In April 2021, three months before the Tokyo Olympics, Mirabai needed to reach a specialist strength-and-conditioning coach in the United States. The Delta wave was raging; countries were shutting their doors to Indian travellers. The entire trip, from treatment to a sparring partner, boarding, lodging and travel, was budgeted at around ₹70 lakh. According to her coach, the sanction came through in a single day. "I never thought a day like this would come," he said, "when you could even ask for an amount like this." She flew out just before the travel ban slammed shut, trained, and returned to win an Olympic silver medal, India's first medal of those Games!

The girl who once lacked bus fare had her elite overseas training approved in twenty-four hours. The funding that reached Mirabai was not luck. It flowed through a set of programmes built up over the last decade, and Mirabai is not the only one. In 2014, Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched TOPS (The Target Olympic Podium Scheme). The scheme was designed to do one focused thing: identify India's top sports talent and remove money as an obstacle. Under TOPS, the government funds not just the athlete but the entire support structure: foreign coaches, physiotherapists, sparring partners, video analysts, airfare and medical insurance. TOPS helped javelin thrower Kishore Jena when he needed 78 days of training in Australia before Paris 2024. When PV Sindhu trained in Germany and Neeraj Chopra's whole athletics setup was backed to the hilt, TOPS was the reason. Khelo India, launched in 2018, works at the other end of the pipeline.

Through the Khelo India Youth Games and University Games, held annually, the system scouts for talent at the school and college level and channels promising athletes into structured support long before they are famous. In early 2025, after the National Games in Uttarakhand, the Prime Minister singled out a clutch of young Khelo India products by name, sprinters, jumpers, a teenage swimmer, as evidence that the pipeline was working. Prime Minister understands the emotional register of sport. Congratulating national award winners the other day, he said: "There is no elevator to success - you have to take the stairs." In later years, initiatives like Fit India and his repeated emphasis on fitness in Mann Ki Baat have made such a deep impact because they change what an ambitious young person from a small town believes is possible for them. India has now openly declared its intent to bid for the 2036 Olympic Games and is set to host the Commonwealth Games again in 2030. Ask any Indian medalist who made them, and the first names are always the same: a coach who refused to give up on them, their parents who sold or mortgaged what little the family had. That will never change, and it shouldn't. But something new has entered that circle of gratitude over the last decade, and the athletes themselves have been the ones to put it there.

When the Tokyo Olympics contingent, India's best-ever haul of seven medals, gathered at the Prime Minister's residence in August 2021, they did not arrive empty-handed. Neeraj Chopra handed the PM the very javelin he had thrown to India's historic gold. PV Sindhu gave her badminton racquet, Lovlina Borgohain her boxing gloves, Bhavani Devi her fencing sword, the hockey teams their autographed sticks. When young javelin thrower Navdeep Singh wanted to place a cap on Modi's head, the Prime Minister sat down on the floor so the athlete could reach him. This is the humility and respect the Prime Minister has always given to the athletes, and these are the gestures of people who feel genuinely seen. In fact, that feeling of being seen is, in a way, the whole point, and it began before the medals. Back in 2016, when Modi personally hosted a send-off for the Rio-bound contingent, Abhinav Bindra, India's only individual Olympic gold medalist, tweeted his astonishment: it was the first time a Prime Minister had ever sent the Olympic team off in person. When a nation's leader treats its athletes not as an afterthought but as the face of what the country can become, something shifts in every small-town child who dreams of the podium. That is the quiet inheritance Narendra Modi leaves Indian sport.



The writer is the Secretary General, Archery Association of India and the Executive Board Member, World Archery Asia

India's edible oil mission: Opportunities, challenges and the road ahead



ASHISH KHANDELWAL

Indonesia, Malaysia, Argentina, Ukraine and Russia. This was exposed sharply during the post-COVID commodity price surge of 2021-22, which saw the prices of edible oil double overnight. This led to the government introducing a much-needed policy directive, the National Mission on Edible Oils — Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), which is aimed at strengthening the ecosystem of India's edible oils.

The National Mission on Edible Oils was the need of the hour because the import bill on edible oil was rising and became the third-highest import bill after crude petroleum and gold. This mission is not just ensuring food security for a population exceeding 1.4 billion but economic security for the country as well. We can achieve this in three ways:

The Palm Oil Pivot: India's edible oil ecosystem is heavily reliant on palm oil. However, things are now changing for good. Almost ₹11,040 crore over five years was allocated in

2021 for expanding palm oil cultivation to 10 lakh hectares by 2025-26 and 16.7 lakh hectares by 2029-30. This primarily targets the North-East and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. These areas have suitable agro-climatic conditions. Through this mission, farmers have been guaranteed prices through a viability price mechanism, ensured buyback commitments and provided substantial planting subsidies.

Palm oil is a great solution for farmers since it yields far more oil per hectare than any other oilseed crop. In comparative terms, the yield of palm oil is five times the yield of edible oil obtainable from traditional oilseeds. As per estimates, a hectare of palm oil cultivation can produce 3-4 tonnes of crude palm oil annually, compared to 0.3-0.4 tonnes from groundnut or mustard. Even a modest scaling of palm oil cultivation will make a meaningful reduction in our dependence on imports. The Mustard and Soybean Story: The government has also leaned heavily on mustard and soybean as the more immediate levers of domestic production. Mustard's acreage has been growing on the back of minimum support price (MSP) hikes and improved seed availability. In 2022-23, India's mustard output reached a record 12.4 million



tonnes. This was a massive improvement, and it provided some domestic buffer against import price spikes.

However, the biggest challenge for India is yield stagnation. India's productivity lags far behind global benchmarks. India's average mustard yield is 1,200-1,400 kg per hectare vis-à-vis 1,800-2,000 kg in leading producing nations. For soyabean, the gap is even starker. We need to bridge this yield gap. This can be achieved through sustained investment in certified seed

distribution, micro-irrigation, soil health and agri-extension services - areas where implementation has historically been uneven. Reducing gaps in processing and value chain: Growing more oilseeds is only half the job done. There is a huge gap when it comes to crushing and refining infrastructure. This gap is substantial and has been characterised by fragmentation, geographic concentration and underutilisation in key production regions. We need a seamless integration of the farm-to-refinery value chain. This must be

supported by adequate storage, cold-chain support for perishable produce and quality-testing infrastructure. This is a must if we want to translate higher crop output into lower consumer prices.

The edible oil mission opened up several opportunity windows for the industry. Firstly, it has put the North-East in the focal point as it is an under-explored agricultural frontier with rainfall, humidity and land availability well-suited to oil palm. Integrated development by combining plantation, processing and rural livelihoods will immensely transform the region's agricultural economy while contributing meaningfully to national supply.

Secondly, nascent segments like rice bran oil, groundnut oil and cold-pressed varieties have emerged as high-value, high-margin opportunities for domestic producers. This has been augmented by rising urban consumer health consciousness. Lastly, the oilseed-to-biofuel roadmap offers a strategic advantage. Demand for biofuel, thanks to the government's blending policy, has created a secondary demand channel.

There is no doubt that India's edible oil self-sufficiency is achievable, but it will require patience, policy consistency and coordinated action across agriculture, trade, infrastructure and R&D. The Edible Oil Mission is a long game, and we need to play it well.

The writer is an agro-economy policy analyst and writes on agriculture, economy and rural India



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SC to hear plea on disruption of essential services during protest



The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to hear a plea which raised the issue of disruption of essential services during protests.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana was told by the counsel appearing for the petitioner that essential services were disrupted when protests were underway and ingress and egress was disturbed. The counsel said there is no way of knowing who is a protestor and who is not and the issue of disruption of essential services during protests is arising across the country.

"We appreciate your concerns but how to issue a direction for that," the bench told the counsel. The apex court tagged the petition with a separate pending plea which has contended that the Jantar Mantar in Delhi was no longer a suitable venue for protests as they cause inconvenience to local residents and disrupt essential services.

The top court on August 3 agreed to examine the separate PIL which seeks an alternative arrangement for holding demonstrations, saying protests at Jantar Mantar create difficulties for local residents and disrupts the supply of essential goods and medical services. (PTI)

Cauvery plea to be taken up on August 17: Supreme Court



The Supreme Court on Wednesday said pleas of the Tamil Nadu Government and others, including the DMK, seeking directions to the Karnataka Government to immediate release Cauvery waters to it will be taken up for hearing on August 17.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana had earlier said the Tamil Nadu government's plea will be taken up for hearing on Thursday, August 13.

On Wednesday, senior advocate P Wilson, appearing for some farmers, mentioned a separate plea for urgent listing. "This was to come up tomorrow before Justice Vikram Nath (led bench). But he is not well," the CJI said.

Earlier, the Tamil Nadu Government had said the state was not getting its due share of Cauvery water in a rain deficient year. The Joseph Vijay led-state Government on August 3 approached the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Karnataka Government for immediate release of the water. The state government, in its plea, claimed that the quantum allocated to it by the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) as well as that released by its neighbour Karnataka was far less.

A CWRC meeting held on July 28 directed Karnataka to release 3,500 cusecs for 15 days starting July 29. However, the quantum of water released at Biligundlu ranged between 158 and 550 cusecs from July 29 to August 2, the State Government said. (PTI)

Mathura: SC mulls remanding to HC plea over who represents all Krishna devotees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday indicated that it may send the plea related to a dispute over whose lawsuit will be the lead case in the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah mosque dispute back to the Allahabad High Court.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and Sanjeev Sachdeva said notices were not issued to other plaintiffs by the high court, which treated another Hindu party, in another suit, as a representative of all devotees of Lord Krishna.

"The application was for something else and notices were not issued to all the plaintiffs. We in any case are inclined to remand the matter back to the high court," it observed.

The apex court posted the matter for further hearing on September 2.

During the last hearing of the matter, the bench said, a



statement was made across the bar by some counsels that off-the-record talks were going on between plaintiffs (Hindu parties) on whose lawsuit will be the lead case in the matter.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for some Hindu parties, urged the court to remand the matter back to the high court for deciding the issue afresh.

The top court was hearing a plea of a Hindu party in the matter challenging a 2025 Allahabad High Court order, which treated another Hindu

Frame policy on regularisation of illegal constructions, SC to States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked all states and Union territories to consider a representation seeking framing of uniform policy for regularisation and demolition of long-standing unauthorised constructions across the country.

The order was passed by the top court while declining to entertain a PIL filed by Centre for Law and Good Governance seeking directions to the Centre and all the states for framing such a policy to save unauthorised dwelling units of poor persons, saying that this issue largely falls within the policy domain of state governments and local authorities.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said that circumstances and ground realities vary from state to state, making it neither feasible nor prudent for the court to prescribe a single policy frame-



work for the entire country.

"It would be difficult and may not be prudent for this court to lay down a uniform policy framework to be applied across various states," the bench said. The court, however, said states and Union territories could consider the issues raised in the petition while formulating new policies or revisiting their existing frameworks.

"We are hopeful that due consideration shall be given to all such issues by the competent authorities," the bench said in its order.

The petition pointed out that settlement and regular-

isation schemes have been introduced in states such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, as well as in Delhi.

It, however, alleged that in several instances, unauthorised colonies and structures were demolished suddenly, sometimes without adequate notice and without any rehabilitation or welfare mechanism for affected families.

The PIL said that demolition is an extreme and irreversible measure and therefore cannot be undertaken without a policy that balances enforcement of planning and land-use laws with the constitutional rights to

shelter, livelihood and dignity under Article 21.

The counsel for the petitioner said that state governments follow inconsistent approaches towards unauthorised constructions.

According to the plea, demolitions are at times carried out in a hurried, erratic and unsystematic manner.

The counsel said that authorities sometimes assure residents that unauthorised structures would be regularised, while simultaneously collecting municipal and property taxes and permitting access to civic amenities such as electricity.

After 40-50 years, residents may be told that their structures are illegal and face demolition without any assessment of whether alternative accommodation is available.

The plea urged the bench to examine the issue from a human-rights perspective, particularly in cases involving families who have remained in possession of properties or colonies for decades.

BBMB dispute: Punjab close to settlement, Government to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Centre on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that the Punjab Government is very close to agreeing to its proposal on the issue of payment of dues to Himachal Pradesh arising out of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) projects since 1966.

On July 30, the Centre had told the apex court that an amicable settlement can be reached on a new cashless formula between the partner states for payment of arrears.

The top court had then recorded that the governments of Himachal and Haryana have in principle agreed to the Centre's proposal but the Punjab Government has objected.

The apex court had pulled up the Punjab Government for not agreeing to the proposal, observing that it has the habit



of not following the decree of the court. On Wednesday, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Himachal Pradesh government, told a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana that the apex court has listed the matter for finding out whether the Punjab Government is agreeable to the Centre's proposal or not.

"I must say now today we speak in a joint voice. Punjab is coming very closer," Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for

the Centre, told the bench.

"I think we are going to iron out the creases," Venkataramani said and requested the bench to list the matter for hearing next week. The bench posted the matter for hearing on August 20.

According to sources, BBMB is paying 7.19 per cent share of Himachal Pradesh's electricity from Bhakra Beas projects after November 1, 2011, while Punjab and Haryana have not paid the outstanding dues of BBMB projects for the previous period, which is 13,066 million units.

7-judge SC bench to hear issue concerning legislative privileges on October 6

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A seven-judge Constitution bench would commence hearing on October 6 on the interpretation of provisions related to the scope of legislative privileges of MLAs and its effect on the freedom of speech and expression, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday.

A separate issue concerning the power of the state legislature to impose additional levy on sales tax will be heard by a seven-judge bench from September 22, it said.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V

Mohana said the matter slated for September 22 would be heard from 2 pm to 4 pm in the post-lunch session so that hearing in other matters could go on in the pre-lunch session.

"One way is to list the matter for hearing from 2 pm to 4 pm. That will allow us to hear fresh and other miscellaneous matters also," the CJI observed.

He said another way was to hear the arguments for the whole day on three days a week — Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The bench said hearing in the matter listed on October 6 would commence preferably at 11 am.

The issue concerning the



interpretation of provisions related to the scope of legislative privileges of MLAs and its interplay with the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression was referred

to a five-judge bench in December 2003.

"It is evident that substantial questions of law as to the interpretation of Articles 194(3), 191(1)(a), interplay

between these two articles, Article 21 and also as to the interpretation of other provisions of the Constitution of India are involved," the apex court had said in its December 8, 2003 order.

In December 2004, when the matter came up before the five-judge bench, it was informed about the conflicting views on the issue by two separate benches.

The five-judge bench then recommended that the issue be placed before a seven-judge bench for authoritative determination.

One of the pleas — titled N Ravi and others versus Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Tamil Nadu — raises the ques-

tion about whether fundamental rights override legislative privileges.

The case pertains to 2003 when journalist N Ravi and others approached the top court after the Tamil Nadu Assembly speaker K Kalimuthu ordered their arrest for alleged breach of privilege and contempt.

The top court had then stayed the arrest of six journalists and later referred the matter to a seven-judge bench in view of conflicting verdicts.

One of the judgments had held that fundamental rights should prevail, while the 1965 verdict said fundamental rights were subservient to parliamentary privileges.

HC refuses urgent hearing of plea for interim protection by Abhishek Banerjee's personal assistant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday refused an urgent hearing of TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee's personal assistant Sumit Roy, who sought protection from coercive action in connection with some cases registered against him.

The Supreme Court and the high court had earlier granted relief to Roy in alleged land-grabbing and cash-for-jobs scam cases, respectively.

Refusing an urgent listing of the matter for hearing, Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya said that upgrading Roy's petition was not possible as numerous similar pleas were pending before the court, and his petition will appear according to the listing serial.

Roy's lawyer stated that the Supreme Court had granted him anticipatory bail and he was meeting the investigating officer as per summons.

He had appeared before the state CID at its Kolkata headquarters. His counsel said



that Roy is, however, vulnerable to police action in other cases registered against him, and sought an urgent hearing for grant of interim protection from coercive action by the police authorities.

The apex court had stayed Roy's arrest last week in connection with an alleged land-grabbing case in West Bengal's Salboni, while directing him to fully cooperate with the ongoing investigation.

Roy had been granted anticipatory bail by the high court in another case related to an alleged cash-for-jobs scam.

Kerala HC sets aside denial of FCRA renewal of two NGOs for funding Vizhinjam protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kochi

The Kerala High Court has set aside the Centre's decision not to renew the FCRA certificate of two NGOs, accused by central agencies of funding agitations against the Vizhinjam sea port, saying that financial support to a protest cannot be seen as diversion of foreign funds.

The High Court said that the right to protest is guaranteed under the Constitution and therefore, financial support to protestors cannot be seen as a diversion of foreign funds for an undesirable purpose or against public interest, tantamounting to violation of any provision in the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

"When the right to protest is constitutionally guaranteed, exercise of such rights cannot be labelled as an undesirable purpose or



against public interest.

The term undesirable purpose in section 12(4)(a)(ii) of the FCRA cannot be interpreted to mean undesirable to the Government or undesirable to the political will.

"A peaceful protest against a project by persons who have a grievance or who apprehend injury to them, cannot be viewed as an undesirable purpose due to a political disapproval," it said in order dated August 11.

The court also said that "executive or administrative

distaste" for protests or dis-sents, cannot convert the exercise of a constitutionally protected right into an undesirable purpose or as against public interest.

"Thus, even if it is assumed that some financial support was provided to the protestors, it cannot be treated as diversion of foreign contribution for an undesirable purpose or against public interest, tantamounting to violation of any provision in the FCRA," it said.

Allahabad HC directs UP police body to produce results of promotion exams

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lucknow

The Allahabad High Court has directed the Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board to produce the complete results of all 176 candidates who appeared in a departmental examination for promotion to head constable (motor transport) amid allegations of large-scale cheating and malpractice using electronic devices.

The Lucknow bench of the high court, presided over by Justice Rajeev Singh, also directed the Board to place before it the sitting plan of the selected candidates. The matter has been listed for further hearing on August 13.

The directions came on a petition filed by constable-drivers, including SB Mishra, challenging the departmental examination held on October 5, 2025, for



promotion from constable driver to head constable (motor transport).

The petitioners have alleged widespread use of electronic devices for cheating and sought cancellation of the examination and a fresh test under strict surveillance.

They have also challenged the subsequent results and shortlisting for

view their own results, she said. Initially, the authorities had informed the court that only two candidates were found using mobile phones and no unauthorised devices had been detected among other candidates.

However, following the court's directions, an inquiry was conducted. On July 22, Pathak informed the court that 115 candidates had been found involved in malpractice and they were debarred.

The court directed the Board to preserve CCTV footage from all eight examination blocks. Relevant digital records were produced before the court on August 10 and taken into custody.

The court directed that the examination recordings, including video footage and photographs, be examined to assist in adjudicating the dispute.

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Tata Motors Q1 net profit jumps 83% to ₹2,556 crore

Commercial vehicle maker Tata Motors Ltd on Wednesday reported an 83 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at ₹2,556 crore in the first quarter ended June 30, led by a mark to market gain on investments in Tata Capital Ltd. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹1,397 crore in the corresponding quarter previous fiscal, Tata Motors Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

Consolidated total revenue from operations in the first quarter stood at ₹20,667 crore as against ₹17,324 crore in the year-ago period, it added. Vehicle wholesales in the quarter stood at 1,08,700 units, a growth of 26 per cent over the year-ago period, it said.

Total expenses in the quarter under review were higher at ₹18,038 crore as compared to ₹15,982 crore in the same period a year ago, the company said.

Commenting on the performance, Tata Motors Ltd MD & CEO Girish Wagh said, "Tata Motors delivered a strong quarter, with volumes growing 26 per cent year-on-year, driven by a winning portfolio, focused market interventions, and disciplined execution. These efforts helped us strengthen customer preference and further consolidate our market position." He said the commercial vehicle industry remained resilient in Q1 FY27, supported by India's strong economic fundamentals, healthy fleet utilisation, and sustained demand across key sectors. On the company's acquisition of Iveco update, Tata Motors said the regulatory approvals are in the final stage, with only one approval pending, the company said.

Axis Bank raises \$300 million via bonds

Axis Bank on Wednesday said it has raised \$300 million (about ₹2,850 crore) by selling bonds to overseas investors to fund business growth.

The bank has successfully allotted \$300 million in senior notes at a coupon of 5.348 per cent, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

The said notes will be consolidated and form a single series with the \$300,000,000 5.348 per cent, it said.

The issuance and allotment of the notes have been completed in accordance with the applicable laws and regulatory requirements, the bank said.

The notes will be listed on Global Securities Market of the India International Exchange (IFSC) Ltd and Debt Securities Market of the NSE IFSC Ltd, it added.

Rupee rises 3 paise to close at 95.33 against US dollar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai

The rupee settled just 3 paise higher at 95.33 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, as hopes of a quick US-Iran agreement and reopening of the Strait of Hormuz faded.

Forex traders said Brent crude is moving towards \$90 per barrel amid risk aversion in global markets.

Date	Rate (₹ per US \$)
Aug 5	95.08
Aug 6	95.17
Aug 7	95.22
Aug 8	95.30
Aug 9	95.13
Aug 10	95.36
Aug 11	95.33*
Aug 12	95.33*

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.40 against the greenback and traded in a range of 95.24-95.43 during the session. It eventually settled at 95.33 (provisional), higher by 3 paise from its previous close.

The Pioneer

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Coal India, AMNS sign pact for synthesis gas utilisation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

State-owned Coal India Ltd on Wednesday said it has entered into a pact with ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Pvt Ltd (AMNS) to explore the utilisation of synthesis gas produced from a proposed coal gasification plant near the steelmaker's Paradip pellet plant in Odisha.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU), executed on Wednesday, envisages a coal gasification facility to be established by CIL adjacent to or at the AMNS Paradip Pellet Plant, coupled with carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) technology, according to a regulatory filing by Coal India Ltd (CIL).

Under the initial framework, both the companies will assess the technical and commercial feasibility of the proposed project, examine implementation modalities and facilitate the preparation of a Preliminary Feasibility Report (PFR) to evaluate its viability.

Coal gasification converts coal into synthesis gas (syn-

NTPC concludes national finale of Medha Pratiyogita 2026

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

NTPC Ltd successfully concluded the national finale of Medha Pratiyogita 2026 at its Power Management Institute (PMI), Noida, with 24 teams competing across four categories—Junior, Middle, Senior and Employee.

The annual flagship event witnessed participation from 1,863 teams from across NTPC projects and regions, providing a platform for employees and their families to compete in a spirit of healthy competition.

The competition commenced with the Unit/Project-level Written Round on July 12, 2026, followed by regional rounds held at Korba, Ramagundam, Talcher Kaniha, Nabinagar, Dadri and PMI, Noida. The

event culminated in the National Finale on Tuesday. The National Finale was contested by six teams in each of the four categories, taking the total number of participating finalist teams to 24.

The winners in the four categories were:

- Junior: Ahaan and Devayansh Singh — Western Region
- Middle: Utkarsh Parikh and Darsh Jain — Northern Region
- Senior: Tanmay Verma and Harshit Sharma — Northern Region
- Employee: Anshuman Shrivastav and Shubham Mishra — Western Region

Each winning team was

awarded ₹30,000 in prize money, along with a Certificate of Excellence. The awards were presented by Shri Anil Kumar Jadli, Director (HR), NTPC Ltd.

Medha Pratiyogita is one of NTPC's annual flagship initiatives that promotes a culture of learning among its employees and their families.

About NTPC Ltd

NTPC Limited, a Maharatna company of the Government of India, is India's largest integrated energy company, with an installed capacity of over 90 GW. The company is leading the charge toward a sustainable future, targeting 60 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032 and investing in emerging technologies such as nuclear power, battery energy storage, carbon capture and green chemicals.

Tata Group stocks fall; TCS tumbles nearly 4%

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Tata Group stocks fell on Wednesday, with TCS dropping nearly 4 per cent, after Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said he will not seek reappointment when his current term ends on February 20, 2027.

Shares of Tata Consultancy Services fell 3.71 per cent, Tata Consumer Products edged lower by 2.44 per cent, Tata Elxsi declined 2.23 per cent, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles dropped 1.92 per cent and Tata Steel slipped 1.57 per cent on the BSE.

The stock of Rallis India declined 0.95 per cent, Trent dipped 0.86 per cent, Tata Power skidded 0.53 per cent, Indian Hotels Company slipped 0.52 per cent, Tata Communications was down 0.37 per cent and Titan lost 0.18 per cent.

The combined market valuation of these firms eroded by ₹45,615.67 crore, with TCS alone taking a hit of ₹32,743.69 crore.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 187.90 points, or 0.24 per cent, to settle at 77,966.35. The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 35.75 points, or 0.15 per cent, to end at 24,435.95.

"Tata Group stocks came under pressure following the Chairman's exit, contributing to the underperformance of large-cap stocks relative to the broader market," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Tata Group stocks came under pressure, with TCS declining around 4 per cent following the resignation of Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, Siddhartha Khemka — Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

N Chandrasekaran will step down as chairman of Tata Sons when his current term ends in February 2027, drawing curtains on a decade at the helm of one of India's most influential business groups after a prolonged standoff over his reappointment with Tata Trusts Chairman Noel Tata.

Chandrasekaran, 63, who has spent 40 years with the Tata Group, on Wednesday said he had informed the Tata Sons board that he would not offer himself for reappointment when his term ends on February 20, 2027. He asked the board to settle on a successor soon to ensure a smooth transition.

The decision follows months of uncertainty over his continuation at Tata Sons, the principal holding company and promoter of Tata group companies.

No manipulation observed in closing auction sessions: SEBI Chairman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai

SEBI chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey on Wednesday said that the capital markets regulator has not observed any manipulations in the newly introduced closing auction sessions system.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event here, Pandey urged the broader ecosystem to understand the new system and adopt it. He said a lot of markets, including those in Australia, Europe, the US and Japan, have adopted a similar system for over two years and India is behind its counterparts.

He said such a system, which was started on August 3, is useful for passive investors, generation of the correct net asset values for mutual funds and index investors. The earlier system had the risk of manipulation with late trades, he added. When asked if the regulator has seen any manipulation in the new system, he said no manipulation has been observed.

"Basically, the CAS is a transparent

market, the pricing there is always visible and participation should grow in it," Pandey said, adding that SEBI is engaged with all the stakeholders to understand their feedback.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is willing to tweak the system if need be, he said, adding that at present, our problem is with understanding the system.

Meanwhile, SEBI is mulling to come out with a new paper on its findings on the losses suffered by retail investors in the derivatives market in the next 8-10 days, according to Pandey.

He said some of the results will surprise the ecosystem and stressed that such strategies of executing trades on expiry days are not as simple as they are made out to be by some retail investors.

Earlier, speaking at the Global Commodity Conclave, Pandey said the growth in the market is encouraging, but the scale alone is not enough as India is a major producer and consumer of several commodities.

"Can that economic weight translate into greater influence over price discovery? Can we move from being price takers to becoming price makers?" the SEBI chairman asked.

The capital markets watchdog is examining wider foreign portfolio investor access to commodity indices and physically settled non-agri contracts through a calibrated framework, he said.

Stock markets decline for 2nd day amid rising crude oil prices

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty ended lower for the second day on Wednesday as elevated crude oil prices and selling in Tata Group stocks after Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran said he will not seek reappointment when his current term ends on February 20, 2027, weighed on investors' sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 187.90 points, or

Index	Open	High	Low	Close	Change
NSE NIFTY	24,473.30	24,472.45	24,265.95	24,435.95	-35.75 (-0.15%)
BSE SENSEX	78,263.33	78,263.33	77,796.35	77,966.35	-187.90 (-0.24%)

Central Bank of India mobilises \$250 million under FCNR (B) window: CEO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai

State-owned lender Central Bank of India has mobilised \$250 million under the FCNR-B window introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), a senior bank official said on Wednesday.

Central Bank of India has surpassed the \$100 million target set for July, garnering \$250 million.

"We have surpassed the July target set internally, and mobilised \$250 million under FCNR — B," Kalyan Kumar, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of

Central Bank of India, said on the sidelines of the annual FIBAC event here.

He said that the Central Bank of India has raised funds through its GIFT City

branch and has set a target of \$400 million by September end, the closure date fixed by the RBI for the special swap window.

During the post-June quarter earnings conference, Kumar had said that the Bank expects to accumulate a total of \$400 million.

A senior executive of the Bank had earlier said that it is looking to raise the deposits from the Middle East and Australian markets.

The Bank is currently offering 6.50 per cent on three-year deposits, and 6.60 per cent on the five-year deposits, the executive said.

Growing gap between renewable energy, transmission capacity key credit risk: Ind-Ra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) on Wednesday said the growing gap between renewable energy (RE) commissioning and transmission readiness is emerging as a key credit risk for the sector.

Around 112 GW of the planned 196 GW RE pipeline till FY32 remains aligned with transmission schedules, about 84 GW of capacity faces delays in general network access (GNA) operationalisation, highlighting a persistent transmission execution gap, it said in a statement.

Ind-Ra projects a 32 GW mismatch between generation and transmission for projects to be commissioned by H2, FY27. This gap may widen to 40 GW, if interstate transmission system (ISTS) commissioning is delayed by three more months

beyond the current commissioning timelines.

If a project operates ahead of transmission readiness, it must use temporary general network access (T-GNA), which can lead to curtailment due to grid constraints.

Ind-Ra-rated renewable

projects have not witnessed material rating pressure from transmission delays so far, supported by repayment moratoriums, liquidity buffers, and sponsor support mechanisms.

However, prolonged transmission bottlenecks could weaken capital structure and lead to sustained reliance on sponsors.

Utility-backed projects benefit from partial protection, as the scheduled commercial operation date (SCOD) under power purchase agreements (PPA) is allowed till 30-60 days post-receipt of the final GNA.

FROM THE WORLD

PAKISTAN

15 killed in road accident

At least 15 people, including women and children of a family, died after a three-wheeler vehicle fell into a canal reportedly due to overspeeding in Punjab province of Pakistan, authorities said on Wednesday.

The rickshaw was carrying 26 wedding guests when it fell into the canal on Tuesday in Kot Addu, Muzaffargarh district of Punjab, some 350 km from Lahore.

The Punjab Emergency Rescue 1122 said in a statement on Wednesday that three rickshaws were carrying a wedding procession from one village to another when one of them lost control due to overspeeding and fell into the Muzaffargarh Canal. "A rescue operation was launched after three people swam through the canal and alerted Rescue 1122."

US

Woman pleads guilt to trafficking

A New York woman has pleaded guilty to her role in an international smuggling conspiracy that illegally brought people, primarily from India, into the United States across its northern border.

Stacey Taylor, 43, of Plattsburgh, New York, was involved in a failed human smuggling operation in January 2025 involving people from India who were illegally brought into the United States.

According to court documents, US Border Patrol agents stopped Taylor's vehicle near Churubusco, New York, in the early morning hours of January 20, 2025, and discovered four men inside her vehicle.

Agents then determined that the four men – three from India and one from Canada – had just illegally crossed the US-Canadian border without inspection in freezing weather. When law enforcement later examined Taylor's cellphone,

Putin threatens retaliation over seized Russian vessels

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday threatened retaliation for Western seizures of its commercial vessels, describing them as "piracy."

Speaking on a visit to a Russian warship that was taking part in a naval exercise in the Pacific, Putin described the Western moves to detain vessels linked to Russia as a breach of international maritime law.

"It's nothing but piracy and robbery," Putin said. "If this is done, we will be forced to respond in kind."

He added that the Russian response wouldn't necessarily come in the waters where



Russian President Vladimir Putin visits the Varyag missile cruiser of the Pacific Fleet to watch a military exercise near Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island, Russia

Thai Government vows tougher gun controls after two deadly shootings near Bangkok

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Bangkok

The Thai Government on Wednesday pledged to tighten gun controls and crack down on illegal firearms after two deadly shootings near Bangkok in less than a week renewed pressure on authorities to curb gun violence.

The country has one of the highest rates of gun ownership in Asia despite its fairly restrictive gun laws. The two recent shootings, both in Nonthaburi province northwest of the capital Bangkok, have intensified calls for tougher enforcement and tighter controls on firearms.

A student opened fire at his high school and family home on Friday, killing at least eight people and injuring more than 20 before apparently taking his own life, according to police. Three days later, a former lawmaker



was arrested after a shooting at a Government office that killed one person and injured another.

Government spokesperson Lalida Persvivatana said Wednesday that the Government is working to strengthen

gun regulations and crack down on illegal firearms, as well as raising awareness on the responsibilities of and limits on gun ownership.

The ultimate goal is "to find ways to remove guns from people's daily lives as much as possible and make Thai society safer," she said in a statement.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Anutin Chamvirakul ordered an urgent review of gun regulations, including a suspension of new permits to purchase firearms and a review of existing permits, according to a statement from the Government House.

He also instructed the Interior Ministry to propose amendments to Thailand's gun control laws within 60 days. The changes are expected to bolster the collection of firearms data, tighten controls on the gun trade and increase penalties for offenders.

Hungary's Parliament elects Andras Baka as president as part of Orban-era purge

JUSTIN SPIKE ■ Budapest

Hungary's Parliament elected former Supreme Court chief justice Andras Baka as president as the country's new Government dismantles power structures left behind by former Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Lawmakers with the governing Tisza party elected Baka in a secret ballot with 140 votes for and six votes against with no abstentions, while Orban's far-right Fidesz party boycotted the vote.

Baka is expected to be sworn in on August 19. The role of president in Hungary is largely ceremonial, though the president does have the power to send bills back to



Andras Baka

lawmakers or to the Constitutional Court for review. Prime Minister Peter Magyar's Government has argued that the purge of officials appointed during Orban's time in office is necessary to restore democratic norms and institutional integrity that were

eroded during his tenure.

Orban and Fidesz have accused the new Government of "tyrannical" policies, which Magyar and Tisza deny.

In comments in Parliament following his election, Baka criticized the performance of Orban's four successive Governments and said one of the biggest challenges facing Hungary was the deep social and political polarization during the former leader's 16 years in power. Baka added that while past legal and financial abuses must be investigated and prosecuted and democratic institutions restored, political change in Hungary should not come through "revenge."

Ex-Chinese premier, architect of growth, dies at 98

JOE MCDONALD ■ Beijing

Former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji has died, according to State media. The impatient, sharp-tongued reformer helped ignite China's explosive economic boom by forcing wrenching change on state industry in the 1990s and leading the country into the World Trade Organisation. The official Xinhua news agency reported that Zhu died of illness in Beijing at around 11 am on Wednesday. He was 97 years old.

Once sent into rural exile to do manual labor for praising reforms in other communist countries, Zhu pushed through a dizzying array of changes as premier, China's top economic post, from 1998 to 2003. Zhu clashed



with Communist Party conservatives and state industry bosses as he pushed state-owned companies to become efficient and profitable. That cost millions of layoffs, but helped propel China to overtake Japan as the second-largest economy behind the United States in 2010. Building on former

leader Deng Xiaoping's 1979 reforms, Zhu is credited with supplying the resourcefulness and tenacity to push through history-making changes such as China's WTO membership, which helped to transform China into the world's biggest exporter.

Those changes helped to keep economic growth above 8 per cent a year from 2000-2010, peaking at 14.2 per cent in 2007.

Named premier in 1998 at age 69, Zhu became a popular figure by criticizing official bungling and graft and accepting blame when the Government fell short. His demanding style earned him the nicknames Boss and Zhu Fengzi, or Madman Zhu. "I have prepared 100

coffins here - 99 for corrupt officials and one for myself," Zhu said in 1998, according to the party newspaper People's Daily.

Zhu ranked No. 3 in the party hierarchy behind President Jiang Zemin and Li Peng, chairman of the ceremonial legislature, the National People's Congress. But he was a technician without his own power base. Zhu complained that allowed officials to ignore his orders. Zhu made his name as a deputy premier in the 1990s by crushing inflation. He enforced price controls and cut off loans to money-losing state companies, rebuffing resistance by local leaders – a pattern Zhu would repeat as he fought conservatives over the pace of reform.(AP)

Indian physicist wins prestigious 2026 Dirac Medal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Indian physicist Deepak Dhar has won the prestigious 2026 Dirac Medal, one of the world's leading honours in theoretical physics, for his "important contributions to statistical mechanics".

Dhar is one of four physicists to receive this year's medal, the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), the Italy-based organisation which issues the award.

Dhar is a professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (ICTS-TIFR) in Bengaluru. The Dirac Medal, established in 1985, recognises major contributions to theoretical physics.

Its past recipients include several scientists who later went on to receive some of the world's highest scientific honours, including the Nobel Prize and the Fields Medal. Dhar shares the 2026 medal with Bernard Derrida of



Indian physicist Deepak Dhar

France, Marc Mezard of Italy and Haim Sompolinsky of Israel and the US.

The four were recognised for work that has helped scientists understand complex systems and has applications ranging from biology and financial markets to computer science and artificial intelligence.

The ICTP said the four scientists were honoured for their contributions to statistical mechanics, a branch of physics that helps explain how the combined behaviour of large numbers of particles or other individual elements can produce complex patterns.

Dhar is particularly known for his work on the "sandpile model", which helps explain how a system can remain stable for a long time but suddenly undergo a major

The approach has since been used to study seemingly unrelated phenomena such as earthquakes, traffic jams and fluctuations in financial markets.

ICTP Director Atish Dabholkar, who chairs the medal selection committee, said the work of the four recipients had helped establish statistical mechanics as a powerful framework for addressing questions far beyond its traditional field, including biology, computer science and artificial intelligence.

NZ PM Luxon survives leadership challenge

CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY ■ Wellington

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said Wednesday that he survived a leadership vote prompted by a challenge from his defence minister less than three months before an election.

The vote took place during a hastily convened meeting of Luxon's centre-right National Party lawmakers at Parliament in Wellington, which was held behind closed doors and ran for more than three hours. Luxon then emerged flanked by his lawmakers to give a brief statement and departed without



taking any questions from reporters.

"There was a confidence vote in my leadership this morning at our caucus meeting," he said. "I had the full support of our caucus and our caucus is united and it is determined to win this election."

Nighttime blitz damaged Russia's Black Sea naval stronghold: Zelenskyy

ILLIA NOVIKOV ■ Kyiv

Ukrainian anti-ship missiles, jet-powered aerial drones and sea drones blitzed a major Russian naval base on the Black Sea coast in a "unique" nighttime operation, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday.

Cutting-edge drones developed by Kyiv since Russia invaded more than four years ago have repeatedly targeted Russian ships in the Black Sea, including warships and oil tankers.

Both countries have Black Sea shorelines.

Ukraine's uncrewed fleet has succeeded in limiting



the movements of Russia's once-dominant Black Sea navy, Kyiv officials say, in one of the country's biggest accomplishments of the war.

But Ukrainian officials reckon that Russian President Vladimir Putin is bent on prosecuting the war, despite his bigger army's slow and costly progress on the battlefield and US diplomatic efforts to find a settlement.

Putin is planning "an additional rapid mobilization of several hundred thousand Russians by the end of the year," Zelenskyy said on social media late Tuesday, citing Ukrainian intelligence reports. The Ukrainian military "carried out a unique opera-

tion targeting the naval base in Novorossiysk - the last major stronghold of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea," Zelenskyy said in a social media post on Wednesday.

The attack struck air defences, piers and other port infrastructure in the Krasnodar region city, he added. Krasnodar region Gov Veniamin Kondratyev said that hundreds of Ukrainian drones attacked Novorossiysk, Anapa and Gelendzhik and the Temyruk district of the region overnight. Russian air defences downed more than 500 Ukrainian drones, the Defence Ministry in Moscow said. In Novorossiysk, an eight-year old child was killed in the

attack, and a person wounded when his house in the Temyruk region was hit later died in hospital, Kondratyev said. He added that 12 other people in the region were wounded.

Debris from downed drones fell on the territory of four industrial plants and 21 residential buildings, according to Kondratyev, but officials gave no details of any damage.

Novorossiysk is also home to a key international oil terminal. The Grushovaya oil transshipment complex near Novorossiysk is one of the largest transshipment hubs in southern Russia for oil and petroleum products.

Spain prepares for rare solar eclipse against backdrop of heat, wildfires

SUMAN NAISHADHAM/TERESA MEDRANO ■ Madrid

Spaniards were rushing to buy specialised glasses to view a rare total solar eclipse Wednesday, as authorities warned people flocking to rural areas to avoid anything that could spark new wildfires.

Across a swath of northern and central Spain, millions of people will have some of mainland Europe's best views of the celestial spectacle. It will begin around sunset, when the sun, moon and Earth align, briefly bringing parts of the Iberian Peninsula – plus slivers of Greenland and Iceland – into darkness.

The event could draw at least an additional half a million visitors, Spanish authorities say. Against the backdrop of scorching summer temperatures and wildfires, officials have rolled out a large public safety campaign ahead of the much-anticipated eclipse, with totality – when the moon completely covers the sun's light – expected to last less than 2 1/2 minutes.

Spain's Interior Ministry said 350 official viewing sites have been set up across the country's sparsely populated interior, an area often referred to as "Empty Spain." Authorities have limited or restricted access to another 123 sites because of environmental conditions or obstacles that could hinder an evacuation in the event of a wildfire. Only weeks ago, the



most destructive wildfire in Spanish history devoured 500 square kilometres and forced the evacuation of tens of thousands of people in central Spain. Several smaller wildfires remain active elsewhere in the country.

More than 33,500 law enforcement officers will be deployed to observation areas and access points, the ministry said.

"High temperatures, the accumulated dryness of vegetation, and the intense pressure on natural areas due to projected travel necessitate extreme preventive measures," Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska said. Much of Spain will be on alert Wednesday as temperatures climb above 35 Celsius and vegetation remains bone-dry. The national weather agency, AEMET, forecast such temperatures across northwest to southeastern Spain, including many areas where the total eclipse will be observed.

Sino-India border generally stable at moment: China

KJM VARMA ■ Beijing

China on Wednesday said the situation along the Sino-India border is “generally stable at the moment” while declining to comment on reports of stepped-up Chinese military activity near the Arunachal Pradesh border.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun made the comments while responding to media queries about whether there has been a recent military incident with India and if China has increased its military activity near the State, which China claims as part of South Tibet. “The China-India border situation is generally stable at the moment,” Guo said. China and India held the 36th



Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun

meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on China-India Border Affairs last week, he said. “The two sides agreed to maintain communication via diplomatic and military channels and jointly uphold peace and tranquility in the border areas,” he added.

India on Tuesday said it considers matters relating to border areas with China as “most serious” and asserted that maintaining peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is of “utmost importance”, as the state of the frontier will govern the overall trajectory of bilateral ties. The remarks came amid reports of aggressive posturing by Chinese troops in Arunachal Pradesh’s

Upper Subansiri region. New Delhi also trashed Beijing’s criticism of its decision to formally identify 27 places and geographical features in Arunachal Pradesh by their standard names, emphasising that the state is an “inalienable and integral” part of India and nothing can change this “indisputable reality”.

India and China rolled out a series of measures in the last over one year to rebuild their relationship after it came under severe strain following the deadly Galwan Valley clashes in 2020 and the subsequent military face-off that lasted for over four years. In October 2024, the two sides firmed up a disengagement pact for Depsang and

Demchok, the last two friction points in eastern Ladakh.

Days after the agreement was finalised, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks in Kazan and took several decisions to improve the ties.

In August last year, Modi travelled to the Chinese city of Tianjin to attend the annual SCO summit. Modi and Xi held extensive talks on the sidelines of the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) summit.

In the meeting, Modi said India is committed to taking forward its ties with China based on mutual trust, respect and sensitivity. In the last few months, India and China initiated a series of measures to reset their ties. (PTI)

SL lawyers asks President to seek expert view on Judge retirement



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

The Bar Association of Sri Lanka on Wednesday urged President Anura Kumara Dissanayake to consult the experts before deciding on the proposed constitutional amendment seeking an extension in the retirement age of judges.

The 22nd Amendment to the Constitution seeks to extend the retirement age of Supreme Court judges from 65 to 67 and the Court of Appeal judges from 63 to 65 to address the backlog of cases. Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) chief Rajiva Amarasinghe said they had a “good dialogue” with the president. “We hope for a good result,” he said. The government has the right to

make constitutional amendments and “we have the right to oppose them,” Amarasinghe told reporters after the meeting.

The BASL said it clarified the reasons for opposing the move in the meeting and also claimed that some of the serving judges are also against the changes.

Around 20 representatives participated in the discussion, including the president’s counsel, former presidents of the lawyers’ body and university professors, according to an Ada Derana report. Sri Lanka’s Cabinet on August 4 approved the proposal for the amendment to address a backlog of more than 1 million court cases and ease the pressure on overcrowded prisons.

Iranian-backed Houthis kill 6 in attack on vessel

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Sanaa

Yemeni authorities said six people were killed by Iran-backed Houthi rebels attacking a vessel in the Bab el-Mandeb strait, while US forces fired on a ship they said was trying to break a blockade of Iran’s ports.

Yemen’s coast guard said the dead included four crew members and two members of the Government-allied National Resistance Forces. Houthis fired three ballistic missiles at the Yemeni commercial vessel, according to the Transportation Ministry of Yemen’s internationally recognized Government.

They are the first known deaths from Houthi attacks on shipping off Yemen in the latest bout of fighting in the Arab country. With the Strait

of Hormuz effectively shut down by Iran, there has been a renewed focus on the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb strait at Yemen’s southern tip, which is an alternate route for Saudi Arabia to ship its oil.

The deadly vessel strike came amid Houthi attacks on the Government-held port city of Mokha on the Red Sea and other areas of the country. Dozens of Government troops and civilians have been killed in attacks since last week, according to the Yemeni military.

The strikes are part of an escalation by the Houthis against Government forces in Yemen and oil facilities in neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which supports the Yemeni Government, and the kingdom’s shipping in the Red Sea. The Houthi attacks



could reignite Yemen’s civil war following a 2022 truce, and open a new front in the West Asia war.

Mohammed Abdul-Salam, the Houthis’ chief negotiator and spokesperson, accused Saudi Arabia in a social media post of exploiting the ceasefire to tighten an air and sea blockade it imposed in 2015. He said the Houthis are open for negotiations but any settlement must include lifting the blockade.

The US military said Tuesday that its forces fired on a Panamanian-flagged

ship in the Gulf of Oman that tried to evade the American blockade on Iranian ports.

The move came as US President Donald Trump tries to keep economic pressure on the Islamic Republic.

US Central Command said the vessel had ignored warnings to stop, prompting an American helicopter to fire missiles into the engine room of the M/V Vela Nova, disabling the ship.

The statement did not say whether the ship’s crew suffered any casualties. Trump on Tuesday night insisted that the US military has “total control” over the Strait of Hormuz, despite the fact that Iran has kept up its attacks on ships in the waterway, largely impeding traffic there.

Pak Minister Naqvi meets top Iranian leaders

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ■ Islamabad

Pakistan Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has held talks with Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Tehran to follow up on the stalled US-Iran peace negotiations, according to media reports.

An interim peace agreement, which Pakistan signed as a guarantor, derailed last month as tensions escalated in West Asia with the US and Iran resuming military strikes. Islamabad is actively pushing to revive its mediation efforts to end the US-Iran conflict.

Pakistan’s Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said at a press briefing in Islamabad on Wednesday that it was trying to resolve the conflict between the US and Iran with the help of other regional countries.

“Pakistan remains engaged alongside its brotherly states in sincere efforts to resolve the crisis,” said Andrabi, when asked about Naqvi’s Tehran visit. (PTI)

Mini-Mozart heist: 210 statuettes stolen from tribute



ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Salzburg

More than 200 gold statuettes of Austria’s most famous composer disappeared from his hometown of Salzburg, officials said Wednesday, leaving a tribute to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart on his 270th birthday considerably less crowded. The Mozarteum Foundation on July 15 unveiled 320 statuettes, barely 50 centimeters (less than 20 inches) high, showing Mozart with his dog. They were designed by German conceptual artist Ottmar Horl.

Within two weeks, more than 80 of the polymer figures had disappeared. By

Wednesday, a total of 210 were missing.

“The worst thing for an artist is when his work dissolves,” Horl told the German news agency dpa. He said he did not believe visitors stole the works but rather that it was an “organised theft”. Horl intended to sell the statues for about 100 euros (\$114) once the exhibition was over, meaning whoever ran away with 210 mini-Mozarts has not become an overnight millionaire. The mini-Mozarts populated not only the garden of the composer’s former house, but also his living quarters as well as several pavilions.

2 US states proclaim August 15 as Indian Independence Day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New York

Two US states, New York and New Jersey, have proclaimed August 15 as “India Independence Day”, recognising India’s journey as an independent Nation and the contributions of the Indian-American community.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul issued a proclamation declaring August 15, 2026, as “India Independence Day” across the entire state, while New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill made a similar declaration, the Indian Consulate in New York posted on X.

The proclamations come ahead of India’s 80th Independence Day celebrations and highlight “India’s journey of independence and the democratic values shared by India and the United States”, the consulate said.

New York and New Jersey, both neighbouring states, are home to some of the largest and most influential Indian-American communities in the United States, with Indian-origin residents making significant contributions across business, healthcare, technology, education and public service, according to the proclamations made by both states.

In New York, Hochul’s proclamation recognised the Indian-American community’s contributions to the state’s cultural, economic and civic life. It also highlight-



Kathy Hochul

ed India’s struggle against colonial rule and its commitment to self-determination, self-governance and democracy. In New Jersey, Sherrill’s proclamation described the state as home to one of the “largest and most vibrant Indian-American communities in the US”.

It recognised their contributions across education, healthcare, research, technology, business, public service and community leadership.

The Indian Consulate in New York expressed gratitude to both governors for the proclamations, saying they recognised the enduring India-US friendship and the significant contributions of Indian-Americans to the two states.

The proclamations are the latest recognition by the US state authorities of India’s Independence Day, which is celebrated by Indian-American communities across the country with cultural programmes, flag-hoisting ceremonies and community events.

South Africa asks African nations to fund migrant repatriations

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Johannesburg

South Africa is asking several other African Governments to reimburse it for the cost of sending tens of thousands of their citizens back home.

The request comes after South Africa deported or helped repatriate more than 80,000 immigrants, following protests and violence against illegal immigration.

According to the country’s Home Affairs department, which briefed lawmakers, the country has spent nearly \$18 million accommodating and transporting immigrants who demanded to return to their home countries.

The foreign ministry has sent written requests for compensation to Malawi, Ethiopia and Nigeria, officials said. The



Tommy Makhode

money covered buses to transport the immigrants, temporary repatriation centers and staff overtime, among other expenses. Tommy Makhode, the director-general of the Home Affairs department, described the costs as “unforeseen and unavoidable”.

Drone strike in Libya torches power substation, triggering outages

SAMY MAGDY ■ Cairo

A drone strike ignited a fire at an electrical facility in a western Libyan city on Wednesday, knocking the facility out of service in the latest of a wave of attacks on energy and oil facilities that threaten to plunge the country into further chaos.

The state-run General Electricity Company said in a statement that a power substation in the city of Zawiya, which links power plants to homes and businesses, was completely burned down.

The city of about 250,000 people has been rattled by a series of drone strikes that hit oil and power infrastructures. Zawiya is home to critical energy infrastruc-



ture, including Libya’s largest oil refinery, an export terminal and a power plant.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the drone strikes.

The power company said the attack resulted in outages across the southern parts of the city, which is located about 47 km west of

the capital Tripoli. Footage shared by the company showed massive flames and fireballs erupting from the facility.

Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, the prime minister of one of Libya’s two rival Governments, denounced the attacks on energy and power installations as “a serious crime and an escalation that will not go unanswered”.

“We will reach those responsible for this attack, and the accountability will be firm. No one will be protected by their position, status, or influence,” he said in a statement.

On Monday, a drone strike hit a fuel-laden tank at Zawiya’s refinery, igniting a massive blaze which firefighters battled for over 15 hours. The refinery was repeatedly attacked on Tuesday and over the weekend, according to the state-run National Oil Corporation.

The city’s power plant was hit by two drones on Tuesday, with one damaging its firefighting system

while the second landed close to the facility’s main fuel storage, setting it on fire, the electricity company said.

The attacks come as tensions are rising between the Government of western Libya and warlord Mohamed Bahroun, who controls the city of Zawiya. Much of western Libya is ruled by local militias loosely allied to Dbeibah’s Government in Tripoli.

The country has been divided for years between rival administrations, each backed by armed groups and foreign Governments. Dbeibah governs western Libya and the administration of Prime Minister Ossama Hammad governs the eastern part of the country. (AP)

Death toll rises to 44 after ferry capsizes on Zimbabwe lake

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ HARARE

The death toll after an overloaded ferry capsized on Lake Kariba in Zimbabwe has risen to 44, police said Wednesday.

Police said on X that the bodies had been retrieved from the lake that forms part of the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia. But police did not update how many people were injured or still missing after Tuesday’s disaster involving a ferry operated by a Government agency. The ferry capsized while carrying at least 114 adult passengers and five crew members, according to Zimbabwe’s disaster management agency.

It was not clear how many people were on the ferry because the figures only included those who bought tickets, and children below ticketing age could have been on board.

The ferry had a carrying capacity of 90 people, according to authorities. It is used to take people from rural communities around the lake to the town of Kariba on its shore. (AP)



Kosovo begins excavations at newly found mass graves tied to 1998-99 war

ZANA CIMILI ■ Kalluder

Erblin Ademi watched from afar as workers excavated recently discovered mass graves from the 1998-99 war in Kosovo. Nearly 30 years after his father went missing, Ademi both feared and wished that his remains will finally be found.

Ademi was just 9 when he last saw his father, Adem Ademi, a prominent surgeon who disappeared along with 22 other intellectuals in April 1999, just months before the end of the war.

Some 1,600 people are still missing from the conflict, believed scattered in unmarked mass graves, and Ademi’s family had endured years of anguish and disappointments at failed efforts to find his father’s remains. They are now cautiously optimistic because



the newly found graves are near to where Ademi was last seen. Excavations near the village of Kalluder e Vogel in the northern

municipality of Zubin Potok, started in late July after the discovery of human remains there. Kosovo’s Prime Minister Albin Kurti

has said that the authorities believe the victims could be the missing intellectuals, who allegedly were caught as they were trying to flee Kosovo to avoid being rounded up by Serb troops.

“Always, when we hear about the beginning of the excavations, there is a mixed feeling, a feeling of hope and a feeling of pain,” Ademi said.

“No matter how many years pass, the feeling of pain will always exist ... but at the same time there has always been hope, a feeling that finally the truth will be revealed.”

Kosovo’s missing include roughly 1,200 ethnic Albanians, around 400 ethnic Serbs and dozens of Roma, according to the Humanitarian Law Center rights group.

Some 13,000 people died in Kosovo’s war, which saw ethnic

Albanians launch a rebellion to gain independence from Serbia. Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, which Belgrade still does not recognize.

Tensions still simmer. In May 2023, Serbia and Kosovo reached an agreement which included commitments by both sides to clarify the fate of the missing, but Kosovo and Serbia have accused each other of stalling efforts to work together.

“It is obvious that authorities are not willing to cooperate,” said Bekim Blakaj, from the Humanitarian Law Center.

The European Union wants Kosovo and Serbia to normalize ties in order to move forward in their plans to join the bloc.

Police in Kosovo said last month they arrested two ethnic Serbs on

suspicion of war crimes in connection with the mass graves, several days before the latest excavations started. The two men remain in custody.

Several top Serbian political and military officials have been tried and convicted of war crimes in Kosovo at a UN tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands.

Erblin Ademi clutched the photo of his father holding him as a little boy.

“Every human being has the right to have a grave where they can be visited, where they can be honored, where they can be remembered,” Ademi said. “We are very hopeful that this will be the end, no matter how long the whole process will take, we will wait until we can honor them as they deserve.” (AP)

PROSPECT

Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, Chairperson and MD of Pride East Entertainment Pvt Ltd, distributed cheques worth ₹1 crore to 20 schools in the flood-affected districts of Assam

UCO Bank organises Retail, MSME, Resource & Agri Carnival

UCO Bank, Mid Corporate Gurugram Branch, organised a Retail, MSME, Resource & Agri Carnival on Tuesday at Club Florence, Gurugram.

The programme was graced by the esteemed presence of Shri Gautam Patra, Chief General Manager, Business Development, New Delhi, and Shri Prem Shankar Jha, Chief General Manager, Head Office, Kolkata. A large number of customers, entrepreneurs and businesspersons participated in the carnival and obtained information about various financial schemes and services being offered by the Bank. The objective of the programme was to raise awareness about retail, MSME, agriculture and other banking products and to provide suitable solutions in line with the financial requirements of customers.

During the programme, bank officials interacted with the participants and shared detailed information about various loan schemes, banking facilities and financial options related to business expansion. Officials from the Zonal Office, New Delhi, along with branch managers from various branches, were also present on the occasion.

(PNS)

IIFL Finance launches special gold loan for women

Leading non-banking financial company IIFL Finance on Wednesday announced a special gold loan offering for women borrowers in the run-up to Independence Day, designed to help women entrepreneurs and homemakers convert idle household gold into productive capital. The offering is available at IIFL Finance gold loan branches across India. The scheme offers a special interest rate starting from 0.81 per cent per month (9.72 per cent per annum) at zero processing fees for women borrowers. The scheme also provides maximum permissible loan value against the customer's gold, within the loan-to-value limits prescribed by the Reserve Bank of India. Mayank Sharma, Head – Gold Loan, IIFL Finance, said, "For millions of Indian women, the gold in the cupboard is the most valuable asset they own, and for generations it has done nothing at all. A gold loan changes that, without asking her to part with it – she pledges, she borrows, she repays, and her jewellery comes home."

(PNS)

India's ethanol supplies cross 800-crore-litre mark

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

India's ethanol programme has crossed a new supply milestone of 800-crore-litre mark during ESY 2025-26, with grain-based feedstocks strengthening their share of monthly supplies in July, according to the latest data compiled by the All India Distillers' Association (AIDA).

A total of 93 crore litres of ethanol was supplied during July, taking cumulative supplies beyond the 800-crore-litre milestone. Grain-based feedstocks accounted for 71 crore litres, or around 76 per cent of July supplies, compared with approximately 73 per cent in June, when grain-based ethanol contributed 75 crore litres out of 103 crore litres supplied during the month.

The month-on-month movement is significant because grain-based supplies remained relatively stable even as total monthly ethanol supplies moderated, resulting in a higher share for grain-



based feedstocks in July.

The July data also highlights a notable shift within the grain-based segment.

Maize and surplus FCI grains each contributed 30 crore litres of ethanol in July, together accounting for nearly 85 per cent of grain-based supplies during the month. Damaged food grains contributed a further 11 crore litres.

The near-equal contribution from maize and surplus FCI grains underlines the increasing role of multiple grain streams in supporting ethanol supplies. It also demonstrates the flexibility of the domestic ethanol supply

chain in drawing on different agricultural resources.

Maize remained a major contributor to the overall ethanol programme, while the significant contribution from surplus FCI grains highlights the role of government-designated surplus food grains in supporting domestic biofuel production.

Sugarcane-based feedstocks contributed 22 crore litres during July, compared with 28 crore litres in June. The monthly ethanol supplies consequently declined from approximately 27 per cent in June to 24 per cent in July.

Conflict begins within the individual, says philosopher Acharya Prashant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Greater Noida

A delegation from Shyam Lal College (Evening), University of Delhi, led by its Principal, Prof Nachiketa Singh, held a public dialogue with philosopher and author Acharya Prashant on the theme "Conflict Resolution and Human Security."

In a rare gesture, rather than host the philosopher on its own campus as is customary for such lectures, the college brought its faculty and students to a college auditorium in Greater Noida, close to Acharya Prashant's residence. The session began with an interaction between Acharya Prashant and Prof. Singh, followed by audience questions. Prof. Singh, a senior political science faculty member with nearly three decades of teaching and research, holds a doctorate on ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia and works across international relations, foreign policy and security studies.



tions, foreign policy and security studies.

He opened by asking Acharya Prashant for a philosophical lens on a subject usually approached through diplomacy and statecraft.

Acharya Prashant located the origin of conflict not in borders or institutions but in the individual. "It is only the human species that requires peace," he said, arguing that human conflict is largely psychological. He traced it to the ego, which he said sets human beings apart from other life forms and makes education necessary. "Only

we need education because only we have the ego," he told the audience.

Much of the discussion turned on education. Invoking the Upanishadic terms avidya and vidya, Acharya Prashant said modern schooling attends almost entirely to the external world while neglecting the self, so that students take near-irreversible decisions in their teens and twenties without knowing who is deciding for them. Self-observation, he added, requires no extra hours. "It is like the speedometer in a

NCDFI, Indian Army reaffirm commitment to strengthen dairy supply chain

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Ltd (NCDFI) and the Indian Army reiterated their commitment to strengthening cooperation to support local milk procurement, processing and cold-chain management through the dairy cooperative network.

"This unique four-decade old Dairy Cooperative-Defence partnership delivers benefits to all stakeholders – defence establishments gain dependable supplies and resilient local supply chains; cooperatives secure assured institutional markets and better utilisation of infrastructure; and dairy farmers access wider markets with regular income," said Meenesh Shah, Chairman, NCDFI, who also heads the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

Speaking at the "Cooperative Conclave on Dairy-Defence Partnership" in Anand, Gujarat, Shah commended cooperatives for strengthening milk procure-



ment, processing, cold storage and supply-chain systems in border and North-Eastern regions. He said every additional litre supplied brings dairy farmers and personnel serving the nation closer together.

The Conclave recognised the contribution of dairy cooperatives in supplying quality milk and milk products to Defence establishments, particularly in remote, border and high-altitude areas.

Lt General Mukesh Chadha, Director General of Supplies and Transport (DGST), Indian Army, appreciated NCDFI and its member cooperatives for ensuring reliable supplies to troops in difficult terrains. He also complimented NDDB for its

focused efforts in border areas toward organising, promoting and strengthening dairy cooperatives, thereby supporting local milk production.

Lt Gen Chadha noted that a stronger dairy-cooperative presence in border areas could create sustainable markets, generate local employment and livelihood opportunities, and contribute to reverse migration. He underlined the scope for greater fresh-milk supplies and called for closer Army-NCDFI coordination to assess requirements and build suitable local capacities.

He also stressed the importance of maintaining adequate long-life milk capacity wherever operational need demands.

Assam begins four-day plantation drive under Brikshya Bandhu initiative

TONY DAS
■ Guwahati

Minister for Environment and Forest Jayanta Mallabarua ceremonially launched the 'Brikshya Bandhu' initiative at the Sri Sri Damodardev International Auditorium, Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, Panjabari, Guwahati, marking the beginning of a four-day statewide plantation drive involving more than 22 lakh students from Class VI onwards. Under the initiative, students across Assam will plant more than 1.5 crore saplings from August 11 to 14 as part of the Amrit Brikshya Andolan.

The initiative has brought together 11,277 educational institutions across the State, with 2,128,495 students already registered for the plantation drive. The Forest Department has distributed 1.57 crore saplings to participating educational institu-



tions till now.

Seven educational institutions took part in the central launch programme in Guwahati, while students and institutions across the State joined the programme through online platforms.

Addressing the gathering, Minister Baruah thanked the students, teachers, Education Department and officials of the Forest Department and all those associated with this initiative. He said the programme aims not only to increase tree cover but also to develop a lasting sense of responsibility among the younger generation towards planting, protecting and nurturing trees.

DAILY SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

HOW TO SOLVE IT

Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you fill a 9x9 grid so that numbers 1 to 9 appear once in every row, column, and 3x3 box, using elimination and logical deduction—no maths involved.

SOLUTION (12.8.26)

7	2	3	5	8	1	4	6	9
5	9	6	4	2	7	8	3	1
4	8	1	9	3	6	5	2	7
3	7	2	1	9	4	6	8	5
1	5	4	8	6	2	9	7	3
9	6	8	7	5	3	2	1	4
2	3	9	6	1	5	7	4	8
6	4	5	3	7	8	1	9	2
8	1	7	2	4	9	3	5	6

DOUBLE CROSSWORD

THURSDAY | AUGUST 13, 2026

ACROSS

4 Evil ways we all have (6)

7 Is sweet, but can make you sick in a sticky coating (8)

8 Creature confused by clouts (6)

10 A backward fool keeping himself to himself (5)

13 Here's your chance to play detective (4)

14 Go round, or simply go (4)

15 Price is both officer and saint (4)

16 One side is insufficient for the whole game (3)

17 Is it much the same as Iraq? (4)

19 Public address I'd settled the bill for (4)

21 A bunion, say, won't help a tennis player (4,5)

23 Transferred foreign currency to the capital of Turkey (4)

24 Despite appearances, it doesn't mean "from" (4)

26 He's a bit decadent (3)

27 The part of a toaster that dries (4)

29 Beat back in a game (4)

32 Continental region to fly from briefly with illness to Wellness (ITW), the initiative combined health and hygiene awareness with creativity, fitness and value-based learning, equipping children with simple, practical messages that they can carry beyond the event and share with their families, peers and wider communities.

33 Dramatically put on a coach (5)

34 What's new in battleship construction

35 They follow the horses and are number ten in the charts (8)

36 Pretentiously artistic outfits for church

15 Some secateurs can scratch! (3)

16 Left it switched on? (3)

18 They go round or up over hills (6)

20 The childless total frequently is high (5)

21 Given a life dependence requirement

22 A social worker (3)

23 Tasteful girl with a French boyfriend (6)

25 Perform at the gala opening, if you follow (3)

28 One has a feeling it may be dropped (5)

30 Provide as an instalment (3,2)

31 All swans? Not really (5)

32 Restful little part of the country (4)

33 Humble member of the baser fraternity

1 Being so small, it can get out of traps (5)

2 First lady to be seated, in a sense (5)

3 Something to sing about when smelling it? (4)

4 Finds a market for sound electric batteries (5)

5 Pleasant looking resort (4)

6 Being out of the wood, we'd cleaned up

9 Product with which a shifty tout admits turning up (6)

11 Pull by the ear (3)

12 It's bulbous yet skinny (5)

13 To make a mess is a bewildering thing to do (7)

1, M-Alice

7, Accident

8, Sets

10, Ku-wait

11, Design

14, A-le

16, Mated

17, Da-B-s

19, Deb-ag

21, Ta-Ken

22, Bayed

23, Reap

26, Lear-n

28, Per

29, Engage

30, Pick-up

31, Apes

32, Tenderly

33, Swells

1, M-arked

2, Ideals

3, East

4, Fireman

5, Debit (card)

6, Stand

8, S-W-AB

9, Tie

12, Sag

13, C-Emma

15, Pokes

18, Ali-EN

19, Day

20, Bed

21, Tangled

22, (Bar-) Bra

23, Rec'd-E

24, Erks

25, Papers

26, Letts

27, A-gin-G

28, Pip

30, Pays

Over 1,000 children embrace preventive health and healthy living in Noida



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

More than 1,000 children came together at The Millennium School, Noida, for the fourth edition of 'Bachchon Ka Maati-IV' and emerged as young ambassadors of preventive health and wellness. Organised by Maati Trust in association with Illness to Wellness (ITW), the initiative combined health and hygiene awareness with creativity, fitness and value-based learning, equipping children with simple, practical messages that they can carry beyond the event and share with their families, peers and wider communities.

The initiative aims to create a ripple effect of preventive health awareness, with these 1000 young ambassadors taking the message of healthy habits, hygiene, nutrition and physical activity into their homes and communities.

A key highlight of the initiative was the Illness to Wellness handwashing and hygiene activity, through which children were trained in the importance of proper handwashing and everyday

hygiene practices.

Anil Rajput, Chairperson, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, said, "Preventive healthcare cannot begin in hospitals. It must begin at home, in schools and through the everyday habits we build from an early age. When children understand the importance of hygiene, nutrition and physical activity, they do not merely improve their own health; they become powerful ambassadors of wellness within their families and communities. Initiatives like Bachchon Ka Maati help make preventive health engaging and relatable, while giving children the knowledge and confidence to spread these messages further." The event also featured a prize distribution ceremony, with Dr Mahesh Sharma, Senior Member of Parliament and former Minister, as the Chief Guest and Mritunjay Pratap Singh, Director, RVNL, as the Guest of Honour. Addressing the children, Mahesh Sharma shared several mantras for success in life and stressed the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle.



Delhi unveils new tourism circuits at Spiritual & Heritage Tourism Conclave 2026. The conclave was graced by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and spiritual leader Sadhguru.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Advertisement No. 11/2026

Online applications are invited for the Non-Teaching posts in the University. Online registration of application for the post will start w.e.f. 13.08.2026 and end on 04.09.2026. Last Date for submitting Hard Copy of the Online submitted application is 16.09.2026. For further details visit University Website: <http://www.digital.gndu.ac.in>

Amritsar 12.08.2026

2426/12/2026-27/14138 Dated CHD - 12/08/2026

REGISTRAR

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR

TENDER NOTICE

Online tender are invited from reputed manufacturers/authorized dealers for the Rate Contract for supply of Chemicals, Glassware, Plasticwares and Equipments etc. (upto Rs. 2,00,000/-) for the period 2026-27. Earnest Money (Rs. 20,000/-) may be deposited online latest by 2/09/2026 (till 5:00 pm). Online Tender Form, Terms & Conditions are available on www.gndu.ac.in

Director of Research

2426/12/2026-27/14139 Dated CHD - 12/08/2026

GVK Power (Goindwal Sahib) Limited

Regd. Office: Plot No.10, Paigah Colony, Sardar Patel Road, Secunderabad-500003 Telangana, India CIN: U40109TG1997PLC028483

(A wholly owned subsidiary of Guru Amar Das Thermal Power Limited, GATPL)

(A step down wholly owned subsidiary of Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL))

HOD-C&I, GATPL, Goindwal Sahib, invites E-Tender for the work of: 1 Tender Enquiry No. 186/GATPL/MD/DTG/20017969 Dated 12-08-2026 "Procurement of Auma MOV Spares"

Area of 2x270 MW Thermal Power Plant (GATPL, Goindwal Sahib)

At 2X270 MW Guru Amardas Thermal Plant (GATPL, Goindwal Sahib, Distt. Tarn Taran, Punjab as per details given in the tender specifications.)

For detailed NIT & tender specifications, please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 12/08/2026 from 17:00 Hrs. onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

GATPL-79/26

1079/12/2026-27/14169 Dated CHD - 12/08/2026

BRIEFLY

Depay says, disappointed at Corinthians for breaking contract



Netherlands forward Memphis Depay plans to "react strongly" after saying that Brazilian club Corinthians did not honor an agreement to extend his contract.

Depay said on social media he was "very disappointed" to find out Corinthians decided "not to honor our agreement in place to extend my contract for 2 more years."

"This renewal was explicitly agreed upon by the president as well as the sporting, legal and financial department," he said. "Some people decided however to breach this engagement..." Depay joined Corinthians in 2024 and helped the club win the Brazilian Cup last year.

"I didn't want this situation and always respected the club throughout the process, but now I am forced to react strongly in order to preserve my interests," he said. (AP)

Man City signs Rulli as back-up goalkeeper to Donnarumma



Manchester City's back-up goalkeeper to Gianluigi Donnarumma will be Geronimo Rulli after the Argentina international joined from Marseille on a two-year deal on Wednesday.

The 34-year-old Rulli replaces James Trafford as City's second-choice goalie. Trafford left to join Leeds last week.

Rulli, who has played eight times for Argentina and was part of the World Cup-winning squad in 2022, has European experience after playing at Real Sociedad, Villarreal, Montpellier, Ajax and most recently Marseille since 2024.

He had a brief spell at City in the 2016-17 season.

"I have been really impressed by him during our conversations, a strong desire to join us," City director of football Hugo Viana said. "It's clear we are getting a brilliant professional, as well as a top keeper." (AP)

Coby Bryant to miss four to six months after knee surgery



Chicago Bears safety Coby Bryant will miss four to six months after he had surgery on his injured left knee, coach Ben Johnson said.

Bryant, signed to a \$40 million, three-year deal as a free agent this offseason, was expected to be an important part of a revamped Chicago secondary.

Johnson said Bryant had surgery Friday without disclosing details of the injury. He did not rule out the possibility that Bryant would return this season.

"I got to see him today," Johnson said. "He's going to be in a hurry to get back to help us out there at the end of the year." Bryant was hurt at practice on Aug. 3. (AP)

PSG looks for Super Cup success over Aston Villa for first of six possible trophies this season

STEVE DOUGLAS ■ Paris

Paris Saint-Germain gets back on the trophy trail on Wednesday in the UEFA Super Cup against Aston Villa. There are six pieces of silverware up for grabs for PSG this season, with the No. 1 priority being a third straight Champions League title to cement its status as one of the greatest club teams in soccer history. The first trophy could be lifted inside Red Bull Arena in Salzburg, Austria, in the annual match between the most recent winners of the Champions League and Europa League. It starts at 9 p.m. local time (1900 GMT).

PSG is bidding for a second straight Super Cup win after beating Tottenham in a penalty shootout last year.

Villa won the Super Cup in 1983 after beating Barcelona over two legs.

The manager, Unai Emery, has experienced three straight losses in the Super Cup - the first two with Sevilla and the third with Villarreal.

Referee is Somali official barred from World Cup

The game will be refereed by Omar Artan, the



Somali who was barred by the United States from officiating at the World Cup days before the start of FIFA's tournament because of vetting concerns. U.S. officials claimed Artan had connections to terror organizations, though without

providing proof.

UEFA responded by picking Artan — a referee judged the best in Africa last season — to take charge of the Super Cup in a powerplay by European soccer's governing body amid its increasing disconnect with FIFA. That disharmony has increased since, with UEFA leading the campaign to oust Gianni Infantino from the FIFA presidency over his recent -aborted- plan to sell an interest in the World Cup. (AP)

Fencing team secures five more medals at Commonwealth title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

The Indian fencing team collected three gold, one silver, and one bronze medal across various senior individual events on the third day of the Commonwealth Champion ship in Lagos, Nigeria. Dominating the field in senior women's foil, senior men's epee, and senior men's sabre, Team India's stellar day three performance brought the nation's overall combined medal count to an extraordinary 29 medals — comprising 8 Gold, 7 Silver, and 14 Bronze.

India established immediate dominance in the senior women's foil category, securing a gold-silver victory.

Kanaglakshmi captured the gold medal following a precise and controlled campaign, while teammate Joys Ashitha took silver to claim the top two spots on the podium ahead of England's Georgia Green and Emily Goodchild, who won Bronze.

The success continued in



the Senior Men's Epee discipline, where Rajendran Shanthimol Sherjin put on a commanding display to secure India's second gold medal of the day.

Sherjin outpointed South Africa's Kruger Pieter, who finished with silver, while Wales' Burkhardt Marc and South Africa's Losevsky Sergey shared the bronze

medals.

In the senior men's sabre event, Singh Karan Singh clinched India's third gold medal of the day with an outstanding final fight against Australia's Shim Yoongi, who took silver.

Teammate Kumaresan Padma Gisho Nidhi added to the medal haul by winning bronze alongside Nigeria's Akinyosoye Oluwafolayemi.

With the championship wrapping up on Wednesday, the Indian contingent turns its focus toward the final events across foil, epee, and sabre disciplines.



Praggnanandhaa beats Javokhir Sindarov in Sinquefield Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ St Louis (USA)

Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa crashed through the defences of Javokhir Sindarov in a second round match to register his first victory of the Sinquefield Cup, the penultimate event of the Grand Chess tour, here.

The star of the day was Praggnanandhaa all the way as the Indian claimed his point inch-by-inch in the endgame arising out of a queen pawn opening.

Sindarov, who will be up against world champion D Gukesh later this year for the world crown, chose just an equal endgame that should



have been a perfect draw for him.

But then what he possibly did not account for was Praggnanandhaa's

tenacity. It paid off in the end for the Indian as from what the computer was claiming to be a drawn

Don't let pressure affect your game: Sreejesh ahead of WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Former India hockey goalkeeper PR Sreejesh has urged the current players not to let the pressure of the World Cup affect their game, asking them to trust their preparation and enjoy the occasion.

The FIH World Cup will be jointly hosted by Amstelveen, Netherlands, and Wavre, Belgium, from August 15 to 30.

The Indian men's team is led by ace drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh, while the women's side is captained by Salima Tete.

The men's team, which has won back-to-back Olympic bronze medals at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024, will aim to end its long World Cup podium drought. India last finished on the podium in 1975, when it won gold.

"The FIH World Cup is the second biggest tournament in hockey after the Olympics and naturally, the whole world is watching, and all eyes are on you. That brings a lot of pressure," Sreejesh said.



"But you cannot let that pressure affect your game. When you start thinking too much about it, your performance drops. And when your performance drops, the pressure increases even more. So the key is to stay calm, focus on your role, and trust your training," said the 38-year-old goalkeeping great, who was part of both of India's bronze-winning Olympic campaigns. The Indian men's team is placed in Pool D and will play the opener against Wales on August 15. They will then take on England and Pakistan on August 17 and 19 respectively.

Strong field of 157 players to compete in Asian Junior Chess Championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

A strong field of 157 players from 10 countries, including six International Masters and 24 FIDE Masters and Women FIDE Masters, will compete in the Asian Junior Chess Championships here from August 16 to 26. The tournament, featuring Asia's top U20 talent, will comprise nine rounds of Classical Swiss, along with seven rounds each of Rapid and Blitz. It is being held under the aegis of the All India Chess Federation, Asian Chess Federation and FIDE, and hosted by the Maharashtra Chess Association.

The event has previously crowned several prominent players, including Viswanathan Anand, Abhijit Kunte and Tejas Bakre in the open section, and Tania Sachdev, Koneru Humpy and Ivana Furtado in the women's section.

The winners will earn a Grandmaster norm if they are already IMs, while non-IMs will be



eligible for an IM norm.

The Classical event will feature 157 players, while 153 will compete in Rapid and 151 in Blitz. The Open section has an average Elo rating of 2054, compared to 1885 in the junior women's section.

Indian IM Mayank Chakraborty (2500) heads the open field, followed by Russia's IM Artem Pigin (2477) and India's IM Apporv Kamble (2441).

In the junior women's section,

India's WFM Pratitee Bordoloi (2252) leads the field, ahead of Kazakhstan's WFA Mariya Kholyavko (2217) and Turkmenistan's WFM Lala Shohradova (2159). Other Indian players to watch include Vignesh Advait Vemula (2405), Aaditya Dhingra (2403) and Akshay Borgeonkar (2396), while WFM Swara Lakshmi Nair (2155), Mrityika Mallick (2153) and Saranya Devi Narahari are among contenders in women's section.

Jeev Milkha Singh to Kapil's PGTI: Indian golfers should be allowed to play anywhere they want

SUMAN RAY ■ New Delhi

Indian golfing stalwart Jeev Milkha Singh has urged the Kapil Dev-led PGTI to not bar players from participating in the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) as they have every right to earn "good livelihood" and build their game through such events.

The 54-year-old owner of four European Tour and six Asian Tour titles said that while he understands that every Tour has its own set of rules and regulations but once a player fulfils his commitment towards that Tour, he should not be stopped from exploring other avenues.

The Professional Golf Tour of India has prohibited golfers, who choose to compete in the IGPL, from playing in PGTI events, making it clear that it would not share talent with the league that was co-founded by another World Cup-winning cricket hero Yuvraj Singh. "You could have two tours or three tours but at the end of the day, it's a player's tour. If they are gaining then there should not be any restriction whatsoever. If they can make a good livelihood out of it, nothing like it," said the affable man from Chandigarh, arguably the greatest Indian golfer of all time.

"...you could have differences, you could feel like, my tour is better than



yours, but at the end of the day, if the players are gaining by playing on any tour, it's fantastic," Jeev told PTI in an exclusive interview from Tokyo on Wednesday.

While maintaining that there is room for both PGTI tournaments and IGPL to co-exist, Kapil Dev has also made it clear that the players will have to pick a lane and no leniency would be shown towards those who decide to play IGPL.

However, despite the strict public position, Kapil has also urged veteran Gaganjeet Bhullar to reconsider his decision to play in the IGPL.

Jeev said once a player is done doing his duties on PGTI, he should not

be held back from playing his trade elsewhere.

"I think every tour has a certain commitment regarding the number of events you'll have to play. I agree with that also. But if you're committed to X amount of events as a member then you should be allowed to play other tournaments, which are going to make you a better player and get you a better livelihood," he emphasised.

Jeev, who is now an active member of the senior tour, cited his own example. "I play on the Japanese senior tour. I have to play 10 events out of the X amount of events they have in a year. If I'm committed to playing those 10 events, I can go play anywhere else in the world.

"On the European tour, my commitment is a minimum of six events. I can go play anywhere after six events. I play 10 in Japan, but I play 12 in Europe. So, there's no restriction," he pointed out. Jeev said the IGPL, a four-week event which debuted this year featuring 60 players, is a very good pathway from domestic golf to the international stage. "The relationship between IGPL and the Asian Tour has become better over the years. They're giving a few spots to the players to get into the final stage and also giving one spot to the top player so that he can play on the Asian Tour," he said. (PTI)

Dickwella returns to Sri Lanka Test squad; Nuwantha gets maiden call-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Galle

Wicketkeeper-batter Niroshan Dickwella returned to Sri Lanka's red-ball set up after three years, while off-spinner Keshara Nuwantha earned his maiden call-up as the hosts named a 16-member squad for first Test against India. Dickwella, who last played a Test against New Zealand in 2023, is in line to make his return to the format after regular wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis was ruled out with an injury.

Besides Nuwantha, uncapped batter Pasindu Sooriyabandara and left-arm pacer Dilshan Madushanka have also been included in the squad, which features four specialist fast bowlers.

Madushanka's return adds further variety to Sri Lanka's pace attack, which also comprises Asitha Fernando, Lahiru Kumara and Vishwa Fernando. All-rounder Milan Rathnayake provides another seam-bowling option.

Nuwantha, meanwhile, could make his Test debut after building an impressive record in domestic cricket.



The right-arm off-spinner joins left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya and Ramesh Mendis in the spin department.

The squad also includes experienced all-rounders Kamindu Mendis and Dhananjaya de Silva.

Dhananjaya De Silva leads the side while Kamindu Mendis will serve as his deputy. The first Test

against India begins here on Saturday. Sri Lanka squad for First Test against India

Dhananjaya De Silva (c), Lahiru Udara, Nishan Madushka, Kamindu Mendis (v-c), Dinesh Chandimal, Pasindu Sooriyabandara, Sonal Dinusha, Niroshan Dickwella (wk), Ramesh Mendis, Prabath Jayasuriya, Keshara Nuwantha, Milan Rathnayake, Asitha Fernando, Lahiru Kumara, Vishwa Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka.

Miller wants to finish on high by winning 2027 ODI World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

South African batting stalwart David Miller wants to end his career on a high by winning next year's ODI World Cup, calling it a "goal" he hopes to achieve in front of the home fans. The tournament will be co-hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia in October-November next year and will feature a revamped format comprising a preliminary stage, group stage, Super 7 and knockout rounds.

Miller, 37, who has featured in several domestic franchise leagues, including the IPL, also said he takes pride in his role as a middle-order batter who comes in to finish games.

"Yeah, I am really

looking forward to it (2027 World Cup). For me, it's a goal that I want to achieve. I would love to finish off late in my career with a trophy," Miller said.

"So, for me, it's a goal that I would love to be a part of that World Cup team. It's something that is never guaranteed, and I'll definitely, from now until then, be focused on aiming to make that team and to contribute the best I can. "Obviously, it will be very special, being at home in front of our fans, and in a place that I've played for so many years. So, it would be fantastic to be a part of that team," he added.

Miller said batting in the middle order and staying until the end to finish games required a certain mastery, something he has relished throughout his career.

"Probably the fact that I've made a career by batting in the middle order and finishing games, that would be something I'm most proud of. It's something that takes a long time to kind of conquer and master.

"I'm still learning all the time, but at least I've had a long career in that department, and I've really enjoyed going about chasing innings, especially," he added.



Australia launch 20-Test year in Top End against depleted Bangladesh

KEIRAN SMITH ■ Darwin (Australia)

Test cricket returns to Australia's tropical Top End for the first time since 2003 when the hosts face Bangladesh in a two-match series starting Thursday.

The series opener at Marrara Stadium in Darwin marks Bangladesh's first test tour Down Under in over two decades and kicks off a 12-month period of at least 20 test matches for the Aussies including tours of world test champion South Africa, India and England.

Australia's so-called Big Four bowling attack is set to be reunited in Darwin with Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon returning from injuries. Pace bowlers Cummins, Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc and offspinner Lyon have been the longtime front line attack for Australia but injuries have limited the frequency of all four combining in the same XI in recent series.

Hazlewood's expected inclusion comes at the expense of the



evergreen Scott Boland, while allrounders Cameron Green and Beau Webster have also been named in Australia's starting team.

"We know Scotty's class, it is always a pretty tight call," said captain Cummins at a pre-match press conference Wednesday. "There is not much you can say

to Scotty except there is a lot of cricket coming up.

"He knows his worth, and how good he is, and I am sure he will be out there at some point pretty soon."

While the bowling unit is settled, it's Australia's batting lineup that poses more questions. (AP)

Rahane to make Test commentary debut during India-Sri Lanka series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai

Former India batter Ajinkya Rahane is set to make his Test commentary debut during the team's upcoming two-match series in Sri Lanka. He will join the Sony Sports Network commentary panel for the series that begins in Galle on August 15.

Rahane, who recently brought the curtains down on an illustrious playing career spanning nearly 18 years after making his first-class debut, will take up a new role behind the microphone, bringing his experience of international red-ball cricket to the broadcast. The 37-year-old Rahane played 85 Tests for India, scoring 5,077 runs at an average of 38.46, including 12 centuries and 26 half-centuries. He also led India to a memorable Test series triumph in Australia in 2020-21 and was part of several memorable overseas victories as a middle-order batter.

"I'm excited to make my Test commentary debut for India's tour of Sri Lanka on the Sony Sports Network and Sony LIV. Test cricket is the pinnacle of our sport, and having represented India in the format for so many years, it is a privilege to now look at the game from a different perspective," Rahane said.



‘Era of randomly scheduling bilaterals over, reinvention needed in Tests, ODIs’

BHARAT SHARMA ■ New Delhi

The era of "randomly" scheduling bilateral series is over but the much-debated ODI format can continue to survive and thrive with its place "inextricably" linked to the World Cup, International Cricket Council (ICC) CEO Sanjog Gupta has asserted in an interview to PTI.

Gupta, a leading figure in the business of sport, had joined the ICC in July last year. He shared his thoughts on the Test and one-day formats at a time when their future has been constantly debated in the age of mushrooming T20 leagues.

"The era of randomly scheduled bilateral series has to come to an end, because countries will not be able to sustain cricket without context, culture, competition and competitiveness, which require significant investment of resources, both financial and non-financial," Gupta said.

"It's important to stay focused on the four levers which drive attention and affiliation -- context, culture, competition and competitiveness -- and ODIs can continue not just to survive, but thrive.

"There is a place for the format in the product portfolio, which is inextricably linked to men's and women's ICC Cricket World Cups. We need to look at what we



want the format to stand for and how we want it to evolve, including the expanse of participation," he noted.

Bilateral cricket is decided exclusively by the member boards without ICC's intervention. The world body only handles the scheduling of multi-national competitions like the World Cups and the World Test Championship. The Boards retain the sponsorship and media rights of bilateral engagements. As things stand, only the big three -- India, England and Australia -- can afford to play Tests while the other full members are struggling to monetise the longest format. (PTI)

India lock T20 series against Afghanistan in September

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Bangladesh's hopes of hosting India for a long-pending white-ball rubber in September seem all but over with the BCCI announcing that Shreyas Iyer and his men will face Afghanistan in a three-match T20I series in Delhi from September 13 to 17.

The BCCI and the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) announced the series in a joint statement on Wednesday, the window for which clashes with



the plans that Bangladesh had proposed. The Indo-Bangla bilateral series had to be postponed last year due to the political

unrest in that country.

The games against Afghanistan are a part of ACB's Future Tours Programme. They are being treated as a home assignment for the ACB, which has made India a base for

conducting games in recent years due to the volatile political situation in Afghanistan.

The series will get underway on September 13, with the second T20I scheduled for September 15 and the third on September 17. All the three matches will be played at the Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium here.

Afghanistan most recently toured India for a three-match ODI series in June, and the two sides also played a three-match T20I series in January 2024.

India hosted Afghanistan for their historic first Test in 2018, and the two teams have since continued to engage regularly across formats.

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem to skip DL meet in Lausanne



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lahore

Pakistan's Olympic gold-medallist javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem will skip the Diamond League meet in Lausanne this month to focus on preparing for another international event and the Asian Games in Japan this year.

Arshad's long-time coach, Salman Butt, said the javelin thrower was presently training in Lahore but would soon leave for South Africa, where he will train for a few weeks under his coach, Terseus Liebenberg, and local trainers. "He has decided against competing in the Diamond League meet this month as he wants to be ready for the Asian Games," Butt said.

NEROCA down nine men FC Raengdai to end group stage campaign with a win

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Imphal

NEROCA FC came from behind to beat nine-man FC Raengdai 3-1 and end their group-stage campaign on a winning note in the 135th IndianOil Durand Cup at the Khuman Lampak Main Stadium on Wednesday, 12 August 2026.

FC Raengdai took the lead in the 19th minute through Jonah Kamei, but NEROCA restored parity eight minutes later after Thoudam Nani Singh turned the ball into his own net. Raengdai were reduced to nine men in the second half after P.M. Rakeveiche and Soraisham Surjakanta Singh were shown red cards within four minutes of each other, forcing the side from Noney to play the final 30 minutes with nine players.

NEROCA took the lead in the 89th minute when substitute Chabungbam Linky Meitei headed home to put his side ahead. Yumnam Renedy Meitei then added a third in stoppage time to complete the comeback. The victory saw NEROCA finish their Group D campaign with four points from three matches, while FC Raengdai, who had already secured their place in the quarter-finals, finished with six points from their three matches.

NEROCA FC head coach Yumnam Raju Mangang made five changes to his starting XI for their final match of the tournament. Naorem Kiranjit Singh replaced Abujam Penand Singh in goal, while Soibam Abhinash Singh and Lambalmayum Hembra Meetei came into the defence in place of Ben Nash



Quansh and Saphaba Singh Telem. Sinam Maichael Singh replaced Charles Teiko Folley in midfield, while Sridarth Nongmeikam came into the attack in place of Ngathem Imarson Meitei.

Meanwhile, FC Raengdai head coach Kshetrimayum Birbal Singh made three changes to his side, who had already secured their place in the quarter-finals. Yaithengbam Suraj Singh came in between the posts in place of captain Kamei Pantiga, with Jonah Kamei replacing Wahengbam Rojen Meetei in defence and taking over the captain's armband. Thoudam Nani Singh was also handed a start in midfield in place of Gaisuangmei Kamei.

NEROCA FC registered the first attempt on goal inside the opening three minutes after Sibajit Singh found space inside the box to control a pass from Maichael Singh. However, the forward failed to make clean

contact with his effort, which drifted wide of the post without troubling the goalkeeper. Moments later, FC Raengdai thought they had taken the lead when Amarjit Singh produced an acrobatic finish after connecting with a pass from Amitkumar Singh, but the effort was ruled out for offside.

FC Raengdai took the lead after gradually establishing control of the contest. Jonah Kamei peeled away from his marker to meet a corner and powered a header towards the bottom corner. The effort beat both the goalkeeper and the defender stationed on the goal line to give Raengdai the advantage.

NEROCA had a couple of opportunities to restore parity from their own set-pieces, with Zidan Singh failing to keep his headers on target on both occasions. They eventually found the equaliser by capitalising on a defensive error from FC Raengdai.