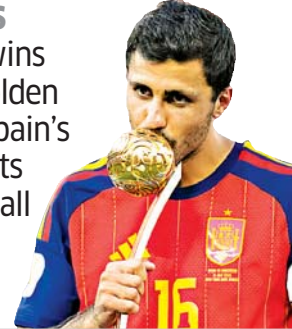


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Youth take their fight to Parliament, face police action

A meeting with Union minister JP Nadda yielded no commitments even as clashes overshadowed the opening day of Parliament's Monsoon Session



CJP supporters near the Parliament ahead of the their planned march on Monday; Police action on protestors at Sansad Marg on Monday afternoon; An injured protestor after police action at Sansad Marg



Police action on protestors at Sansad Marg on Monday afternoon; An injured protestor after police action at Sansad Marg

GOVT URGES CJP TO END PROTESTS

The Union Government on Monday urged Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protesters to end their sit-in and help restore normalcy after a delegation met Union Minister JP Nadda over the NEET-UG paper leak. CJP sought Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation, alleging repeated failures, including the NEET-UG 2026 leak. Nadda confirmed receiving a written memorandum, assuring the delegation that the Government would discuss the demands internally.

(PNS)

Forty days of anger explodes on streets



Police action near Parliament House on Monday

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA
■ New Delhi

They came in the rain. They came from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Assam, and Madhya Pradesh. They came because a girl named Riya Thapa had died by suicide, because the NEET paper had leaked, and because nobody in Government had resigned. They gathered at Jantar Mantar from Sunday night,

slept on the wet ground and on Monday morning, they tried to walk to the Parliament. The Delhi Police, which had imposed Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, which replaced the old Section 144 of the CrPc, across the New Delhi district, was waiting for them.

What followed was the one of the most charged day of political protest in the Capital in years.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

On Monday morning, thousands of students, youth, and supporters of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) gathered at Jantar Mantar despite prohibitory orders issued by the Delhi Police. Many people

had camped overnight at Jantar Mantar and the crowd grew as more joined from around the city. They called for Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign, citing exam irregularities, paper leaks in tests like NEET, and student deaths. Protesters shouted slogans

calling for Pradhan's resignation and carried signs about exam scams and the impact of system failures. Some protests also happened near metro stations after authorities closed some exits.

By late morning, the crowd started a planned march towards the Parliament.

Around 11.25 am, as thousands of protesters tried to move past several barricades in the high-security area along the Parliament Street, near Shastri Bhawan, and other important spots, security forces used baton charge and tear gas on protestors. Traffic stopped on major

roads, metro services were limited, and police blocked demonstrators from reaching the Parliament on the first day of the Monsoon Session. Police also cut mobile internet in parts of central Delhi and closed several metro stations, including Rajiv Chowk,

Janpath, Patel Chowk, Central Secretariat, and Seva Teerth, disrupting travel.

This incident is a major escalation in weeks of protests over exam irregularities, paper leaks, and problems in India's education system.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

The Bystander



PIONEER IN SHORT

BIHAR COUPLE TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

A 65-year-old man and his 55-year-old wife have tested positive for COVID-19 in Bihar's Bhagalpur district, hospital officials said on Monday. The couple is undergoing intensive medical care at Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital (JLNMC), where a team of doctors is monitoring their condition. The man was admitted to JLNMC on Sunday after his health deteriorated. He was initially treated at a private clinic before being referred to the hospital after developing COVID-19 symptoms. His infection was confirmed through an RT-PCR test, following which his wife also tested positive. Officials said further surveillance and preventive measures were being carried out in the area.

HDFC EARNINGS DISAPPOINT INVESTORS

HDFC Bank shares fell over 5 per cent on Monday after the lender's June quarter earnings disappointed investors, particularly on the net interest margin (NIM) front. The stock declined 5.12 per cent to close at ₹777.65 on the BSE, eroding the bank's market capitalisation by ₹64,685.58 crore to ₹11.97 lakh crore. The sharp fall in HDFC Bank shares dragged benchmark indices lower, with the Sensex declining 442.93 points, or 0.57 per cent, to settle at 77,708.52, while the Nifty fell 95.80 points, or 0.39 per cent, to 24,238.50. HDFC Bank reported a 5 per cent rise in standalone net profit at ₹19,060 crore for the June quarter, compared with ₹18,155 crore a year earlier. However, total income declined to ₹92,184 crore from ₹99,200 crore.

SBI takes over Ram temple donation count

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Ayodhya

In the wake of the donation-theft row, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust in Ayodhya has deployed a new team to count cash offerings in donation boxes under a two-shift system supervised by the State Bank of India (SBI) even as the Supreme Court asked the Uttar Pradesh Government to explain whether it would be possible to establish a Special Investigation Team to investigate the alleged misuse of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"Just a word of caution."

Please don't politicise the issue. The courts are not a place for politics. It is a simple case of a crime being committed. We are here to ensure a proper investigation," the CJI said while hearing the case. The counting process at the temple was paused for a week-long trial run but has now officially resumed, with the SBI directly overseeing it. SBI, as the trust's official banker, is now responsible for counting the money collected from the donation boxes inside the temple. According to temple management, each shift has 10 to 12 people.

CONTINUED ON >> P4



Ram Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu Yadav and his nephew Maneesh Yadav, arrested in connection with the alleged theft of Ram temple donations, being brought back to the district jail in Ayodhya Uttar Pradesh

PM Modi opens Monsoon Session with dig at Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday addressed the nation ahead of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, expressing optimism for productive proceedings. He also mentioned that the average age of team members at Skyroot Aerospace, a private space company which scripted history with VIKRAM-1, India's first private rocket to reach orbit over the weekend, is 28 years, in a veiled attack on the Leader of Opposition (LoP), Rahul Gandhi. The LoP in the Lok Sabha, turned 56 on June 19 this year. "India's youth have taken a new flight into space. It is a tremendous success. I am told that the average age



Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi

of the team working at the Skyroot start-up is just 28 years. It is these young minds who have made this possible. I am not talking about a 56-year-old young man. I am talking about a start-

up whose team, with an average age of just 28, has planted India's flag in the realm of space. They certainly deserve our heartfelt congratulations. More importantly, such achievements instil immense confidence in our nation and further strengthen India's standing as a respected and trusted partner in the world," PM Modi said in his customary remarks ahead of the Monsoon Session. His remarks came ahead of the start of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which is expected to be stormy with the Opposition set to raise the issues of the NEET paper leak, the alleged theft of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya and the blended petrol fiasco.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Opposition brings Parliament to a standstill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Opposition protests over the alleged NEET paper leak and Ram temple donation theft issues disrupted Lok Sabha proceedings on Monday, forcing the both the House of Parliament to wrap up for the day after multiple adjournments on the opening day of the Monsoon Session.

The Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day at around 3 pm after the House reassembled six times following



Opposition leaders protesting in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament on Monday

disruptions. It was earlier adjourned at 2.30 pm as Opposition MPs continued their protest despite presiding officer Jagdambika Pal

appealing to them to allow the House to take up matters of public importance under Rule 377 of the Rules of Procedure and

Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha. Similarly Rajya Sabha too was adjourned for the day to meet on Tuesday as Opposition members led by the Congress demanded action against the guilty in the medical entrance examination question paper leak.

After the papers were tabled in the Upper House, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge rose to speak on the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak, saying the issue concerned the future of lakhs of students.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Twice rebuilt, twice champions: Spain scripts football's greatest reinvention story



SHAKYA MITRA

Spain are world champions once again after beating Argentina in the final.

An extra-time goal from Ferran Torres helped Spain add the FIFA World Cup to their UEFA Euro 2024 title. They have now won two World Cups and three European Championships in the last 18 years, establishing themselves as one of the greatest national teams in football history. In a little under two decades, Spain have built a record that few countries can match in an era

when global competition has made sustained dominance harder than ever.

Yet this latest triumph is not simply the continuation of the team that conquered football between 2008 and 2012. It is the story of a nation that has reinvented itself twice.

For much of the twentieth century, Spain were international football's great under-achievers. Before 2008, they had reached the last four of the World Cup only once in 1950 while their only European Championship title came in 1964, when the tournament featured just four teams. Despite producing generations of technically gifted footballers and possessing one of Europe's strongest domestic leagues,



Spain celebrates with the trophy after the World Cup final soccer match between Spain and Argentina

Spain repeatedly fell short on the biggest stage.

Despite possessing two of world football's biggest clubs, Barcelona and Real Madrid,

Spain often struggled to forge a cohesive national side. Club and regional rivalries were often cited as one factor behind that difficulty. Real

Madrid traditionally represented Spain's capital, while Barcelona became closely associated with Catalonia, and those club and regional identities occasionally carried over into the national team environment.

The arrival of Luis Aragonés after Spain's first round exit in the 2004 European Championships changed things. He built a team around a clear footballing identity rather than reputation, before Vicente del Bosque carried that culture forward. The result was one of international football's greatest teams, winning Euro 2008, the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012 with a possession-based style that transformed the game. Like every great team, however, that cycle

eventually came to an end.

Between 2014 and 2022 Spain often looked like a nation trying to recreate the past. They still dominated possession but struggled to create chances with the speed and unpredictability that had once made them irresistible. Round of 16 exits at the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to lower-ranked opposition, both after penalty shootouts, highlighted a side that controlled matches without consistently deciding them.

The response after Qatar was not another attempt to revive the old formula. Instead, Spain chose reinvention.

Former Athletic Bilbao defender Luis de la Fuente, who had spent nearly a

decade within the Spanish Football Federation guiding youth sides to European titles and an Olympic silver medal, was appointed to the top job.

He already knew the country's next generation, with many of the players who now form the backbone of the senior side having already won trophies under him as well as an Olympic silver medal in 2021.

One of the key factors at the heart of Spain's successful reinvention under De la Fuente has been selection of players.

Rather than revolving around Barcelona and Real Madrid, today's Spain are drawn from across the country's football landscape.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

MP police should strive to become country's best force: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday called upon the Madhya Pradesh Police to strive towards becoming the best police force in the country, urging officers to strengthen law and order, intensify action against crime and maintain the trust reposed in them by citizens. He also congratulated senior police officials for completing the promotion of nearly 25,000 personnel across various ranks under the state government's recent promotion drive.

Addressing a meeting of senior police officers at the Police Headquarters in Bhopal, the Chief Minister said the unprecedented promotion exercise should translate into improved policing and greater accountability. Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sanjay Kumar Shukla, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Neeraj Mandloi, Director General of Police Kailash Makwana and other senior officials attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister directed the police department to ensure the effective implementation of the three new criminal laws introduced by the Central Government. He also instructed senior officers to make comprehensive security arrangements for the upcoming festive season and Independence Day celebrations, ensuring that citizens experience a safe and peaceful environment across the state.

Highlighting the state's



success in eliminating Left Wing Extremism, Yadav said Madhya Pradesh's former Naxal-affected areas had entered a new phase of normalcy owing to the determined efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. He said the police should now actively contribute to the development of these regions by supporting welfare initiatives and strengthening public confidence.

The Chief Minister also stressed the need to continue the state's anti-drug campaign with renewed vigour. Referring to the public awareness slogan "Nashe Se Doori Hai Zaroori", he said the campaign had received widespread public support and should be expanded further. He directed the police to work in coordination with the Higher Education Department to organise awareness programmes in educational institutions and recognise individuals making significant contributions to the de-addiction campaign. He also called for stricter monitoring of interstate borders to prevent

the illegal transportation of narcotic substances.

With industrial expansion gathering pace in Madhya Pradesh, Yadav said adequate security arrangements would be essential for industries and institutions. He instructed officials to facilitate the deployment of licensed security personnel through the State Industrial Security Force (SISF) and asked the department to prepare for emerging social and security challenges.

Emphasising the importance of timely promotions and recruitment, the Chief Minister said vacancies in the police force should be filled without delay through a structured annual promotion calendar. He directed officials to eliminate recruitment backlogs and ensure that sanctioned posts remain vacant for the shortest possible time. Special attention should also be given to recruiting eligible youth from the state's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, including the Baiga, Sahariya and Bharia communities, particularly in the six districts where they are predominantly located.

Villagers protest against illegal liquor, drugs; seek police action

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Rewa

Hundreds of residents from Puraini Jagir Gram Panchayat (Ward No. 379) in Rewa district on Monday staged a protest outside the office of the Superintendent of Police (SP), demanding stringent action against the alleged open sale of illicit liquor, cannabis and narcotic injections in their village.

Women, children, senior citizens and youths participated in the protest and submitted a memorandum, alleging that the illegal drug trade has been flourishing for a long time, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. They claimed that, despite repeated complaints, no effective action has been taken, forcing them to approach the district police chief.

According to the villagers, illegal liquor, cannabis and narcotic injections are being sold openly from a hut located near a government school in Khamhariya village and in the Puraini Kothar area. They alleged that drug addicts frequently gather near Hanuman Temple, Shiv Temple, the canal, Baniya Bagiya, Vanshal Basti and Nai Basti, particularly during the evening, disturbing public order and creating an unsafe environment.

The protesters said the growing menace is adversely affecting schoolchildren and young students, as drug addicts often loiter around educational institutions and religious places. They expressed concern that such activities are exposing children to substance abuse at an early age and damaging the social environment of the

village.

Villagers further alleged that women and girls have become the worst sufferers due to the increasing drug trade. They said it has become unsafe for women to step out after sunset, while parents are also worried about sending their children to school or the local market because of the presence of intoxicated individuals in public places.

The residents claimed they had repeatedly lodged oral complaints and informed the local police through mobile phone calls, but no concrete action followed. They also alleged that details of their complaints were leaked to the accused, emboldening them to continue their illegal activities without fear.

The memorandum urged the police to conduct a confidential investigation into the alleged drug network and take strict legal action against those involved. A copy of the memorandum has also been submitted to the District Collector.

Villager Ramkishore Patel said illegal liquor and narcotics were being sold openly at several locations in the village and that the entire community had approached the SP after repeated complaints failed to yield results.

Savitri Devi Kol said women and young girls no longer feel safe venturing out in the evening, adding that groups of drug addicts are often seen near schools and temples.

Another resident, Shivprasad Saket, demanded the complete eradication of the illegal drug trade from the village and strict action against those responsible.

Electric bus trial run gets underway in Bhopal



Mayor Malti Rai and Corporators take a test ride of the PM E-Bus service in Bhopal on Monday.

Pioneer photo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The trial run of electric buses began in Bhopal on Monday, marking a significant step towards introducing eco-friendly public transport in the city. The buses rolled out from the Bairagarh depot early in the morning and started operating on three designated routes as part of a five-day dry run ahead of their public launch in August.

The trial is aimed at assessing operational efficiency, route feasibility, charging infrastructure and identifying any technical issues before the buses are opened to passengers. As the exercise is a dry run, members of the public are not being allowed to travel on the buses. However, elected councillors will be invited to participate in the trial to provide feedback.

The buses are being operated in two shifts each day. The first shift runs from 8 am to 12

noon, while the second shift operates from 2 pm to 6 pm.

During the trial, the electric buses are travelling from the Bairagarh depot through Old Bhopal to the Board Office. From there, services are being tested on the Bhopal Railway Station (Platform No. 1) route and the Bairagarh-Chichli route via Kolar. Officials are monitoring traffic conditions, route suitability and operational challenges on these corridors to ensure smooth services once regular operations begin.

The electric buses were also used on Sunday to transport Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, ministers and senior government officials to the state cabinet meeting held at Jagdishpur, showcasing the vehicles ahead of the public rollout.

According to officials, 21 electric buses have already reached Bhopal, while another 20 buses are expected to arrive

over the next 10 to 12 days. With the induction of the new fleet, the city's electric public transport network is set to expand significantly.

To support the operations, charging infrastructure has been established at the Bairagarh depot. A total of 11 charging points have been installed to ensure uninterrupted charging and efficient fleet management once commercial services commence.

Officials said the trial will help fine-tune operations and address any technical or logistical issues before the buses are made available to commuters. If the dry run is successful, the process for launching regular electric bus services for the public will be completed, with operations expected to begin in August.

The initiative is expected to strengthen Bhopal's public transport system while promoting cleaner and more sustainable urban mobility.



Students participate in a rocket demonstration event during International Moon Day Celebration at the Regional Science Center in Bhopal on Monday.

Pioneer photo

SUV with 'SDM' sign crushes farmer on Rajgarh highway

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Rajgarh

A 28-year-old farmer was killed in a horrific road accident on the Rajgarh-Biaora highway in Madhya Pradesh's Rajgarh district after an SUV bearing an 'SDM' signboard allegedly rammed into his motorcycle and ran over him before fleeing the spot.

The deceased has been identified as Mangilal Tanwar, a resident of Banskhedhi village. According to Kotwali police, the impact was so severe that he died on the spot. Officials described the condition of the body as extremely grievous, with the motorcycle found some distance away from the accident site.

According to family members, Mangilal had gone to Biaora on Monday morning to purchase pesticides for his maize crop. At around 12 noon, while returning to his village, his motorcycle was allegedly hit by a speeding Bolero near the Laxmanpura junction on the Rajgarh-Biaora road.

Eyewitnesses alleged that after the collision, the vehicle's tyre ran over the farmer

before the driver sped away without stopping. The body remained on the road until police reached the spot.

The victim's brother-in-law claimed that the vehicle involved in the accident had 'SDM' written on its front. Acting on information about the vehicle's route, family members visited the Biaora toll plaza and examined CCTV footage. They claimed the footage showed a Bolero carrying the 'SDM' signboard and obtained an image of the vehicle, which has been shared with the police as part of the investigation.

Mangilal was the sole earning member of his family. He is survived by his wife and two daughters. His elder daughter is seven years old, while the younger child is just two-and-a-half months old.

Police said they recovered broken pieces of the Bolero's headlight and part of its number plate from the accident site. A case has been registered against an unidentified driver, and efforts are underway to identify the vehicle and its driver using CCTV footage and physical evidence collected from the scene.

Drive to save GI-tagged tamarind

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Dhar

The Dhar district administration has stepped up efforts to conserve and promote the rare Khorasani Tamarind, a GI-tagged species that is uniquely associated with the historic town of Mandu.

As part of the initiative, Neha Jaiswal, director of Neha Green Vatika Nursery in Mandu, met District Collector Rajeev Ranjan Meena and presented a detailed conservation and development plan for the species. She highlighted the need for large-scale plantation, protection of existing trees and expansion of sapling production to ensure its long-term survival.

Appreciating the initiative, the Collector said preserving Mandu's rich botanical heritage for future generations is a priority. He issued necessary directions to strengthen the conservation plan and said he would soon visit the nursery to review its work.

The initiative aims to revive the presence of Khorasani Tamarind in Mandu's ecosystem while safeguarding one of the region's most distinctive natural and ecological treasures.

NGT halts illegal construction in Shahpura Lake buffer zone

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken a stringent view of alleged illegal construction within the 50-metre buffer zone of Shahpura Lake, directing authorities to stop all unauthorised activities with immediate effect and remove accumulated silt from the lake embankments within seven days.

The directions were issued by a bench comprising Justice Shiv Kumar Singh and Expert Member Sudhir Kumar Chaturvedi while hearing the matter of Nitin Saxena vs Madhya Pradesh State Wetland Authority, concerning the conservation of Shahpura Lake, encroachments and water pollution.

The Tribunal made it clear that no illegal construction or encroachment would be permitted within the lake or its notified buffer zone. It also ordered that the silt excavated during lake cleaning, currently lying along the embankments, must be removed within a week to prevent it from washing back into the lake during the monsoon and polluting the water.

The NGT further directed the

CM announces FD for children's education

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has announced Rs 5 lakh in financial assistance for the education and welfare of the two children of late Urmila Saini, a Postal Assistant from Indore, expressing deep concern over the family's tragic circumstances.

Following the untimely death of Urmila Saini and the subsequent demise of her husband, Akhilesh Saini, their children—Preksha (15) and Avyakt (7)—have been left without parental care and support. Assuring the bereaved family of the State Government's full support, the Chief Minister said every possible effort would be made to secure the children's future, particularly their education.

Mohan Yadav met Preksha, who was accompanied by her maternal grandfather Satyanarayan Malakar and other family members, at his office in the Madhya Pradesh Legislative



Assembly. During the meeting, the Chief Minister offered his condolences and assured the family that the government stands firmly with them during this difficult time.

To ensure uninterrupted education for the children, the Chief Minister announced that a Fixed Deposit (FD) of Rs 5 lakh would be created in their names. The interest earned on the deposit will be used to meet their school

and higher education expenses, providing them with sustained financial support in the years ahead.

Reiterating the government's commitment to the welfare of children in distress, the Chief Minister said the State would continue to extend all possible assistance to help the siblings pursue their education and build a secure future despite their personal loss.

Lions Club Bhopal plants saplings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Lions Club of Bhopal Glorious launched its first service activity for Lion Year 2026-27 by organising a Tree Plantation and Environmental Awareness Drive at Gram Ratibad to promote environmental conservation and sustainable development.

District Governor MJF Lion Mahesh Malviya, the chief guest, said protecting nature is a collective responsibility and urged people to plant and nurture trees for future generations.

Region Chairperson Lion Prakash Bachchani, District Environment Chairperson Lion Anita Mishra and Zone Chairperson Lion Dr Rachana Akhand Giri highlighted the importance of tree plantation as a social responsibility. With support from the Gram Panchayat and villagers, participants planted saplings of various species and pledged to protect the environment.

The programme was attended by senior Lions members, Sarpanch Ajay Rajoriya, BJP Mahila Morcha President Priyanka Mishra, club office-bearers and local residents.

Over 16 lakh passengers opt for digital payments on WCR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jabalpur

West Central Railway (WCR) has reported a significant rise in digital payments, recording cashless transactions worth Rs 14.17 crore through its Passenger Reservation System (PRS) and Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) during June of the 2026-27 financial year.

According to the railway administration, a total of 16,32,799 passengers opted for cashless payment modes, reflecting the growing adoption of digital transactions across WCR's three divisions—Jabalpur, Bhopal and Kota.

The initiative is part of Indian Railways' ongoing efforts to provide passengers with convenient, secure and transparent services through advanced digital technologies while encouraging a shift towards cashless transactions.

Under the PRS, passengers increasingly used Point of Sale (POS) machines and UPI/BHIM payment platforms for ticket bookings. Transactions through POS machines generated Rs 6,69,495, while payments made using UPI/BHIM contributed Rs 5,53,74,390 in revenue.

The UTS also witnessed

strong adoption of digital payment options. Mobile ticketing generated Rs 1,87,28,260, while UPI/BHIM transactions accounted for Rs 6,69,52,420 in revenue during the month.

Railway officials said the growing use of digital payment platforms has made ticket booking faster, safer and more convenient for passengers. Cashless transactions eliminate the need to carry cash, reduce waiting time at ticket counters and ensure greater transparency in financial transactions. The digital payment systems adopted by Indian Railways are secured through advanced encryption and authentication technologies, making them reliable for passengers.

West Central Railway has been actively promoting digital payment modes at PRS and UTS counters while encouraging passengers to use mobile ticketing and other online payment options for ticket purchases at stations and onboard trains.

The railway zone will continue strengthening its digital payment infrastructure across all three divisions. Special emphasis will be placed on expanding technological capabilities and conducting awareness campaigns.

Guru Purnima gets statewide cultural identity in MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday announced that Guru Purnima will be celebrated across Madhya Pradesh as 'Maharshi Sandipani Shraddha Parva', with large-scale participation from educational institutions, cultural organisations and the public to strengthen the ideals of India's ancient knowledge tradition and the Guru-Shishya (teacher-disciple) tradition.

Chairing a review meeting on preparations for the upcoming Guru Purnima celebrations at Committee Room No. 1 of the Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha, the Chief Minister said gurus have always occupied the highest place in Indian culture and civilisation. Describing the

significance of the word 'guru', he said it symbolises the journey from 'Gu', representing the darkness of ignorance, to 'Ru', signifying the light of knowledge and wisdom. Guru Purnima, he said, is a sacred occasion to honour teachers, seek their blessings and reaffirm the values of learning and service.

Yadav said the principles of India's ancient knowledge system and the Guru-Shishya tradition should be promoted in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. He directed the School Education, Tribal Affairs, Higher Education, Technical Education and Medical Education departments to ensure active participation in the celebrations. Private educational institutions, as well as organisations associated with sports, theatre, music,

painting and other art forms, have also been asked to take part in the statewide programme.

The Chief Minister noted that the State is currently observing Guru Purnima Fortnight and instructed officials to inaugurate all remaining Sandipani Schools before Guru Purnima. Referring to Maharshi Sandipani, the revered guru of Lord Krishna, Yadav said he imparted education to students from all sections of society irrespective of their economic background and played a significant role in strengthening and organising the Gurukul education system while instilling the spirit of patriotism.

To familiarise students with his legacy, the Chief Minister directed officials to prepare a 10 to 20-page booklet on the life, teachings

and contributions of Maharshi Sandipani, with particular emphasis on his role in developing the Gurukul system. The booklet will be distributed across schools in the State.

Yadav also directed that Guru Puja programmes be organised in all government and private schools, colleges and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), with local public representatives invited to participate. He further instructed that students be introduced to the inspiring friendship of Lord Krishna and Sudama during annual Friendship Day celebrations to reinforce values of loyalty, humility and companionship.

The Chief Minister said Guru Purnima should evolve into a people's movement that inspires students and youth to respect their teachers while strengthening faith

in India's cultural heritage. He emphasised that both government and private educational institutions, including schools, colleges and universities, should participate enthusiastically to ensure that the message of the Guru-Shishya tradition reaches every section of society and is effectively passed on to future generations.

Additional Chief Secretary for General Administration, Culture and Tourism Sheo Shekhar Shukla informed the meeting that educational institutions across Madhya Pradesh will organise Guru Purnima programmes on July 29, beginning with floral tributes to Goddess Saraswati, followed by Saraswati Vandana, teacher felicitation ceremonies, lectures, student-teacher interactions, cultural performances and competitions.



Leader of opposition Umang Singh and Congress MLAs protest against anti-farmers policies during monsoon session of MP State Assembly in Bhopal on Monday.

Pioneer photo



Police use water cannons to disperse activists of the OBC Mahasabha during a protest demanding the restoration of the OBC reservation, during the Monsoon Session of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly, in Bhopal, Monday.

Pioneer photo

Lawyer dies after firing attack

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Gwalior

A long-running land dispute turned fatal in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district on Saturday when a lawyer was allegedly shot multiple times by his relatives in broad daylight. The victim, identified as Ratan Singh Yadav, later succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Gwalior.

According to police, the incident took place near an eatery on the Bhitwar-Dabra Road, where Ratan Yadav had gone in connection with a disputed 1.5-bigha land parcel. The property has been the subject of a court case between Yadav and his relatives for some time.

Family members alleged that an argument broke out after Yadav reached the land, following which the accused opened fire. He sustained three bullet injuries, including wounds to his neck, chest and another part of the body. He was initially rushed to a nearby hospital before being referred to Gwalior in critical condition, where he died during treatment.

Police have registered a case against Rakesh Yadav, the victim's cousin, Rahul Yadav, his nephew, and Gabbar Singh Rawat, another relative. All three accused fled the scene after the shooting and remain absconding.

Senior police officers, including Bhitwar SDOP

Gagan Hanwat and Station House Officer Sudhir Singh Kushwaha, reached the spot soon after receiving information about the incident. The police team inspected the crime scene, collected forensic evidence and launched a search operation to trace the accused.

Preliminary investigation suggests that the murder was the outcome of an old rivalry linked to the disputed land. Police said all angles are being examined, and further action will be taken based on the evidence collected during the investigation.

The killing sparked outrage among members of the legal fraternity in Bhitwar. A large number of lawyers gathered at the local police station, demanding the immediate arrest of the accused and strict action against those involved in the murder.

Speaking to reporters, SDOP Gagan Hanwat said police received information about the firing in the afternoon and responded immediately. He said the victim sustained multiple gunshot wounds and that the investigation points to a long-standing personal enmity and property dispute as the likely motive behind the attack.

Police said raids are being conducted at multiple locations to arrest the accused, adding that they expect to make arrests soon. Security has also been tightened in the area to prevent any further escalation of tensions following the incident.

Preksha selected for Pannalal Namdev Literary Award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Poet Preksha Saxena of Bhopal has been selected for the 13th Pannalal Namdev Memorial Literary Award-2026 for her poetry collection Pankhudiyan. The award has been announced by the three-member jury constituted by the Madhya Pradesh Lekhak Sangh's Tikamgarh district unit.

Instituted in memory of Pannalal Namdev, the award carries a cash prize of Rs 1,100, along with a citation, memento, shawl and coconut. The honour is presented annually to recognise outstanding contributions to literature.

The organisers also announced that the 12th Roopa Bai Namdev Memorial Literary Award-2026 will be conferred on satirist and poet Preeti Singh Parmar of Tikamgarh in recognition of her notable con-



tribution to satire and poetry.

The Pradyumna Khare Second Memorial Literary Award-2026 will be presented to Ravindra Yadav of Tikamgarh for his literary work Raste Aur Manzile. The award includes a cash prize, citation, memento, shawl and coconut.

The announcements were made by Rajiv Namdev 'Rana Lidhauri', president of the Tikamgarh district unit of the Madhya Pradesh Lekhak Sangh. He said the award cer-

emony will be held on September 6, 2026, at Apurva Hotel in Tikamgarh.

The event will also feature the release of the 21st edition (2026) of Akanksha, the district's only literary magazine edited by Rajiv Namdev 'Rana Lidhauri'. Two books will also be launched during the programme—Vardan by Yadukul Nandan Khare and Trishul, a Bundeli haiku collection authored by Rajiv Namdev 'Rana Lidhauri'.

A poets' conference will be organised as part of the event, bringing together noted poets from Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

The annual literary awards and poets' gathering are regarded as one of the prominent literary events in the Bundelkhand region, celebrating excellence in Hindi literature and promoting emerging literary talent.

Balaghat police bust interstate theft gang

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Balaghat

Balaghat police have cracked a Rs 9.8 lakh burglary case by arresting an 11-member gang involved in a theft at a house in Baihar police station limits. Police have recovered more than Rs 1 lakh in cash from the stolen amount and are investigating the gang's possible involvement in other thefts.

The burglary took place on the night of July 10 at the residence of Kamlesh Rahangdale in Kholwa village. According to police, the crime was planned after Kamlesh's driver, Sukhdev Meravi, allegedly informed his acquaintance Shanti Tekam that a large amount of cash was kept at his employer's house.

Investigators said Shanti passed on the information to property broker Pankaj Rawde, who then contacted Sanjay Kamathe, a social media influencer from Tumsar in Maharashtra. Kamathe allegedly assembled a group of asso-

ciates, who planned and executed the burglary.

Police said the gang comprised members from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. During the investigation, officers also found that one of the accused had allegedly convinced the group that performing rituals with coconuts and lemons outside the target house would prevent its occupants from waking up during the burglary.

According to police, the accused gathered at Shanti Tekam's house before finalising the plan. While some members entered the house and stole Rs 5 lakh in cash and jewellery worth around Rs 4.8 lakh, others kept watch outside.

The theft came to light when family members noticed suspicious movement as the accused fled the house. A police team launched an investigation using CCTV footage, surveillance inputs and questioning of suspects.

confidence and preparedness to handle unforeseen situations both at the workplace and in public.

Officials described the programme as highly informative and beneficial and expressed the need for similar workshops to be organised regularly to support the physical, mental and professional development of municipal employees.

Among those present were Additional Commissioner Santosh Tagore, Deputy Commissioners Yogendra Singh Patel and Sanjesh Gupta, senior engineering officials, zonal officers, public relations officials, and personnel from the Health Department, Property Tax Department and other wings of the Ujjain Municipal Corporation.

Ujjain civic staff receive stress management, BLS training

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ujjain

The Ujjain Municipal Corporation (UMC) on Monday organised a special lecture on "Lifestyle & Stress Management" along with a Basic Life Support (BLS) training programme to promote employee well-being, foster a healthier workplace, and equip civic officials with essential life-saving skills for emergency situations.

The programme was held in the presence of Mayor Mukesh Tatwat, Municipal Corporation Chairperson Kalavati Yadav and Municipal Commissioner Abhilash Mishra.

The sessions were conducted by Dr Khuzema Furniturewala, an international speaker, National BLS

Instructor and Senior Consultant at the Army War College, Mhow. Addressing municipal officers and employees, Dr Furniturewala underlined the growing importance of maintaining physical and mental well-being in today's demanding work environment.

He stressed that a healthy lifestyle is built on a balanced diet, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, positive thinking, effective time management and the ability to manage stress. He explained that adopting these healthy practices not only improves an individual's physical and mental health but also enhances productivity, decision-making, efficiency and overall workplace performance.

Dr Furniturewala also encouraged employees to prioritise preventive healthcare and maintain a healthy work-life balance, emphasising that sustained physical fitness and mental resilience are key to delivering efficient public services.

The second session focused on Basic Life Support (BLS), where participants received practical training in handling medical emergencies. The programme covered emergency response techniques for cardiac arrest, breathing failure, unconsciousness and other critical conditions, with special emphasis on the correct administration of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Officials and employees also took part in hands-on demonstrations

and practised these life-saving techniques under expert supervision, enabling them to respond effectively during real-life emergencies.

The interactive sessions witnessed enthusiastic participation, with employees actively engaging in discussions, raising queries and seeking expert guidance on stress management, healthy living and emergency medical response.

Municipal Commissioner Abhilash Mishra said the initiative was organised to encourage a healthy lifestyle, create a positive and stress-free work culture, and build emergency response capabilities among civic employees. He said such programmes not only contribute to the physical and mental well-being of employees but also strengthen their

IN FOCUS



Devotees carrying a 1,100-metre chunadi across the Tapi River during celebrations marking the birth anniversary of the river goddess Tapi in Surat, Gujarat, Monday

Gujarat destroys seized drugs worth estimated ₹2,212 crore in Bharuch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bharuch

Narcotics with an estimated value of ₹2,212 crore, including around 11.10 lakh bottles of various substances and 14,500 kg of drugs, seized from various parts of Gujarat over the past year, were on Monday destroyed at an incinerator in Bharuch district, officials said.

These substances were seized by local police, CID and ATS, and 877 cases were registered. The drugs were scientifically disposed of at the BEIL incinerator in the Dahej industrial area as per environmental norms in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, according to an official release. Sanghavi said Gujarat Police have been waging a “war” against drug cartels and peddlers by busting syndicates and coordinating with social organisations to divert youngsters away from drugs. “In every corner of Gujarat, police are acting against drug cartels and peddlers,



Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi with senior police officials and others during the launch of the Handbook on Investigation of NDPS Act Cases in Gandhinagar PTI

not as a campaign, but as a war,” he told media persons.

Sanghavi said drugs valued at more than ₹2,000 crore were destroyed at the same incineration facility last October, while the latest exercise involved narcotics valued at ₹2,212 crore. He claimed the Gujarat Police achieved the highest

conviction rate in drug-related cases in India this year.

“We have been successful in securing convictions against more than 65 per cent of those involved in spreading the drug menace. We are moving towards achieving a 100 per cent conviction rate,” he added.

Maharashtra couple found dead in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A 30-year-old man and a 26-year-old woman, both natives of Maharashtra, were found dead inside a rented room in Delhi’s East of Kailash on Monday morning in an apparent case of suicide, police said.

The incident came to light after a PCR call was received at Amar Colony Police Station at 9.08 am reporting the suspected suicide of a man and a woman at Sant Nagar in East of Kailash.

When a police team reached the spot, they found that the door of the rented accommodation had already been forced open by one of the woman’s friends or neighbours after repeated attempts to contact the occupants failed. Inside the room, the 26-year-old woman, a



Nagpur resident, was found dead on the bed, while the man, identified as Anmol Kunda Patil, 30, was found hanging from the ceiling fan with a nylon rope. Police said the Crime Team and the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) examined the scene and collected evidence, police said.

A handwritten suicide note, prima facie believed to have been written by the man, was recovered and seized for forensic examination. Officials, however, did not disclose the note’s contents.

GTB fan death incident: Delhi health minister orders probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh directed officials on Monday to constitute a committee to investigate the death of a patient at Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital after a ceiling fan allegedly fell on him.

The minister said strict departmental action would be taken if negligence is found. The direction came a day after a 42-year-old patient died around three hours after a ceiling fan allegedly fell on him inside the hospital’s emergency ward, prompting his family to demand an enquiry into the incident.

During a high-level review meeting with senior Health Department officials, the minister learned that a committee headed by the Special Secretary (Health) had been constituted to investigate the incident and was asked to submit its report within three days. According to the Health Department, appropriate and strict departmental action will be taken based on the committee’s findings, reiterating that negligence in



healthcare services will not be tolerated.

In the Sunday statement, GTB Hospital said the patient died due to his existing medical condition, not because of the ceiling fan incident. It said the patient had been admitted in an unconscious condition with uncontrolled hypertension, stroke or encephalopathy complicated by aspiration pneumonia and respiratory failure.

The hospital also said a preliminary inspection found that the ceiling fan fell after its shaft fractured.

The minister chaired a review meeting to assess the preparedness of Delhi’s Government healthcare system, particularly during

the ongoing monsoon season, and discussed the issue.

During the meeting, Singh directed officials to ensure the uninterrupted availability of essential medicines, diagnostic services and healthcare infrastructure across all Government hospitals.

He instructed hospitals to maintain adequate medicine stocks and ensure essential diagnostic and laboratory services remain available without interruption so that patients receive timely treatment. The minister directed hospitals to remain fully prepared to deal with vector-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria and chikungunya. He asked officials to ensure adequate availability of medicines, testing facilities, consumables and other medical resources to manage any seasonal surge in cases.

He also reviewed vacancies in technical posts within the Health Department. He instructed officials to expedite the recruitment process to strengthen the healthcare workforce and improve service delivery in Government hospitals.

Union Govt urges CJP to end sit-in, help restore peace

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Centre on Monday requested the CJP protesters to end their sit-in and assist the administration in restoring normalcy. In a statement, Union Minister JP Nadda said discussions with the protesters took place after they proposed talks with the government earlier in the day.

A delegation of Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) met on Monday as protesters demanded accountability from the Government over the NEET-UG paper leak case. According to CJP spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka, the meeting with Nadda happened where a demand for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET-UG paper leak was raised.

Nadda said the meeting took place in a cordial atmosphere. “An initial verbal discussion was held in detail with their delegation, and they submitted a written petition to me around 4 PM,” said the Health Minister. Sources in Government said Nadda assured the two-member CJP delegation that the Government leadership will hold internal discussions on their demands and get back to them, after thousands of protesters tried to march to Parliament but were prevented by police.

CJP blamed the Union education minister as “directly responsible for multiple paper leaks, including NEET 2026, and other exam fiascos, most recently being CBSE 12th portal chaos and CUET exam delay.” The group’s



spokesperson Saurav Das in a social media post said that he and another spokesperson, Ashutosh Ranka, met Nadda at his house for 10 minutes and gave a letter of demands.

“While we submit a written letter with our demands, he has assured us that he will meanwhile speak internally. We are in that process...” Das said. “The minister assured us he will discuss this at the appropriate level. However, no commitments have been made so far. The peaceful protesters will not rest until the demand is met.”

He also shared a copy of the letter on social media. “There has been no systemic corrections or action taken by Pradhan, indicating his gross incompetency as the education minister,” the CJP said in the letter.

The CJP has been spearheading protests over alleged examination irregularities since June.

FROM PAGE - 1

General of Police, Tripura.”

Anurag Dhankar was from Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh and had over 30 years of experience in policing, intelligence, and investigations. He joined the IPS in 1994 and served in Tripura for almost 16 years, holding important roles like Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) and Director General (Intelligence). His knowledge of the state’s security and law-and-order issues earned him respect from colleagues and subordinates.

While on central deputation, Dhankar made important contributions at the national level. He worked in several roles with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), eventually becoming Additional Director. He was especially known for leading the investigation into the Punjab National Bank fraud case involving Nirav Modi, one of India’s biggest financial crime cases. He also served with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo from 2003 to 2004.

SBI takes over Ram temple donation count

The first shift runs from 8 am to 2 pm, and the second from 2 pm to 8 pm. By rotating new teams every six hours, the trust hopes to reduce fatigue-related mistakes and limit the risk of wrongdoing. The trust has also appointed Shobhnath Mishra as the new head of cash counting.

The State Government formed a SIT on June 13 to investigate the matter. This led to an FIR being registered on June 25. Eight people, including former counting staff, were arrested in connection with the case. Authorities recovered cash, gold, silver, foreign currency, and a donation box labelled “Ramrajya Kosh.” One of the accused had over Rs 20 lakh. Subhash Srivastava, who previously oversaw cash counting, was also arrested and jailed.

The SC is overseeing the investigation, led by Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant and other senior officers. The SIT was expected to submit an interim report while the court reviews related petitions. The trust says it is working closely with UP Police and the SIT.

PM Modi opens Monsoon Session with dig at Rahul

The PM added, “Be it the monsoon or the Monsoon Session — if both are proactive, they prove to be highly productive. And when both are productive, it leads to the welfare of the nation and the well-being of all living beings. That is why we pray that the monsoon remains both proactive and productive, and that the monsoon session proves productive as well.”

PM Modi stressed that meaningful discussions should take place in the House and collective resolutions made to move the country forward.

Forty days of anger explodes on streets

The Cockroach Janata Party’s (CJP) Chalo Sansad march was met with batons charges near the Parliament Street, tear gas shells near the Shastri Bhawan and the Raisina Road, and mass detentions across central Delhi. Internet services were suspended in parts of the Capital. Several entry gates to the Parliament were shut.

Protesters attempting to reach Jantar Mantar from Mandi House Metro Station were assaulted by the police. By 4 pm, repeated tear gas shelling pushed protesters past a breaking point, and the demonstration turned violent. Stone-pelting began, and police vehicles were smashed near Rajiv Chowk. By evening, Jantar Mantar was completely empty, with protesters regrouped and gathered around Connaught Place and Rajiv Chowk. The CJP launched its sit-in at Jantar Mantar on June 6, over 40 days ago.

The demand throughout has been the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged irregularities in NEET-UG 2026. The Government did not engage until Monday, the day of the march, when CJP spokesperson Saurav Das and Ashutosh Ranka were called in to meet Union Minister JP Nadda. Das posted from outside the meeting, “Our demands are clear. The youth have gathered in huge numbers.” After the meeting, he said Nadda had assured him he would speak internally, but that no commitments had been made.

The father of Riya Thapa, the NEET student who died by suicide, was present at Jantar Mantar and persuaded CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, who had himself been on hunger strike, to end his fast and lead the march. Dipke, addressing supporters earlier in the day, said, “This Government is not satisfied with taking the lives of 20 NEET students. They are now baying for the blood of others.”

The CJP posted as the internet was cut in parts of the city: “You can shut down the internet, but how will you close the eyes and ears of the protesters who will see and report?” Delhi Police Additional CP Rajeev Ranjan appealed for calm: “Delhi Police appeals to all protesters to maintain peace, exercise restraint, and cooperate with the police.”

Youth take their fight to Parliament, face police...

The incident resulted in injuries to over 118 police officers and approximately 60 protesters. Additionally, around 20 vehicles were damaged, and approximately 70 protesters were detained. The Delhi Police have also registered a case following Monday’s protest.

The protest at Jantar Mantar had been growing for weeks and had become one of the largest gatherings against what many see as problems in the education system. The CJP has held a sit-

in protest there since early June 2026.

The core demands include the immediate resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The main demands are for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign, for those responsible for repeated exam paper leaks to be held accountable, for reforms to stop such problems, and for compensation to families of students who died by suicide due to exam stress (with reports mentioning over a dozen cases).

Delhi Police said they acted to keep order and stop unauthorised marches into restricted areas. They denied using too much force or causing many injuries, and called some reports misinformation. Protesters said that force was used against women and younger participants.

Activist Sonam Wangchuk joined the protest with an indefinite hunger strike and was hospitalised on July 18 because of health issues. In a handwritten note from the hospital on Monday, Wangchuk said he would end his fast only if the Government took responsibility for the education system’s failures or if Members of Parliament from different parties promised to raise the issues in Parliament. Administrators are converging at the historic site to press their demands.

A delegation from the CJP met Union Minister JP Nadda after initial discussions began around noon. The meeting, described as cordial, took place in the afternoon. The delegation submitted a memorandum outlining their demands, including the Education Minister’s resignation, support for affected students and families, and related accountability measures. Nadda assured the group that their concerns would be conveyed to senior leadership for consideration. He also appealed to the protesters to end the sit-in and cooperate with efforts to restore normalcy in the area.

Opposition leaders sharply criticised the police response. Some said that using batons against students and youth protesters was an attack on democratic rights and the voices of young people. Several people were detained during the clashes, with estimates of 10-15 or more initially taken into custody. By Monday evening, the main protest was still underway at Jantar Mantar, though security forces had begun clearing some areas.

Tripura DGP Anurag Dhankar found dead

A post-mortem has been ordered to find the exact cause of death, and police and forensic teams are investigating the circumstances.

“Tripura Director General of Police Anurag Dhankar was found hanging in the washroom of his official chamber at the police headquarters on Monday”, according to Chief Minister Manik Saha. The CM said he visited the police headquarters with other top officials, including the chief secretary and the home secretary, after hearing the news. Saha wrote on Facebook, “I am deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic demise of Anurag, IPS, Director

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

A 19-year-old Class 11 student was allegedly stabbed to death following a quarrel with a group of youngsters in Delhi’s Kalkaji on Sunday afternoon, police said.

The incident took place near a park in B Block of DDA Flats in Kalkaji. Police received a PCR call about a quarrel involving school students at 2.23 pm and rushed to the spot, where they found the victim lying with stab injuries. A CATS ambulance reached the scene, administered cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and then shifted the injured youth to the AIIMS Trauma Centre. However, doctors declared him dead on arrival.

The deceased was identified as Saiyed Husain (19), a resident of JJ Camp in Okhla Phase-II. Police said Husain was a Class 11 student at an MCD school in Kalkaji. Preliminary investigation suggests that Husain was stabbed during a quarrel involving two to three persons. “The victim sus-



tained stab injuries during an altercation. The accused have been identified and efforts are underway to trace and apprehend them at the earliest,” a senior police officer said. Police said multiple teams have been formed to arrest the suspects.

A case has been registered and investigators are examining CCTV footage from the area and questioning witnesses to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the fatal attack. The motive behind the killing is yet to be established. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination, and further investigation is underway, he added.

changing demands.

This latest World Cup is therefore more than another trophy. It is evidence that Spain have evolved from a golden generation into a footballing institution. Teams are difficult to build. Rebuilding one may be even harder. Spain have now done both.

It completes one of international football’s most remarkable journeys: from decades of frustration to one of the greatest teams of the 21st century, through decline and reinvention, and back to the summit once again.

History will remember the medals and the silverware. But Spain’s greatest accomplishment may be something less tangible: the ability to repeatedly unite players from different footballing backgrounds around a shared identity.

The author is a sports management consultant with over a decade of experience in sports promotion and development

Opposition brings Parliament to a standstill

“Thousands of students have reached Jantar Mantar (where the protest is on), and they were lathi-charged,” he said. “The Government is trying to beat them down and suppress the issue,” Kharge said, as Opposition members shouted “shame, shame”.

Amid the uproar, the Chairman adjourned the House till noon. Opposition members continued raising slogans in favour of protesting students and the subsequent police action against them. They were also raising slogans against donation theft at Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

Earlier, at 2 pm, Pal said there was adequate quorum to conduct business, but some Opposition MPs alleged they were being prevented from entering the House. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said the House could not function if the disruptions continued. Previously, as soon as the House met at 11 am, opposition members started raising slogans, forcing Speaker Om Birla to adjourn the proceedings till 12 noon as the Question Hour was being taken up. Birla objected to two members raising slogans when obituary references were read out on the demise of six former MPs, saying it was not a good precedent.

When the House met again at 12 noon, noisy protests continued and the House was adjourned till 12:30 pm. Before the proceedings were adjourned, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced a bill to replace an ordinance which increased the number of Supreme Court judges from 34 to 38, including the Chief Justice of India. Similar disruption was witnessed at 12:30 pm when repeated pleas by the Chair to take up Zero Hour failed to get a positive response from opposition members. Dilip Saikia, who was in the Chair, adjourned the proceedings till 1 pm. When the House met at 1 PM, the protests by the opposition continued.

DCGI approves India’s first dengue vaccine–QDENG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

India has approved its first dengue vaccine, with the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) granting market authorisation to the vaccine QDENG, developed by Takeda Biopharmaceuticals India.

The vaccine is approved for people aged 4 to 60 years and can be given regardless of whether a person has previously been infected with dengue.

Unlike the older dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia, QDENG does not require people to undergo blood testing to determine whether they have previously had dengue, a significant advantage for large-scale public health programmes.

“Since its launch in 2022, QDENG has been approved

in 43 countries, with more than 32 million doses distributed globally. This approval marks an important step forward in strengthening dengue prevention in India,” said Mahender Nayak, Head of Intercontinental Markets, Takeda.

The latest seven-year data for QDENG show continued protection against dengue infection and hospitalisation across all four serotypes, an important milestone for communities and health systems, he added.

The vaccine has already been approved in more than 40 countries, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Indonesia and Argentina. India now joins that list at a time when dengue is emerging as one of the country’s biggest seasonal public health threats.

The approval in India is



based on results from Takeda’s global clinical development programme, involving 19 Phase 1, 2 and 3 clinical trials with over 28,000 participants in both endemic and non-endemic regions, the company said.

It is also supported by data

from a Phase III clinical trial (DEN-302) conducted in Indian participants, which evaluated the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine in individuals aged 4-60 years, it added.

The vaccine is administered subcutaneously, 0.5 ml as a

two-dose regimen, with doses given three months apart.

India carries a substantial dengue burden, and all four dengue virus serotypes have been documented as co-circulating in several regions, said Goh Choo Beng, Medical Affairs Head, Southeast Asia & India Cluster, Takeda.

“QDENG is designed to protect against all four serotypes, regardless of prior exposure. Its approval represents an important step in strengthening India’s comprehensive approach to dengue prevention, alongside vector control, surveillance, community awareness and other public health measures,” Beng added.

The company added that the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends QDENG for use in dengue-endemic regions and supports its inclusion in public

immunisation programmes in high-transmission areas without requiring pre-vaccination screening.

QDENG has also received WHO prequalification, confirming that it meets international standards for quality, safety and effectiveness. This also makes the vaccine eligible for procurement by global agencies such as UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO).

Dengue, a mosquito-borne viral disease, poses a significant global public health threat, with prevalence in over 125 countries. India accounts for nearly one-third of the global dengue burden, the company said.

Millions of Indians remain at risk each year due to widespread endemicity, rapid urbanisation and climate-related factors that drive mosquito proliferation, it added.

10 more die in Jammu rain havoc; death toll reaches 22

MOHIT KANDHARI
■ Jammu

A day after devastating flash floods and landslides claimed 12 lives and left several others missing across Jammu division, 10 more civilians lost their lives on Monday, taking the death toll in the rain-battered region to 22.

According to official sources, seven people were buried alive when their house was struck by a massive landslide in the Domail Dhok area of Loran in Poonch district. The incident was reported after midnight, following flash floods that triggered massive mudslides.

Three persons were killed and six others injured after falling boulders struck a passenger bus and a house in two separate incidents in the hilly Doda district.

According to Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma, seven people have lost their lives in the incident in Loran Dumilan village. He said all seven bodies have been retrieved. Among the seven killed, four were women.

Mohd Rafiq lost his wife, Zaida Begum, and two minor kids along with four other relatives.

In a separate incident, a rock rolled down a hillock near Raggi Nallah along the Jammu-Kishtwar national highway around 9.30 am amid torrential rains, hitting a passenger bus, the officials said.

They said a rescue operation was launched immediately, and seven injured persons were shifted to a nearby hospital, where one of them, identified as Manish Kumar, was declared brought dead.

In addition, the body of an unidentified person was recovered from the



damaged vehicle, the officials said, adding efforts are underway to establish the identity of the deceased.

The officials said the highway remained blocked as a couple of private vehicles were also hit by boulders in the area. However, the occupants of the vehicles escaped unhurt.

In another incident, a woman identified as Shiv Devi was killed after being hit by a shooting stone at her house in the Kashtigarh area of the district, the officials said.

Meanwhile, heavy rain on Monday severely hampered rescue operations in both Poonch and Rajouri districts.

The fresh spell of rain began around 3 am in the twin border districts and continued unabated, making rescue and search operations difficult in the affected areas.

Police, Army, SDRF and Civil Defence personnel and local volunteers continued rescue efforts despite the adverse weather, the officials said.

Moderate to heavy rainfall was reported from Jammu and several other districts, though there were no immediate reports of any loss of life or damage to property.

Earlier, a BJP delegation led by the Leader of the Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Sunil Sharma, visited the flood-affected areas of Poonch and Rajouri districts to assess the damage caused by flash floods and landslides triggered by torrential rain.

West Bengal CM Suwendu releases 1993 firing report ahead of TMC rally

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

In a damaging development that could hurt the very purpose of observing the Trinamool Congress’ Martyrs’ Day by the Mamata Banerjee faction of the Trinamool Congress, Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Monday disclosed the long-pending report of the Justice Sushanta Chattopadhyay Commission.

The report incidentally comes just on the eve of the TMC’s observance of the 33rd Martyrs’ Day rally on July 21 and threatens to challenge Mamata Banerjee’s moral right to politically exploit the day, experts said.

According to the report presented before the Assembly, the police firing on Youth Congress demon-



strators on July 21 1993, killing 13 persons, was legally unwarranted.

The report said that the firing was carried out on the instructions of the then Home Secretary Manish Gupta. Instead of taking action against Gupta after becoming the Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee not only sent him to Parliament but also made him a Cabinet Minister in his Government, post 2011.

The report had thus far

been kept under the carpet by the previous TMC Government notwithstanding its annual observance of the TMC Martyrs’ Day rally, when the kin of the deceased were honoured from the dais.

Chief Minister Adhikari also released the names of the 44 witnesses who were summoned by the Commission. Mamata Banerjee, who had always claimed to be a witness to the firing, however, was not summoned by the Commission.

Referring to the reports, the Chief Minister said: “Many people extracted benefits from the July 21 movement, some rose in power, some acquired status to go abroad, but the people of Bengal still do not know as to what really happened that day.”

Rahul slams baton charge on CJP protests, calls PM anti-youth

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday dubbed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the “most anti-youth” PM in the country’s history as he accused the Government of not just failing the youth but also pouncing on them.

Gandhi’s remarks came after security forces resorted to a baton-charge near Parliament Street after thousands of Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) supporters, protesting against the paper leaks, allegedly tried to breach barricades while marching towards Parliament on the first day of the Monsoon session.

As CJP supporters, including students, marched towards Parliament, the police tried to stop them and used tear gas and lathi-charged them.



Rahul Gandhi with Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during the Monsoon session of Parliament in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

“Prime Minister Modi is the ‘most anti-youth Prime Minister in India’s history - He’s so ‘anti-youth’ that he can’t even take the resignation of a failed Education Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan.

“152 paper leaks. 7.5 crore students victimised. And not a single guilty person punished. Who got the punishment? The hardworking youth,” he said in a post in Hindi on X.

Gandhi said when children raise legitimate questions about education, they are met with batons and detention in response.

“The criminals who leaked the papers roam free - and the students raising valid issues are dragged around, beaten.

“This Government is not just failing the youth - it is pouncing on them,” the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said.

Jitendra Singh calls for revisiting pension rules to minimise litigation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh, on Monday called for a comprehensive review of pension regulations to ensure that evolving social realities are adequately reflected in Government policies, stating that many pension disputes arise because existing rules have failed to keep pace with changing societal needs.

He emphasised that the ultimate objective of pension administration should be to prevent litigation through timely policy reforms rather than resolving disputes after they reach the courts.

Addressing the 2nd National Workshop on Pension Litigation, organised by the Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare, the Minister said the Government is committed to creating a zero-litigation pension ecosystem through simplified rules, improved grievance redressal, stronger coordination among Ministries and proactive identification of recurring issues before they develop into legal disputes.

During the event, Dr Jitendra Singh



launched the Compendium of Case Laws on Pension Litigation, a Flyer on Pension Litigation, and the Special Campaign 3.0 of the Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare, aimed at strengthening litigation management, improving service delivery and promoting citizen-centric pension administration.

Singh observed that pension administration must continuously evolve alongside changing social realities. Referring to recent reforms, he highlighted the Government’s decision to extend pension benefits to separated daughters by simplifying eligibility conditions, thereby

eliminating the need for lengthy legal proceedings in many deserving cases. He said such reforms demonstrate the Government’s commitment to making pension policies more humane, inclusive and responsive to contemporary societal requirements.

The Minister also referred to reforms in family pension provisions, noting that outdated regulations inherited from earlier administrative frameworks often created hardship for beneficiaries. He said several such provisions have been revisited over the past few years to ensure that pensioners and their families are not compelled

to seek judicial intervention merely to receive legitimate benefits.

Earlier, welcoming the participants, Dhruvajyoti Sengupta, Joint Secretary, Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare, said the Department’s vision is centred on improving the ease of life of pensioners through policy reforms, digital governance and effective litigation management. He informed that litigation cases on the Department’s Litigation Information Management System (LIMS) have declined by nearly 20 per cent over the past year, reflecting improved coordination among Ministries, legal counsels and departments.

The workshop was attended by Nivedita Shukla Verma, Secretary, Department of Pension & Pensioners’ Welfare; Sukriti Likh, Secretary, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare; Dr Rajiv Mani, Secretary, Department of Legal Affairs; and R Venkataramani, I.d. Attorney General for India. The programme featured two technical sessions on pension litigation before tribunals and courts, litigation management, standardisation of case laws, and policy interventions aimed at minimising avoidable pension-related disputes.

CPI(M) condemns police action on students

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Monday strongly condemned the police action against students and youth protesting at Jantar Mantar during a march to Parliament, demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the disbanding of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

Security forces resorted to a lathi-charge and used tear gas to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who had gathered following a call by student and youth outfits over alleged paper leaks and irregularities in the NEET examinations. Several protesters sustained injuries in the clash, which also witnessed police action near the CPI(M) headquarters at Gole Market.

In a press statement, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau alleged



CPI(M) General Secretary MA Baby

that the police carried out “ferocious attacks” on peaceful demonstrators at the behest of the Union Home Ministry. The party accused the Centre of adopting a dictatorial approach and refusing to engage in dialogue despite a month-long nationwide protest.

“The paranoid Government, instead of being accountable for the growing mess in education and the pathetic situation of unemployment, has refused to have a dialogue with the protesters,” the statement

read, warning the Union Government that repressive measures would fail to suppress the growing anger among the country’s youth.

The party reiterated its demands for the immediate resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan, the dissolution of the NTA, and the unconditional release of all detained student activists.

Expressing solidarity with the protesting students, CPI(M) General Secretary MA Baby lashed out at the Union Government for suppressing democratic protests.

“The brutal police action on students peacefully exercising their democratic rights at Jantar Mantar is unacceptable. Instead of fixing accountability for the NEET mess and addressing the grievances of millions of aspirants, the Modi Government is using police force to brutally crush student voices. Dharmendra Pradhan must step down immediately on moral grounds,” MA Baby said.

ASI received 121 nods for archaeological projects in five years, says Union Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

There were 121 instances when permission was granted for the ASI to carry out archaeological projects in the country in the last five years, the Government informed Parliament on Monday.

Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat shared the data in a written response to a query in Lok Sabha.

He was also asked for details of any court orders regarding the continuance or closure of any archaeological projects during the last five years and the action taken thereof.

“There is no court order regarding the continuation or closure of any archaeological projects during the last five years,” Shekhawat said.

There are 3,686 centrally protected monuments and sites under the care and main-



tenance of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) across the country.

The Union minister was also asked about the sites where the ASI is doing excavation across the country along with expenditure incurred thereon and the timeline set for completion of works; and the details of historical findings discovered from the archaeological projects carried out during the last five years and scientific validations thereof.

In tabulated data, he shared that 121 instances of permission were issued for carrying out archaeological

projects by the ASI in the last five years.

In 2021-22, as many as 24 instances of permission were issued, while in 2022-23, the figure stood at 31; and for 2024 and 2025, the numbers stood at 22 and 25, respectively.

“During excavation, structural remains, burials, pottery and antiquities such as coins, beads, ornaments, agricultural tools, bone objects, etc. have been unearthed and, as per set practice, samples are sent to various institutions for scientific validations whenever required,” the minister added.

Datia bypoll: BJP deploys top leaders for booth duty

GIRISH SHARMA
■ Bhopal

With the high-stakes Datia Assembly by-election entering a crucial phase, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has launched an aggressive organisational campaign by deploying senior leaders, former ministers, former MLAs and experienced office-bearers to oversee booth-level operations, signalling the party’s focus on micro-management to retain the prestigious seat.

While Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, State BJP president Hemant Khandelwal, State BJP in-charge Mahendra Singh, ministers and senior leaders are spearheading the campaign, the party has simultaneously activated its grassroots network by assigning veteran leaders to individual Shakti Kendras, the BJP’s key organisational units responsible for booth management and voter mobilisation.

Under the strategy, each Shakti Kendra has been



assigned a Prabhari (in-charge) and a Sangathak (organiser), who will jointly supervise four to six polling booths. Their responsibilities include coordinating booth-level workers, strengthening voter outreach, monitoring election preparedness and ensuring effective management on polling day.

According to the list issued by the Datia district BJP unit, senior leaders have been assigned responsibilities across Datia Urban, Datia Rural, Badoni, Bhandar, Indergarh and Seondha mandals. Several former ministers, former legislators and experienced organisational functionaries have been entrusted with the task of

ensuring seamless coordination between the party organisation and grassroots workers.

The move comes as the BJP intensifies its campaign for the July 30 bypoll, widely seen as a prestige battle for the ruling party. The election assumes added significance after the party fielded Ashutosh Tiwari, replacing senior leader and former Home Minister Narottam Mishra, whose supporters had initially expressed resentment over the ticket decision before the leadership moved swiftly to restore unity within the organisation.

Party leaders believe that booth management remains the backbone of the BJP’s electoral success. By assigning experienced leaders to every Shakti Kendra, the organisation aims to strengthen voter contact, improve coordination among workers and maximise voter turnout on polling day.

Speaking about the party’s election strategy, BJP State president Hemant

Khandelwal said the BJP’s greatest strength lies in its disciplined cadre and robust organisational structure. He said every worker has an important role in the election, adding that the party remains in “election mode” throughout the year through continuous coordination with booth, mandal, district and State-level workers. Khandelwal also expressed confidence that the BJP would register a decisive victory in the Datia bypoll, saying the organisation was united and fully committed to ensuring the success of the party’s candidate.

A Shakti Kendra is regarded as one of the BJP’s most important organisational units, serving as the link between the party leadership and booth-level workers. With two senior functionaries supervising each cluster of booths, the BJP hopes to ensure meticulous planning, efficient voter mobilisation and effective election-day management as it seeks to retain the Datia Assembly seat.

■ States Focus ■



LANDSLIDES HIT GUWAHATI; LOCALS ASKED TO STAY ALERT

Several landslides were reported in Guwahati on Monday, with the authorities issuing an alert for more rainfall in the city over the next 24 hours, aggravating the situation. Kamrup Metropolitan District Commissioner Swapneel Paul said landslides were reported from at least five locations, though no casualties have been reported so far. The affected areas include Kamakhya main road beyond Prashanti Lodge, Kamakhya Colony near Ganesh Mandir, Paschim Kamakhya village near the water tanker, Pandu Temple Ghat and Madhavdevnagar in Maligaon, he said. People have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel in hilly areas of the district, particularly around Maligaon and Pandu, he said.

(PNS)



DOVAL TO RECEIVE LOKMANYA TILAK AWARD ON AUGUST 1

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval has been selected for the prestigious Lokmanya Tilak Award for his significant contribution to the field of national security, the Tilak Smarak Trust announced on Monday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah will present the award to Doval at a function in Pune on August 1. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy CMs Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar are likely to attend the event, the trust's president, Dr Rohit Tilak, said at a press conference. The award ceremony will be held at the Maharashtra Mandal ground in the Gultekdi area of Pune. Doval, 81, has handled crucial assignments in sensitive regions, including Mizoram, Sikkim, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. He also served in diplomatic roles at Indian missions in Islamabad and London. He is the longest-serving National Security Advisor of India. Doval has served as India's special representative for the India-China boundary talks and is also credited with playing an important role in diplomatic efforts that helped resolve the Doklam standoff.

(PTI)

MP Govt tables UCC Bill in Assembly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Government on Monday introduced the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in the Assembly, where noisy scenes were witnessed as the Opposition demanded a discussion on the alleged land purchases linked to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. The State Government tabled the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill, 2026, on the opening day of the five-day monsoon session, even as Congress members demanded an urgent debate on the alleged scam in Ujjain. The House was adjourned for 30 minutes after Congress members trooped into the well. Speaker Narendra Singh



Madhya Pradesh Assembly speaker Narendra Singh Tomar being greeted by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav in Bhopal on Monday

Tomar said the House would take up discussion on the UCC Bill on Tuesday. A recent newspaper report had claimed that Yadav and his family members purchased huge land parcels after the latter became the chief minister — a charge

denied by the BJP as baseless. As soon as the Question Hour concluded, Leader of the Opposition Umang Singhar raised the issue of land purchases linked to the chief minister and family through an adjournment motion, inviting strong objec-

tions from BJP legislators and ministers. Assembly Affairs Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya opposed the demand, saying the matter could not be taken up through an adjournment motion. He contended that the adjournment motion is usually taken up on recent developments and not on old ones. Congress MLAs trooped into the well of the House shouting slogans, and Singhar maintained that the adjournment motion pertained to the alleged acquisition of land linked to the Simhastha area and the alleged purchase of land by the chief minister's family, insisting on a debate. As the Congress members refused to relent, the Speaker adjourned the proceedings for 30 minutes.

DMK legislator held for defamatory speech against TN CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Tuticorin (Tamil Nadu)

Opposition DMK MLA, GV Markandeyan, was arrested on Monday for allegedly making defamatory remarks against Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, drawing sharp criticism from the party president MK Stalin, who denounced the police action.

Markandeyan, representing the Vilathikulam Assembly constituency, was picked up by a police team from his residence amidst protests by his supporters who raised slogans condemning the police action.

He was later arrested, a police official said, and added that his arrest followed a complaint from the ruling TVK functionary over his controversial speech threatening the chief minister.

The police registered an FIR against Markandeyan under three sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) — criminal intimidation, intentional insult with intent to provoke breaching public peace, and spreading false information, following a com-



Opposition DMK MLA, GV Markandeyan

plaint lodged by P Kasiram, the Tamilaga Vетtri Kazhagam functionary, the official said.

While addressing a public meeting in Kovilpatti in the district on July 18, Markandeyan had issued threats and made derogatory remarks against the chief minister, which were found in bad taste. Kasiram had said in his complaint to the police.

In the viral video of his arrest, the legislator could be heard saying that he could not be arrested without the permission of the Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker, since he was an MLA. The police had to convince the MLA to take him to the police station, even as his supporters staged a protest in front of his house.

Markandeyan is the second legislator from the DMK to be arrested from the Tuticorin district within weeks. Former State minister Anita R Radhakrishnan, representing the Tiruchendur Assembly constituency in the district, was arrested on July 3, allegedly for making a defamatory speech against Vijay.

Strongly condemning the arrest, Stalin accused the ruling TVK of political vendetta and said the former DMK ministers and party legislators were "continuously hunted" for pointing out the mistakes and misdeeds done by the current regime. "The court recently pulled up the Government for adding unrelated criminal sections even in defama-

West Bengal Govt to make all communications in Bangla from September 1, says CM



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

The West Bengal Government will make all official communications in Bangla from September 1, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari said in the Assembly on Monday and read out Amit Shah's letter, which suggested taking steps for the extensive use and development of Indian languages.

He said Union Home Minister Amit Shah had, in the letter, urged him to take steps for the use of the Bangla language at every level of State administration.

"From September 1, the use of the Bangla language will be mandatory at every level of the State Government," the chief minister said.

"We will use Bengali in all correspondence with the Centre and other States," he said, adding that communications with the Union Government will be in Hindi along with Bangla.

Currently, official communications with the Centre are generally conducted in English. The chief minister also announced that his Government would take initiatives to promote a wider use of Bangla, stating the language must be given priority in all forms of official communication.

Special emphasis would be on issuing Government notifications, directives, and office orders in Bangla, he said. Adhikari said that during the Union home minister's three-day visit to

West Bengal, Shah wrote him a letter in Bengali, highlighting Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee's views on language diversity.

"He was an ardent supporter of conservation, development, and the extensive use of Indian languages," said Shah in the letter, which Adhikari read out in the House. During the inauguration of the country's first immersive language museum in Kolkata on Sunday, Shah emphasised the inseparable link between language and civilisation, saying the expression of a nation's culture was impossible without language, which could not exist without words born out of human emotions and expression.

Calling upon people to preserve India's multilingual ethos, he said, "Apart from the mother tongue, learning another Indian language will not only help preserve one's own native tongue but also ensure the long-term vitality of all Indian languages."

He said every individual shares a deep emotional bond with their mother tongue and this attachment should become an integral part of one's character.

In his letter, the home minister suggested it was necessary to ensure that from the land and land revenue department to the chief minister's office, file management, noting, departmental communications and orders are in Bangla.

Karnataka Congress questions ONGC CSR funds to RSS-linked organisations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bengaluru

Karnataka Congress president BK Hariprasad on Monday questioned the alleged flow of ONGC's CSR funds to organisations linked to the RSS and demanded greater transparency and accountability in the use of public resources.

Referring to a media report, Hariprasad alleged that state-owned ONGC had channelled ₹668 crore in CSR funds to 20 RSS-linked organisations over the past decade and said the issue warranted public scrutiny. "It's reported that Rs 668 crore of ONGC's CSR funds reportedly flowed to 20 RSS-linked organisations over the last decade," Hariprasad said



Karnataka Congress president BK Hariprasad

in a post on 'X'.

He further alleged that the reported funding pattern should be viewed alongside "the recurring allegations of public resources — from temple offerings and disaster relief funds to Covid relief,

public land, and Kalyana Karnataka development funds — being channelled into the Sangh ecosystem."

Hariprasad questioned the RSS's claim that it does not receive government funds, saying, "Yet the @RSSorg

claims it doesn't take Govt funds. If public institutions & taxpayer-backed resources are funding your affiliates, how can RSS claim to be independent of govt money?"

He said the debate had gone beyond the question of registration and added, "The issue is no longer registration alone; it is transparency, accountability, and the right of citizens to know how public money is being spent."

Demanding answers from the RSS, the Karnataka Congress chief said, "RSS should not evade further questions on its funding and how correct it is morally for an unregistered organisation to receive such funds."

There was no immediate response from ONGC.

Gujarat: Murder accused attacks cops, killed in encounter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Anand

A man accused of kidnapping and murdering a minor girl was killed in an encounter in Gujarat's Anand district after he allegedly attacked police personnel with a concealed knife while trying to escape from custody, an official said on Monday.

Two policemen sustained injuries in the attack on Sunday night. The accused, whom the police shot in self-defence, died during treatment, Inspector General of Ahmedabad Range Raghavendra Vatsa said.

"A person accused of kidnapping and killing a minor girl has been killed in an encounter as he tried to escape after attacking police with a concealed knife on Sunday night. Two policemen received injuries in the knife attack," Vatsa told reporters. Police identified the deceased as Suresh Parmar, in his late 20s, who was accused of kidnapping and murdering a four-and-a-half-year-old girl from Vasad in the district.



According to Anand police, the girl was sleeping with her parents, who are migrant labourers, on a platform at the Vasad railway station and was abducted at around 9.15 pm on Saturday. Later, the body was found on the railway tracks early on Sunday.

The railway station's CCTV footage showed the accused taking the child away. Multiple teams of the railway

police, Anand district police, Local Crime Branch (LCB), Special Operations Group and Vasad police launched a search operation.

Parmar, a resident of Borsad town in Anand, was arrested late Sunday evening by Borsad rural police and handed over to the LCB for further investigation, the police said.

While the LCB personnel were bringing Parmar to Anand town on Sunday night, he asked the escorting team to stop the vehicle, claiming he needed to vomit. After the vehicle halted, he allegedly attacked two policemen with a hidden knife in an attempt to flee, causing injuries to both of them, they said.

A sub-inspector repeatedly warned the accused to surrender, but he continued the attack, forcing the police to open fire in self-defence, the police said.

Parmar sustained a bullet injury and was taken to a hospital in Karamsad, where he succumbed to his injuries in the early hours of Monday, they added.

Out of total CSR only 8.4% spent on environment in FY-2023-24: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

While the amount deployed in environmental corporate social responsibility (CSR) has steadily increased in recent years, only 8.4 per cent of the total CSR was spent on it in the financial year 2023-24, according to a report.

It also stated that among India's 50 most climate-vulnerable districts, 30 of them received only 1 per cent (Rs 106 crore) of total environmental CSR spending over the past three years.

The report, 'A Decade of Green Spending: What ₹17,000 Crores of Environmental CSR Reveals About Corporate India', was released by Sattva Consulting, a global impact consulting firm, on Monday.

It also revealed that sectors with some of the largest environmental footprints, including energy, mining, and oil, gas, coal and petroleum, show relatively low participa-



tion in environmental CSR. "Sectors with high pollution intensity, including oil, gas, coal and petroleum, mining, and energy, allocate only 5-7 per cent of their CSR budgets to environmental initiatives... By contrast, consumer-facing sectors such as FMCG and automotive allocate over 10-15 per cent of CSR to environmental themes," said the report.

The analysis highlighted that high-value environmental CSR projects (₹50 lakh and above) in FY 2023-24, water management (15 per cent), renewable energy (12

per cent), and biodiversity (11 per cent) together account for 38 per cent of all high-value project funding.

However, air quality, despite its acute public health relevance, received just Rs 14 crore, around 5 per cent of the high-value project pool.

In a statement, Srikrishna Sridhar Murthy, co-Founder and CEO of Sattva Consulting, said, "India's climate ambitions will require every form of capital to work more strategically. As climate risks increasingly affect business operations, supply chains and communities."

6 killed as truck collides with car in Maharashtra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Wardha (Maharashtra)

Six persons were killed when a truck crashed into a car on the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway in Maharashtra's Wardha district early on Monday, police said.

The two vehicles caught fire after the accident that occurred at around 3 am near Virul village. Traffic movement on the busy expressway was disrupted.

A container truck carrying ethanol overturned near interchange IC-80 on the expressway. While another lane remained operational, a stationary car on the road was struck from behind by a truck, and both vehicles caught fire, a senior police official said.

Four car passengers and two occupants of the truck, including its driver, died in the accident, he said.

Teams from the Highway Safety Patrol, Wardha Police, fire brigade, and the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation rushed to the spot for rescue and traffic restoration operations.

Since the overturned container was carrying highly flammable ethanol, it was necessary to empty it first before its safe removal. The operation was underway with utmost caution to ensure public safety, the official said.

Traffic on the Mumbai-Nagpur carriage-way was being diverted to the opposite lane, causing heavy congestion along the affected stretch. Police also advised motorists trav-



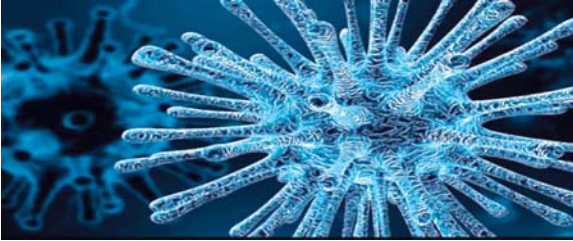
elling from Nagpur to Mumbai to avoid using the Samruddhi Expressway up to Wardha for the next few hours. They asked people to use the Nagpur-Amravati highway and rejoin the expressway through the Amravati gate interchange.

Efforts were underway to facilitate the safe clearance of the accident site.

Notably, the Samruddhi Expressway recorded 185 accidents in 2025, a 35 per cent increase from the 2024 figure of 137, as per the highway police data.

The 701-km six-lane access-controlled highway, which connects Vidarbha's largest city to the country's financial Capital, has been opened to traffic in phases since December 2022. An Intelligent Traffic Management System is currently under implementation to improve monitoring and enhance road safety, officials earlier said.

Gujarat reports 63 suspected Chandipura cases, 12 test positive



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

Gujarat has recorded 63 suspected cases of Chandipura virus, of which 12 have tested positive, according to a review of the situation by the State health authorities.

A review meeting chaired by Health Minister Praful Pansheriya examined the geographical spread of reported cases, possible sources of transmission, laboratory testing and measures undertaken by the administration.

Of the 12 positive cases,

nine are from Gujarat, and three are from Rajasthan. The positive cases in Gujarat have been reported from Panchmahal and Kheda, which have recorded two cases each, while Sabarkantha, Mehsana, Bharuch, Bhavnagar and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation area have reported one case each.

The Health Minister directed officials to maintain intensive surveillance in areas reporting cases and conduct detailed investigations into patients' travel and medical histories to identify possible sources of infection.

Army deployed, rail services hit as flood worsens in Assam

TONY DAS
■ Guwahati

Incessant rains worsened the flood situation in Upper Assam on Monday, requiring the deployment of Army personnel to assist state agencies in relief and rescue operations, while rail traffic was hit in the region with several trains rerouted, suspended or short-terminated. According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), five people have died so far in this year's floods. More than 57,100 people in Charaideo, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sivasagar, Tinsukia and Udalguri districts have been affected by the deluge, it said.

Several tea estates in the state are under floodwaters, with the Assam unit of the Tea Association of India saying that rivers from Nagaland have swelled suddenly and were flowing above the danger level. The breach of the embankment on the Dorika River aggravated the situation, inundating extensive stretches of the tea estates in the Nazira region, it said. Northeast Frontier Railway said that due to heavy rainfall, the swollen Dikhow river flooded Simaluguri town in Sivasagar district in Tinsukia Division. "Floodwaters have entered the station yard and the railway colony. Railway tracks in the area have also been inundated. For passenger safety, train movement in the Simaluguri-Namtiali and Simaluguri-Selenghat sections has been suspended until



further notice," it said. Long-distance trains from Dibrugarh and Tinsukia have been diverted through the Rangiya-Rangapara route on the north bank of the Brahmaputra while several local trains have either been cancelled or short-terminated. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said four of his cabinet colleagues are on the ground and monitoring the rescue and relief operations. He has asked all MPs and MLAs of the affected districts to be at the flood-hit

areas to oversee the rapidly changing situation. "In Sivasagar, 510 people have been rescued by SDRF and the Fire and Emergency Services. Rescue efforts continue with additional boats and Army helicopters deployed to reach inaccessible areas," the Chief Minister's office posted on social media. In Charaideo, the National Disaster Response Force, its state counterpart and Army teams have been deployed in the worst-hit areas, while relief measures are under-

way to ensure the safety and well-being of affected residents, it added. On Sunday night, Sarma said the state government requested the Army and Air Force to be on standby to assist the local administration in evacuating flood victims from several districts affected by the deluge.

"Flood-fighting work is underway in Jorhat, Charaideo and Sivasagar. Sand-filled bags are being dumped along the Dikhow embankment, geobags are being used to reinforce the Disang riverbank and flood-fighting work is underway at the Jhanji embankment in Norakonwar Bailung Gaon," the CMO said. It said the Jhanji river was showing a receding trend with the water level falling by 0.04 metres since morning.

Sarma said unprecedented rainfall over the last few days has aggravated the flood situation in Sivasagar and neighbouring districts.

"We remain committed to providing all sorts of assistance to the affected... Rescue efforts are underway and are being monitored by our ministerial team," he added.

As rains continue, the administration is reinforcing its efforts to shift people to safer places and provide them with all necessary support, the Chief Minister said.

Sarma said on Sunday that he directed his ministerial colleagues Ajanta Neog, Bimal Borah, Keshab Mahanta and Susanta Borgohain to immediately reach the affected areas to supervise relief efforts.

IndiGo to place order for over 1,000 aircraft engines with CFM International

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The country's largest airline IndiGo on Monday announced it will place an order with CFM International for more than 1,000 engines to power its 510 A320 neo family planes. IndiGo and CFM International, an equal joint venture between GE Aerospace and Safran Aircraft Engines, have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the order at the Farnborough International Airshow in the UK.

The order for more than 1,000 LEAP-1A engines to power 510 Airbus A320 neo family aircraft will also be the "largest single order ever placed for LEAP engines and a record for CFM International," a release said on Monday.

Financial details were not disclosed. A320 neo family planes include A320 neos, A321 neos and A321 XLRs. All are narrow-body aircraft.

CFM International would also provide extensive support to the airline in establishing its engine MRO (Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul) facility in Bengaluru. Besides, it will provide support to the IndiGo fleet through long-term material services agreement, including supply of spare parts.

Currently, IndiGo has an operational fleet of over 400 planes and over 900 Airbus aircraft are on order.

"CFM has been a trusted partner in our growth journey since 2016, supporting a fleet that now



exceeds 375 A320/321Family aircraft. The LEAP engine's industry-leading proven reliability makes it the ideal choice to support our scale, operational resilience and sustainability ambitions," IndiGo CEO Designate Willie Walsh said.

IndiGo has been a customer of CFM International for 10 years.

In 2016, the airline operated a sub-fleet of Airbus A320 ceo family aircraft powered by CFM56-5B engines and in 2019, the airline ordered LEAP-1A engines for their newest fleet of Airbus A320/321 neo family aircraft.

India is the third largest market for CFM International, with 5 Indian carriers operating more than 400 LEAP-powered aircraft and 2,000 engines on order.

GE Aerospace Chairman and CEO H Lawrence Culp, Jr said that with a strong installed base, manufacturing in Pune, a broad local supplier network, and

advanced engineering in Bengaluru, we remain committed to supporting IndiGo's growth and expanding our presence in India.

"As one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, India is of strategic importance to Safran. Through our continued investments in the country, particularly in LEAP engine production and MRO capabilities, we are strengthening our long-term commitment to supporting IndiGo's remarkable growth and to contributing to the development of Indian aerospace industry," Safran CEO Olivier Andries said.

Meanwhile, many planes are grounded due to issues with Pratt & Whitney (P&W) engines.

Earlier in the day, Honeywell Aerospace announced that IndiGo has selected its avionics and power systems for 810 new Airbus A320 neo family aircraft that are to be delivered in the coming years.

DGCA issues 1,331 pilot licences till June, says Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

As many as 1,331 commercial pilot licences have been issued by aviation watchdog DGCA this year till June 30, and out of them, 41 per cent of the cadets were trained overseas, according to the Government.

The data was submitted to the Rajya Sabha on Monday as part of a written reply by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol.

This year, till June 30, commercial pilot licences were issued to 791 cadets from Indian Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) and 540 cadets from foreign FTOs.

The licences were issued to 1,652 cadets and 1,347 cadets in 2025 and 2024, respectively. As per the data, a total of 1,622 persons were issued the licences in 2023, higher than the 1,165 people who received the licences in 2022.

Currently, there are 41 DGCA-approved FTOs with 63 bases across the country with more than 400 aircraft.

DGCA norms stipulate Aircraft: Instructor: Student ratio as 1:1:10, which corresponds to training capacity of around 3,500 students at these FTOs at any given point of time, Mohol said.

The minister said the Government has taken several steps to strengthen pilot training infrastructure in the country, including simplifying and streamlining the approval and oversight process for FTOs, and revising training regulations.

Polluted river stretches drop to 296, says Govt



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The number of polluted river stretches in the country has declined from 351 in 2018 to 296 in 2025, based on biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), an indicator of organic pollution, the Government informed the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

In a written reply to the House, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary said the number of polluted river stretches had come down to 311 in 2022, before further declining to 296 in 2025, according to the latest report of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

He said rivers are polluted mainly due to the discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage from cities and towns, industrial effluents, inadequate dilution, dumping of solid waste on riverbanks, agricultural runoff, geogenic effects and other non-point sources of pollution.

The minister said the CPCB, in association with State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Pollution Control Committees (PCCs),

monitors river water quality through a network of 2,265 monitoring stations under the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme. Choudhary said the government has incurred ₹11,332 crore under the Namami Gange programme and ₹1,888 crore under the National River Conservation Plan for river pollution abatement, in addition to schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

He said that while no standards have been prescribed specifically for heavy metals in rivers, they assess such parameters as pH, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), dissolved oxygen (DO), and faecal coliform (FC) to gauge river pollution.

The minister said the CPCB has one Central Water Laboratory in Delhi and eight regional laboratories for analysis of water quality parameters, while state pollution control boards have their own labs recognised either by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) or under the Environment (Protection) Act.

Sikkim CM presents ₹19,215 crore Budget for 2026-27

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Gangtok

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Monday tabled in the Assembly a Budget of ₹19,215 crore for the financial year 2026-27, with the focus on developing infrastructure and social welfare measures.

Tamang, who holds charge of the finance department, said his government has significantly expanded public investment through enhanced State revenues, prudent fiscal management and mobilisation of additional resources from the Centre and externally aided projects. Presenting the budget on

the first day of the four-day session of the Assembly, he proposed a gross expenditure of ₹19,215 crore for the financial year 2026-27, with a net expenditure of ₹18,455 crore after accounting for recoveries.

"The Budget would be financed through Sikkim's own revenues, transfers from the Government of India and prudent borrowings, with allocations prioritising good governance, infrastructure development and social welfare," Tamang said.

The revenue expenditure has been estimated at ₹11,733 crore, while ₹5,896 crore has been marked for capital expenditure excluding loans



and advances, the CM said.

He said that the State Government has earmarked ₹2,460 crore for its share under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes to accelerate development across

sectors, it is informed.

Exuding confidence about the financial health of the Himalayan state, Tamang said Sikkim has emerged as one of the most progressive states in the country, record-

ing an average real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth of over 12.6 per cent during the past eight years.

He said that the state has the highest per capita GSDP in the country and has witnessed significant improvements in human development, poverty reduction and household income.

Reaffirming the Government's vision of Viksit Sikkim @2047, he said the state aims to sustain an average annual GSDP growth of over 13 per cent through sound governance, strategic investments and citizen-centric development. The CM further said

that Sikkim's GSDP at current prices is projected at ₹62,973 crore in 2026-27.

Among major announcements regarding the priorities of the State Government in the current fiscal, he said that the state government proposed to provide statewide Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) screening to around 1.5 lakh women aged 30 to 65 years as part of its efforts to eliminate cervical cancer.

The CM also announced the operationalisation of Sikkim's first Renal Transplant Programme at STNM Hospital enabling patients to undergo kidney transplantation within the State.

Haryana revises ex-Agniveer reservation norms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chandigarh

The Haryana Government has revised the implementation of its existing reservation policy for ex-Agniveers in direct recruitment by specifying the category-wise distribution of the 20 per cent reservation available for select Government posts.

Chief Secretary Anurag Rastogi has issued revised instructions, partially modifying the government's earlier order dated August 20, 2025, relating to reservation for ex-Agniveers in direct recruitment.

Under the revised provisions, the overall 20 per cent reservation remains unchanged, but the



Government has now notified its category-wise distribution for direct recruitment to the posts of Forest Guard in the Environment, Forests and Wildlife Department, Prison Warden in the Prisons Department and Mining Guard in the Department of Mines and Geology.

"As per the revised breakup, 2 per cent of the reservation has been earmarked for Deprived Scheduled Castes (DSC), 2 per cent for Other Scheduled Castes (OSC), 3 per cent for Backward Class-A (BC-A), 2 per cent for Backward Class-B (BC-B), 2 per cent for the

Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and the remaining 9 per cent for the Unreserved category, taking the total reservation for Ex-Agniveers to 20 per cent," an official statement said here on Monday.

The revised provisions also prescribe separate roster points for each category to ensure uniform implementation of the reservation policy during recruitment. The Human Resources Department has directed all concerned authorities to bring the revised instructions to the notice of all stakeholders and ensure compliance in letter and spirit.

The fresh instructions have been circulated to all

Administrative Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Managing Directors of Boards and Corporations, Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, the Registrar General of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and Registrars of all state universities for compliance, it said.

Earlier, the Haryana Government had decided to provide the benefit of horizontal reservation in direct recruitment to resident ex-Agniveers of the State. In April 2026, the Haryana cabinet had decided to enhance the 10 per cent horizontal reservation for ex-Agniveers to 20 per cent in the services or posts under the State Government.

Special court sentences 44 Somali pirates to life imprisonment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

A special court in Mumbai on Monday sentenced 44 Somali nationals to life imprisonment in two different cases on charges of piracy and other offences.

The court also appreciated the bravery of Indian Navy in discharging legal and international duty in letter and spirit by taking all cost and risk. While imposing the maximum punishment of life imprisonment, Special Judge S B Dige noted that the offences committed by the accused persons were serious in nature. All the 44 accused, comprising 35 in one case and nine in the other, had pleaded guilty before the court and had urged for leniency.

The court said it was aware of the poor condition of the accused persons and the fact that they have voluntarily pleaded guilty. "But on the other hand, the act of piracy on high sea by hijacking a vessel and keeping crew members hostage for ransom by attempting to kill them and to keep them as human shield and not obeying the lawful directions of Indian Navy are very serious things which cannot be taken casually," the court said.

The accused have been convicted under Indian Penal Code, Arms Act, Passport Act, Foreigners Act, Maritime Anti-Piracy Act and the Explosive Substances Act.

Strategic initiatives reviewed to strengthen Goa's position as year-round tourism destination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Panaji

Goa Tourism on Monday reviewed a series of strategic initiatives as part of efforts to strengthen the state's position as a year-round tourism destination.

These included a proposed partnership with global travel major TUI Group, plans for World Tourism Day 2026 celebrations and the promotion of sports tourism, officials said.

The initiatives were discussed at the 29th meeting of the Empowered Committee on Marketing and Public Relations under the Goa Tourism Board, chaired by State Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte, they added.

According to the Department of Tourism, the committee deliberated on measures to expand destination marketing, strengthen global partnerships, promote sports tourism, enhance digital engagement and deepen stakeholder collaboration.

The committee also reviewed preparations for World Tourism Day 2026, which Goa plans to celebrate on a large scale under the UN Tourism theme 'Digital Agenda and Artificial Intelligence to Redesign Tourism', it added.

The Department of Tourism, in collaboration with Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG), is planning month-long activities involving stakeholders,



industry partners and local communities, with a focus on

innovation, digital transformation, sustainability and responsible tourism.

The committee also discussed proposals related to hosting marquee sporting

events such as IRONMAN 70.3 Goa and Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT), which are expected to attract new visitor segments and further diversify the state's tourism offerings, officials said.

Speaking after the meeting, Khaunte said, "Goa's tourism strategy is centred on long-term, sustainable growth through strategic planning and partnerships. Our focus remains on creating a resilient, future-ready tourism ecosystem that keeps Goa competitive across global markets while showcasing the state's diverse tourism offerings throughout the year."

The committee also discussed a proposed partnership with TUI Group to

enhance Goa's visibility in key European markets during the 2026-27 tourist season through destination marketing campaigns, trade engagement and sustainable tourism promotion.

Tourism Director Kedar Naik said the discussions reflected the department's focus on innovation, international partnerships, experiential tourism and community participation to build a sustainable tourism ecosystem.

The meeting reaffirmed Goa Tourism's commitment to collaborative planning and sustainable tourism development aimed at enhancing visitor experiences and strengthening the state's global competitiveness, the department said.



Editor's
TAKE

FIFA World Cup: Spain rules the world again

Football once again demonstrated its unrivalled global appeal, uniting nations, cultures and generations in a way few events can

Cricket may be the religion of the Indian subcontinent, but football is the religion of the world. Sunday's proof came from MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, where Spain outlasted Argentina 1-0 in extra time to become world champions for the second time. Substitute Ferran Torres settled a stubborn final in the 106th minute, likely closing the book on Lionel Messi's extraordinary World Cup career and confirming what football fans have suspected for two years: this Spanish side is the finest on the planet.

La Roja's route was no procession. World Cup debutants Cape Verde defended heroically to hold them to a goalless draw in the opener, but Spain settled quickly, topping their group unbeaten before knockout-round scalps of Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal and, in the semi-final, Kylian Mbappé's France. Along the way, goalkeeper Unai Simón set a World Cup record with six clean sheets, and Spain conceded only once in seven matches - the tightest defence any champion has fielded.

Nineteen-year-old Lamine Yamal, still managing an injury picked up before the tournament, became only the third-youngest player ever to feature in a World Cup final. Individually, the honours were shared. Rodri, Spain's captain, imperious midfield anchor and the 2024 Ballon d'Or winner, won the Golden Ball ahead of Messi and Mbappé – recognition that control, not chaos, wins tournaments. Mbappé, despite France's fourth-place finish, claimed the Golden Boot with ten goals, his second in as many World Cups and the first time anyone has repeated the feat. Messi, who dragged a young Argentina side to the final at 39, collects a Silver Ball as consolation in what he has said will be his last World Cup.

For Spain, this is more than another trophy. Paired with their Euro 2024 title and a 38-match unbeaten run, it confirms that a golden generation - Yamal, already a Ballon d'Or runner-up at 19, alongside Pau Cubarsi and Pedri – has inherited the tiki-taka blueprint and fused it with a defence built to match. Luis de la Fuente's side has delivered back-to-back major titles, echoing the legendary 2008-2012 dynasty that won three in a row, and with most of this core still in their early twenties, a run at Euro 2028 already looms.

Spanish academies remain world football's most reliable factory of champions. And yet in India, this triumph will register as a footnote beside the next cricket series. India's men's team is ranked 138th in the world, this year's ISL season was disrupted by a boardroom dispute serious enough to reach the Supreme Court, and no Indian city has ever hosted a senior FIFA World Cup fixture. Cricket's commercial machine – the IPL, blanket television coverage, a fan base nurtured since colonial times – leaves little oxygen for football to grow beyond pockets in Kolkata, Kerala, Goa and the Northeast. Sunil Chhetri's era inspired millions, but India still awaits a true successor and, more urgently, the grassroots pitches and school-level coaching that turn passion into a footballing nation. Until administration catches up with appetite, India will keep watching the world's game from the boundary line.

The entrepreneurs building a self-reliant India

India has long been home to millions of skilled micro-processors making distinctive local products. What many of them lacked was affordable finance, modern technology, quality certification and a way into organised markets



CHIRAG PASWAN

When the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted lives and livelihoods in 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognised that recovery had to reach beyond large industry. It had to reach the smallest producers and enterprises, especially those working in India's villages and small towns.

The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme was launched that year under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan with this purpose. It began with a part of the food economy that had long remained outside formal finance and institutional support: the micro-processor already producing, selling and employing a few people, but without the capital or guidance needed to grow. The scheme reflected a conviction the Prime Minister has consistently held, that India's growth must begin at its base, among people willing to build enterprises of their own.

The credit-linked component of PMFME has now crossed two lakh sanctions. The milestone matters because of the people behind it, entrepreneurs who have entered the formal credit system and secured a real chance to build. It is an achievement worth celebrating, and a moment to honour those who made it possible.

The first of them was Jamnalal Patidar, whose application was the very first sanctioned under PMFME. A tenth-pass entrepreneur with no background in food processing, he began a coriander-processing unit with an investment of ₹10 lakh. With the scheme behind him, he gained access to finance, machinery and guidance, and his idea grew into a working enterprise that today employs more than five people.

His story makes a simple point. Enterprise is not the privilege of the well-born or the well-schooled. It turns on whether a person with an idea can find the finance, technology and support needed to act on it. By enabling ordinary Indians to build enterprises and employ others, PMFME is carrying forward the Prime Minister's vision of turning job-seekers into job-creators.

India has long been home to millions of skilled micro-processors making distinctive local products. What many of them lacked was affordable finance, modern technology, quality certification and a way into organised markets. The scheme was built to close those gaps together, through credit-linked assistance, capacity building, common infrastructure,



THE PRADHAN MANTRI FORMALISATION OF MICRO FOOD PROCESSING ENTERPRISES SCHEME WAS LAUNCHED THAT YEAR UNDER THE AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN WITH THIS PURPOSE. IT BEGAN WITH A PART OF THE FOOD ECONOMY THAT HAD LONG REMAINED OUTSIDE FORMAL FINANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

The writer is the Union Minister for Food Processing Industries

sanction towards a thriving enterprise. If Patidar shows how far this journey can travel, Singh shows that it is still gathering pace.

That is the shape of the road ahead. Opening formal credit to micro-processors was the first task, and the harder, more rewarding one is to help each sanction become a disbursed loan, and each loan a business that trades and endures. A sanction opens the door; our work is to help every entrepreneur walk through it and build something that lasts.

This must define the next phase of PMFME. We will get credit to promising enterprises faster, help them adopt better technology and packaging, widen their access to markets, and prepare many more of them to reach buyers at home and abroad. And we will stand with our entrepreneurs after the sanction, not only before it, with the steady support that turns a first loan into a lasting livelihood.

Taken together, these two lakh sanctions are far more than an administrative milestone. Each enterprise that takes root strengthens the economy around it. It buys from nearby farms, creates income closer to home, and gives more women and young Indians the confidence to build businesses of their own.

When we look at Patidar's coriander unit, the lesson is simple. The first sanction under PMFME went to a man with no established factory and no specialised degree. What he had was an idea and the will to work; what the scheme gave him was access. Two lakh sanctions later, that opportunity has reached entrepreneurs across the country. Our task now is to help more of them build businesses that survive, employ others and create value where they begin.

PIC TALK



Women tie padlocks at Natheshwar Mahadev Mandir, also known as 'Tale Wale Mahadev', ahead of the month of Shravan in Prayagraj. PHOTO: PTI

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What India can learn from Japan's teaching culture



SAKSHI SETHI

2ND OPINION

Every education system in the world generates instructors. Very few produce teaching cultures. This delicate, almost invisible distinction is what makes Japan worth studying, not for its technology or test scores, but for the silent philosophy that drives what happens inside its classrooms and, more importantly, its staffrooms.

Consider Jugyo Kenkyu, or Lesson Study, a collaborative practice that has existed in Japanese education for more than a century. A group of teachers jointly plans a lesson. One teacher conducts it while the others observe how students respond, where they struggle and what helps them understand. Afterwards, the group discusses and refines the lesson. The purpose is not to rate the teacher but to examine the learning. In too many Indian schools, classroom observation still arrives wearing the uniform of appraisal. Lesson Study offers a different possibility:

observation as professional cooperation rather than judgement.

The second useful idea is Kaizen, i.e. continuous improvement through small and consistent changes. Indian education remains fascinated by the grand gesture: the new policy, revised assessment pattern or digital platform that promises to transform learning. But transformation is rarely an event. It is an accumulation. A teacher who regularly asks, "What did not work today, and what can I change tomorrow?" may improve more meaningfully than one who attends several ceremonial workshops. Kaizen dignifies the small. Then there is Ho-Ren-So, an abbreviation of h?koku (report), renraku (inform) and s?dan (consult). It is a Japanese workplace principle based on communicating early, sharing relevant information and seeking guidance before problems become crises. Anyone who has worked in an Indian school understands how much energy is lost when communication fails. Ho-Ren-So is not unnecessary bureaucracy. It is courtesy converted into a system. Schools that communicate early and laterally become calmer institutions, and calm institutions teach better.

Another idea, Omoiyari, means understanding others' feelings and responding with consideration. In schools, it helps teachers notice a quiet child, an overwhelmed colleague or a parent's hidden concerns.

A fifth lesson comes from Tokkatsu, or Special Activities, through which Japanese schools integrate cooperation, responsibility and participation into daily life. Students may help clean classrooms, serve lunch and take responsibility

for shared spaces. Character is not outsourced to a weekly moral education period. It is built into the ordinary rhythm of the school day. Japan's insight is simple: character is caught more often than it is taught. If schools want responsible students, the conduct of adults becomes part of the curriculum. A final lesson comes from Japan's well-being culture: Shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing, the practice of restoring oneself through mindful time in nature. The idea may sound indulgent until one considers teacher exhaustion: correction loads, data entry, duty rosters, administrative paperwork and the emotional labour of managing dozens of children. A depleted teacher cannot remain endlessly patient, creative and compassionate. Rest is not softness; rather, it is sustainability. Japan's education system is neither free from pressure nor should it be romanticised. The purpose is not to copy another country uncritically, but to identify ideas that can be adapted intelligently. Strong teaching cultures assume that excellence is collaborative, incremental, empathetic and sustainable. As India implements the National Education Policy (NEP), we must ask whether we are genuinely building professional capacity or merely conducting training. Training fills a hall for a day. Culture fills a career.

A teacher's influence begins somewhere very ordinary: in a staffroom where teachers trust one another, in a lesson improved collectively, in a problem communicated before it grows and in the quiet act of noticing a child.

The writer is an educator and a councillor

SPAIN ENDS SIXTEEN-YEAR WAIT WITH HISTORIC WORLD CUP WIN

On Sunday, Spain secured their second FIFA World Cup title after a 16-year wait. Substitute Ferran Torres emerged as the unlikely hero, scoring the decisive goal in the 106th minute of extra time to seal a hard-fought 1-0 victory over defending champions Argentina. Spain's triumph was about far more than lifting the trophy; it was a testament to resilience, tactical discipline and unwavering belief throughout the tournament.

For 19-year-old talent Lamine Yamal, who became the fourth teenager in history to win a FIFA World Cup, the victory marked another extraordinary milestone in his rise that has already captivated the footballing world.

Spain produced a masterclass in collective football, dominating

possession, controlling the midfield and effectively neutralising Lionel Messi's influence without resorting to man-marking. By remaining faithful to their trademark passing game, La Roja demonstrated that a cohesive, technically superior system can outmatch even the most gifted individuals.

The final was also a tribute to Argentina's courage and determination. The reigning champions fought relentlessly until the final whistle, pushing an outstanding Spanish side to its limits. Although La Albiceleste fell short in their bid to retain the title, their resilience and remarkable campaign earned admiration across the football world.

RANGANATHAN SIVAKUMAR | CHENNAI

Vikram-1 heralds a new space era

India's space programme has entered a defining new era with the successful launch of Vikram-1, the country's first privately developed orbital rocket. The seven-storey rocket lifted off from ISRO's First Launch Pad at Sriharikota under Mission Aagaman (Arrival) and successfully placed technology demonstration payloads into an orbit roughly 450 km above Earth. This mission is particularly significant because Vikram-1 achieved orbital success on its maiden attempt.

The launch marks more than the success of Skyroot Aerospace. It also reflects the growth of India's space programme, built on decades of ISRO's pioneering work and sustained by thousands of suppliers, engineers and scientists. Nearly six decades after India's space programme began as an exclusively government-led effort, private enterprise has now demonstrated its ability to develop and launch orbital rockets.

Vikram-1 establishes Skyroot as a serious competitor in the global small-satellite launch market while highlighting the potential of public-private collaboration. The government must deepen this growing partnership, combining ISRO's expertise with private innovation to accelerate India's ambitions in commercial launches and deep-space exploration.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

Time for a responsible Monsoon session

The Monsoon Session of Parliament is set to face several pressing national issues that demand serious attention on Monday. As the government presents its legislative agenda and the Opposition seeks accountability, the session provides an important opportunity to strengthen parliamentary democracy through constructive engagement. The people expect thoughtful deliberations that address their concerns rather than political confrontation.

Parliament is the cornerstone of India's democracy, where laws are enacted and the executive is held accountable. Issues such as inflation, employment, agriculture, national security, education, healthcare and economic growth require reasoned discussions based on facts, mutual respect and constructive engagement to reach solutions to these challenges.

Unfortunately, previous sessions have frequently witnessed disruptions, walkouts and repeated adjournments, preventing meaningful discussions on vital legislation. Such interruptions waste valuable parliamentary time and erode public faith in democratic institutions. Parliament must function with dignity, discipline and a spirit of cooperation, and deliver governance that serves the national interest.

RUKMA SHARMA | JALANDHAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Taking accountability beyond resignation

The NEET paper leak has shaken the faith of millions of students, exposing deep cracks in India's examination system. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has admitted moral responsibility, but the question remains whether he should resign or lead reform.

Opposition parties, student groups and civil society argue that resignation is the only dignified response. A minister stepping down would signal that failures at the highest level cannot simply be brushed aside. It would restore public trust and set a precedent for accountability. In a democracy, such symbolism matters.

However, the government counters that the leak was caused by corrupt insiders within the National Testing Agency and complicit teachers, not ministerial intent. Resignation, they argue, would be political theatre without fixing structural flaws. What students need is reform within the system, which includes stronger exam security, transparent oversight and a rethinking of centralised testing. Pradhan's role, then, is to drive corrective action rather than abandon responsibility.

Resignation would cleanse the moral stain; reform would address the systemic rot. The real test of leadership lies in whether India chooses symbolic sacrifice or substantive change – or both.

O PRASADA RAO | HYDERABAD

Time for public audit to put land at the centre of governance

The question that public audit must increasingly ask is simple: Does the government know what land it owns, where it is located, how it is being used, whether it is encroached upon, and whether it is creating public value? This question is not technical. It goes to the heart of public accountability



VIVEK KUMAR SINGH

Public audit in India has traditionally followed the money. It examines whether expenditure was authorised, whether procedure was followed, whether revenue was collected, and whether public funds were properly used. But one of the most valuable public assets often remains outside the centre of audit attention — land.

Land is the silent base of public governance, infrastructure, welfare delivery, urban expansion, environmental protection and economic development. Yet governments often know less about their land than about far less valuable assets. While elaborate systems exist for accounting for buildings, vehicles, machinery and financial assets, information on land is frequently fragmented, outdated or incomplete.

The question that public audit must increasingly ask is simple: Does the government know what land it owns, where it is located, how it is being used, whether it is encroached upon, and whether it is creating public value? This question is not technical. It goes to the heart of public accountability.

Weak land governance affects public finances, project delivery, citizen services, environmental protection and public trust. Acquisition delays push up costs. Weak records generate uncertainty. Encroachments erode public assets. Poorly managed land remains idle while public institutions search for space. Faulty compensation records can lead to overpayment, litigation or exclusion of rightful beneficiaries. Yet public discourse usually views land through narrow lenses like ownership disputes, acquisition controversies, mutation delays or revenue administration. These are important, but they often describe symptoms rather than causes. Land governance is not one department's routine function. It is a connected system of maps, records, transactions, updates and ground possession. When these links do not speak to one another, the state begins to carry multiple versions of the same parcel.

A registered sale may not update revenue records. A revenue correction may not reach municipal databases. A court order may not be reflected in administrative records. A map may say one thing, a register another, and actual possession something else. For an auditor, this is not merely a clerical inconsistency. It is a risk signal. The traditional auditor asked, "Was the transaction proper?" The modern auditor asks, "Did the system work?" The future auditor must ask, "Was public value created?" Land governance is perhaps the most suitable field for this transition. Take government land, for example. In theory, it is a valuable public asset. In practice, many departments do not even have complete and updated inventories of their land holdings. Information on location, area, present use, ownership status, encroachment, litigation and valuation is often scattered. A department may lose public land not because someone formally transferred it, but because nobody knew it was its own land in the first place.

This calls for an asset-management approach to land. Government must identify, inventory, protect, utilise and monitor public land with the same seriousness with which it manages other valuable assets. In fact, land deserves greater attention because it is finite, difficult to replace, and often appreciates over time. The same logic applies to acquisition and compensation. Many project delays are attributed to contractors, funding gaps or execution weaknesses. But quite often, the real bottleneck lies earlier, in poor planning, faulty surveys, weak consultation, unclear ownership records, repeated alignment changes and compensation disputes. Compensation administration, too, is not merely a payment process. It involves the identification of rightful beneficiaries, accurate measurement, correct valuation and timely disbursement. Errors can lead to duplicate payments, exclusion, litigation and fiscal loss.

A useful audit lens is to move beyond the lazy shorthand of "land disputes". In public administration, many problems that reach the state as disputes are actually



system failures wearing the mask of disputes. A boundary conflict may be the result of outdated spatial information. An ownership mismatch may arise from delayed record correction. A disputed compensation payment may reflect weak beneficiary identification. An encroachment may reveal not merely an enforcement failure, but the absence of a reliable public land inventory.

This distinction matters because audit is strongest when it diagnoses causes, not merely records symptoms. If every land problem is treated as a dispute, the response naturally moves towards adjudication, litigation and file-bound resolution. But if the problem is understood as a survey failure, record failure, registration failure, possession mismatch or asset-management failure, the remedy becomes more precise. The auditor's role is not to sit in judgement over title, but to ask whether the system that records, protects, updates and verifies land is working as it should.

Digitisation has opened new possibilities, but also new risks. Online records, digital mutation workflows, registration databases and citizen portals can improve transparency and service delivery. But technology cannot cure bad data. An inaccurate paper record does not become accurate merely because it is digitised. In fact, digitisation can amplify old errors by making them more widely accessible and more quickly replicated. validation, correction mechanisms, access controls, audit trails and interoperability. If digital systems remain isolated, governments may only replace paper silos with digital silos.

The next frontier is geospatial and technological audit. GIS, satellite imagery, drone surveys, spatial databases and AI can help auditors move beyond departmental records. They can verify encroachments, land use, infrastructure progress, environmental compliance and acquisition claims through independent spatial evidence. This does not reduce the importance of documents. It strengthens audit evidence. Land governance also has a direct bearing on citizen trust. For many citizens, the state is encountered not in Parliament or the Secretariat, but in the registration office, revenue office, mutation counter, survey camp, compensation hearing or grievance forum. When records are unreliable, mutations delayed, encroachments unchecked or compensation disputed, the credibility of governance suffers.

Therefore, land audit should not be confined to revenue audit. It cuts across performance audit, compliance audit, IT audit, environmental audit, infrastructure audit and asset-management audit. A mutation backlog is not merely a service-delivery issue. A weak land inventory is not merely a departmental lapse.

A flawed acquisition process is not merely a project delay. Each is part of a larger governance risk. India's public audit institutions have an opportunity to widen the frame. Land must be seen not only as a legal subject, revenue matter or administrative routine, but also as a strategic public asset. The test of good land governance is not merely whether files moved, records were digitised or transactions were registered. The real test is whether public assets were protected, fiscal risks reduced, citizens served, infrastructure delivered, environmental safeguards maintained and public value created.

In public finance, what is not counted is often not controlled. In land governance, what is not known is eventually lost. Public audit must, therefore, also begin to ask a basic question that governments have too often avoided: "Do we really know the land we govern?"

The writer is an ex-IAS officer and is presently Chairman, RERA Bihar. He served as Principal Secretary, Department of Revenue and Land Reforms, Bihar

India's private space age has arrived



PRAVIN KAUSHAL

On the morning of July 18, 2026, a seven-storey rocket lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, climbed for roughly fifteen minutes, and placed several payloads into orbit some 450 kilometres above the Earth. The rocket was Vikram 1. The company that built it, Skyroot Aerospace, is not a government arm, not a legacy defence contractor, and not even a decade old. With this single launch, India became only the third country in the world, after the United States and China, where a privately built company has independently designed, constructed, and flown its own rocket into orbit.

It is worth sitting with that fact before moving on to the human story around it, because the number that matters most here is not four payloads or 450 kilometres. It is six. Six years ago, in May 2020, the Government of India announced that the space sector, until then a strict government monopoly, would be opened to private participation. Six years later, an Indian startup has done something only two other nations have managed at the level of private industry. That is an extraordinarily short runway for a result of this magnitude, and it deserves to be the actual headline.

For most of independent India's history, space was constitutionally the exclusive domain of the state. The Indian Space Research Organisation designed the launch vehicles, built the satellites, and owned the launch pads; private firms, at best, supplied components and hoped for a contract. This was not unique to space. Telecom, coal, aviation, and banking all operated for decades on the same premise: that certain sectors were too strategic or too capital-intensive to entrust to private hands. The costs of that premise rarely show up immediately. They show up as absence: as a generation of engineers who dreamed of building rockets but had exactly one employer to dream about; as capital that might have funded ten competing approaches to a hard problem instead funding one; as innovation that thrives on rivalry never getting a field to compete in. Closed sectors do not just constrain companies. They constrain what an entire generation is permitted to imagine for itself.

The two engineers behind Skyroot understood this from the inside. Pawan Kumar Chandana and Naga Bharath Daka met as scientists at ISRO, one having worked on India's heaviest launch vehicle, the GSLV Mark III, the other bringing expertise in the avionics that let a rocket sense its own position and correct its path mid-flight. In June 2018, while it was still, in practical terms, unthinkable for a private company to build its own rocket in India, they left secure government careers to start one anyway, with ten people and \$1.5 million in seed funding. Eight years and more than \$160 million later, that bet has produced a rocket now in orbit.

It is tempting to tell this purely as a story of individual daring, and it is that. But it would be a mistake to read Vikram 1 as proof that the private sector succeeded where the government failed. The truth is closer to the opposite. Chandana and Daka's technical skill was built inside ISRO, on the back of decades of public investment in their training. More than seventy technologies developed within ISRO have since been formally transferred to private industry, letting companies like Skyroot build on government research rather than start from zero. What changed in 2020 was not the talent. It was the permission, and the establishment of IN-SPaCe as a single-window regulator, so a startup no longer needed to navigate ISRO's internal processes just to test a rocket engine. Government investment supplied the skill; policy reform supplied the outlet. Vikram 1 is what happens when those two things are finally allowed to meet. The rocket's name is itself a quiet argument for that reading. It honours Vikram Sarabhai, the physicist who founded ISRO in 1969 on the conviction that a poor country could not afford to stay out of space, not to compete with wealthier nations for prestige, but because space technology was how India could leapfrog straight to solving problems on the ground: connecting villages, tracking monsoons, mapping resources. Sarabhai built that vision inside government because, in his era, there was no other institution capable of building it. Chandana and Daka have now shown that the same vision can be built outside it too, not instead of the government's role, but as an extension of it. There is a strategic dimension worth naming plainly. India's space economy is currently valued at roughly \$8.4 billion, about two per cent of the global total, a modest share for a country that trains a disproportionate share of the world's engineers. The government's own projections put that figure at around \$44 billion by 2033 and \$100 billion by 2040. None of that growth was available while the sector legally belonged to a single government department. More than three hundred private space startups are now active in India, up from a handful five years ago, and the sector already supports close to a hundred thousand jobs. A country that can launch small satellites reliably and cheaply, precisely the market Vikram 1 was built for, is also a country that can become the launch partner of choice for the dozens of developing nations that want satellite access to agriculture data, disaster monitoring, and communications, but will never build a Sriharikota of their own. That is not only a commercial opportunity. It is a geopolitical one, and India is now positioned to claim it early.

None of this guarantees what comes next. Skyroot must still prove it can launch repeatedly, not just once; that it can compete on cost with established players; that international customers and insurers will trust a young company with expensive payloads. Those are real hurdles, and the company has been candid that they remain ahead of it. But the sequence that got India here is not really in dispute: the sector was closed, then it was opened, and within six years of opening, a company with no state backing put a rocket into orbit. That sequence is the real lesson of July 18, not that India has arrived in space, which it did in 1969, but that India has learned something about how to get out of its own way, and did not take nearly as long to learn it as history might have suggested.



The writer is a tech and social entrepreneur and Programme Director (Eastern India) at WHEELS Global Foundation, a Pan-IT alumni initiative working across 20+ states in India



M SRINIVAS | **NEHA BAKSHI**

India's nutrition journey is undergoing a profound transition. While the country continues to make progress in reducing undernutrition and improving food security, a new challenge is rapidly emerging, which is obesity. The changing food environment, increased availability of calorie-dense foods and inadequate physical activity have contributed to the rising obesity burden.

The NFHS-6 report highlights the magnitude of this emerging challenge. The prevalence of overweight/obesity among adults aged 15-49 years has increased among women from 24 per cent to 30.7 per cent and among men from 22.9 per cent to 27.3 per cent since NFHS-5. These trends indicate the need for a critical rethinking of India's approach to nutrition, health and lifestyle in the coming decades.

As per the World Health Organization, overweight/obesity is the excessive deposition of fat in our body to an extent that it starts limiting our

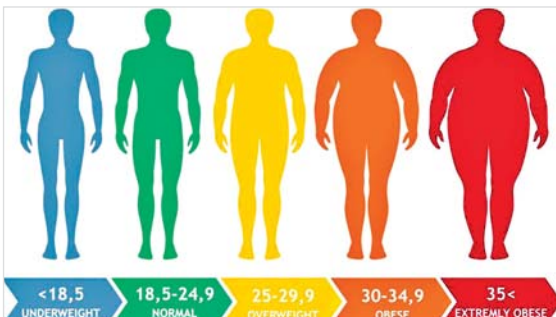
everyday activities and overall health. Body Mass Index (BMI) is used for assessing overweight/obesity. A person with a BMI >25 kg/m² is classified as overweight/obese. This increasing weight is not just a number; it puts individuals at serious risk of developing lifestyle-related diseases like diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and others.

Rising trend of obesity: NFHS-5 to NFHS-6

India has seen this rise in overweight/obesity in previous surveys as well, but the pace at which the number has increased in the latest NFHS-6 data is concerning. According to NFHS-3 (2005-06), 12.6 per cent of women and 9.3 per cent of men were reported to be overweight/obese. Now, the figures in NFHS-6 (2023-24) stand at 30.7 per cent for women and 27.3 per cent for men. Thus, in two decades, the prevalence rate has approximately doubled among women and tripled among men. Even traditionally leaner states have shown rapid progress towards obesity; for example, Rajasthan went from 12.9 per cent (NFHS-5) to 20.3 per cent (NFHS-6).

A nationwide surge in overweight/obesity

The survey depicted that 32 and 28 states and UTs have shown an increasing trend in overweight/obesity among women and men, respectively, since NFHS-5. The highest burden of



obesity is borne by the southern parts of the country. Among women, prevalence was highest in Puducherry (51.3 per cent), Lakshadweep (50.1 per cent), Andhra Pradesh (47.9 per cent), Sikkim (47.5 per cent), Kerala (46.7 per cent) and Goa (45.1 per cent). For men, the rising burden was reported in the states/UTs of Chandigarh (48.5 per cent), Puducherry (45.9 per cent), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (46.1 per cent), Goa (43.6 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (41.5 per cent). In contrast, the lowest prevalence among women was reported in Meghalaya (13.8 per cent), Jharkhand (16.9 per cent), Nagaland (17.2 per cent), Assam (19.6 per cent) and Bihar (19.8 per cent). Among men, Meghalaya (15.6 per cent), Chhattisgarh (16.1 per cent), Jharkhand (16.8 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (17.6 per cent) and Rajasthan (19.3 per cent) recorded the lowest prevalence.

The urban-rural picture

NFHS-6 shows that overweight/obesity, which

was once a concern limited to city dwellers, is now becoming a rising issue in rural areas across the country. The NFHS-6 data has shown a rise in overweight and obesity in urban and rural areas among women and men. It could be because of the increased penetration of High Fat, Salt and Sugar foods at cheaper prices in both urban and rural areas.

Efforts of the Govt in tackling obesity

Understanding the magnitude of the issue, both the Central Government and different state governments have initiated various programmes to promote a healthy lifestyle. The Eat Right India initiative, launched by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), promotes healthy, safe and sustainable food practices. The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) also focuses on mass screening, early diagnosis and behaviour change. The Fit India Movement and Khelo India initiative are nationwide movements to promote an active lifestyle among schoolchildren and youth, while the Ministry of Ayush promotes yoga and other traditional healthy practices.

Recognising obesity as an emerging public health challenge, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, addressed the nation on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day in 2025 from the Red Fort. He called for a movement towards a healthy life and for every family to take up the '10 per cent less oil' promise as a way of life to prevent obesity.

Way forward

The programmes and initiatives by the government show its commitment towards curbing obesity; the NFHS-6 data highlights the need to further strengthen existing efforts for prevention. There is an urgent need to improve the food environment by reducing the availability and aggressive marketing of junk foods, while promoting access to healthy foods and clear nutrition labelling. Physical activity should be promoted through schools, workplaces, community spaces and active urban and rural planning.

It is high time for us to understand the depth of the rising problem of obesity. There is a need to consciously incorporate a healthy way of living by adopting practices such as monitoring our weight status and waist circumference, eating a balanced diet, regularly engaging in daily physical activity, practising mindful eating, avoiding high-fat, salt and sugar foods, and consulting a medical professional if suffering from other comorbidities like diabetes, hypertension, etc.

India's malnutrition challenge encompasses both undernutrition and overweight/obesity. Government intervention programmes have laid a good foundation; now, we need continued efforts in promoting a healthy food environment, an active lifestyle and nutrition literacy. As India progresses towards Viksit Bharat 2047, citizens adopting a healthy lifestyle will play a key role in the country's social and economic progress.

Dr M Srinivas is member NITI Aayog & Dr Neha Bakshi is consultant NITI Aayog

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Order Order

SC gives Parsvnath Developers one week to pay home buyer dues



The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed the Centre's plea challenging a Delhi High Court verdict that quashed the tender process for outsourcing Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) services at Indian missions in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Singapore and Canberra.

The top court, however, allowed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Engineers India Limited (EIL) to make temporary arrangements to ensure uninterrupted delivery of services while a fresh tender process is completed. "The SLP (special leave petition of the Centre) is dismissed."

"However, having heard learned counsel for the parties and taking note of the submissions made before us, we are of the view that no impediment should be caused to the day-to-day functioning of the concerned establishments pending the completion of the fresh tender process," the bench said.

To ensure continuity of services and compliance with the directions issued by the high court, the top court modified the impugned order. "It shall be open to EIL and the MEA to make suitable interim arrangements for continuation of the subject services. Such interim arrangements may include engagement of the successful L-1 bidders whose performance has been found satisfactory, or any other agency, in such a manner as EIL and the MEA

The case pertained to a petition filed by one Rita Tikku, a cancer survivor, and Lokaish Tikku, who invested their life savings in the 'Parsvnath Exotica' project in Sector 53, Gurugram. The bench noted that the Haryana Government has filed the status report as directed by it earlier.

"The Haryana Government states that a compliance affidavit has been filed. However, the same was filed last evening and not tagged with the paper books. Let it be done immediately," it said.

The bench said the respondent builder and its officials have entered an appearance. "Let them explain non-adherence to orders by HRERA (Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority). Before the execution of non-bailable warrants, which is already issued, we grant the last opportunity to the builders to deposit the entire recoverable amount along with interest of 12 per cent per annum with the Supreme Court registry. (PTI)

SC to direct nationwide APAAR consent compliance

The Supreme Court on Monday said it will direct the CBSE to implement a direction of the Orissa High Court to amend the model consent form for the generation of Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry IDs to provide parents with the option to refuse consent or opt out of the scheme.



Under the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) scheme, launched by the Ministry of Education under the New Education Policy, 2020, a unique, lifelong 12-digit student ID is generated. It acts as a digital passport for all educational records, securely storing marksheets, degrees and co-curricular achievements in one place.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana was hearing a plea filed by the parents of four students challenging the validity of the APAAR ID scheme for students on the ground that it compelled them to obtain Aadhaar IDs.

The top court said that since the Centre has not challenged the high court's December 2025 judgement, it would direct the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to implement the ruling nationwide.

"We will direct the CBSE to implement this judgement on a pan-India basis, as the High Court order has been accepted. We are directing the CBSE to examine the issues as well," the bench said.

It said a formal order would be uploaded later. (PTI)

SC asks Government to frame former-judges' benefits policy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to set up a panel for a uniform national policy regarding post-retirement benefits like services of drivers, security and stay in Government accommodations while travelling for former high court judges.

Observing that there was a wide disparity in benefits extended by different states, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, to set up within two weeks the panel, which in turn, gives its report on the issue within three months.



The bench was hearing a contempt petition filed by Justice VS Dave, President of the Association of Retired Judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, raising the issue of security and other facilities for retired judges.

During the hearing, the CJI questioned the adequacy of the financial assistance currently provided by some states for engaging security



SC rejects Govt's plea on CPV outsourcing tenders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed the Centre's plea challenging a Delhi High Court verdict that quashed the tender process for outsourcing Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) services at Indian missions in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, Singapore and Canberra.

The top court, however, allowed the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Engineers India Limited (EIL) to make temporary arrangements to ensure uninterrupted delivery of services while a fresh tender process is completed. "The SLP (special leave petition of the Centre) is dismissed."

"However, having heard learned counsel for the parties and taking note of the submissions made before us, we are of the view that no impediment should be caused to the day-to-day functioning of the concerned establishments pending the completion of the fresh tender process," the bench said. To ensure continuity of services and compliance with the directions issued by the high court, the top court modified the impugned order.

"It shall be open to EIL and the MEA to make suitable interim arrangements for continuation of the subject services. Such interim arrangements may include engagement of the successful L-1 bidders whose performance has been found satisfactory, or any other agency, in such a manner as EIL and the MEA



may consider appropriate." It, however, made clear that such an arrangement shall be purely temporary and not create any special equities in favour of any party, and remain subject to the outcome of the fresh Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

"The MEA shall ensure compliance with the earlier directions as well as the directions contained in this order and shall complete the fresh tender/RFP exercise as expeditiously as possible, preferably within a period of three months," it ordered.

The bench clarified that this interim arrangement is made without prejudice to the rights and contentions of all parties and no party shall claim any equity on the basis of this arrangement.

The bench was hearing the Centre's petition against the July 17 Delhi High Court verdict directing the Government to issue a fresh RFP after finding serious deficiencies in the technical evaluation process. Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued that the high court's decision had adversely impact-

ed the functioning of Indian missions abroad, forcing embassy personnel to divert from their regular duties to manage visa-related services. "Our embassy staff has been diverted. The tender holder always engaged in some litigation. But this time we decided to let them participate in the open tender process," Mehta said. The bench orally said that the Government had "invited" the high court's adverse findings by failing to record reasons for its evaluation. The solicitor general justified the actions and said that bidders could not be mechanically assigned comparative scores across different missions.

"We are dealing with four different embassies. Abhishek Singhvi's client may get two marks in Abu Dhabi but five in Singapore. If the same marking is given, then something is fishy," Mehta said.

Earlier on July 17, the CJI-led bench agreed to hear on July 20 the Centre's plea against the High Court verdict setting aside the tender awarded to private firms for outsourcing CPV services at some

Indian missions.

The High Court had directed the Centre to issue a fresh RFP, inviting fresh bids.

The Solicitor General said that fresh tenders were awarded following the procedure, but no new entity can start functioning straightaway, and as a result, such services have almost become dysfunctional.

In its verdict, the high court said that while taking the decision, the Centre relied on undisclosed comparative standards, made unexplained deductions under objective evaluation criteria, and adopted inconsistent marking. The high court said that these deficiencies struck at the very heart of transparency, fairness and equality in the public procurement process.

"The use of undisclosed comparative standards, unexplained deductions under objective criteria, inconsistent marking and complete absence of recorded reasons strikes at the heart of transparency, fairness and equality in public procurement. Therefore, exclusion of a lower bidder on the basis of an arbitrary evaluation process is not merely an individual grievance but also raises concerns of public interest under Article 14 of the Constitution," the high court said.

The technical evaluation processes are set aside, the high court said. "Consequently, the award of tender in favour of the private respondents shall also stand nullified," the court said.

Calcutta HC refuses Mamata faction interim nod to operate bank accounts frozen by ED

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court on Monday refused the Mamata Banerjee faction of the Trinamool Congress interim permission to operate three of the party's bank accounts frozen by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The ED froze the three bank accounts of the Trinamool Congress with balances amounting to ₹440.42 crore in connection with its probe based on an FIR lodged by the state police in alleged dishonest financial dealings, unlawful collection of money, and routing of suspected funds through certain bank accounts of the party.

Justice Krishna Rao had on



July 13 reserved the interim order on the prayer after arguments by the parties in the matter were concluded. According to officials, the Enforcement Directorate's preliminary investigation found that about ₹160 crore was transferred from the TMC's bank accounts to Carewell Aviation India Pvt. Ltd. and its related entity between April 2023 and June 2026.

The company is alleged to have further routed ₹82.96 crore (between 2023 and 2026) to another newly incorporated entity. It was found that a "significant" amount was transferred to this entity. Out of this, ₹112 crore was used for purchasing an Embraer Legacy 600 business jet and an AgustaWestland 109SP helicopter, the officials said.

2020 Delhi riots: SC stays HC relief to Devangana Kalita

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed an order of the Delhi High Court, which permitted Delhi riots-accused Devangana Kalita to inspect unrelayed-upon documents in the alleged larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 riots.

A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M Pancholi issued notice to Kalita on a plea filed by the Delhi Police challenging the June 5 high court order. "You will not conclude your arguments even in 10 years, and then you say there is delay in trial," the bench observed orally.

Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the Delhi Police,

submitted that Kalita is not entitled to any document until charges are framed. "They can't ask for any other document. What is the purpose of inspection at this stage?" Raju asked.

Kalita's lawyer referred to a Supreme Court judgment and said the list of documents that are not relied on must also be furnished prior to framing of the charge. After hearing the parties, the Supreme Court bench issued notice to Kalita and stayed the Delhi High Court order.

The matter will now be heard after two weeks. On June 5, the high court had lifted its earlier stay on framing of charges in the alleged larger conspiracy case related to the



2020 riots and allowed the trial court to pass a final order.

The high court had vacated the court's order while dismissing Kalita's plea seeking direction to the

police to provide her certain videos and WhatsApp chats in relation to the case. The court, however, allowed a separate petition by Kalita and permitted her to inspect unrelayed-upon documents in the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) case.

Kalita had moved high court in 2023, claiming that Delhi Police had commissioned certain persons to record the February 2020 protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens, and the footage should be supplied to her before the trial court proceeds to hear the arguments as it would show that she was protesting peacefully. Besides the video footage, she had also sought the



the sanctioned plan, while the authorities alleged that the structure had been built on land falling within a pond area.

The counsel urged the bench to grant immediate protection in view of the ongoing demolition.

The CJI declined to grant an urgent hearing or any interim relief.

Making it clear that the apex court would not enter-

tain the matter at the first instance, the CJI said the petitioner should pursue the appropriate remedy before the high court concerned. "Even if it is completely dismantled today, I will not...," the CJI said.

The CJI also expressed concern over the growing tendency of litigants to bypass high courts and seek urgent intervention directly from the apex court.

SC reduces punishment for rape convict citing reform possibility

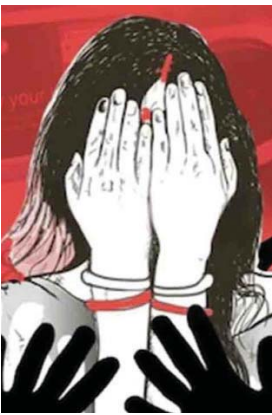
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday reduced the sentence of a man convicted in a 2016 rape case from life imprisonment to 20 years in jail with benefit of remission, saying there was a possibility of reformation as the offence was committed when he was 25.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Augustine George Masih noted that the man had no criminal antecedents and has maintained a good conduct in jail. "In the present case, the appellant convict has no criminal antecedents; was of only 25 years when the offence was committed; given the young age there is a possibility of reformation. "The State has neither brought on record anything to show that the same would not be possible, nor has it contravened the statement made on behalf of the appellant that in the nearly ten years (including remission) that he has been convicted, he has maintained a good conduct," the bench said.

The trial court had sentenced the man to rigorous imprisonment for the remainder of his natural life and also directed him to pay a fine of ₹25,000 to the victim. This decision was upheld by the Delhi High Court.

In this case, a call was received at I P Estate police station, New Delhi, alleging that two accused persons had committed rape on the victim. The victim at night-time took a rickshaw from



the Delhi railway station on the assurance that the driver would drop her off at her home but instead of doing so, he took her to a deserted place where another person was already present and they proceeded to commit the offence of rape. An FIR was registered on September 7, 2016.

The top court said it cannot lose sight of the fact that the offence is heinous and is not only against the victim but against the society at large.

"Despite much evolution, sociologically and psychologically, to break away from the chains of patriarchal thought, incidents such as these are only continuing unabashedly.

"Various amendments have been brought in over the years in the law, and while they may have had positive impact to some extent, the urgency to root out such offences cannot be simmered down even for a bit till these incidents are recorded only in history and are viewed with collective disdain," the bench said.

Kerala: Man sentenced to death in 2025 Nenmara double murder case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Palakkad

A court in Kerala on Monday sentenced a 61-year-old man to death in the sensational 2025 Nenmara double murder case.

Palakkad Additional Sessions Judge Kenneth George sentenced Chenthamara to death and imposed a fine of ₹20 lakh for murdering his neighbour Sudhakaran and his mother, Lakshmi, at Pothundi near Nenmara on January 27, 2025. The court convicted Chenthamara under Section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for murder and Section 126(2) for wrongful restraint. Holding that the case fell



under the "rarest of rare" category, the court observed that the convict had murdered multiple members of the same family. Chenthamara had earlier been arrested for the 2019 murder of Sudhakaran's wife, Sajitha, whom he allegedly blamed for his marital problems. After being released on bail

in January 2025 in the case, he murdered Sudhakaran and Lakshmi. Police arrested him shortly after the double murder, following a massive manhunt, and he was later lodged in the Malampuzha sub-jail.

In the Sajitha murder case, a court had earlier sentenced Chenthamara to double life imprisonment.



PIOTECH

The helix and the harvest: Why tribal India’s future lies in digital sovereignty



MONI MADASWAMY

Every year on the 15th of November, India observes Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas to honour Bhagwan Birsa Munda, the legendary tribal leader who spear-headed the 19th-century Munda Revolt. His rallying cry - *‘Jal, Jungle, Zameen - Inka hum sabko sambhal-na hai’* (Water, Forest, Land - We must protect them all)-remains the moral compass for indigenous conservation. Yet, as India enters a deeply digital era, we face a critical policy paradox: How do we honour this sacred triad in a world dictated by climate volatility, complex agricultural supply chains, and rapid technological disruption?

For decades, public investments in tribal regions have focused on building physical infrastructure — roads, schools, and clinics. Yet, sustainable economic transformation and technology - driven livelihood opportunities remain elusive for many of India’s 1.45 lakh tribal villages.

Tribal agriculture is not a “development deficit” to be corrected by urban models; it is inherently sustainable, fascinatingly self-sufficient, and deeply self-dependent. The challenge is not to alter the tribal landscape or forcefully disrupt their microcosm, but to protect them from external exploitation by unscrupulous elements. In our rush to introduce “informatics” or “efficiency,” the greatest risk is accidentally overwriting centuries of harmonious, self-contained ecological balance.

The modern world has far more to take and learn from the philosophy and ecological harmony of tribal communities than it has to give.

To bridge this gap respectfully, the Smart Tribal Farming Project Initiative (STFI) — a framework officially recognised in the Economic Survey of India 2025-26 as a scalable model for rural transformation — has been structurally engineered not as an intervention to alter their landscape, but as a digital shield to protect it from outside exploitations.

The DFI-2022 recommendations and academic mobilisation

To bridge the gap between national planning and field-level execution, the STFPI directly aligns with the landmark recommendations of the Committee on Doubling Farmers’ Income (DFI-2022). Specifically, Volume 12B (Digital Technology in Agriculture) outlines a strategic blueprint for the structural application of digital public infrastructure through seven dedicated Mission Mode Programmes, explicitly introducing the foundational pillars of Smart Irrigated Farming, Smart Rainfed Farming, and Smart Tribal Farming. Under the leadership of Shobhit Institute of Engineering and Technology (Deemed-to-be University), Meerut, this national policy agenda was translated into a massive academic and civil-society outreach campaign.

The Centre for Agricultural Informatics and e-Governance Research Studies (CAIRS) of the University, established in 2013, has organized a comprehensive series of 245 specialised webinars-comprising 132 National and 113 International sessions-focused on the strategic deployment of technology in agriculture.

This sustained knowledge mobilisation successfully united policymakers, technology experts, and grassroots non-Governmental organisations, shifting the policy conversation from the oretical top-down planning to a synchronised, multi-stakeholder operational roadmap implemented across regional tribal village clusters.

Operationalising STFPI: The quintuple helix, 5WIH, and BharatNet framework The practical deployment of the STFPI relies on a highly structured multi-stakeholder model powered by the Quintuple Helix Innovation Framework. This network seamlessly brings together Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Government, Industry, Civil Society Organisations, and local Environmental Systems into a collaborative ecosystem. Within this framework, field execution is structurally driven by the **5WIH Planning Tool** (What, Where, When, Why, Who, and How), which converts complex agricultural informatics into location-specific, customised actions for each distinct tribal village cluster.

The digital leap in India’s tribal heartland

The blueprint for transforming rural communities is being rewritten through a powerful fusion of high-speed digital infrastructure and grassroots self-governance. Leveraging the Government’s BharatNet expansion, a robust 1 to 10 Gbps data pipeline is now deploying directly to the Gram Panchayat level. While the unconnected panchayats are predominantly located in complex, hilly terrains-

where several STFPI pilots are strategically positioned-targeted interventions are expected to rapidly close this digital divide. Notably, the *PM JANMAN (Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan)* explicitly targets data and mobile service saturation across tribal-dominated villages to link Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). To aggressively absorb the remaining unconnected populations, the Government deploys parallel infrastructure programs financed by the Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN).

Catalysing AgriTech and edge deployments

Beyond basic connectivity, this heavy bandwidth acts as an economic catalyst for remote production centres. By injecting high-capacity data pipelines into rural hubs, the initiative successfully supports advanced edge computing technologies. Critical tools-such as WebGIS participatory asset mapping, real-time IoT soil-moisture telemetry, and decentralised smart farming networks-are now expected to operate at peak capability with near-zero downtime, driving a technological revolution in rural agriculture.

Supercharging tribal enterprise and livelihoods

This digital backbone is tangibly transforming tribal enterprise. TRIFED is spearheading this shift via its network of over 1,205 operational *Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs)*, securing sustainable livelihoods for roughly 3.6 lakh tribal forest gatherers. These digital pipelines seamlessly link remote collection centres to global markets and 122 brick-and-mortar “Tribes India” retail outlets.

Localised governance and global scalability

Concurrently, under the ambitious Tribal Village Vision 2030 initiative, specialised single-window “*Adi Sewa Kendras*” are being established at the grassroots level. These centres localise, streamline, and optimise essential citizen services. By bridging state-of-the-art connectivity with local autonomy, this ecosystem offers a powerful, reproducible growth model for sustainable rural transformation-serving as a clear development blueprint for the entire Global South.

Global recognition: Entering the international scenario

The scale and global relevance of this framework have catapulted the initiative onto the international stage, establishing a benchmark for sustainable development throughout the Global South.

Scaling horizons: Commemorating UN world rural development day

As part of its extensive global outreach, Shobhit University teamed up with apex international bodies, hosting the International Online Webinar on Smart Tribal Farming: Achieving Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood Opportunities. Organised in direct partnership with the African-Asian Rural Development.

Organisation (AARDO) and the UN Centre for Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDPAP) on 6th July 2025, this Webinar marked a definitive shift-positioning India’s domestic tribal informatics model as a universal roadmap for international agrarian development.

Redefining “SMART” from the ground up

In urban tech corridors, “smart” implies automated automation and top-down data extraction. At the grassroots level, non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) and HEIs working with indigenous communities have refined the acronym into five distinct, action-oriented Strategic Pillars:

- **S** - Sustainable Hill Agriculture & Ecology: Replacing standard plain-land farming models with micro-water harvesting, participatory soil conservation, and community-led native seed banks.
- **M** - Market-Linked Enterprises: Building direct, intermediary-free trading channels by organising tribal collectives into Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and creating place-based brand equity for premium “Tribal Products”.
- **A** - Appropriate & Augmented Technology: Deploying low-footprint, high-impact systems like gravity-fed micro-irrigation, localised vernacular mobile advisories, and decentralised solar-powered post-harvest units.
- **R** - Reviving & Validating Traditional Knowledge: Documenting and scientifically validating Indigenous Technical Knowledge (ITK) regarding resilient crop varieties and natural pest management.
- **T** - Tribal Ecotourism & Skills: Diversifying local economies through community-owned ecotourism, nature guiding, and cultural curation.

The author is former director general, National Informatics Centre (NIC), Government of India, professor emeritus and chairman, Centre for Agricultural Informatics and e-Governance Research Studies (CAIRS) & Centre for Smart Tribal Farming Programme Initiative (STFPI), Shobhit Institute of Engineering and Technology (Deemed-to-be University), Meerut

Please read the complete article online at dailypioneer.com



NISHANT SAHDEV

Your phone buzzes. A six-digit code appears - a one-time password, or OTP. You type it in, the payment goes through, and you forget the number forever. It lived for less than a minute. And in that minute, it had only one job: to be impossible for anyone on Earth to guess. This little ritual repeats in India about nine thousand times every second. In June alone, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) handled 22.72 billion payments - roughly 757 million a day. Every one of them begins with secret numbers that must be unpredictable. So does every Aadhaar check, every private chat, every net banking login, every defence communication. Everything starts with the same demand: give me a number nobody can guess.

The trick every computer plays

Here is the surprise: a computer cannot do this. A computer is the most obedient machine ever built. Give it the same instructions twice and it gives the same answer twice — every single time. That perfect obedience makes it hopeless at the one thing an OTP needs: genuine surprise.

So computers use a trick. They begin with one small secret number - engineers call it a “seed” — and feed it into a formula that churns out a long stream of digits. The stream looks random. It fools the eye and passes every statistical test. But it is fake randomness, like a magician’s deck of cards: it looks shuffled, yet every card sits exactly where the magician placed it. Anyone who discovers the seed can predict every “random” number that follows. And your bank’s OTP, if you trace it all the way down, always rests on one such seed.

When loaded dice break strong locks

History shows what happens when the trick goes wrong. In 1995, two students at Berkeley cracked the security of Netscape, then the world’s most popular internet browser. They never attacked the lock itself. They simply noticed that the browser built its secret numbers from the time on the clock and a few other values — things an outsider could largely guess.

In 2008, the world learnt that a single line of code, accidentally deleted from a popular operating system, had for nearly two years shrunk the possible security keys on count-



RAJESH SETH

Every day, millions of people rely on AI assistants such as ChatGPT, Gemini and Claude. A recent landmark study by Anthropic now offers a glimpse into what happens inside these systems before they produce an answer.

Millions of people around the world use these AI assistants daily to seek answers to countless questions. Students seek help with homework, housewives request for diet plans, professionals prepare reports, doctors summarise medical research and travellers plan holidays. AI has quietly become a part of everyday life. Yet one question has continued to puzzle even the AI experts who built these systems: ‘What actually happens inside AI after we ask a question and before it produces an answer?’

The AI black box

Researchers could see the information going into these systems (the ‘AI Black Boxes’) and the responses coming out, but what happened in between remained hidden. As AI becomes part of healthcare, education, banking, business and Government, understanding how it reaches its conclusions is becoming increasingly important. People are unlikely to trust AI completely unless they have some idea how it arrives at its answers.

A recent research paper by Anthropic (‘Verbalizable Representations Form a Global Workspace in Language Models,’ published on July 6, 2026) has attracted worldwide attention. The study provides the clearest evidence yet that advanced AI appears to organise information before producing a response. Until now we believed that AI simply ‘predicted the next word’ without any organised internal thinking.

Anthropic’s paper suggests that modern AI may have a more structured way of processing information than we previously understood. To understand this, think about how we answer a question ourselves. Suppose someone asks, ‘Which is the largest planet in our solar system?’

Most of us do not immediately say ‘Jupiter’. Our brain silently searches through memories of the planets, identifies the correct answer and only then do we speak. The entire process takes barely a fraction of a second, yet it is an essential part of human reasoning.

Why India must own its dice

Every UPI payment, OTP and encrypted message rests on numbers nobody can predict — yet India imports its randomness in sealed black boxes it has never checked



less servers to a pool of just a few tens of thousands. That is small enough for an attacker to try every key, one by one.

In 2012, researchers scanned the entire internet and found tens of thousands of devices using identical or related keys - because each device, switching on for the very first time, had nothing unpredictable to start from.

Notice the pattern. The mathematics never failed. The locks were flawless. The dice used to forge the keys were loaded. A lock, however strong, is only as good as the randomness behind it. And here is what should truly worry us: India’s digital systems have never faced such a public test. Not because they are perfect — but because nobody finds a problem that nobody looks for.

The universe’s only honest coin toss

So where does real randomness live? As a physicist, I find the answer beautiful.

Not in everyday life. A coin toss feels random, but it isn’t. If you knew the exact force of the flip, the spin, the air, you could predict heads or tails every time.

There is exactly one place where the future is genuinely unwritten: the quantum world — the world of atoms and light. Fire a single particle of light at a special mirror that reflects half of all light and lets the other half through. Will this one particle bounce back, or pass through? Nobody can say. Not because our instruments are weak, but because the universe itself has not decided. The answer does not exist until the moment it happens. It is the only perfectly honest coin toss in existence.

For decades, scientists wondered whether particles secretly carry hidden

instructions we simply had not found. The experiments that finally ruled this out won the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physics. Einstein famously grumbled that “God does not play dice.” Eighty years on, the joke has turned around: God’s dice are now for sale. Machines

that capture this quantum uncertainty are called quantum random number generators — the only randomness guaranteed by the laws of physics, rather than by the hope that nobody finds your seed.

India can make its own dice

Now come home. In 2023, India approved the National Quantum Mission with a budget of ₹6,003 crore. The headlines always chase one glamorous word: quantum computers. But hidden inside the mission is a quieter prize — the ability to make our own randomness. Engineers have a word for raw randomness: entropy.

The building blocks already exist. DRDO and IIT Delhi have sent quantum-protected secret keys through a hundred kilometres of optical fibre between Prayagraj and Vindhyachal. ISRO has tested quantum links through open air. C-DOT has built prototype telecom systems designed to stay secure in the quantum age. Startups in Bengaluru already sell quantum random number devices off the shelf.

What is missing is not technology. It is policy. We carefully audit who manufactures our chips and carries our data. We almost never ask who rolls our dice. The random number generators inside our

payment machines, SIM cards, bank servers and defence radios are mostly imported sealed boxes — trusted mainly because opening them is inconvenient. India should treat randomness as critical infrastructure: publish national standards for it, test and certify the generators in every system that touches money, identity or defence, and use Indian quantum sources where the stakes are highest. The RBI already audits banks’ capital. CERT-In already demands reports of cyberattacks within hours. Checking the quality of the nation’s randomness is simply the next line in the same ledger. A country that stakes 757 million transactions a day on rolls of the dice should know exactly where its dice come from.

Talent in every corner

Rules, though, are only as strong as the people who carry them out. Recently, a young cybersecurity aspirant named Utsav Puri Gosai wrote to me on LinkedIn from a rural part of Gujarat. What impressed me was not just his interest, but his determination to learn despite living far from India’s big tech hubs, with far fewer opportunities.

Nature spreads its randomness perfectly evenly; India spreads opportunity far less fairly. Talent exists in every corner of this country.

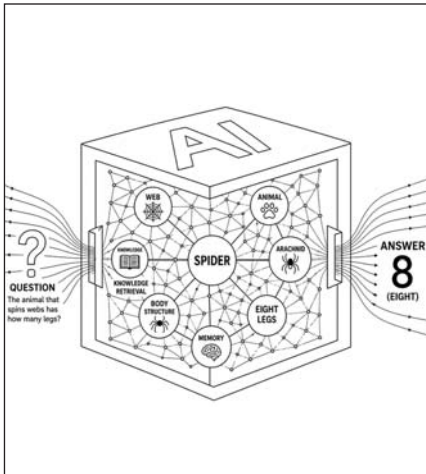
Visibility, mentorship and a clear path forward do not. If India is serious about cybersecurity, young people like Utsav must be able to find all three.

What quantum cannot fix

One warning: a quantum chip is not magic. Most fraud in India today breaks no code at all. It arrives as a convincing phone call, a fake “digital arrest”, a manufactured panic — and no machine, however perfect, can stop a frightened person from reading out an OTP to a stranger. Ordinary random number generators, when well designed and openly reviewed, also remain excellent; the real dangers are weak seeds, sealed black boxes and careless engineering around them. Even quantum devices can be badly built, and must be tested rather than worshipped. So the lesson of the National Quantum Mission is not “quantum everything”. It is three humbler words: Know Your Dice. So the next time your phone buzzes at a shop counter, look at those six digits for a moment before you forget them.

The author is a physicist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a columnist on AI, infrastructure and global systems

What happens inside AI before it answers?



A peek inside the AI black box

Until now, people believed AI worked very differently. Anthropic’s researchers have opened a small window into the inner workings of modern AI. They suggest that advanced AI systems appear to create a temporary internal workspace where the key ideas needed to answer a question briefly come together before the response is generated.

Imagine a large company. Finance, Marketing, Operations and Human Resources each perform specialised tasks. But when an important decision has to be made, the heads of these departments meet to exchange information and decide the best course of action.

How AI answers questions

Anthropic believes something similar happens inside modern AI. Before producing an answer, the AI appears to bring together the most relevant ideas in an internal workspace where they influence one another. To ascertain if this hidden workspace genuinely helps the AI to reason, the researchers designed a series of experiments. One of the simplest involved the question: ‘The animal that spins webs has how many legs?’ ChatGPT’s answer is ‘The animal that spins webs is a spider and has 8 legs.’

The question did not contain the word ‘spider’. Yet AI activated the idea of a spider internally before answering, connecting ‘web’ with ‘spider’ and then with ‘eight legs’. Humans think in a similar way, forming ideas before expressing them in words. The experiments suggested that advanced AI may also organise concepts internally before deciding what to say. This insight has important implications for understanding AI and for making it more reliable.

Why the anthropic study is important

The researchers also wanted to find out

whether the internal workspace actually influenced AI’s answers.

Imagine a student solving a mathematics problem. If you quietly changed one of the numbers in the student’s rough work, the final answer would almost certainly change, showing that the rough work was an essential part of the thinking process.

Anthropic’s researchers carried out a similar experiment. By carefully altering some of the concepts active inside the AI while it was working on a problem, they found that the final answer changed as well. The internal ideas were not merely passing through the system but were actively shaping its reasoning.

The researchers observed similar patterns when the AI solved arithmetic problems, translated languages and tackled more complex tasks, suggesting that advanced AI is doing considerably more than simply ‘predicting the next word’: it appears to organise information before responding.

Interestingly, this internal reasoning process was not needed for every task.

Simple jobs such as correcting spelling mistakes or recalling straightforward facts continued to work reasonably well even when this workspace was disturbed. That observation mirrors human behaviour. Reading a familiar word requires almost no effort. Solving a crossword, planning a holiday or making an important financial decision requires far more careful thought. Advanced AI appears to make a similar distinction between routine processing and complex reasoning.

Towards more trustworthy AI

The significance of this research extends far beyond scientific curiosity. One of the biggest challenges facing AI today is trust. If an AI recommends a medical treatment, helps approve a bank loan or assists a Government department in making decisions, people naturally want to know why it reached that conclusion. Until now, AI has often resembled a brilliant student who always gives the right answer but never shows the steps used to reach it. Anthropic’s work begins to change that.

If researchers can better understand how AI organises its reasoning, they may eventually be able to detect faulty logic, hidden bias or uncertainty before the system presents its final answer. That could make future AI systems more reliable, easier to improve and more transparent. Till now the emphasis has been on building larger models using more data and more compute. Anthropic’s

work indicates that the next major breakthrough may come not from making AI bigger, but from understanding it better.

What the anthropic study does not claim

The study does not claim that AI is conscious and does not suggest that machines have emotions, self-awareness or feelings. The researchers simply argue that advanced AI appears to organise information internally before producing an answer. That tells us something about how these systems process information. It tells us nothing about consciousness.

Why the study is relevant for India

India is rapidly embracing AI. Universities are introducing AI into their curricula. Businesses are embedding it in products and services. Governments are exploring its use in healthcare, agriculture, education and public administration. Millions of Indians now interact with AI assistants daily. As this transformation gathers pace, trust will become

as important as capability. People will increasingly ask whether these systems are reliable, whether their decisions can be explained and whether mistakes

can be identified before they cause harm.

Anthropic’s research does not answer all these questions. Much remains to be discovered. However, scientific breakthroughs are often remembered not because they solved every problem, but because they opened an entirely new way of thinking. This study may prove to be one such milestone.

It does not tell us that machines think like humans. Instead, it gives us the first clear glimpse of how one of humanity’s most powerful inventions appears to organise information before producing an answer. The long-term success of AI will depend not only on how intelligent it becomes, but also on how well we understand it. Anthropic’s study has not completely opened AI’s black box. But it has lifted the lid just enough to reveal something that was previously hidden. That small glimpse may one day be remembered as an important step towards building AI that is not only powerful, but also transparent, trustworthy and worthy of the confidence society increasingly places in it.

The author is an alumnus of IIM Ahmedabad and Professor of Practice at IILM University, Gurugram with an interest in AI, Technology and Strategy

FROM THE WORLD

USA

JFIIDS urges US Congress

An Indian diaspora advocacy group on Monday urged US Congress and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to halt the implementation of the new four-year cap on visa restrictions for students and exchange visitors.

"This is a self-inflicted wound on US competitiveness," said Khanderao Kand, chief of Policy and Strategy at the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (JFIIDS). The statement comes days after the US tightened the rules governing visas for foreign students, exchange visitors and journalists. "A four-year cap misaligns with how modern degrees actually work - median time to a bachelor's is about 52 months and to a PhD about 5.7 years - while USCIS is already sitting on more than 11 million cases with roughly year-long processing times. (AP)

SINGAPORE

Minister resigns over conduct

Singapore's acting Minister-in-Charge of Muslim Affairs Faishal Ibrahim has resigned after questions regarding his conduct were raised over his interactions with a woman, according to an official statement."Most of their interactions took place through online messages. They also met on the sidelines of public events," Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said in a statement on Monday.

Last month, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) received an email from a woman detailing her interactions with Faishal, following which Wong directed the relevant authorities to review the situation. Later, the police concluded that no criminal offences were committed and that no action will be taken against either of them. "But there was a separate question of whether Associate Professor Faishal's conduct met the standards expected of a Political Office Holder and MP," the statement said. (PTI)

Ukraine fires over 400 drones in Moscow attack

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Kyiv

Ukraine fired more than 400 drones toward Moscow in its latest major attack on the Russian Capital, the city's mayor said on Monday.

The blitz came hours after Russia bombarded Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities with ballistic missiles in a relentless cycle of tit-for-tat strikes that make a settlement to end Moscow's more than 4-year-old all-out invasion appear a distant possibility.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, meanwhile, said he would hold "key talks" on Monday as he tries to defuse a domestic political crisis, after last week's Government reshuffle exposed a deep split between the military's old guard and young innovators over how to fight the war. Zelenskyy needs to reassure



Ukrainians that sacrificing 35-year-old Mykhailo Fedorov as defence minister and keeping faith with 60-year-old Soviet-trained General Oleksandr Syrskiy as armed forces chief won't derail the fight against

Russia. Days of street protests in favour of Fedorov and against Syrskiy followed Zelenskyy's decision. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that over 400 Ukrainian drones were sent

toward the Russian capital from late Sunday until early Monday. He said most were downed far from the Capital and 85 were intercepted near Moscow.

Andrei Vorobyov, the head of the region around Moscow, said that 10 people were wounded by Ukrainian drones. He said that several residential buildings and civilian infrastructure facilities were damaged.

The attack started a fire at the Yuzhnye Vrata industrial park, about 30 kilometres south of Moscow, according to Yevgeniya Khrustaleva, the head of the Domodedovo area of the Moscow region.

The Astra news outlet reported that the assault also caused a fire at an oil depot in Podolsk, about 20 kilometres south of Moscow but there was no official confirmation

3 CHINESE NATIONALS INJURED IN DRONE ATTACK

Beijing: Three Chinese nationals were among 10 people injured in Ukrainian drone attacks in Russia's Moscow region, Chinese state media reported on Monday.The injured Chinese nationals, along with the other victims, are undergoing treatment

at local hospitals, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The Chinese Embassy in Russia is verifying the relevant details. The drone strikes unfolded from Sunday night through the early hours of Monday, the report said. (AP)

of the strike. Ukrainian forces struck logistics facilities and an oil depot in the Moscow region, more than 400 kilometres from Ukraine's border, Zelenskyy said. He also said Ukrainian forces hit two vessels belonging to Russia's so-called shadow fleet transporting sanctioned oil and four dry cargo ships in the Black Sea.

It was not possible to independently verify either side's claims. Ukraine's long-range drone tech-

nology has swiftly evolved during the war, posing a problem for Russia, whose huge land mass is hard to fully protect. Kyiv's forces have aimed especially at Russian oil facilities, causing fuel shortages and embarrassing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In May, the Russian Defence Ministry said air defences downed 1,054 Ukrainian drones in a 24-hour period. Russia uses ballistic missiles more frequently.

Andy Burnham takes charge as UK's new PM



ADITI KHANNA ■ London

Andy Burnham, newly elected leader of the Labour Party, on Monday took charge as the UK's new Prime Minister.

King Charles III invited the 56-year-old former mayor of Greater Manchester to form a new Government following the resignation of Keir Starmer moments earlier to mark the formal handover of power. "The Rt. Hon. Sir Keir Starmer MP had an audience of the King this morning and tendered his resignation as Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, which His Majesty was graciously pleased to accept," a Buckingham Palace spokesperson said.

Burnham, elected Labour leader unopposed last week, is expected to get to work as PM immediately by announcing his picks for Cabinet. The country's fifth Prime Minister in four years has pledged to bring in "stable and responsible" politics.

Earlier, Starmer delivered his final address from 10 Downing Street as Britain's

Prime Minister before making his way to meet the King to formally tender his resignation. "My work is done," he said.

The 63-year-old Labour MP, who announced his decision to step down last month, said he was "passing the baton" to Burnham, who had his "full support".

"I go with good grace, I go with a smile and I go proud of everything that we have achieved," said Starmer.

His Cabinet colleagues and officials lined up to applaud his departure from Downing Street after two years, having won a landslide election for Labour in the July 2024 general election.

Prime Minister Andy Burnham says politicians "need to be better" in his first speech as Britain's leader.

He is promising to deliver a "circuit breaker" for a system he says has taken wrong turns since the 1980s. Burnham spoke outside 10 Downing Street minutes after he was formally asked to form a Government by King Charles III. (PTI)

Congo Ebola death toll hits 930 with 37 new deaths in 24 hours

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Bunia

At least 930 people have died in Congo's Ebola outbreak, the country's Ministry of Health said on Monday, with 37 new deaths recorded in a 24-hour span Friday into Saturday, one of the highest totals.

The deaths were recorded out of the 2,344 cases confirmed as of Saturday, the health ministry said.

The Ebola outbreak that was declared in eastern Congo on May 15 is the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak on record. The Bundibugyo virus responsible for the outbreak is less common than others that cause Ebola disease, and there is no approved vaccine



or treatment. Ebola is highly contagious and can be transmitted to people from wild

animals. It spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids

China, US in talks for Xi's planned September visit

KJM VARMA ■ Beijing

China on Monday said it is in talks with the US over the planned visit of President Xi Jinping to Washington in September, signalling that the visit is on track despite recent tensions after President Donald Trump's allegation that Beijing interfered in American elections.

"Head-of-state diplomacy provides irreplaceable strategic guidance for US-China relations," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here on Monday while replying to a question over US Secretary Marco Rubio voicing confidence that Trump's remarks wouldn't affect Xi's visit to the US. The two sides had "maintained



communication regarding the arrangements for the heads of state's interactions later this year," Lin said.

On Sunday, Rubio, before flying to the Philippines to attend a meeting of ASEAN foreign ministers, struck an optimistic note when asked

whether Trump's remarks would affect Xi's visit to the US."We anticipate that the trip is happening in September," Rubio said.

"They've continued to send over their teams to prepare for it, and I've heard nothing otherwise," he said

of the Chinese side. "I have no reason to believe that they won't be coming," he told the media, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Rubio was expected to meet Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who would also be in the Philippines to attend the ASEAN meeting.

Lin said Wang will attend the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Manila on July 22 but declined to confirm the Rubio-Wang meeting on its sidelines. Lin said Wang will also attend the Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states to be held in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, from July 23 to 25. (PTI)

Six killed, several injured in rain-related incidents in Pak's KPK



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Peshawar

At least six people, including two children, were killed and several others sustained injuries in rain-related incidents triggered by the ongoing monsoon spell in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, rescue officials said on Monday.

In the first incident, four people were killed and nine others injured after a passenger wagon was swept away by a flash flood in the Landi Kotal area of Khyber district on Sunday night, an official from emergency service Rescue 1122 said.

Search and rescue teams, assisted by local volunteers, recovered all four bodies from different locations after an extensive operation, the official said.

In another rain-related tragedy on the same day, two children were killed and many others injured after lightning struck a house in the Irfan Nagar area of Rustam tehsil in Mardan district, causing the roof to collapse.

Indian envoy meets distressed workers in Oman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

India's Ambassador to Oman, Prashant Pise, met distressed Indian women employed as domestic workers in the Gulf nation and assured them of prompt action to address their grievances, the embassy in Muscat said on Monday.

The embassy's outreach comes amid recurring reports of abuse, exploitation and non-payment of wages involving Indian women domestic workers in Oman and other Gulf countries.

Pise met women domestic workers in distress and "those who have left their employers' households or have been abandoned by their employers" at a shelter



India's Ambassador Prashant Pise met distressed Indian women in Oman

run by the mission, the embassy posted on X on Monday.

The embassy said it provides free boarding and lodging facilities to distressed workers and that their grievances and complaints were heard during the interaction with the ambassador. "Their grievances and complaints were heard, while assuring

them prompt action by the Embassy's Community Affairs team to reach an early resolution," it said.

The meeting came against the backdrop of the case of Hyderabad resident Shabnam Begum, who alleged that she was lured to Muscat with the promise of a better-paying domestic job but was instead forced to

work 12 to 15 hours a day across multiple households without wages.

She also alleged that she was assaulted, denied adequate food and had her mobile phone confiscated before escaping and taking shelter at the Indian Embassy.

The mission said on Saturday that it had taken cognisance of the matter and was pursuing it at the appropriate levels.

India has labour and manpower cooperation agreements with all of the six Gulf countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE — providing a framework for addressing issues relating to the welfare and protection of Indian workers through regular bilateral consultations.

India extends grant support to Maldives for fitness centres across 42 islands

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Male

India and the Maldives have signed agreements under which New Delhi will provide equipment support for fitness and recreation centres in 42 islands, further expanding bilateral development cooperation, according to the Maldives' foreign ministry.



The Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed on Sunday by Maldivian Foreign Minister Iruthisham Adam, Indian High Commissioner G Balasubramanian and Maldives' Youth Empowerment, Sports and Fitness Minister Abdulla at

a ceremony in Male, the ministry said in a press statement.

The agreements are aimed at improving access to fitness facilities across island communities, with a special focus on women, girls and youth, while promoting healthier lifestyles

and community well-being, it said. The project is part of India's grant assistance under the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP), whose total outlay has been enhanced over the years to MVR 355 million (\$22.9 million), it said.

India, Moldova agree to promote trade, strengthen supply chains: President Murmu

ASHWINI SHRIVASTAVA ■ Chisinau

India and Moldova on Monday agreed to promote greater trade and investment, strengthen resilient supply chains and improve connectivity, with President Droupadi Murmu saying economic cooperation remains a key pillar of the bilateral partnership.

Murmu, who is the first Indian President to visit Moldova, held productive and forward-looking discussions with her Moldovan counterpart Maia Sandu here, covering the entire spectrum of bilateral ties.

"Economic cooperation remains an important pillar of our partnership. We agreed to promote greater trade and investment, strengthen resilient supply chains, improve

connectivity and encourage closer engagement between our business communities," she said.

The India-Moldova Business Forum, being held on the margins of this visit, will go a long way in energising our trade and investment ties, the President said.

"We agreed to strengthen cooperation in various areas of mutual interest including agriculture, logistics and infrastructure, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, Digital Public Infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and innovation," Murmu said in a press statement.

Referring to her visit, she said it marks a historic milestone in bilateral relations and reflects the growing friendship and mutual trust between the two countries.



President Droupadi Murmu during a meeting with Moldova's Parliament President Igor Grosu in Moldova

"India and Moldova have enjoyed warm and friendly relations for more than three decades. Although geographically distant, our partnership has steadily grown, guided by our shared commitment to peace, development and international cooperation," the President said.

Around 2,000 Indian nationals, including approximately 1,800 medical students, reside in Moldova, making India one of the largest foreign student communities in this Eastern European nation. The visit to Moldova is part of Murmu's three-nation tour of European countries aimed at boosting ties in trade, technology, tourism and other sectors. Murmu said that both countries reviewed the progress achieved in recent years and agreed to further deepen

cooperation across a wide range of sectors that are important for the growth, prosperity and well-being of their peoples.

"We discussed ways to expand educational exchanges and institutional partnerships. India is pleased to double the number of ITEC training slots for Moldovan professionals, including specialised courses in Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies," she said.

Murmu said she exchanged views on regional and global developments with her Moldovan counterpart and reaffirmed their shared commitment to peace, dialogue and respect for international law. "We agreed to continue working together to address common global challenges and

contribute to a peaceful, stable and prosperous world. India has consistently supported early resolution of all conflicts, disputes and tensions through dialogue and diplomacy. We have always stood by the side of peace," she added. On her arrival at Chisinau International Airport earlier in the day, she was warmly received by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, Mihai Popsoi.

Later, Murmu was accorded a ceremonial welcome and guard of honour by President Sandu at the Presidential Palace. After concluding her day-long trip here, Murmu will visit North Macedonia from July 21 to 22. This will also be the first ever visit by an Indian President to this landlocked country. (AP)



Taranga Gogoi, political secretary to Assam chief minister and president of Assam Cricket Association speaking at the inaugural Assam Premier League player auction in Guwahati

PIONEER PHOTO

Assam Minister Pijush distributes MMUA cheques to beneficiaries

TONY DAS
■ Guwahati

Assam Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, and Parliamentary Affairs Pijush Hazarika on Monday distributed Mukhyamantri Mahila Udyamita Abhiyaan (MMUA) cheques to 22,818 beneficiaries in Dhing, Nagaon.

The Minister stated that this is not only ten thousand rupees but an empowering tool for the women members of society to earn a livelihood and achieve economic independence. The Minister urged the beneficiaries to properly utilize the ₹10,000 seed money to set up businesses and become eligible to receive subsequent payments of ₹25,000 and ₹50,000 under the MMUA.

Minister Hazarika also spoke about welfare initiatives like PMAY houses, improved road infrastructure, free rations to poor families and free admission to schools and colleges under the present Central and State Governments.

He highlighted how all encompassing development has been ushered in by the State government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. He also announced that distribution of free rations would be restarted from next month. He emphasised that the present Government is unbiased in giving benefits to people, cutting across linguistic and religious divides, and no area will be left untouched by development measures.

He further spoke about how flood protection measures have helped people in



the Dhing constituency cultivate two or more crops. Stating that poor, meritorious students have got government jobs under the present government, Minister Hazarika asserted that corruption in the recruitment process during the earlier Government's tenure has been completely eradicated. Sharing his vision for the Agriculture Department, Minister Hazarika urged the people to take up farming to contribute to Assam's economic development. He assured the farmers of all possible help from both the Agriculture and Irrigation departments.

MLAs Mehbub Mukhtar and Rupak Sarma, along with the DC of Nagaon, were also present at the meeting.

Later, the Minister attended a programme at Bhomoraguri and distributed land pattas to 81 families of the Nagaon-Batadrava constituency. He also distributed MMUA cheques to a few beneficiaries. The Minister said that those who received land pattas would now also be eligible for farmer registration, which would provide them with a unique ID. This registration will make them eligible to receive benefits under Government schemes.

Income tax department short of 26,997 officers, support staff

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Income Tax Department is running short of 26,997 officers and support staff as of January 1, 2026, Parliament was informed on Monday.

"The vacancies in Group A, B&C in the Income Tax Department as on January 1, 2026, are 26,997. Occurrence and filling up of vacancies is a continuous process," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written response to the Lok Sabha.

As and when vacancies arise, such vacancies are filled regularly in accordance with the terms of the mode of recruitment prescribed in the relevant recruitment rules, namely direct recruitment through UPSC/SSC or through promotion as applicable, it added.

Further, the introduction of the New Income Tax Act, 2025, has resulted in a landmark development to simplify language, remove



obsolete provisions and consolidate & restructure provisions, it said.

Measures have been taken to strengthen and modernise the tax administration by leveraging information and digital technology for ease of filing, faster processing of returns, data analytics and faceless assessments, he said.

Replying to another question, Chaudhary said 11 individuals have been declared as Fugitive Economic Offenders under the provisions of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 (FEOA) since 2024.

Properties worth ₹1,303.16 crore have been confiscated under the provisions of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, pertaining to such offenders since 2024, he added.

Out of the above-mentioned fugitives, Red Notice has been published against 8 individuals, and extradition requests have been sent in respect of 4 individuals who were located, he said.

Moreover, he said 12 Mutual Legal Assistance Requests (MLAR) have also been sent. He further said that the necessary steps have been taken by the government to restructure the confiscated property to the legitimate victims of such economic offences.

So far, he said, the Directorate has successfully restored properties valued at approximately ₹73,015.03 crore to victims or legitimate claimants, resulting in restitution of ₹15,262.30 crore and ₹32,677.97 crore during FY 2024-25 and 2025-26, respectively.

Moreover, he said that during the FY 2026-27 till date, an amount of ₹9,873.11 crore has been restituted.

As per the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Balance of Payments (BoP) statistics, he said, net private transfers, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, increased from \$124.6 billion in 2024-25 to \$144.8 billion in 2025-26.

IOB Q1 profit surges 49% to ₹1,659 crore



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

State-owned lender Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) on Monday reported a 49.3 per cent year-on-year jump in net profit to ₹1,659 crore in the three months ended June 2026, driven by improved asset quality. The bank had earned a net profit of ₹1,111 crore in the corresponding quarter last year.

Total income rose to ₹10,938 crore during the April-June period from ₹8,866.47 crore a year earlier, the bank said in a stock

exchange filing. The bank's asset quality improved, with Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) dropping to 1.33 per cent for the June quarter of FY27 from 1.97 per cent a year earlier. Similarly, net NPA eased to 0.18 per cent from 0.32 per cent.

Further, provisions were at ₹834 crore in the quarter under review mostly unchanged from ₹844 crore a year earlier but lower than ₹1,006 crore in the March quarter. Shares of IOB were trading 4.11 per cent higher at ₹35.2 on the BSE in the afternoon trade.

Canara HSBC Life Insurance Q1 profit rises 20% to ₹28 cr



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company on Monday reported 20 per cent increase in net profit at ₹28 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2026, driven by higher premium collection. The insurer's net profit stood at ₹23 crore a year earlier.

The company's net premium income rose to ₹2,048 crore during June quarter FY27 from ₹1,653 crore a year ago, according to a stock exchange filing.

The assets under management (AUM) expanded by 14 per cent to surpass

₹49,683 crore. The Value of New Business (VNB) grew by 29 per cent to ₹124 crore in Q1 FY27, it said.

VNB is the present value of expected future earnings from new policies written during a specified period/fiscal and it reflects the additional value to shareholders expected to be generated through the activity of writing new policies during a specified period.

Solvency ratio of Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company listed earlier last year declined to 198 per cent as against 200 per cent in the same period a year ago.

Serving poor true tribute to Almast Babu Lal Badshah's ideals: Haryana CM Saini

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said that the life of Almast Babu Lal Badshah ji conveys the message of love, brotherhood, humanity and social harmony. He said Babu Lal Badshah ji believed that where there is true love, there is no place for discrimination.

The Chief Minister was addressing the gathering while attending the 43rd Annual Three-Day Mela at Almast Babu Lal Badshah Ji's Darbar in Nakodar, Jalandhar, on Monday. The Gaddi Nashin of Almast Babu Lal Badshah Dargah Hans Raj Hans also attended the event.



Haryana CM Saini being welcomed at Nour Mahal Divya Jyoti Jagriti Sansthan in Jalandhar on Monday. Former MP Sunita Duggal also present

PIONEER PHOTO

CM Nayab Singh Saini said that it was a matter of immense privilege and pride for him to visit the sacred land of Nakodar, associated with Almast Babu Lal Badshah ji. He described it as a blessing to have the opportunity to pay his respects at this holy shrine. He also expressed gratitude to the Sh. Hans Raj Hans for inviting him and extending a warm welcome.

The Chief Minister said that although Punjab and Haryana are two separate states, they share a common cultural heritage, Guru tradition and deep social bonds. He remarked that the two states are like two brothers from the same family and will always continue to

move forward with the spirit of love, brotherhood and mutual harmony. He expressed the hope that just as Haryana is progressing steadily on the path of development, Punjab too would advance rapidly and further strengthen its position among the country's leading states. He also prayed to Almast Babu Lal Badshah ji for the prosperity and well-being of both states and for the progress of the nation. CM Saini said that the Haryana Government, drawing inspiration from the teachings of Babu Lal Badshah ji, is implementing several public welfare schemes for the benefit of the poor, the needy and underprivileged.

Former Member of Parliament Sunita Duggal, former Minister Aseem Goel, District President, Sardar Jagbir Singh Brar, and Sardar Gulab Singh Sandhu were also present on the occasion.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Engineering Department
Tender Notice
Tender Reference No. GNDU/ENGG/2026/07/04-05

The Engineering Department of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar invites online bids for:-
(i) Renovation and Upgradation of various toilets (With Waterless Urinal and Other Water Conserving Fitting and Techniques) within Guru Nanak Dev University (Under RUSA 2.0) (ii) SITC of Old Number 6 Passenger Lift at Library Building.
Closing date & time: **04-08-2026 upto 04:00 pm**
For details log onto www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note: Any Corrigendum/Addendum to the tender notice shall be published on the above website only.
24/26/12/2026-27/13417 Dated CHD :- 20/07/2026

INDAG

INDAG RUBBER LIMITED
(CIN: L74899DL1978PLC009038)
Regd. Office: 11, Community Centre, Saket, New Delhi - 110017.
Ph. No. : 011-26963172/73; E-mail ID: info@indagrubber.com;
Website: www.indagrubber.com

NOTICE OF THE 47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, DIVIDEND & RECORD DATE AND REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION
Notice is hereby given that the Forty-Seventh (47th) Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Members of Indag Rubber Limited (the "Company") will be held on Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 05:00 P.M. (IST) through Video Conferencing ("VC") / Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") facility including e-voting/ remote e-voting without the physical presence of the members at a common venue to transact the business(es) as set out in the Notice of 47th AGM dated June 22, 2026. The venue of the meeting shall be deemed to be the Registered Office of the Company.
In compliance with General Circular Nos. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, and subsequent circulars issued in this regard, the latest being 3/2025 dated September 22, 2025, by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India ("MCA's Circulars") and Circulars issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI's Circulars") and in compliance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 ("Act") and the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("Listing Regulations"), the Company has sent the Notice of 47th AGM and Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025-26 on July 20, 2026 through electronic mode to all the members whose name appear in Register of Members as on July 10, 2026 and whose email addresses are registered with the Company/ Registrar to an Issue and Share Transfer Agent ("RTA")/ Depository Participant(s) ("DPs").
As per Regulation 36(1)(b) of the Listing Regulations, the letter mentioning the web-link including the exact path, where complete details of the AGM Notice and Annual Report are available, is being sent to those members(s) who have not registered their e-mail IDs with the Company/ RTA/ DPs.
The Notice of 47th AGM and Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025-26 are also available on the website of the Company at www.indagrubber.com under the head 'Investors Relation'; on the website of BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com; and on the website of NSDL at www.evoting.nsdl.com. Members can attend and participate in the ensuing AGM through VC/ OAVM only and such Members shall be reckoned for the purpose of quorum under Section 103 of the Companies Act, 2013.

RECORD DATE AND DIVIDEND
The Board of Directors in their meeting held on May 28, 2026 had recommended a Final Dividend of Rs. 1.50/- per equity Share of face value of Rs. 2/- each. The Final Dividend, if approved by the Shareholders at the ensuing AGM, will be paid on or before September 10, 2026, only in electronic mode, to those Shareholders whose names appear in the Register of Members as on August 5, 2026, in respect of shares held in physical form, and to those beneficial owners whose names appear in the records furnished by NSDL/CDSL as on the close of business hours on August 5, 2026, in respect of shares held in dematerialized form. The Register of Members and Share Transfer books shall remain closed from Thursday, August 06, 2026 to Wednesday, August 12, 2026 (both days inclusive).

REMOTE E-VOTING
Pursuant to the provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, the Company has availed services of National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) to provide Electronic Voting Facility to its members to cast their votes on all resolutions as set forth in the Notice convening 47th AGM. The voting rights of members shall be in proportion to their share of the paid-up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date i.e., **Wednesday, August 5, 2026.**
The remote e-voting period commences from August 9, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. (IST) and will end on August 11, 2026 at 5:00 P.M. (IST). During this period, the shareholders may cast their votes electronically. The remote e-voting shall be disabled by NSDL thereafter. Those Shareholders, who shall be present in the AGM through VCO/AVM facility and had not cast their votes on the Resolutions through remote e-voting and are otherwise not debarred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote through e-voting systems during the AGM.
The shareholders who have already cast their votes by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend/participate in the AGM through VCO/AVM but shall not be entitled to cast their votes again.
Any person who has acquired shares and become member of the Company after sending of AGM Notice in electronic form but before the cut-off date of August 5, 2026, may obtain their user ID and password for remote e-voting from the Company's RTA via e-mail at admin@skylinteria.com or NSDL at evoting@nsdl.co.in. However, if the person is already registered with NSDL for remote e-voting then the existing user ID and password can be used for casting vote. A Person who is not a member of the Company as on cut-off date i.e. Wednesday, August 5, 2026, should treat this Notice for information purpose only.
In case of any queries, members may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and e-Voting user manual available at the download section of www.evoting.nsdl.com or call on 022-4886 7000 and 022- 2499 7000 or send a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or contact Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, Senior Manager, National Securities Depository Limited, T301, 3rd Floor, Narman Chambers, G-Block, Plot C-32, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Maharashtra - 400 051, at the designated email id evoting@nsdl.co.in who will also address the grievances connected with voting by electronic means. Members may also write to the Company Secretary at info@indagrubber.com.
The Board of Directors has appointed Mr. Kanishk Arora of M/s Kanishk Arora & Co., Practicing Company Secretaries (FCS 9575; CP No. 13253), as the Scrutinizer for conducting remote e-voting in a fair and transparent manner.
The details of the said meeting are also available on the website of the Company at www.indagrubber.com and the website of BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com.

By order of the Board
For Indag Rubber Limited
Sd/-
Sonal Garg
Company Secretary
(ACS 24598)

Date: July 20, 2026
Place: New Delhi

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 (20.7.26)

7	2	5	3	8	9	6	4	1
3	1	4	7	5	6	8	2	9
6	8	9	4	1	2	5	7	3
4	3	6	2	9	7	1	8	5
8	7	1	5	4	3	2	9	6
9	5	2	8	6	1	4	3	7
2	6	3	1	7	8	9	5	4
1	4	8	9	3	5	7	6	2
5	9	7	6	2	4	3	1	8

DOUBLE CROSSWORD
TUESDAY | JULY 21, 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		9					
10							
				12			
13		14				15	16
17					18		
				19			
20	21					22	23
24				25			
27						28	
29							
30							31

ACROSS
1 Saucy in a novel way? (5)
6 New ideas to which actors are deaf (5)
9 One at the doctor's but without a complaint? (7)
10 Two ways to try for admission (5)
11 She's a setback for Aidan (5)
12 Singer given heart by English National Opera (5)
13 Removed from the rent book? (4,3)
15 Gardens by the river (3)
17 Neglect to order it (4)
18 Possibly green article to be found in groups (6)
19 It's tough with nothing in store (5)
DOWN
2 Would irregular soldiers fire at it? (6)
3 Rush to arrange out-of-the-way trips (6)
4 It's a sort of fever! (3)
5 Beast bringing wicked vice to the East End (5)
6 Irked at having done any wrong (7)
7 Sunny sort of celebrity? (4)
8 Motoring club? (6)
12 Teacher makes that impatient noise, a bit out of sorts (5)
13 Is such a brush one of a set? (5)
14 One competitor of several in a rail system (5)
15 Food to bake fresh, note (5)
20 Merchant doing a swap? (6)
22 Unable to move quickly (4)
24 Bluff ruler of Westphalia (3)
25 Less than presentable as an anagram, but sound (7)
26 Sigmund, an informal fellow out of uniform (5)
27 Is of negative nature and shows little dash (5)
28 Grins stupidly at a pair of spectacles (5)
29 It's quite normal that Mr Gore might take a turn (7)
30 One cannot take a light view of such practices (5)
31 Intends me to join a couple of Poles (5)
16 Cook a stew that is never eaten (5)
18 Cupidity, it seems, is the desire for more than just a cup (5)
19 Naturally enough, the ears play a part in it (7)
21 Vegetable served in the gunners' mess? (6)
22 It's easy for one to get fifty in front (6)
23 It may strike one as a neat motto (6)
25 In which dancers express disapproval to us? (5)
26 Finance sport to a good end (4)
28 Its violent impact puts heart into drama (3)

SOLUTION (20.7.26)

ACROSS	24, Soundly	DOWN	20, Bitch
3, Ho-i-st	26, Crated	1, To bat	21, Nomad
8, Got up	29, Cue (queue)	2, Rub-iron	23, Pledged
10, Ought	31, Ho-Dies	4, Oval	24, Sesa-me
11, Bob	32, Peddles	5, Sort-I.e.	25, Out (rev)
12, Ba-I-rd	34, Paris	6, Tu-D-or	27, Races
13, Ca-pit-ol	35, Gus	7, Sheet	28, Te-P-id
15, Towel	36, D-EN-IM	9, To-p	29, B-om
18, Co-y	37, Medoc	12, Boyhood	30, B-esom
19, P-rate	38, Dekko	14, Tow	32, Pin-k
22, Now-Here		16, W-ally	33, Lud
23, P-iod		17, L-ends	
		19, Pra-N-cs	

BRIAN MAHONEY
 ■ East Rutherford (USA)

HINDUJA HOUSING FINANCE

HINDUJA HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

Corporate Office: 167-169, 2nd floor, Near Little Mount Metro Station, Saipet, Chennai - 600015

Regional Office- Office No. 153, Orbit Mall, 1st Floor,Vijay Nagar Squire, A.B.Road, Indore, M.P. - 452010

Email - auction@hindujahousingfinance.com

Appendix IV : Possession NOTICE (for Immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Hinduja Housing Finance Limited (HHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of power conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice (S) issued by Authorized Officer of the Company to the Borrower(S) / Guarantor(S) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice here by given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Possession** of the property described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him, under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the change of HHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

Name of Borrower/ Guarantor / Co-Borrower	Demand Notice Date Amount Due	Description of Secured asset (Immovable Property)	Date & Type of Possession
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000000486 MP/IDR/RTLM/A000002338 Mr. SUKHOV PATIDAR Mrs. PREMKUNWAR PATIDAR	13-04-2026 Rs. 1823686/-	Makan Number 45, Ward Number 13,gram Dhamnod,tehsil-rattam,dist.- Ratlam Madhya Pradesh, India - 457001 Total Area - 1579.20 sq.ft. Boundaries: North : Road, South: House of Prakash ji, East: House of Badrali Patidar, West: House of Nandram ji	17-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000000748 MP/IDR/RTLM/A000002121 Mr. MUKESH MALVIYA Mrs. Sangeeta MALVIYA	13-04-2026 Rs. 1355553/-	Makan No 441 Patwari Halka Number 07 Gram Badoda Tahsil Rattlam, Rural , Ratlam , Madhya Pradesh, India - 457222 TOTAL AREA- 1560 Sq.Ft./ 144.98 Sq.Mtr. Boundaries: North : Road, South: Land of Shankarlal, East: Gali the land of Ramlal, West: Road	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000000767 Mr. RAMLAKHAN SINGH Mrs. MAINA BAI PARMAR	13-04-2026 Rs. 1153355/-	Ph. No. 40 Survey No.313/4 Gram Nandwasla Teh. Khachraud Dist. Ujjain, Rural , Ujjain , Madhya Pradesh , India - 456224 TOTAL AREA- 0.03 hect. Boundaries: North : Land Of Anubhav S/o Pradeep Kumar, South: Land Of Balwant Singh S/o Udanghisingh, East: Road After Land Of Mahank Singh, West: Land Of Jagdish S/o RANCHOD	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000001129 Mr. BHANVAR LAL Mr. KALU GARI Mrs. Padam bai	13-04-2026 Rs. 606164/-	House No 72, Patwari Halka No 01,Gram Gottdha,Near By Mataji Mandir, Khacharod, Madhya Pradesh, 456224, TOTAL AREA- 2520 sq. ft. (234.20 sq. mtr.) Boundaries: North : House of Ramesh, South: House of Nathaji, East: Road, West: House of Ishwarsingh.	20-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000001257 Mr. DULE SINGH GOYAL Mrs. AJAB KUNVAR	13-04-2026 Rs. 701555/-	House No 110, Patwari Halka No 57,Gram Khiledi,Near by Shitla Mata Mandir, Badnawar, Madhya Pradesh, India - 454441 TOTAL AREA- 1044 sq.ft. Boundaries: North: Road Of Kamal Singh Hada, South: House Of Rameshwar Mukati, East: Road, West: House Of Kamalisingh Hada	20-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000001679 Mr. BHERU LAL Mrs. GOPAL BAI GURJAR	13-04-2026 Rs. 814649/-	Survey No 169/2, Patwari Halka No 46,Gram Baydi,Near by Mataji Mandir, Sailana, Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh,457001 TOTAL AREA-0.050 Hec. Boundaries: North : Land of Mohanlal, South: House of Mohanlal, East: Land of Mansingh, West: Raw Way	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000001880 Mr. PAWAN PATIDAR Mrs. RADHA PATIDAR	13-04-2026 Rs. 1171139/-	Survey No 548, Patwari Halka No 43,Gram Dabdiya, Near by Patidar Dhamrashla, A lot, Ratlam Madhya Pradesh, 457001, TOTAL AREA- 9687.51 Sq Ft 900 SqMtr. Boundaries: North : House Of Ranglal Ji, South: Government Road, East: Land Of Mangleshwar, West: Land of Baleshwar S/o Nandram Ji	20-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000001903 Mr. GORDHAN SINGH Mrs. Prem Bai	13-04-2026 Rs. 940764/-	Bhukhand No 9, Patwali Halka No 39,Gram Guradiya,Near By Imli Chouraha, A lot, Madhya Pradesh, 457114 TOTAL AREA- 2712.50 Sq Ft 252 SqMtr. Boundaries: North : Land Of Kalu Singh, South: Common Path, East: Agriculture Land Ishwar Singh , Rajendra And Gajendra, West: House Of Sardar Singh	17-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000002144 Mr. SHANKAR LAL Mrs. KAILASH BAI MALVIYA	13-04-2026 Rs. 709687/-	Barkheda Khurd,Bamankhed Road,Survey No 379/1, Patwari Halka No 4,Gram Barkhed Khurd, Near By Ramdevji Mandir, A lot, Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh,457118 TOTAL AREA - 5865 Sq Ft Boundaries: North : Land Of Bapu Singh, South: Owned Land, East: Land Of Babulal Ji, West: Common Path	17-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000002167 Mr. SAMRATH GIR Mrs. Angurbala Bai	13-04-2026 Rs. 985204/-	Radha Krishna Mandir Road,House No 84, Ward No 8, Patwari Halka No 120,Gram Lachhakhedi, Near By Radha Krishna Mandir, Mandsaar, Madhya Pradesh, 458990 TOTAL AREA - 2300 Sq Ft / 213.67 Sq Mtr. Boundaries: North : Road, South: House Of Mangilal, East: Rasta, West: House Of Vinod	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MH/KGN/KHGN/A000000094 Mr. Yashwant Yadav Mrs. Swati Yadav	13-04-2026 Rs. 1048694/-	Gram Balkhadiya PH No. 48 Khalsa No. 97 (B). Plot No.183 (P) Gram Panchayat Balkhadiya Tehsil Bhikanganol District Khargone, Madhya Pradesh 451335, India - 451335 Measuring 1130 Sq.Ft. Boundaries: North : Common Road, South: House of Ramesh Santosh, East: Common Road, West: House of Basantibai w/o Arjun	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/DHAR/A000000428 Mr. ROHIT JI Mrs. SANGITA PARIHAR Mrs. LOGA BAI	13-04-2026 Rs. 764558/-	WARD NO 03, LSN 388, PH NO 80, GRAM SODPUR, TEH PITHAMPUR, NEAR HANUMAN MANDIR, Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, 454010 measuring area 1180 Sq.ft. Boundaries: North : Open land of Pritam singh, South: Rasta, East: Sumersingh, West: Fallow land	17-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/INE/IDCT/A000003082 Mr. PINKESH MAKWANA Mrs. POOJA POOJA	13-04-2026 Rs. 1412425/-	All that property situated at East Part of House No 201/23, Sector B, Ayodhyapuri Colony, Village Kodariya, Tehsil Mhow, Distt Indore (MP) 453441 measuring 390 SQFT Boundaries: North : Colony Road, South: Keshavnand Colony, East: House No 201/22, West: Remaining Part of Plot No 201/23	20-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/KHA/KHWA/A000000388 Mr. MUKESH REWARAM Mrs. INDIRA MUKESH	13-04-2026 Rs. 342309/-	Plot on Part of Survey No.471/1/1, Patwari Halka No.40,Village-Dhakagaonw Tehsil-Sanaswad, District- Khargone, Madhya Pradesh- 451111 measuring 1000 sq. ft. Boundaries: North : Road, South: Land of Gentu Ji Enak, East: Rest Part of Seller, West: Rest Part of Seller	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/DHAR/A000000622 Mr. KEDAR SOLANKI Mrs. KAVITA BAI Mrs. AMRUTA BAI Mr. MAGANLAL SOLANKI	13-04-2026 Rs. 1239221/-	Survey No 77/1, PH NO. 67, Gram Salonda, Th. Sardarpur, Near By Dantoli Road, Dist. Dhar, MP 454111 measuring 0.047 hect. Boundaries: North : Road & Land Of Survey No. 95, South: House Of Durgalal & Land Of Survey No	

MP/INE/IDCT/A000001968 Mr. SUMIT SONI Mrs. DEEPIKA SONI	13-04-2026 Rs. 1243677/-	All that property situated at Plot No. 6/1, Ward No 6, Survey no. 244 Colony Sirpur Tehsil and District Indore (M.P.) measuring 900 SQFT Boundaries: North : Road, South: Someone Else's House, East: Agarwal's House, West: Rajmal Verma's House	20-07-2026 Physical
MP/IDR/IDCT/A000000617 Mr. CHANDRESH KAPADIYA Mr. PANNALAL KAPARIYA Mrs. KAMLA BAI	13-04-2026 Rs. 2085545/-	Land on Part of Survey No.74, Patwari Halka No.61, Village Dhanakhurd, Dhar 454775 Agarwal Colony Pithampur Dhar, Urban Dhar , Madhya Pradesh , India - 454775 Measuring 600 Sq Ft. Boundaries: North : House of Mamta Bai Kapurchand, South: Common Road, East: House of Yogendra Singh, West: House of Shri Anil S/o Shri Punaji	17-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/IDCT/A000001851 Mr. GOURISHANKAR MEWADE Mrs. RITU MEWADE	13-04-2026 Rs. 1345133/-	Northern Part of Plot No.75-A & Southern part of Plot No.76-A, Shri Vandana Nagar Sector-A, Chhota Bangadda, Indore, 452006 Measuring 400 Sq.ft. Boundaries: North : Rest part of Plot No.76-A, South: Rest part of Plot No.75-A, East: Gali, West: Road	20-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/IDCT/A000001971 Mr. JITENDRA VISHWAKARMA Mrs. BINA BAI VISHWAKARMA	13-04-2026 Rs. 1181077/-	All that piece and parcel of property bearing Plot/House No – 225(Northern Part Of House No – 225), Patwari Halka No. 46(old Patwari Halka No – 20), area measuring – 297 Sq. Ft. Or 27.60 Gaj. Mtrs, situated at " Sai Vihar Colony " at Village – Baddodiya, Tehsil-Sanwer, District - Indore 453551 Boundaries: North : House No - 224, South: Remaining Part Of House No - 225, East: Others Land, West: Road	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/INE/IDCT/A000001806 Mr. Monu Vishwakarma Mrs. Simranva Vishwakarma Mr. GIRDHARI RAMLAL Mrs. POOJA JEE	13-04-2026 Rs. 705330/-	All that property situated at House No NA, PHN 17, Part of Survey No 53/3/9, Village Revli, Tehsil Sanwer, Tehsil and Distt Indore (MP) Admeasuring 480 SQFT Boundaries: North : Kartik Yadav, South: Sonu Sharma, East: Rest Part of Seller, West: Other's Plot	18-07-2026 Symbolic
MP/IDR/REWA/A000000544 Mr. SUDHEER KUMAR RAJAK Mrs. RAMKALI RAJAK	09/12/2025 Rs. 10,11,432/-	Mauja Gram Laxmanpur Ph Laxmanpur R N M Kotli Tehsil Huzur Nagar Distt Rewa Kharsa No 1277, Urban Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, India - 486005 Total Area - 5722 Sq Ft. Boundd As - East- House of Bharat Kumar Rajak, West- House of Rajiv Lochan Mishra, North- Government Road, South-Other Land	14/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000002175 Mr. AKHILESH PATIDAR Mrs. RAVINA PATIDAR	11/08/2025 1178904/-	House No172, Patwari Halka No 63, Gram Badagao, Near by Radha Krishna Mandir, Khacharod, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, 456337	10/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/RTLM/A000001410 Mr. Uday Singh Mrs. Annu Bai	11/11/2025 Rs. 6,24,357/-	House No 65, Patwari Halka No 61, Gram Malakhedi,near By Govt School, Khacharod, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, Rural, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India - 456313. Admeasuring Area - Total Area 1920 Sq. Ft. Boundd As - East- Road, West: Land of Bhuvan Singh, North: House of Ratan Lal Ji, South: House of Mohanlal Ji	10/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/UJJN/A000000923 Mr. VIJAY SINGH Mrs. KRISHNA KUNWAR Mr. BHERU SINGH	31-07-2024 Rs. 10,34,104/-	A House Gram Panchayat No. 624, Situated At Badagaav, PH.No. 63, Tehsil Kahchrod, Distt. - Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh Total Area : - 1520 Sq. Ft. Boundaries - East - Asha Kunwar Virendra, West - Prakash Kunwar Datar Singh, North - Samandar Singh Kisan Singh, South - Road	10/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/UJJN/A000001806 Mr. GOPAL SHARMA Mrs. Gudi Bai Mr. Sanjay Gopal	11-11-2024 Rs. 6,41,237/-	Plot House No. 67, Ph. No. 45, gram Itawa, Mahidpur, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, 456443 Total Area – 732 Sq.ft. Four Boundaries - East : Road, West- House Of Chaganlal, North : House Of Mangilal, South: House Of Tulsiaramji	16/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/UJJN/A000001060 Mr. DINESH S/o BABULAL Mrs. PAVAN BAI	26-03-2024 Rs. 6,19,405/-	House No.372/1, Village Bichdod Khalsa, PH.No.59, Gram Panchayat Bichdod Khalsa, Tehsil Ghatiya, Distt. Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India –456010 Total Area –720 Sq. Ft. Boundaries - East - House Of Vinod, West - House Of Girdhari, North - House Of Girdhari, South - Common Road	14/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/UJJN/A000002122 Mr. Babu Lal Mrs. Nanu Bai	18/08/2025 Rs 546408/-	09, Gram Lasudyanhata, Tehsil Jharsda, Kharsida, Khrishna mandir, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh Total Area – 660 Sq. Ft. Boundaries - East - Common Road, West - House Of Dhirap Singh, North - Owner's Plot, South - House Of Mukesh	16/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/UJJN/A000001864 Mr. Dhara Singh Devda Mrs. Maya Kunvar	16/08/2025 Rs 820902/-	Plot/House No. 151, PH.No. 102, Gram- Pipliya Nath, Tehsil- Mahidpur, Distt- Ujjain(M.P.), India - 456443 Total Area – 891 Sq. Ft. Boundaries - East - Road, West - Open Land Of Mr. Ishwar Singh, North - Plot Of Mr. Chain Singh, South - House Of Pintu Singh	16/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/UJJN/A000002613 Mr. DHARA SINGH Mrs. KRASHAN KUNWAR	12-10-2025 Rs. 1038698/-	Survey No 126 West Part Gram Sumrakhedha Tehsil Jharsda Distt Ujjain MP Survey No 126 West Part Gram Sumrakhedha Tehsil Jharsda Distt Ujjain MP	16/07/2026 Physical
MP/IDR/DHAR/A000000295 Mr. AJAY JI Mrs. MUNNI JI Mrs. ANANDI BAI	08-09-2025 Rs. 968722/-	Property Is Situated At, Plot No. 36, Land Of Survey No. 110, Gram Ambodiya, Tehsil Ghatiya, Dist. Ujjain Madhya Pradesh , India – 456006 , Total Area - Boundaries - East - House of Basant Lal Ji, West - House of Nandkishore Ji, North - Road, South - Road	15/07/2026 Physical
MP/UJJ/AGAR/A000000565 Mr. Satyanarayan Chouhan Mrs. Sona Bai	18-08-2025 Rs. 719933/-	84 dehrupal, WARD NO 07, MAIN ROAD, Rural, Moman Badodiya, Madhya Pradesh, India - 465226	07/07/2026 Physical

Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s) are hereby put to caution that the property may be sold at any time herein after by way of public auction/tenders and as such this may also be treated as a notice under Rule 6, 8 & 9 of Security (interest) Enforcement Rules, 2002. Authorised Officer Mobile No. - Mr. Vaibhav Shrivastava - 7987969803, Rajesh Chakotiya - 8435571111, Dharamveer Yadav - 82694 20174, Saurabh Krishna - 70603 9536, Ankit Parmar - 89892 40866, Divyank Shrivastava - 8318225992, Shivam Sharma - 75099 99827

Date: 21.07.2026

Authorised Officer, Hinduja Housing Finance Limited



Rohit hasn't told us anything about retirement, says skipper Shubman Gill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ London

India skipper Shubman Gill says senior star Rohit Sharma has not spoken to him about his international future which has been a subject of intense speculation for the past few days.

Before the third ODI at Lord's on Sunday, in which Rohit smashed a majestic hundred albeit in a losing cause, rumours had swirled that the match would be his last for India. But BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia issued a firm denial.

The 39-year-old Rohit, who only plays the 50-over format now, eventually silenced his critics by becoming the first and the oldest Indian batter to score an ODI hundred at Lord's even as the team lost by 27 runs. Gill was asked whether the 'Hitman' had intimidated anything to him about his future. "I mean, we have not had a chance (to speak to him). He's (Rohit) not told us anything. I think it's all out in the media. But there has not been any discussion like that," Gill said.

Gill was all praise for

Rohit's 138 off 110 balls and the manner in which he paced his innings that had 17 fours and five sixes. "I think the way Rohit Bhai paced the innings, it was great. Most of the time I was on the non-striker end watching. The conversation was mostly that if we keep the wickets in hand, then only



138 runs
110 balls
17 fours, 5 sixes



there will be a chance to chase such a big score.

"In Powerplay, we were talking that whether to go to hit or not, but we have seen that hitting with a new ball is not that easy. I think the way he paced his innings, and then the way he accel-

erated after reaching 70, it was great to see," he said.

Why no Kuldeep Yadav? Gill explains: Gill and coach Gautam Gambhir received a lot of flak for ignoring Kuldeep Yadav across all three games whereas England used multiple spinners to good effect.

Asked why Kuldeep wasn't played, Gill admitted that in hindsight, it seemed that two spinners could have been played on this track.

"So the matches that we played prior to this, we had seen the wickets get a little bit slower. When we were bowling and when Axar bhai was bowling, it didn't look like the wicket will get that slow, but when they (England) came into bowl, it did look like the wicket got a tad bit slower as the game went on," Gill said.

Also Gill said that whenever Indian spinners bowled, it seemed as if they were going on defensive. "Whenever spinners came in to bowl, we felt like we kind of had to go into defensive route whenever the fast bowlers were bowling, it felt like something was happening. And that was thought process behind not playing an extra spinner," he reasoned.



India records 78 doping cases till July 15; Punjab, UP at top: Sports Minister



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India has recorded 78 doping cases till July 15 this year with Uttar Pradesh and Punjab accounting for the biggest share of 13 violations each so far, Sports Minister Manuskh Mandaviya revealed on Monday in response to a query in Lok Sabha. After BJP MP Sambit Patra posed a query on the number of athletes who have tested positive for banned substances during the last three years, Mandaviya, in a written response, said 78 Adverse Analytical Findings (AAFs) have been recorded so far in 2026.

"These athletes have been banned from the Sports activities in accordance with the National Anti-Doping Rules, 2021. The sanctions, as determined by the Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel (ADDP) include disqualification of results, forfeiture of medals/prizes, period of ineligibility from participation in sports, and other consequences as prescribed under the WADA Code 2021," the Minister stated.

In state-wise list of AAFs, it was revealed that after Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, Madhya Pradesh threw up the highest number of dope offenders — 11 — this year, followed by Karnataka, which had nine cases.

In 2023, India reported 213 doping violations, which increased to 260 in 2024 before the number declined sharply to 131 in 2025. No dope violations have been found so far this year among athletes representing Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya and Sikkim.

The Minister then listed the awareness initiatives that have been undertaken to promote clean sports.

"...the Government is implementing a comprehensive and sustained anti-doping awareness programme through NADA in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code and International Standard for Education," he said.

Yuvraj wants clarity on Ro-Ko; concerned about lack of chances for Yashasvi Jaiswal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The spotlight seems fixed on Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli but former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh says he is more concerned about Yashasvi Jaiswal at this point as the young opener waits on sidelines despite scoring two hundreds in last three ODI appearances.

Speaking on 'JioStar', Yuvraj stressed on the need for clear communication between the team management and Rohit and Kohli about their future. He then urged the Indian think tank to "back them all the way" if the plan is to have them at next year's ODI World Cup in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

"More than Virat and Rohit, my concern is that Yashasvi Jaiswal is not starting. If the World Cup comes and he hasn't had enough game time, he's



suddenly going to feel the pressure," Yuvraj told 'JioStar'.



Rohit silenced retirement speculation with a blazing 110-ball 138 against England in the third ODI at Lord's, while Kohli also looked in fine touch with successive fifties in the series that India lost 1-2 here on Sunday.

"You need to have that clarity from the coach, captain and selectors, whoever it is," he said. "I have been in that position, which Rohit and Virat find themselves in. So, it's not fair for us to judge whether they should play. It's the team management, the coach and the selectors who have to decide that.

"If you want them to play the WC, you have to tell them, 'Guys, we want you to play the World Cup. We are backing you all the way. Go out there and be yourselves. There is no stress that tomorrow, if you don't have a good series, that you're not going to be in the team.'"

All Indian women boxers capable of winning gold at CWG: Head coach Nieva

APARAJITA UPADHYAY ■ New Delhi

Every Indian woman boxer heading to the Commonwealth Games has the ability to win gold, head coach Santiago Nieva said, expressing confidence that the team can better its medal haul from the previous edition in Birmingham.

The Indian women pugilists have enjoyed a successful run on the international circuit over the past year, winning medals at the World Cups, World Championships and Asian Championships.

"We know we have a strong team. And we have set a high bar with expectations to do our best," Nieva said. "If



we look at the results from this year, not only this year, even from the World Cup finals last year and onwards, most of our women boxers have won gold or maybe silver in the tournaments. (PTI)

Gave away lot of runs in last 3 overs: Gill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

India captain Shubman Gill blamed his team's inability to stem the flow of runs at the death after England amassed 388, saying the hosts' late assault ultimately proved decisive in the visitors' 27-run defeat in the third ODI on Sunday.

Reflecting on the turning point, Gill said India remained firmly in the contest until the closing stages of England's innings, before an expensive finish with the ball swung the game decisively in the hosts' favour.

"We were right in the game until the 45th over (when England batted). Gave away a lot of runs in the last three overs. That's where the game went away from us," Gill said at the



post-match presentation ceremony. "We thought if we had wickets in hand after 40 overs, we would be in the game. At the same time, we didn't want to be too far behind. After the powerplay we tried to play at 6-6.5 runs per over and chase at 10 in the

last 10 overs," he said. Gill drew encouragement from Rohit Sharma's century, saying the senior opener once again demonstrated why he remains one of the world's finest ODI batters despite the surface becoming difficult for stroke-making.

New Zealanders wake to a new major champion, heap praise on Ryan Fox

STEVE MCMORRAN ■ Wellington

When Ryan Fox rolled in a 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole at Royal Birkdale to win the British Open by one shot, it was just past 5.30 a.m. in his homeland and the sun hadn't yet risen. Most New Zealanders woke Monday to a wintry morning and the news their small nation had its fourth major golf champion.

Those who followed Fox on television throughout the night were able to watch him lift the Claret Jug before heading bleary-eyed but happily to work.

Sir Bob Charles, who was New Zealand's first major winner and the first left-handed player to win a major when he won the British Open in 1963, is now 90 and watched Fox's foundry round in replay at a more congenial hour. "I'm watching this in color. In my day, it was all black and white," Charles told the New Zealand Herald newspaper of the TV coverage. "I'm watching every hole that he's playing. In my day, they only had about the last three or four holes."

Charles praised Fox for the



pace at which he plays the game which goes against a modern tendency toward slow play. Fox hesitated for barely 30 seconds over the final putt that allowed him to join Charles, Michael Campbell and Lydia Ko as a major-winner from New Zealand.

"Ryan is a refreshing player," Charles told the Herald. "He plays the way the game should be played, the way it used to be played and should be played. And that is: you get on with it, and you don't spend half an hour lining up every putt."

"Let's hope that Ryan can be a great example of how the

game should be played now, even when you're playing for, you know, \$100 million!"

New Zealand's Parliament is in recess. Had it been in session politicians likely would have taken the opportunity to lavish praise on Fox, seeking some of his reflected glory.

Instead, New Zealanders rushed to social media to praise the 39-year-old Fox, a third-generation sporting champion within his family. His father, Grant Fox, was an All Blacks rugby star and winner of 1987 Rugby World Cup. His grandfather, Merv Wallace, was captain of New Zealand cricket team. (AP)

Till I am playing, there will always be noise: Rohit Sharma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ London

Acutely aware but dismissive of the "noise" around his future in international cricket, veteran Indian batting star Rohit Sharma says he knows that speculation won't stop till he is playing but he would rather focus on scoring runs instead of fighting it.

With a facile 138 at the Lord's on Sunday, Rohit could not prevent India's 27-run loss didn't look his usual, possibly trying to mask the insult and hurt he must have felt.

"The noise, since I made my debut was there. Till I am going to stay here, it is always going to be there, so it doesn't really matter too much," the 39-year-old, who became the oldest Indian centurion and first from the country to score a ton in 50-over cricket, told BCCI.TV.

"What really matters is what I do on the field, try and contribute to the success of the team. That's where all my focus is. Let the noise be there, if there is no noise there is no fun. My job is inside, their job is outside, that's how I look at it. "My job is with bat, come and play, represent my country, that's what I have been told to do since I made my debut, so that's what I am going to do," added the man, who is within touching distance of 12,000 ODI runs.



Under pressure, his 34th ODI ton was one of his best knocks in recent times. Rohit said he has always enjoyed playing in England.

"I love playing in England. The atmosphere, the grounds, the pitches, when you turn up to play any format over here, it challenges you in different ways. And that's what you want as a cricketer. To be challenged in every way possible. I enjoyed out there in the middle," he said. The century stand with Virat Kohli, who smashed 74, raised visions of an improbable win despite the steep chase of 388. It didn't happen but their on-pitch understanding was still as smooth as it was a decade and half ago.

New Zealand beats West Indies to clinch ODI cricket series

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Bridgetown (Barbados)

Mark Chapman scored 80 and Mitchell Santner shepherded the tail to guide New Zealand to a tense one-wicket win over West Indies in the fourth one-day cricket international Sunday and to an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

Santner was dropped with three runs needed and one wicket in hand, and last batter Jayden Lennox survived reviews for caught behind and lbw, before New Zealand edged past West Indies' modest total of 188 with 35 balls remaining.

Santner, the New Zealand captain, hit the winning runs from the first ball of the 45th over to finish 34 not out and to spoil West Indies' hopes of achieving a series-leveling victory to pay tribute to cricket great Garry Sobers.

"It was pretty chaotic, especially the ending," Santner said. "You try to chip off the total as much as you can. Even partnerships of 10 or 15 at that stage was going a long way."

"It probably shouldn't have got that close but it was nice to get over the line."

Tribute to Sobers: West Indies



had expressed a fervent hope to honor Sobers in his home town of Bridgetown and at Kensington Oval, the stadium where he nurtured his career and made his name. Sobers died Friday aged 89; both teams wore black armbands and flags flew at half staff in his memory.

Two seats were left empty in the pavilion named for Sobers and a minute of silence was observed before play began.