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1,679 illegal immigrants sent back: Himanta



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Airfares: SC asks Centre to place rules before it



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The username wars: India's small fight over a very big question



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GLOBAL

NASA astronaut Anil Menon set for 8-month mission to space station



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SPORTS

Best is yet to come: First female Test centurion at Lord's Yastika Bhatia



SC seeks SIT report in Ayodhya row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed by the Uttar Pradesh Government to probe the alleged embezzlement of donation money at the Ram temple in Ayodhya to submit a status report in the matter.

A bench comprising CJI Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohna also issued a notice to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust on pleas seeking a fair and time-bound probe into the donations 'theft' row.

Narendra Kumar Goswami, one of the three petitioners, moved the top court seeking a CBI probe into the matter. He also sought a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit of the finances of the Sri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, which

manages the affairs of the Ram temple.

Ajay Kumar Rai and Dinesh Kumar Yadav filed the second petition seeking similar measures.

Besides seeking a Supreme Court-monitored CBI probe, the third petition filed by RJD MP Sudhakar Singh has sought a forensic audit of the entire finances of the temple trust.

Earlier, a partial working day bench headed by Justice BV Nagarathna had asked one of the petitioners to mention the case for urgent hearing on a later date.

The petition, filed by practicing advocates Ajay Kumar Rai and Dinesh Kumar Yadav, said a CBI-led multi-disciplinary SIT should investigate the alleged financial irregu-

larities and other purported illegalities concerning the affairs and administration of the temple trust.

In the petition, Rai sought directions to the Centre, the Uttar Pradesh government and the Trust for constituting and operationalising such regulatory, supervisory and audit mechanisms, as may be necessary, to safeguard

public interest and maintain the confidence of millions of devotees and donors.

Whether or not the reports regarding missing funds and other alleged irregularities concerning the Trust are ultimately found to be true, such reports have caused deep concern among the generations that struggled for

the restoration of the glory of Ayodhya, the plea said.

It also said the SIT constituted by the Uttar Pradesh Government commenced its inquiry into the matter without the registration of an FIR or any regular criminal case.

The plea said the issues involved not only concern the possible commission of cognisable offences but also directly affect the faith, sentiments and confidence of countless devotees and the public.

On June 13, the Uttar Pradesh Government constituted the SIT on a request from the temple trust following allegations of misappropriation of donations received at the Ram temple.

The Special Investigation Team comprises Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, Inspector General of Police Kiran S and Special Secretary (Finance) Neel Ratan.

2020 DELHI RIOTS



AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and inset Ankit Sharma

PTI

Tahir Hussain convicted for Ankit Sharma murder

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH

New Delhi

More than six years after Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma was killed during the 2020 North East Delhi riots, a Delhi court has convicted former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain and four others for his murder.

The court found that a local politician allegedly supplied firearms to a mob, showing that the violence was planned, not random. The trial court will announce the quantum of

sentence on July 16. Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat at Karkardooma Courts found Tahir Hussain guilty of planning a conspiracy to target and kill members of one community.

The court said Hussain, then the AAP councillor from Mustafabad, gave pistols and ammunition to his co-accused: Mohd Abid Khan (Fauzi), Parvez Ahmed (Babloo), Mohd Shadab (Chintu) and Shah Alam (Shahzada), to carry out the attacks.

PIONEER IN SHORT

27 KILLED, 25 CRITICAL IN BANGKOK

A huge fire tore through a music bar in Bangkok overnight, killing at least 27 people and leaving 25 hospitalised in critical condition in the Thai capital's most deadly blaze in 17 years. Photos from the Rong Beer Na Ladprao bar in a northern part of the Thai capital showed people fleeing as flames shot out the single-story building and thick black smoke billowed into the sky. Shoes lost and scattered as their owners sought to flee could be seen in pictures from the aftermath of the tragedy. Bangkok city officials said the fire broke out shortly before midnight Sunday, and it was about half an hour until firefighters brought it under control. By daylight Monday morning, the site had been cordoned off as dozens of Thai forensic officers combed through the burned remains for clues about what caused the fire.

Mediation bid fails for 3 UP shrine cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Varanasi/Mathura/Sambhal

Efforts to explore an out-of-court settlement in three major religious site disputes in Uttar Pradesh have failed to gain traction, with parties in the Gyanvapi, Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah and the Sambhal Shahi Jama Masjid cases insisting that the courts adjudicate the matter.

The Supreme Court has launched the 'Supreme Court Action for Mediated Adjudication and Disputes Harmonisation across Nation' (SAMADHAN SAMAROH) to encourage amicable settlement of pending cases through mediation ahead of a Special Lok Adalat scheduled to be held on August 21, 22 and 23.

As part of the initiative, parties in several pending matters have been asked to explore the possibility of an amicable settlement.

In the Gyanvapi case, Hindu side counsel Madan

Mohan Yadav said the Supreme Court had asked both parties to appear before the mediation centre of a Varanasi court on July 14 to explore a possible resolution. However, Yadav said the Hindu side wanted the dispute to be decided on legal grounds alone.

"We have decided that the temple belongs to us and that the Muslim side is an encroacher. The mosque side should vacate the premises so that a grand Kashi Vishwanath temple can be built at the original Jyotirlinga site," he said.

Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee secretary Mohammad Yasin said thousands of similar disputes were pending across the country and doubted whether mediation would lead to any resolution.

He said the committee was still considering whether to participate in the mediation process.

High alert ahead of PM's Punjab-Haryana visit

Khalistan Group threatens blasts during Modi's rally

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH <

New Delhi/Chandigarh

Security forces are on high alert after an email from a group claiming to be the Khalistan National Army threatened bomb attacks in Chandigarh and Jalandhar on July 17, the day Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit the region for major inaugurations and a large rally in Haryana's Jind district.

Sent from kengakira@gmail.com, the email claims IED blasts will hit schools at 1:11 pm and the Mohali Mayor's office at 3:11 pm. It also names Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu as a target and warns people to stay away from Modi's rally.

THE MESSAGE MENTIONS KHALISTAN, FARMERS' CONCERNS, THE LATE ACTIVIST JASWANT SINGH KHALRA, AND SUPPORT FOR DILJIT DOSANJH



Maharashtra and Gujarat. Each time, authorities responded by searching and increasing security, taking the threats seriously until they could be ruled out.

The Prime Minister's July 17 programme includes flagging off India's first hydrogen-powered train from Jind, inaugurating the redeveloped Jind railway station, laying foundation stones for several development projects, and addressing a major public rally. Virtual inaugurations of additional infrastructure across Haryana and Punjab are also planned.

US to charge ships for Hormuz passage: Trump

JON GAMBRELL <

Dubai

US President Donald Trump said Monday that the United States is "reinstating" a blockade on Iran in the Strait of Hormuz and will charge ships for safe passage, after another heavy exchange of fire threatened negotiations aimed at ending the war.

He said on social media that Iranian ships will no longer be able to travel through the Strait and America would charge a 20 per cent toll on eligible cargo, as the conflict with Iran has intensified after peace talks failed to deliver meaningful progress.

"We are reinstating the

THE IRANIAN BLOCKADE, so named because it is only stopping Iran's ships or customers from entering or leaving," Trump said online. "All other countries will have



fair and open use of the Strait." The President said the toll would help cover "any and all costs necessary to do the job of providing safety and security to this very

India's women conquer Lord's with historic win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London

A stellar all-round performance fuelled India's famous 270-run win over England in the first-ever Women's Test staged at the iconic Lord's here on Monday.

Needing four wickets to wrap up the game overnight, India completed formalities in the morning session on day four, dismissing England for 186 in 62.5 overs despite a dogged half-century from Sophie Ecclestone.

It was a clinical performance from India in a format they don't play often, beating an out of sorts England fair and square in the "Home of Cricket".

Resuming their second innings at 130 for six, England batted for more than 90 minutes before succumbing to Indian bowlers. India had set a mammoth 457-run target for the hosts.

England's lead scorer Amy Jones (54 off 80) was the first wicket to fall on the day with Sneha Rana having her caught at mid-wicket.

Sophie Ecclestone, who was dropped twice off Gaud, too put up some resistance battling alongside Issy Wong (1 off 33) but they only delayed the inevitable.

Deepthi Sharma cleaned up the tail by removing Lauren Bell and Wong in quick succession.

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA

New Delhi

A Delhi Police constable posted with the Anti-Auto Theft Squad of the East District allegedly shot his 34-year-old wife dead near Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital in East Delhi at around 3 am on Monday, her birthday. The incident took place after the two got into an argument while riding their scooter from their home in New Vinod Nagar.

The constable shot Priyanka and then fled the scene, leaving her bleeding on the roadside, where she was found by a delivery executive who rushed her to the hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead.

Priyanka



The accused has been identified as Manish Bhati, a constable with the AATS of Delhi Police's East District. He has been absconding since the incident. Multiple police teams have been formed to trace and arrest him. DCP East District Rajeev Kumar

Birthday bloodbath: Delhi cop shoots wife

confirmed that police teams reached the spot immediately after receiving information. CCTV footage from the site and surrounding areas is being examined.

The footage reportedly shows the couple stopping their scooter by the roadside, getting off, and arguing, before Bhati allegedly pulled out his pistol and shot his wife. The footage is being treated as key evidence in the investigation.

The couple had left their home late Sunday night. According to Priyanka's brothers, they had gone out together for some work on her birthday when the argument broke out during the ride.

India players celebrate with the trophy following the victory in London, England

PTI

Classifieds

LOST AND FOUND

I, Saloni Maheshwari, have initiated the process of surrendering my SEBI Research Analyst license with registration no. INH000026682 and BSE Enlistment no.7189. If anyone has any grievances, they can lodge their grievances at <https://scores.sebi.gov.in>.

BEDKHALI NOTICE

I, Banarsi Dass S/o sh. Thakur Singh Vill Dhanauran Teh kharar Distt SAS nagar Mohali. That my son Named Parveen Kumar, His wife Harpreet Kaur. Both are out of Control and not obeyed me. That due to above said reasons I do hereby debbar, dis-own, dis-inherit all of them (my said son, his wife,) from my all moveable and immoveable properties. That if any person may deal with any to them, then shall do the same at their risk.

We, Naveen Jain S/o Kulwant Rai Jain & Swati Jain W/o Naveen Jain, R/o #1718, Sector 16, Tehsil Road, Mohan Nagar, Derabassi, SAS Nagar, Mohali, Punjab - 140507, declares that our Son Naman Jain is out of our control. We Disown him from all our movable and immovable properties with immediate effect. Anybody who deals with him shall be doing so at their own risk. Concerned Note.

We, Shakuntla Rani W/o Badhrinath Munjal & Badhrinath Munjal S/o Amir Chand Munjal R/o H.No.156, Sarojini Colony Phase-1, Yamuna Nagar, Tehsil Jagadhri, Distt. Yamuna Nagar, declare that our son Rajan Munjal Alias Vicky and, daughter-in-law Kavita Malik Alias Gudiya are beyond our control. Therefore, We hereby disinherit them from my movable and immovable property. Anyone dealing with them in the future will be responsible; We and our family will have no responsibility.

I, Tarawati W/o Late Sh. Ram Gopal R/o House No. 2499, Sector 38-C, Chandigarh inform that my son Sandeep Kumar is out of my control. I disown him from my all moveable and Immoveable Properties. Anybody who deal with him will do at their own Risk.

We Roop Lal S/o Prem Singh and Anupama W/o Roop Lal, House No. 133, Shivalki Avenue Sector 125, Kharar, District Mohali Punjab inform that our son Sahil Chauhan and his wife Neha alias Urmila Thakur are out of our control. We Disown them from our all moveable and Immoveable Properties. Anybody who deal with them will do at their own Risk.

I, Nannu S/o Sh. Ram Gopal, House No. 2114, New Indira Colony, Manimajra Chandigarh inform that my son Naresh is out of my control. I disown him from my all moveable and Immoveable Properties. Anybody who deal with him will do at their own Risk.

We Iqbal Singh s/o Naschatar Singh r/o Vill. Dohak , Sri Muksar Sahib have declare that our daughter Gurwinder Kaur is out of Our control. So,She left home without our consent. We disown her from all our moveable and immoveable properties. If any body deal with her, own risk and responsibility. he/she will be himself responsible for her good/ bad and legal / illeige activities, we and our whole family will not have any concern / relation with her.

We Harmanjit Singh Dhalival S/o Sh. Rattan Singh and Smt. Karamjit Kaur W/o Harmanjit Singh Dhalival, House No. 3250/2, Sector 44-D, Chandigarh inform that our son Anchalvir Singh Dhalival and his wife Arpan Shergill Dhalival are out of our Control. We Disown them from our all moveable and immovable properties. Anybody who deals with them will do at their own Risk.

We, Suman Mehra W/o Arun Mehra and Arun Kumar Mehra S/o Late Thakur Dass Mehra R/o H.No.10, Paradise Green, Palm Grove, opp IVY Hospital, Ajnala Road, Heir, Amritsar have declare that we Monish Mehra and his wife Harvin Mehra from our movable and immovable property as they were out of our control, but now they are in our control, so we revoke the Disinheritance we gave.

I, Chaman Lal S/o Khushi Ram R/o 125/37, 27 Feet Road, Majitha Road, White Enclave, Amritsar have declare that my son Sunil Kumar is out of my control I disinherit him from my all movable and immovable properties anybody deal with him is his own risk and responsibility.

CHANGE OF NAME

मैं, नेहा पुत्री श्री मुकेश निवासी 634 / 18, सफ़ौली रोड, शिव कॉलोनी. जिता जौद हरियाणा यह घोषणा करती हूँ कि मेरे पासपोर्ट में मेरे पिता का नाम मुकेश कुमार है और मेरे बाकी सभी दस्तावेजों में मेरे पिता का नाम मुकेश । मुकेश कुमार व मुकेश नाम से एक ही शख्स है और वो मेरे पिता है।

ਮੈਂ ਮੋਨਿਕਾ ਪੁੱਤਰੀ ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਾਸੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਤੇ ਡਾਕ. ਪੁਰਹੀਰਾ ਤਹਿ. ਵਾ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਹੁਸ਼ਿਆਰਪੁਰ ਨੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਂ ਮੋਨਿਕਾ ਤੋਂ ਮੋਨਿਕਾ ਕੌਰ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਸਬੰਧਤ ਨੋਟ ਕਰਨ।

I, Rohit Kumar, S/o Shri Balram @ Balram Dass, R/o House No. 94/1, Dera Bhag Singh, Ward No. 16, Cheeka, District Kailthal, Haryana-136034, hereby inform that my father's name is recorded as Balram Dass in my educational records (DMC), whereas my father's name is recorded as Balram in my Aadhaar Card, PAN Card and Family ID. Balram and Balram Dass both refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, for all purposes and records, he shall be known and recorded as Balram only. In this regard, an affidavit has been duly executed before the Notary, Guhla (Kaithal) on 10-07-2026 on Non-Judicial Stamp Paper No. 12AA 361536.

I, Dilbar S/o Mohin R/o #Village Hasanpur, Po Harnaul, Tehsil Radaur, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my name from Dilbar to Dilbar Khan.

I, Munish Kumar S/o Sh. Tarsem Kumar R/o #698, Kot Khalsa Main Bazaar, Nivi Patti, Amritsar, District Amritsar, Punjab, have changed my name from Manish Kumar to Munish Kumar.

I, Somay S/o Ravinder Kumar R/o VPO Jakhod Khera, District Hisar (Haryana) 125052 declare that I have changed my name from Somay to Somay Sheoran for future purpose.

I, Salautri W/o Randheer R/o House No. 1236, Khedar, Distt. Hisar, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from Salautri to Savitri. I shall be known as Savitri for all official and legal purposes.

I, Joginder Singh S/o Bharat Singh R/o Village Khanda Kheri Tehsil Bas Distt. Hansi, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from Joginder Singh to Jogender Singh. I shall be known as Jogender Singh for all official and legal purposes.

I, Nitish Kumar Dahiya S/o Shri Dharambir Singh R/o Village Khedar, Barwala (Rural), Tehsil Barwala, Distt. Hisar, Haryana declare that I have changed the name of my minor son from Baby two of Sonia to Lakshit for all future purposes.

I, Rohit S/o Dharam Pal R/o H. No. 272, New Rishi Nagar Hisar Tehsil and Distt. Hisar, Haryana 125001 declare that I have changed the name of my minor son from Baby of Rohit to Lakshay for all future purposes.

I, Seema Rani Singhal W/o Pawan Kumar Bargoti R/o 1604, Sector 1-4, Hisar, Haryana-125001 declare that I have changed the name of my minor daughter from Rutvi Bargoti to Rutvii Devi Bargoti for all future purposes.

I, Rajvanti W/o Manjeet R/o H. No. 279 Kaimri Road Shashtri Nagar, Azad Nagar, Hisar, Haryana declare that I have changed the name of my minor daughter from Baby to Nisha for all future purposes.

I, Kapil Khaneja S/o Prem Khaneja R/o H. No. 05, Patel Nagar, 8-Marla Colony, Hisar declare that I have changed my name from Kapil Khaneja to Kapil Kumar Khaneja for future purpose.

I, Khushi Singla W/o Gaurav Bansal R/o H. No. 109, Tayal Garden, Barwala Road, Jindal Park, Hisar declare that I have changed my name from Khushi Singla to Khushi Bansal for future purpose.

I, Reeku D/o Rajbir R/o VPO Bithmara Distt. Hisar, haryana 125113 do hereby declare that I have changed my name from REEKU to RINKU for future purpose.

I, Vikas Bhardwaj S/o Jaiveer Sharma R/o H. No. 11, Ram Nursery Wali Gali, Bharat Nagar-2, Kaimri Road, Hisar 125001 do hereby declare that I have changed my minor SON name from Maheem Bhardwaj to Manvik Bhardwaj for future purpose.

I, Davinder Kumar Sachdeva S/o Tirath Ram R/o A-2, Neel Nagar, Nilokheri declare that Davinder Kumar sachdeva & Devender Kumar both are same person.

I, Sai Raj S/O Ved Raj R/O House No- 567, Kesho Ram Complex, Burali, Sector-45, Chandigarh I have Changed My Name From Sai Raj to Rakesh Kumar Ahuja.

I Amarjeet Kumar s/o Brijan Parsad R/o 11 Dadu Majra Chandigarh I have changed of my son Parmish Gautam to Ritik Gautam.

I, Amandeep, S/o Sh. Raj Singh, House No. 240/5, Scheme No. 5 Gandhi Nagar, Jind, Haryana, declare that I have changed my name from Amandeep to Amandeep Sindhu. This is for all future purposes.

I, Ranbir Singh, S/o Amar Singh, R/o Village Jolly Tehsil Morri, District Panchkula, Haryana, have changed my minor daughter's name from Riya Choudhri to Riya Chaudhary.

I, Ram Preet Chauhan S/O Ram Sabad R/O H.No. 2096, GF, Sector 45-C, Chandigarh Have Changed My Name From Ram Preet Chauhan To Ram Preet.

I, No. 162758F Rank P.O (ELAR) Raj Kumar S/o Janak Raj R/o Mohalla Lallian, Urmar, PO Urmar Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed the name of my wife name from Savita Chawla to Savita and date of birth from 06-11-1975 to 06-11-1977. Concerned note.

I, No. 162758F Rank P.O (ELAR) Raj Kumar S/O Janak Raj R/o Mohalla Lallian, Urmar, PO Urmar Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed the name of my daughter name from Alisha to Alisha chawla. Concerned note.

I, Harshdeep Singh S/o Dilbag Singh R/o Village Naru Nangal Kila, PO Naru Nangal Khas, Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab declare that my surname is Singh and my given name is Harshdeep. Concerned note.

I, Satvinder Pal S/o Chint Ram R/o Vill. Ahrana Khurd, PO Ahrana Kalan Tehsil and Distt. Hoshiarpur Punjab have changed my name from Satvinder Pal to Satvinder Pal. Concerned note.

I, No 3990217F Ex Hay (MACP Nb Sub) Davinder Kumar Vill- Bhatoli PO Bhawnaur Tehsil - Mukerian Distt Hoshiarpur (Pb) have changed the name of my daughter from Priti to Preeti Devi. Concerned note.

I, Bavita Rani Alias Seema Rani W/o Rajinder Kumar R/o VPO Phuglana Distt. Hoshiarpur 146001 Punjab have changed my name from Bavita Rani Alias Seema Rani to Seema Rani. Where Seema is my given name Rani is surname. Concerned note.

I, Virpal S/o Mohinder Pal R/o Village and PO Dagana Kalan Distt. Hoshiarpur 146022 Punjab have changed my name from Virpal to Vir Pal Salhan. Concerned note.

I, Mamta R/O Ward no 552/7, Shankar Nagar, Gurdaspur have changed my name to Mamta Mahajan. Concerned note.

I Manjeet Kaur Mother of No. JC583736L Rank Nb Sub Name Tirath Singh Presently Residing at Vill. Malaikpur P.O: Batala, Teh. Batala, Distt. Gurdaspur PIN-143505 have changed my name from Manjeet Kaur to Manjit Kaur Vide Affidavit No.PB65011324577557Y dated 30 June 2026 before Notary Public Batala.

I Kokli mother of No. 2859969W NK Lakshmi Chand R/o Village Kakhri Hukmi, Tehsil Badhra Distt. Charkhi Dadri have changed my name from Kokali Devi to Kokli. My date of birth is 01.01.1958.

I, hitherto known as PARTH S/O SURENDER KUMAR R/O VILLAGE MOI HOODA, TEHSIL GOHANA, DISTT SONIPAT, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PARTH HOODA.

I, hitherto known as ARYAN S/O SURENDER KUMAR R/O VILLAGE MOI HOODA, TEHSIL GOHANA, DISTT SONIPAT, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ARYAN HOODA.

I, Mahinder Singh S/o Bhagat Ram R/o Village-Ramana Ramani, Tehsil-Nigdhu, District-Karnal declare that Mahinder Singh and Mahinder Pal both are my name. My wife name is registered as Balla Devi in my passport, whereas her correct name is Bala Rani.

I, Prem Kumar S/O Ramesh Kumar, R/O Ward No.10 Green Vally Razada Road Qadian -143516, Tehsil - Batala, Distt- Gurdaspur, Punjab. Have Changed My Name Prem Kumar To Prem As My Given Name And Kumar As My Surname. All Concerned Please Note.

I Bobby s/o Sh. Suresh Pal r/o Village Jaroda, Tehsil Jagadhri, distt Yamunanagar have changed my name from Bobby to Bobby Kumar.

I Manish Kumar Bajaj S/o Late Prem Kumar R/o # 185, gali no. 4 Azad Nagar have changed my name from Munish Kumar Bajaj to Manish Kumar Bajaj.

I, Vishal Dhiman S/o Girdhari Lal R/o H.No.138, Shivpuri-A, Kansapur Road, Yamuna Nagar, Jagadhri, have changed my name from Vishal Dhiman to Vishal Kumar.

I, Rachna W/o Krishan Lal R/o 1502A, ITI Road, Giri Mandir, Modern Colony Yamuna Nagar, have changed my name from Ruchi to Rachna. Ruchi and Rachna both are my name one and the same lady. In future I will be known as Rachna.

I, Savita Sangwan, W/o Sh. Manoj Kumar Sangwan, R/o 422, Huda, Sector 06, Panipat, declares that I have changed my name from Savita Sirohi to Savita Sangwan, for all future Purposes.

I, Surinder Singh S/o Iqbal Singh R/o Flat No. B4/502, VIP Road, Rail Vihar Zirakpur, Distt SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab have changed my name from Surinder Singh to Surinder Singh Nijjer

I SHAILENDRA KUMAR SINGH S/O SURENDRA SINGH R/O C-1003, City Apartment, Sohana, Sector 78, Mohali, Tehsil and District SAS Nagar (Mohali) Punjab-140308 India have changed the name of my minor son MAANENDRA VIKRAM SINGH, aged 13 Years and he shall hereafter be known as MAANINDRA SINGH.

I, Amanpreet Kaur Dung D/o Kulwinderjit Singh, House No. 1274, Sector 15-B, Chandigarh have changed my name from Amanpreet Kaur Dung to Amanpreet Kaur

I, Kulvinder Kaur Sodhi D/o Surjit Singh Sodhi, House No. 1274, Sector 15-B, Chandigarh have changed my name from Kulvinder Kaur Sodhi to Kulvinder Kaur

I, Kulwinderjit Singh Dung S/o Pritam Singh, House No. 1274, Sector 15-B, Chandigarh have changed my name from Kulwinderjit Singh Dung to Kulwinderjit Singh

I, Bhupinder Jit Singh Dung S/o Kulwinder Singh, House No. 1274, Sector 15-B, Chandigarh have changed my name from Bhupinder Jit Singh Dung to Bhupinder Jit Singh

I Sharanjit Kaur Somal W/O Mantej Singh H.No. 2205, 31 C, Chandigarh 160030 have changed my name from Sharanjit Kaur Somal to Sharanjit Kaur.

I, Rajinder Singh S/o Ajmer Singh, R/o Sangriwala, District SAS Nagar Mohali Punjab have changed my name from Rajinder Singh to Harjinder Singh

I, Ravinder Kaur W/o Gurdeep Singh, House No. 990, Sector 45 Burali Chandigarh have changed my name to Rajwinder Kaur

I, Gurdeep Singh S/o Narotam Singh, House No. 990, Sector 45 Burali Chandigarh have changed my minor son name from Baby of Rajwinder Kaur to Santpaharajot Singh Gill

I, Ram Darsh S/o Sh. Nanu Lal Sharma, House No. 3872, Ambedkar Colony Yojana Palsora, Chandigarh have changed my name from Ram Darsh to Ram Darsh Sharma.

I, Parmjeet w/o Sanjeev Kumar r/o Village Talheri Rangran Tehsil Barara (Ambala) Haryana India have changed my name from Ram Darsh to Ram Darsh Sharma.

I, Sanjeev s/o Roop Ram r/o Village Talheri Rangran Tehsil Barara (Ambala) Haryana India have changed my name from Sanjeev to Sanjeev Kumar.

I Subha Singh S/o Sh. Surain Singh R/o VPO Hassanpur, Tehsil Thanesar, District Kurukshetra have changed my name from Subha Singh to Suba Singh. All concerned note please.

I, Pramila Sahani legally mother of No.15697559H Hav Arun Kumar Sahni Unit 32 RR C/o 56 APO residing at Khatra, Distt. Bankura, State- West Bengal -722140 declare That I have changed my name from Pramila Devi to Pramila Sahani vide Affidavit No. IN-PB67005523995981Y dated 06.07.2026 before the court of Bathinda.

I, Pramila Sahani (previously known as Pramila Devi) legally mother of No.15697559H Hav Arun Kumar Sahni Unit 32 RR C/o 56 APO residing at Khatra, Distt. Bankura, State- West Bengal -722140 declare That I have changed my name from Pramila Devi to Pramila Sahani vide Affidavit No. IN-PB67005523995981Y dated 06.07.2026 before the court of Bathinda.

I, Ramnaresh Sahani (previously known as Ram Naresh Sahni) legally father of No.15697559H Hav Arun Kumar Sahni Unit 32 RR C/o 56 APO residing at Khatra, Distt. Bankura, State- West Bengal -722140 declare That I have changed my name from Ram Naresh Sahni to Ramnaresh Sahani vide Affidavit No. IN-PB67004398163191Y dated 06.07.2026 before the court of Bathinda.

I, Ramnaresh Sahani legally father of No.15697559H Hav Arun Kumar Sahni Unit 32 RR C/o 56 APO residing at Khatra, Distt. Bankura, State- West Bengal -722140 declare That I have changed my DOB from 01.07.1956 to 11.05.1960 vide Affidavit No. IN-PB67879600437348Y dated 08.07.2026 before the court of Bathinda.

I, Shareefasab legally father of No.15828501K/L/NK Malikasab Shareefasab Nadaf Unit 36 FAD, C/o 56 APO, residing at #108, Kadasagatti, Turakarshigihalli, Sampgaon, Distt. Belgaum, State-Karnataka-591115 declare that I have changed my name from Shareefasab to Sharipasab J Nadaf and DOB from 05.01.1975 to 05.09.1972 as per my Aadhaar Card vide Affidavit No. IN-PB68746416100807Y dated 10.07.2026 before the court of Bathinda.

I Ajay Kumar Mishra S/O Ram Saijwan Mishra R/O H.No. 5496/3, Mhc, Manimajra, Chandigarh, Have Changed My Name From Ajay Kumar Mishra To Ajay Mishra.

I Ramesh Kumar Rathee s/o Balbir Singh Rathee r/o Vill. Sahanpur Teh. Safidon Distt. Jind declare that I have changed my name from Ramesh Kumar Rathee to Ramesh Kumar for all future purposes. That in my old passport my father name is Balbir Singh Rathee which is wrong. Correct name of my father Balbir Singh should be added in my passport.

I Anu Naresh w/o Ramesh Kumar r/o Vill. Sahanpur Teh. Safidon Distt. Jind declare that in my husband's passport my name is Anu Naresh which is wrong. My correct name is Annu Devi. I have changed my name from Anu Naresh to Annu Devi for all future purposes.

I Sarin Kumar s/o Sh. Roshan Lal r/o H.No. 252 Sec 8 Distt. Jind declare that I have changed my name from Sarin Kumar to Sarin Sharma for all future purposes.

I, Monika D/o Sh. Devender Singh Resident of House no 07/23, kishan pura, Panipat -132103 have declared that I have change my name from Monika to Monika Virk.

I, Mukesh Gupta R/o H.No. 425, Sector-7, Urban Estate, Karnal (Haryana) I have changed my name from Mukesh Kumar Gupta to Mukesh Gupta.

I Neeru Gawri W/o Sanjeev Gawri R/O #588, Near Power House, Gurinder Avenue, SRI MUKTSAR SAHIB HAVE CHANGED MY NAME from Neeru Gawri to Neeraj Gawri w/o Sanjeev Gawri

I, ISHU KAMBOJ, Daughter of Shri Krishan Kumar, resident of House No. 121, Near Sheelta Mata Mandir, Kansal, P.O. Naya Gaon, Sub-District Kharar, District S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), Punjab – 160103, have changed my name from ISHU to ISHU KAMBOJ. Henceforth, I shall be known and addressed as ISHU KAMBOJ for all purposes.

I, Naresh Kumar S/o Deshraj R/o #Village Lahasabad,Po Muzafat kalan,Tehsil Pratap Nagar, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my minor Son name from Natin Kumar to Niteen.

I, Naresh Kumar S/o Deshraj R/o #Village Lahasabad, Po Muzafat kalan, Tehsil Pratap Nagar, Distt Yamuna Nagar have changed my minor Son name from Natin Kumar to Niteen.

I NEERAJ S/o Kaushal Kishor R/o H.No.5/17, Gali No. 5 G, Saraswati Vihar, Rewari, Haryana-123401 have changed my name to NEERAJ VERMA for all future purpose.

I ZAHIDA W/o M.A.Parvez R/o House No.C-85, 3rd Floor, Block-C, Abul Fazal Enclave Part-2, Shaheen Bagh,South Delhi Delhi- 110025, have changed my name to JAYDA GULSHAN JAHAN For all future purpose.

I KAUSHAL KISHORE S/o Puran Chand R/o H.No.5/17, Gali No. 5 G, Saraswati Vihar, Rewari, Haryana-123401, have changed my name to KAUSHAL KISHOR for all future purpose.

I DHIRENDER KUMAR SAXENA S/OHarish Chandra Saxena R/O house no 4821, Upper Ground Floor, 12th Avenue, I.P.2, Sainik Colony, Sector-49, Faridabad, Haryana-121001, Have Changed My Name to DHIRENDER SAXENA For All Future Purpose.

I, Sarsoom Masih S/O Maqsud Masih R/O Village- Sooch. Po- Aulakh Beri, Gurdaspur Pin-143527, Punjab, India. Declare That My Given Name As Sarsoom And My Surname As Masih.

I, Taiyab S/o Rassol Mia R/o H.No. 2049, Gali No.1 Masit Wali, Kishankot, Near Police Station Islamabad, Amritsar have changed my name from Taiyab to Taiyab Ali.

I SHUKANTLA SHARMA (existing name) SPOUSE OF No. 679166B Ex MWO (Hony Fly Officer) Ram Bilas Sharma S/o Dariya Dutt resident of VPO Behlba, Tehsil Meham, District Rohtak (Haryana) declare that I have changed /amend my name in my husband Defence Records/ PPO from SHUKANTLA SHARMA (existing name) to SHAKUNTLA SHARMA (Correct Name) for all work purposes. In future I shall may be known/ written/ called as SHAKUNTLA SHARMA for all work purposes Vide Affidavit dated 13 JULY 2026 before Ist Class Magistrate Rohtak.

I Narender Kumar S/o Sh. Ramkumar Hooda R/o H.No. 659/29/1, Vishal Nagar, Rohtak, Haryana – 124001 declared that my old name is Narender Kumar and I have to changed my name from Narender Kumar to Narender Hooda. In future I will be known as Narender Hooda for all purposes.

I, Pushpinder Singh S/o Hukum Singh R/o Todarpur (175), PO. Sadhura, Distt. Yamuna Nagar, have changed my name from Pushpinder Singh to Pushpinder.

I, Ram Karan son of Sh. Deep Chand resident of Village Nagla Rajputan Tehsil Naraingarh Distt. Ambala have changed my minor daughter's name from Baby Two of Reena Devi to Riya Saini.

I, Niranjan Kumar Raghuvanshi Son of Prem Singh Resident of Village Kothi Deora, Post office Ghatti, Tehsil and Distt Solan HP -173211 declare that I have changed my name from Niranjan Kumar (Previous Name) to Niranjan Kumar Raghuvanshi (New Name). All Concerned please may note.

I, Moni Sangal, W/o Vikas Kumar Sangal, r/o Gali No. 12, near Khalsa College, Azad Nagar, Yamunanagar, declares that I am known by both the names Moni Sangal and Monika Sangal.

I hitherto known as SURINDER KAUR BARING WIFE of NACHHATTAR SINGH SIDHU Resident of HOUSE No. 949/3, Tajpur Road, New Kulla Patti, Raikot, Post office Raikot , District Ludhiana Punjab - 141109 India, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SURINDER KAUR SIDHU.

I, YODHBIR SINGH, Father of Service No. 14942102K Rank -HAV, Name YOGESH KUMAR, R/o Village-DATOLI (176), Post Office- Dudhwa Tehsil CHARKHI DADRI, DISTRICT-BHIWANI, State-HARYANA, Pin-127022, of Present Unit:-25 MECH INF (RECCE & SP) WH BN C/o 56 APO Pin-911725, India declare that in my Son services records my name erroneously mentioned as YUDHVIR SINGH. My correct name is YODHBIR SINGH vide affidavit NO. IN-PB69446830500096Y, Dated 13 July,2026.

I, JIVNI, Mother of Service No. 14942102K Rank -HAV, Name YOGESH KUMAR, R/o Village-DATOLI (176), Post Office-Dudhwa Tehsil CHARKHI DADRI, DISTRICT-BHIWANI, State-HARYANA, Pin-127022, of Present Unit:-25 MECH INF (RECCE & SP) WH BN C/o 56 APO Pin-911725, India declare that in my Son services records my name erroneously mentioned as JIWANI. My correct name is JIVNI vide affidavit NO. IN-PB694455206219950Y, Dated 13 July, 2026

I, Manpreet Kaur D/o Sarabjeet Singh W/o Narinderjit Singh Bhullar R/o H.No.25-D, East Mohan Nagar, 100ft Road, Amritsar have changed my name from Manpreet Kaur to Manpreet Kaur Bhullar.

I, hitherto Known as Ruby wife of Jagjit Singh residing at H.No.122, Abadi Bhai Veer Singh Colony, Mule Chak, Fatahpur, Amritsar Punjab-143009 have changed my name and Shall hereafter be known as Simran.

I, hitherto Known as Kanchan Abbi wife of Sushil Kumar residing at House No. 929/9, Abbian Mohalla Patti, Tehsil Patti District Tarn Taran Punjab-143416 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Madhu Bala

I, Sayam S/o Anand Vashist R/o H.No.1610, Gali No.2, Batala Road, Near Radhe Shyam Mandir, Bharat Nagar Amritsar have changed my name from Sayam to Sayam Vashist

I, Manpreet Kaur W/o Navdeep Singh R/o H.No.L-4/994, Street No.2, New Kot Mit Singh Atma Ram Sultanwind Road, Amritsar have declare that Manpreet is my Given name and Kaur is my Surname

I, Satinder Pal Singh S/o Joginder Singh R/o Village Moure Khurd, Tehsil Ajnala, Distt. Amritsar have declare that Satinder Pal is my Given name and Singh is my Surname

I, Rajbir Kaur W/o Satinder Pal Singh R/o Village Moure Khurd Tehsil Ajnala Distt Amritsar have declare that Rajbir is my Given name and Kaur is my Give name

I, Mohit S/o Narinder Pal R/o 62, O/s Gilwali Gate, Nagar Nigam Colony Amritsar have changed my name from Mohit to Mohit Sharma

I, No.14669795X Hav Pal Avadh Narayan Hiralal Unit of 11 Jak Rif C/o 56 Apo that in my army service record my minor son's name has been wrongly entered as Anurag but my correct name of my minor son is Anurag Pal vide affidavit No.IN-PB69222711753567Y Dt.13.07.2026 before Executive Magistrate Amritsar

I, No.14669795X Hav Pal Avadh Narayan Hiralal Unit of 11 Jak Rif C/o 56 Apo that in my army service record my name has been wrongly entered as Pal Avadh Narayan Hiralal my correct name of mine is Pal Avadhnnarayan Hiralal Vide affidavit No.IN-PB69244230648525Y Dt.13.07.2026 before Executive Magistrate Amritsar

I, Buddhsen Patel father of No 13769206Y Hav Umesh Kumar Patel Unit of 11 Jak Rif C/o 56 Apo that in my son's army service record my date of birth has been wrongly entered as 12.10.1957 but my correct date of birth is 01.01.1959 Vide affidavit No.IN-PB69223749063095Y Dt.13.07.2026 before Executive Magistrate Amritsar

I, Buodhvt Patel mother of No 13769206Y Hav Umesh Kumar Patel Unit of 11 Jak Rif C/o 56 Apo that in my son's army service record my name and date of birth has been wrongly entered as Buodhvt Patel 01.01.1960 but my correct name and date of birth is Buddhvati Patel 01.01.1973 Vide affidavit No.IN-PB69220740975359Y Dt.13.07.2026 before Executive Magistrate Amritsar

I, Ratna Devi mother of No 13771113Y Hav Yogesh Kumar Unit of 11 Jak Rif C/o 56 Apo that in my son



Punjab Caps Private School Fee Hike At 5%; 7,800 Private Schools, 32 Lakh Students Covered

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab has ushered in one of its toughest regulatory frameworks for private schools after Governor Gulab Chand Kataria approved 'The Punjab Regulation of Fee of Unaided Educational Institutions (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026', bringing into force a law that caps annual fee hikes at five percent, mandates refund of excess fees collected from parents, and empowers authorities to impose penalties of up to Rs five lakh and even cancel the recognition of repeat offenders.

The ordinance, cleared by the state Cabinet on June 22, covers nearly 7,800 private unaided schools affiliated with PSEB, CBSE, ICSE, and other boards, providing relief to around 32 lakh students and their families.

Announcing the implementation of the Ordinance, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann thanked the Governor for approving what he described as a major pro-people decision. "Our government will not allow education to become a business. We are fully committed to reducing the unnecessary financial burden on common families and ensuring that school education remains affordable for all," he said, adding that no private school would now be permitted to increase annual fees by more than five percent without prior approval of the competent authority. The Chief Minister said that the law goes beyond regulating future fee hikes by also



addressing past overcharging. Schools that have increased fees by more than 15 percent over the last three years will have to refund the excess amount collected from parents within one month. He clarified that fee escalation would be calculated on the enhanced base fee every year, making the permissible cumulative increase over three years around 17-18 percent. "If a school has raised fees by 25 percent during this period, it will have to refund the excess 10 percent to parents," he said. Mann termed it a historic move, saying that it would be the first time in Punjab that private schools would be compelled to return excess fees collected from parents.

A key feature of the Ordinance is a broad definition of "fee". The government has made it clear that every compulsory payment collected from parents — including tuition fee, transport charges, building fund,

development fund, annual charges, and other mandatory collections — will be treated as part of the fee structure for regulatory purposes. Only voluntary payments for activities such as educational or industrial tours have been kept outside its ambit. Mann alleged that several schools had been splitting collections under different heads to conceal actual fee receipts. Citing an example, he said that one school in Bathinda had been collecting swimming pool charges despite not having a swimming pool. "Educational institutions cannot make profits in the name of education by collecting money through multiple accounts," he asserted, adding that forensic audits would be conducted to trace all collections, including those routed through trusts, companies or other entities.

To enforce the new law, the government will constitute Fee Regulatory Committees

- Annual fee hike capped at 5%; No increase beyond 5% without prior govt approval
- Decision applies to all unaided private schools (PSEB, CBSE, ICSE and other boards)
- Covers all compulsory charges, including transport, building, development, annual fees
- Schools to refund excess fee collected beyond permissible limits over the last three years
- Fee Regulatory Committee under every SC to scrutinise school accounts
- Forensic audit of school finances wherever required
- Schools to upload fee records of last four years on govt portal within prescribed timeline
- Heavy penalties for violations — up to Rs 5 lakh, depending on the category of school
- Repeated violations can lead to cancellation of recognition/affiliation

under every Deputy Commissioner, which will scrutinise school accounts, examine financial records, interact with parents, and ensure that no fee is diverted to undisclosed accounts. The committees will also review compliance with provisions relating to economically weaker section (EWS) students. An online portal will also be launched, requiring every private school to upload details of its current fee structure, fee revisions for the last four years, and financial records within 10 days. Schools seeking to raise fees beyond five percent will have to apply at least six months in advance, justify the increase with documentary evidence such as new infrastructure or facilities, and undergo a financial audit before any decision is taken. Even after approval, schools will have to inform parents well in advance. The Ordinance prescribes a graded penalty structure.

Primary schools violating the law will face a fine of Rs 50,000 for the first offence, and Rs one lakh for the second. Middle schools will be fined Rs one lakh and Rs three lakh respectively, while senior secondary schools can be penalised Rs two lakh for the first violation and Rs five lakh for the second. Persistent violations can lead to cancellation of recognition or affiliation.

Calling the legislation a landmark reform, Mann said that the government had dismantled every "unholy nexus" in the education sector and would not allow an "education mafia" to flourish. "Education is a noble and sacred endeavour. It is a public good, not a commercial enterprise to be exploited for profit," he said, asserting that the Ordinance would ensure transparency, accountability and lasting protection for lakhs of parents from arbitrary fee hikes.

Punjab Regularises 516 Forest Workers, Restores 237 Promotions

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Combining employee welfare with a sharp political attack on previous governments, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday regularised the services of 516 daily wage workers of the Forest and Wildlife Preservation Department, restored the long-pending promotions of 237 department employees, and reiterated that his government would continue extending job security to contractual staff across departments.

Handing over appointment letters at a function in Mohali, Mann said that the newly-regularised employees would now become permanent government servants, remain in service till the age of 58 years, receive all government benefits, and be entitled to a five percent annual salary increment under the state's regularisation policy. He described the move as a historic step towards ending years of uncertainty for workers who had spent decades in

service. Launching a broadside against previous regimes, Mann alleged that earlier governments remained busy promoting their own political interests and families while ignoring employees and the public.

Mann said several employees being regularised had served the department for 10 to nearly 25 years but could not qualify under the May 16, 2023, regularisation policy because of educational qualifications or age limits. Recognising their long service, the Cabinet granted a special relaxation to ensure no deserving worker was denied permanent employment.

He said that the Finance Department had also prescribed a transparent salary structure for such employees, while their existing pay would remain protected wherever applicable.

Mann said that the process of regularising employees in other government departments was also underway. While some cases were delayed due to court

proceedings, government teams were working to resolve the issues.

Highlighting his government's employment record, he said Punjab had provided more than 68,000 government jobs since the AAP assumed office in March 2022 through a transparent, merit-based recruitment process. He asserted that neither a recruitment exercise had faced legal challenge nor had any examination paper leaked during his government's tenure. He also claimed he had signed only those files that benefited the people and the state.

He also announced that 6.5 lakh saplings would be planted in every district to commemorate the 650th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Ravidas ji. He also said all Forest Department guest houses and forest resorts would be renovated to improve facilities and increase departmental revenue, citing the recently upgraded guest house near Chohal Dam as a model.

Haryana CM Directs officials to develop Portal for Scientific Disposal of End-of-Life Vehicles

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday directed officials to develop a dedicated online portal for the registration and scientific disposal of end-of-life vehicles to streamline the scrapping process and enhance transparency.

Chairing the second board meeting of the Artificial Intelligence for Resilient Jobs, Urban Air Quality and Next Generation Skills Council (ARJUN SPV), Saini said the state should make optimum use of modern technology to promote clean air, green transport and sustainable development.

The proposed portal will allow citizens to register private vehicles and government departments to register obsolete official vehicles online, making the scrapping process more efficient and transparent.

The chief minister also reviewed the Annual Action Plan for 2026-27 under the Haryana Clean Air Project for Sustainable Development (HCAPSD) and directed departments to complete initiatives related to clean air, electric mobility, industrial pollution control and crop residue management within stipulated timelines.

He asked officials to expedite the installation of EV charging stations across the state and reviewed plans for setting up 100 charging stations under the state's Electric Vehicle Policy. The meeting also reviewed the expansion of electric bus services in Gurugram and Faridabad, including infrastructure for operating 200 electric buses under the public-private partnership (PPP) model, besides preparations for introducing electric buses in Sonapat. The board discussed AI-based air quality management measures, including preparation of a state emission inventory, development of an AI-based decision support system, strengthening continuous ambient air quality monitoring and improving inter-departmental data sharing. Saini also stressed effective monitoring, financial management, public awareness and grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure timely implementation of projects.

Ahead of PM Modi's Haryana Visit, CM Saini Kicks Off Statewide Cleanliness Campaign

PNS ■ PANCHKULA

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday launched a state-wide cleanliness drive from Panchkula ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to the state on July 17.

Calling upon citizens to actively participate, Saini urged people to transform cleanliness into a mass movement and strengthen the spirit of public participation. On the occasion, he participated in the drive to the area in front of the main market in Sector-20, Panchkula and urged people to make cleanliness a mass movement.

While participating in the cleanliness drive, he appealed to citizens to maintain a clean and healthy environment. He also spread awareness about the scientific and proper disposal of waste by personally collecting garbage and loading it onto a cart.

As part of the programme,



he also planted a sapling, highlighting the importance of environmental conservation.

Talking to media persons, the Chief Minister said that cleanliness is not the responsibility of the government alone but a collective respon-

sibility of every citizen. He urged people to actively contribute to keeping their homes, neighbourhoods, markets, and public places clean while ensuring proper waste management.

Saini said that inspired by Prime Minister Modi's call for cleanliness, people across the country have embraced cleanliness as an integral part of their daily lives. He informed that Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to visit Haryana on July 17. In view of the visit, it has been decided to conduct a comprehensive cleanliness drive across Haryana from July 13 to July 17, which was launched from Panchkula on Monday.

He said that Prime Minister Modi's visit to Haryana is a matter of pride for the people of the state. He said that during the visit, the Prime Minister would flag off a hydrogen-powered train and inaugurate as well as lay the foundation stones for several development projects.

BRIEFS

PM to launch Swachh Rail Parivahan initiative from Jind in Haryana

Chandigarh: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the country's first hydrogen-powered train from Jind on July 17. Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini said that the selection of Haryana as the launch site for the country's first hydrogen-powered train reflects the state's leading role in innovation and development. The train will operate between Jind and Sonapat. Powered entirely by hydrogen fuel. It will be an environmentally friendly mode of transport that will help reduce pollution while promoting sustainable and clean mobility. In a statement, Saini said it is a matter of immense pride for Haryana that the nation's first hydrogen-powered train will run on the state's railway tracks. He also said that during his visit to Jind on July 17, the Prime Minister will dedicate several other development projects to the people of Haryana.

Drive to Plant 1.50 Crore Saplings During 2026-27: CM Bhagwant Mann

Chandigarh: The Bhagwant Mann Government has launched a plantation drive to commemorate the 650th Parkash Purab of Guru Ravidass. As part of the initiative, 1.50 crore saplings will be planted across the state during 2026-27, including 6.50 lakh saplings in every district, making it one of Punjab's largest environment conservation campaigns. CM Bhagwant Mann said the government had earlier also planted 3.50 lakh saplings in every district to mark the 350th Shaheed Diwas of Guru Tegh Bahadur, reaffirming its commitment to preserving both Punjab's spiritual heritage and its natural environment.

Projects must be completed within prescribed timelines: CM Saini

Chandigarh: Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini said that officials must ensure the timely completion of all ongoing government projects within the stipulated deadlines so that people receive their benefits without delay. Saini was chairing the State PRAGATI Project Review Meeting, during which he reviewed in detail 12 projects worth more than Rs 75 crore and issued necessary directions to the concerned officials. He directed that the implementation period of any project should not be extended, as delays increase the project cost and impose an additional financial burden on government. Moreover, such delays prevent citizens from receiving intended benefits on time.

Baghel Rejects Channi Camp's CM Pitch, Backs Rahul Gandhi as Party's Sole Face

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The battle for control of the Punjab Congress has intensified despite the party high command standing firmly behind state president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, exposing deep factional divisions just as the party begins preparing for the 2027 Assembly elections. In the latest setback for the rebel camp led by former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, Punjab Congress in-charge Bhupesh Baghel has unequivocally rejected the demand to project Channi as the party's chief ministerial face, declaring that Rahul Gandhi remains the Congress' only face in Punjab. The statement comes days after Baghel also dismissed calls for replacing Warring, signalling that the central leadership is unwilling to alter the existing power structure despite mounting internal pressure. Baghel made his position clear immediately after concluding his Punjab tour, taking to 'X' to send a direct message to the dissident faction. "There is no confusion in the minds of the people of Punjab. Just as they trusted Rahul Gandhi in the Lok Sabha elections, Punjab's voters are placing their faith in him for the Assembly elections as well. Congress has only one face in Punjab, and that is Rahul Gandhi," read his post.

The statement effectively closes, at least for now, the debate over projecting Channi as the party's chief ministerial candidate and

marks the second major rejection of the rebel camp's demands within days. Earlier, Baghel had also ruled out replacing Warring as Punjab Congress president despite persistent lobbying by Channi's supporters.

Baghel's firm stand has now prompted the dissident camp to take its battle directly to the Congress high command. With Rahul Gandhi currently abroad and expected to return on July 17, the Channi faction is preparing to camp in Delhi the same day in an attempt to present its case before him.

Sources said that Channi and senior Congress leader Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa have already reached out to party leaders in Delhi to secure an appointment with Rahul Gandhi. A senior party leader has reportedly assured the group that a meeting will be arranged.

The strategy reflects the camp's determination to bypass the state leadership and engage directly with the party's top decision-makers before Baghel formally submits his assessment of Punjab's political situation.

The Channi camp has also questioned the fairness of Baghel's six-day visit to Punjab, which was undertaken to resolve the factional crisis. Dissident leaders alleged that the in-charge largely interacted with leaders considered close to Warring while ignoring their concerns.

According to the rebel group, they now want to brief Rahul Gandhi personally on what they describe as the "ground reality" in

Punjab. They claim dissatisfaction with the present leadership exists among party workers as well as several senior leaders and insist this feedback should reach the high command before any final decisions are taken.

The latest confrontation has revived memories of Punjab Congress' long history of internal factionalism. During Capt Amarinder Singh's dominance, differences within the party rarely surfaced openly. However, the political landscape changed dramatically in 2021 when Navjot Singh Sidhu openly challenged Capt Amarinder's leadership. The high command eventually removed Capt Amarinder as Chief Minister but chose Charanjit Singh Channi — not Sidhu — to head the government. That history now appears to be repeating itself. This time, Channi has emerged as the rallying point for leaders questioning Warring's leadership. Several senior leaders are said to be backing the campaign, turning the issue into a full-fledged power struggle within the state unit.

With the Congress high command having reaffirmed its support for Warring while projecting Rahul Gandhi as the party's undisputed face, attention has now shifted to Delhi. The outcome of the proposed meeting between Rahul Gandhi and the dissident leaders is expected to determine whether the Punjab Congress moves towards reconciliation or slips into a deeper internal confrontation ahead of the electoral battle.

Khalra's Widow Seeks 'People's Commission' on Punjab Disappearances

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Decades after Punjab's turbulent years left behind unanswered questions over disappearances, unidentified bodies, and alleged fake encounters, Harike Pattan is set to become the focal point of a renewed call for truth and justice on Tuesday. Ahead of the Akal Takht's ardas samagam, human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra's widow — Paramjit Kaur Khalra — has appealed to Punjabis, the Sikh community across the world, and all those who believe in human rights to gather in solidarity with victims' families and support the formation of an independent 'People's Commission' to uncover the truth behind the alleged human rights violations of the 1980s and 1990s.

The congregation, to be held at Harike Pattan — a place closely associated with the legacy of Jaswant Singh Khalra and the alleged disposal of unidentified bodies during Punjab's militancy years — is being viewed as far more than a religious ceremony. It is expected to serve as a collective appeal for truth, accountability, and justice for families who, according to Paramjit Khalra, continue to wait for answers decades after losing their

loved ones.

In her appeal issued ahead of the gathering, Paramjit Khalra urged people to rise above political affiliations and stand united in the pursuit of justice. She described the ardas as an opportunity for Punjab, the Sikh panth, and people around the world who believe in human rights to come together in support of those whose voices, she said, have remained unheard for decades.

She said that the military action at Sri Darbar Sahib in June 1984, the anti-Sikh violence of November 1984, and the years that followed — marked by alleged enforced disappearances, unidentified bodies, torture and fake police encounters — continue to raise questions that have never been fully answered. According to her, countless victim families are still seeking truth, accountability and justice. The Harike Pattan congregation comes amid renewed public attention to Jaswant Singh Khalra's legacy following the controversy surrounding Satluj, the film inspired by his life and work. The debate over the film has once again brought national attention to allegations surrounding disappearances, unidentified bodies and alleged fake encounters

during Punjab's militancy years.

The central demand raised by Paramjit Khalra is the constitution of an independent People's Commission to establish the actual number of people who allegedly disappeared during the 1980s and 1990s, identify the scale of unidentified bodies, and determine the extent of alleged fake police encounters during the period.

Appealing directly to the Akal Takht Jathedar, she said that the Sikh community looks towards the supreme temporal seat with the hope that it will provide fearless, impartial, and principled leadership in pursuing the truth. She urged the Akal Takht to lead an independent effort that would establish the facts and give long-awaited answers to affected families. Paramjit Khalra alleged that governments headed by different political parties over the years had failed to ensure justice for victims. She claimed that while affected families continued to struggle legally, socially, and financially, several officials accused in human rights violation cases received protection, legal backing, or important positions instead of being held accountable.

She also accused the

present Punjab Government of failing to ensure that convicted police personnel faced the law, alleging that some had instead been helped to evade accountability. Referring to the Khalra murder case, she named convicted former DSP Jaspal Singh, besides Jasbir Singh and Satnam Singh, while asserting that justice remained incomplete.

Besides seeking a People's Commission, Paramjit Khalra placed two other major demands before the Akal Takht. She sought a rightful place in the Central Sikh Museum for the unidentified victims whose identities and stories, she said, came to light through the work and sacrifice of Jaswant Singh Khalra. She argued that these victims deserved lasting recognition and remembrance. Her third demand was that the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) should provide financial assistance to families affected by the alleged disappearances and killings. She also asserted that no political party or individual should be above accountability and maintained that those responsible for human rights violations, denial of justice or concealing the truth must face public accountability.

5873	5895	5898	5904	5930	5949	5969	5974	5975	5991
Issued by DIRECTORATE OF SMALL SAVINGS, BANKING AND LOTTERIES, PUNJAB									
Kindly check the final result with Official Gazette Notification									

Classifieds

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Kamalash Kumari mother of No JC 584731Y NB Sub Devinder Digra Unit of 11 Jak Rirf C/o 56 Apo that in my son's army service record my name and date of birth has been wrongly entered as Kamlish Kumari 01.03.1968 but my correct name and date of birth is Kamlesh Kumari 10.07.1966. Vide affidavit No.IN-PB69249416723699Y Dt.13.07.2026 before Executive Magistrate Amritsar

I, Bionoy Kumar Sahoo father of No JC 423650N Sub Tapas Kumar Sahoo R/o Mahisha Gerya Chhota Bhagabanpur, Paschim, Medinipur, West Bengal-721126 have changed my name from Binoy Kumar Sahoo to Binay Kumar Sahoo Vide affidavit No.IN-PB6924327838057Y Dt.13.07.2026 before notary public Amritsar

I, Charanjit Singh S/o Swarn Singh R/o Vill Rakh Sarai Amanat Khan, Po Rakh Sarai amanat Khan, Tarn Taran, Punjab have changed my name from Charnjit Singh to Charanjit Singh

I, Prabdeep Singh to W/o Harminder Singh R/o H.O.No. 19, Gokul Ka Bagh, 100 Feet Road, Amritsar have changed my name from Prabdeep Kaur to Prabdeep Singh

I, Reena W/o Suraj Sharma R/o H.No.107-A, Street No.4, Near Lamba Pind Chowk, Near Hardyaj Nagar, Jalandhar declare that Reena & Reena Sharma is one and the same person.

I, Sarbjit Kaur W/o Harpal Singh R/o H.No.180, Gali No.2, Tarn Taran Road, Guru Arjan Dev Nagar, Amritsar have changed my name from Sarbjit Kaur to Sarabjit Kaur

I, Jagdeep Kaur and Simran W/o Mandeep Singh R/o 49-A, Park Avenue, Chhabhal Road, Tarn Taran have declare that above both name's are mine one and same person.

I, Charnjit Singh S/o Baldev Singh R/o Gadamajra Tehl Rajpura Distt Patiala Punjab. have changed my name to Singh Charnjit.

I, Ram Lubhaya S/o Dina Nath, Vill. Suralwal, Tehsil Anandpur Sahib (Rupnagar) have changed my name from Ram Lubhaya to Ram Lubhaya Kaushal.

I, Sardar Kaur Alias Sardaro W/o Shadi Ram R/o Village Jakhwali, Tehsil & Distt. Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab) declare that both above names are mine and of one same person. For future purposes my Name be treated as Sardar Kaur.

I, Ashita Singla D/o Manish Singla R/o #2082, Phase 7, S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), Punjab declare both names Aashi and Ashita Singla are mine and of one and the same person.

I, Vikas Jain S/o Sh Dinesh Kumar Jain R/o Kamla Mahal, [ICICI Bank Road,Back Side of Lamba Nursing Home, Kamla Nagar, Hisar, Haryana, My Son has changed his name from Devaarya Jain to Devaarya. In future my new name may be considered for any correspondence.

I, Ashok Kumar S/o Har Bhagwan R/o 59/7, Bazari, Mohalla, Gohana declare that in my Adhar card & Pan Card my name written as Ashok Kumar S/o Harbhagwan and in my marksheet my name is written as Ashok Kumar S/o HariBhagwan Dass. But Ashok Kumar S/o Har Bhagwan & Ashok Kumar S/o HariBhagwan Dass both names are same and one person.

I, Jernal Kaur, W/o Sh. Mohan Lal R/o Chanana Colony, Naraingarh, District Ambala, declare that my name has been wrongly recorded as Jarnail Kaur in the Railway PPO, whereas my actual name is Jernal Kaur. All concerned please take note.

I, Ekta Wife of Sh. Gaurav Hans R/o House No. 167 Vikas Vihar, Sharma Colony, Near Panchmukhi Hanuman Mandir Kalka, Tehsil Kalka Distt. Hoshiarpur, Punjab, PIN - 144210 declare that I have changed my father's name from Ajit Lal to Jit Lal due to variation in my Matriculation Certificates. Concern notes.

I, Shishpal Singh S/o Tara Chand R/o H.No. 1769/7, Jawahar Nagar Patiala Chowk Jind-126102 (Haryana) have changed my name from Shishpal Singh to Shish Pal.

I, Usha Rani Mal D/o Sh. Gurmial Chand Mall, R/o House No. 2292/2, Sector-40-C, Chandigarh, have changed my name from Usha Rani Mal to Usha Rani.

I, Mela Kerketta W/O Samuel Gurai R/O H.No. 238, Block J, Spangle Condos, Gazipur, Zirakpur, Tehsil Dera Bassi, Distt. SAS Nagar (Mohali) Punjab-140603 that my name has been entered as Prabha Karketa Guria in the school records of my son Robin Guria. That my ture and correct name is Mela Kerketta. Both names are mine only and by is mistakenly mentioned as DHANA LAKSHMI but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is DHANA LAKSHMI AKULA. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832015, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, DHANA LAKSHMI is legally Wedded wife of Army No: 14933180A, Rank: Hav Name: Venkateswara Rao Akula Presently residing at House No. 4-107, Vill: Mundlapadu, Post: Mundlapadu, Teh: Giddalur, Dist: Prakasam, State: Andhra Pradesh, Pin: 523367, India, declare that in my Husband Service Record my name is by mistakenly mentioned as DHANA LAKSHMI but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is TASHI CHOMO but as per Civil Govt Documents my Correct name is TASHI TSOMO. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 833402, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, BHAGI RATHI SINGH am Father of Army No: 15214207F Rank: Hav(Gnr) Name: Chiranjivi Kumar Singh Presently Posted at Unit: 336 Med Regt C/o 56 Apo Permanent Address: Vill: Phulari, Post: Phulari, Tehsil: Sandesh, Dist: Bhojpur, State: Bihar, Pin: 802164 declare that in my Son's Service record my name is by mistakenly mentioned as BHAGI RATHI SINGH but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is BHAGIRATH SINGH.. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832010, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, SHARADA am legally Wedded Spouse of Army No: 2813788P Rank: Sep Name: Nagare Vikram Shankar Presently Posted at Unit 16 Maratha Li, Permanent Address: Mukkam Post Matulthan, Taluka Yeola, Nashik, Maharashtra-423403 declare that in my Husband Service record my name is by mistakenly mentioned as SHARADA but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is SHARDA VIKRAM NAGARE. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832014, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, MANGALABAI am Mother of Army No: 2808978X Rank L/Hav Name: Khairnar Yogaraj Pandharinath Presently Posted at Unit 16 Maratha Li, Permanent Address: At Post: Waypur, Vaipur, Po: Waypur, Dist: Dhule, State: Maharashtra, Pin: 424309 declare that in my Son's Service record my Name is by mistakenly mentioned as MANGALABAI but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Correct name is MANGALABAI PANDHARINATH PATIL and Also Correct my Date of birth from 01/01/1969 to 01/01/1959. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832019, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, SITA DEVI am Mother of Army No: 15214207F Rank: Hav(Gnr) Name: Chiranjivi Kumar Singh Presently Posted at Unit: 336 Med Regt C/o 56 Apo Permanent Address: Vill: Phulari, Post: Phulari, Tehsil: Sandesh, Dist: Bhojpur, State: Bihar, Pin: 802164 declare that in my Son's Service record my Date of birth is by mistakenly mentioned as 01/07/1965 but as per Civil Govt. Documents my Correct Date of birth is 01/01/1965. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832012, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, BHAGIRATH SINGH am Father of Army No: 15214207F Rank: Hav(Gnr) Name: Chiranjivi Kumar Singh Presently Posted at Unit: 336 Med Regt C/o 56 Apo Permanent Address: Vill: Phulari, Post: Phulari, Tehsil: Sandesh, Dist: Bhojpur, State: Bihar, Pin: 802164 declare that in my Son's Service record my Date of birth is by mistakenly mentioned as 01/07/1965 but as per Civil Govt. Documents my Correct Date of birth is 01/01/1965. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832011, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, BHOSALE ANITA CHANDRAKANT am Mother of Army No: 16119749W Rank: NK Name: Bhosale Mahesh Chandrakant Presently residing at 164 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from BHOSALE ANITA CHANDRAKANT to ANITA CHANDRAKANT BHOSALE and Also Correct my Date of birth from 01/07/1967 to 22/06/1967.

I, Army No: 14851514X Rank: Hav/Clk (SD) Name: Puspendra Presently Posted at Unit: 311 Coy ASC (Sup) Type 'G' C/o 99 Apo Permanent address: Village: Manfara, Post: Jakhora, Tehsil: Chirawa, Distt: Jhunjhunwa, State: Rajasthan, Pin: 333025 declare that in my Service record my Daughter name is by mistakenly mentioned as DIVYANSI but as per Civil/Govt. Documents my Daughter Correct Name is DIVYANSHI. Vide Affidavit No: 11AA 832018, Dated: 13/07/2026

I, BHOSALE VIDHYA am legally Wedded Spouse of Army No: 16119749W Rank: NK Name: Bhosale Mahesh Chandrakant Presently residing at 164 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from BHOSALE ANITA CHANDRAKANT to ANITA CHANDRAKANT BHOSALE and Also Correct my Date of birth from 01/07/1967 to 22/06/1967.

I, BHOSALE VIDHYA am legally Wedded Spouse of Army No: 16119749W Rank: NK Name: Bhosale Mahesh Chandrakant Presently residing at 164 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from BHOSALE VIDHYA to BHOSALE VIDHYA MAHESH.

I, BHOSALE GOPAL CHANDRAKANT GOPAL am Father of Army No: 16119749W Rank: NK Name: Bhosale Mahesh Chandrakant Presently residing at 164 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from BHOSALE GOPAL CHANDRAKANT to BHOSALE VIDHYA MAHESH.

I, BHOSALE VIDHYA am legally Wedded Spouse of Army No: 16119749W Rank: NK Name: Bhosale Mahesh Chandrakant Presently residing at 164 Br Coy, 16 Engr Br Regt (PMS), Chandimandir Cantt Panchkula, Haryana declare that I have changed my name from BHOSALE VIDHYA to BHOSALE VIDHYA MAHESH.

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I, SANTOSH is Mother Of Army No.15225127K, Rank Hav Darshrath Singh. R/O Jawani Singh Ki Jakhod, Po- Jakhod, Distt- Jhunjhunun, State- Rajasthan -333033, India. Declare That My Name Santosh Is Wrong. But My Name Santosh Devi Is Correct. Vide Affidavit No. In-Pb 69407192804311Y Dated 13-07-2026, Before Notary Public Gurdaspur, Punjab, India.

I, Omavati D/o Shyam Lal W/o Ravi Kumar Soni Residing at H.No 54 Ground floor Near Ganesh Vihar Dhakauli Zirakpur S.A.S Nagar Mohali Punjab have changed my name from Omavati to Megha Soni.

I, Ramandeep Kaur Dholan D/o Jugraj Singh R/o Phero Ke Ferozepur Have changed my name as Ramandeep Kaur.

I, Anju @ Anjali Rani W/o Danesh Kumar R/o Raikot (Ludhiana) declare that all names are my name & same person. Date of Birth 16-07-1999.

I, Sukhbir Singh S/O Ajit Singh R/O Mohlan Teh. Malout Distt. Sri Muktsar Sahib. Have Change My Name Sukhbir Singh To Sukhbeer Singh.

I, JC-508336X Ex Sub Maj (Hony Capt) Sukhdev Singh Son of Sarwan Singh Resident of Vill: Ganga Chak, Teh: Dasuya, Distt Hoshiarpur have changed the name of my daughter from Paramjeet to Parmajeet kaur.

I, Gurdeep Kaur W/o Mohan Singh R/o Mallan (Sri Muktsar Sahib) have changed my name to Hardeep Kaur.

I, Balbir Singh S/O Jit Ram R/O Vpo Dosanjh Kalan, Tehsil Phailaur, Distt Jalandhar have Changed My Name Balbir Singh To Balvir And Now Singh Is My Surname. All Concerned Note.

I, Krish S/o Sandeep Kumar R/O Gidderbaha Distt. Sri Muktsar Sahib have recorded as Krish Sidana on my school's documents but I want to change it to Krish.

I, Mansi W/o Parvinder Singh R/O VPO Ranbirpura Tehsil & Distt Patiala have changed my name from Mansi to Mansi Kaur.

I, Baldev Singh S/o Dial Singh, R/o VPO. Wandler, District Moga has changed my name to Suklahan Singh.

I, Gagandeep S/o Gursewak Singh R/o Guru Teg Bhadar Nagar, Kotkapura Distt. Faridkot have Changed my name Gagandeep To Gagandeep Singh.

I, Sawinder Kaur W/o Swran Singh R/o Village Dilaawalpur Tehsil Tarn-Taran Distt Tarn-Taran changed my name to Swinder Kaur.

I, Sher Singh S/o Nirmal Singh R/O VPO Sarhali Kalan Pati Puhle Ki (Jagatpura) Tehsil & Distt Tarn-Taran declare that my given name is Sher and my Surname is Singh.

I, Tushar Singh S/o Nirmal Singh R/O VPO Sarhali Kalan Pati Puhle Ki (Jagatpura) Tehsil & Distt Tarn-Taran declare that my given name is Tushar and my Surname is Singh.

I, Sukhjeet Singh Sandhu S/o Suklahan Singh R/o VPO Malloke Tehsil Zira Distt. Ferozepur have changed my name to Sukhjeet Singh.

I, Raibrinder Singh S/o Manjinder Singh Vpo Rayya Teh. Baba Bakala Distt. Amritsar have changed my name from Raibrinder Singh To Raibrinder is my given name and Singh is surname.

I, Santosh Dev Is Mother Of Army No.15225127K, Rank Hav Darshrath Singh. R/O Jawani Singh Ki Jakhod, Po- Jakhod, Distt- Jhunjhunun, State- Rajasthan -333033, India. Declare That My Date Of Birth 07-09-1962 Is Wrong, But My Date Of Birth 01-01-1948 Is Correct. Vide Affidavit No. In-Pb 69406213360562Y, Dated 13-07-2026, Before Notary Public Gurdaspur, Punjab, India.

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■ States Focus ■

BJP slaps `100 cr defamation notice on Omar Abdullah



DMK SUBMITS HORSE-TRADING EVIDENCE TO TN GOVERNOR

DMK Organising Secretary RS Bharathi on Monday said that his party “submitted evidence on horse-trading in Tamil Nadu” to Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar. “The material evidence” included the statement made by MDMK chief Vaiko on the horse-trading of MLAs and a public remark by former AIADMK legislator MR Vijayabaskar, which were submitted to the Governor, Bharathi said. The evidence was submitted to DVAC as well to corroborate the systematic practice of horse-trading in the State, he added. “We submitted the evidence as supplementary to our complaint dated July 1, on the systematic practice of horse-trading by the ruling TVK,” Bharathi told reporters. The party had included the statement made by Vijayabaskar.

(PTI)



KARNATAKA TO SET UP 10,000 BHARAT JODO YUVA SANGHAS

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara on Monday said the Government has issued an order to establish 10,000 ‘Bharat Jodo Yuva Sanghas’ (youth clubs) statewide, aimed at boosting leadership, sports, culture, scientific temper and social harmony. This was among the first few initiatives announced by the DK Shivakumar-led Cabinet, soon after it took charge of governing the State on June 3. “We have issued an official order to establish 10,000 Bharat Jodo Yuva Sanghas across Gram Panchayats and urban wards to promote sports, culture, scientific temper and social harmony among young people,” Parameshwara posted on ‘X’. He said, “One Sangha will be formed in every Gram Panchayat; one for every 4,000 people in Town Panchayats; every 6,000 people in Municipalities; every 8,000 people in City Municipal Councils; and every 10,000 people within Municipal Corporation and GBA limits.” The initiative will be implemented by the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, with support from the Departments of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Urban Development, Revenue and Education, he added.

(PTI)

MOHIT KANDHARI
n Jammu

The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday served a legal notice to Chief Minister Omar Abdullah demanding that he either substantiate or withdraw his serious allegations that the national party had attempted to bribe National Conference legislators with cash and ministerial berths in a bid to topple his Government.

The notice, which includes a demand for a written retraction and an unconditional public apology within seven days, threatens civil and criminal defamation proceedings, including a `100 crore damages suit, if the Chief Minister fails to comply.

In response to the legal notice, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah took a light-hearted yet defiant tone, calling the communication a “love letter” from the BJP.

Interacting with the media persons at the party head-

quarters in Srinagar, on the sidelines of a homage ceremony, Omar said that he felt “honoured” to be the only politician in Jammu and Kashmir to receive such attention, signalling that the notice only underscored his growing relevance as a political force the saffron party could not ignore.

The chief minister, while addressing National Conference (NC) workers at Hazratbal last week, alleged that the BJP is trying to bring down his Government by engineering a split in his party. He also claimed that an NC MLA from Jammu told him that he was offered `20-30 crore and a ministerial berth to switch sides to the saffron camp.

The notice has been issued through advocate Parimoksh Seth on the instructions of BJP J&K Unit president and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Paul Sharma. It contends that the chief minister’s statements have caused serious damage to the reputation and public standing of



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

the BJP and its office-bearers.

According to the three-page notice, Abdullah alleged that BJP functionaries had approached certain National Conference MLAs from the Jammu region with offers of `20–30 crore, ministerial berths and restoration of Statehood in an attempt to persuade them to switch allegiance to the BJP. It refers to the chief minister’s allegation that a senior BJP office-bearer, who is also

a lawyer practising in the Supreme Court, allegedly played a role in offering the inducements. Rejecting the allegations, the BJP has described them as “entirely untrue, malicious and without any factual basis.”

The notice states that the allegations were deliberately made to tarnish the party’s image and have been widely circulated, thereby causing substantial reputational harm.

1,679 illegal immigrants sent back: Himanta

TONY DAS
n Guwahati

More than 1,600 illegal immigrants from Bangladesh have been repatriated from Assam in the last two years, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Monday.

Replying to a question from AIUDF legislator Badruddin Ajmal, Sarma laid in the Assembly that the State follows the Central Government’s directives in the matter of citizenship, and enough safeguards have been ensured so that human rights violations do not take place while implementing laws in this regard.

“A total of 1,679 illegal immigrants have been repatriated (deported/sent back/expelled) from Assam to Bangladesh in the last two years,” Sarma, who also holds the Home and Political Department, said. Sharing the list in the



House, he said the repatriation took place between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2026, after identification of the illegal immigrants.

While some of the illegal immigrants were ‘sent back’, others faced ‘expulsion’, while

a few were returned to their home country through the process of ‘deportation’.

Sarma said no identified illegal immigrant is repatriated if any appeal is pending in the High Court or the Supreme Court.

Asked about the procedure followed by the Government to ‘push back’ the infiltrators, the CM said that the subject of citizenship is a matter under the Central Government.

The State Government follows the existing provisions of law as well as the directions issued by the Centre from time to time while taking action against illegal immigrants.

The Assam Government does not deal directly with any other foreign country, bypassing the Centre, he said.

“The State Government implements the provisions of law as well as directions issued by the Centre pertaining to the citizenship matter. While implementing such laws and directions, enough safeguards are put in place so that the human rights of an individual are not violated,” Sarma added.

Ladakh to get hill councils for all 7 districts: Chief Secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Leh

The Union Territory Administration will constitute an Autonomous Hill Development Council (AHDC) in each of Ladakh’s seven districts, Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra announced on Monday.

The official described the move as a major step towards strengthening grassroots governance and balanced development across the region.

Ladakh moved from two districts to seven in April 2026, when Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar, and Drass were notified as new districts. Elected representation until now has remained with the two existing councils, one each in Leh and Kargil. “Ladakh Administration



Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra

has decided to constitute an Autonomous Hill Development Council in each of the seven districts. It is a major step towards democratic decentralisation and grassroots governance,” Kundra told reporters. He said Section 3(1) of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Act already provides for a council for every district, to be constituted from a date the Government notifies in the Gazette.

Vietnam boat tragedy: Survivors slam lack of medical aid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Hyderabad/Amaravati

Survivors of the Vietnam tourist boat tragedy expressed outrage over the absence of timely medical preparedness and trained personnel at the site of the accident that claimed several lives, saying they were forced to perform CPR in a desperate attempt to save fellow passengers pulled from the sea.

A total of 20 tourists from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana who survived the Vietnam boat tragedy arrived in Hyderabad on a flight late on Sunday after being repatriated from Vietnam.

A tourist speedboat carrying 32 Indian tourists, three crew members and an attendant capsized near Hon May Rut Ngoai off Phu Quoc Island on Saturday while returning to An Thoi Port in Vietnam. Fifteen Indian tourists were killed, and 21 others were rescued, with two survivors remaining in critical condition.

Govinda, a native of Rajahmundry and an employee of the mobile company that organised the trip, recounted the desperate moments on the island.



“There was no proper medical team on the island. We did whatever we could with the little knowledge we had. We performed CPR and tried to keep people alive, but many slipped away before our eyes. Had trained doctors, oxygen support and even basic emergency facilities been available, some of them could have survived,” he said.

According to him, 35 people were on board, and many were rescued from the sea, but there were no trained doctors on the island

to administer CPR or provide emergency treatment. He said the Boat’s crew, jet ski operators and members of their own group rushed to rescue passengers immediately after the vessel overturned. However, professional medical assistance arrived much later. “Everyone tried to help. We managed to save some people, but official medical help arrived much later. We requested an air ambulance, but were told one was not available. Ambulance boats

came only after some time, and the critically injured were shifted later,” he added.

Of the 29 tourists from Andhra Pradesh who were part of the trip, 26 survived while three lost their lives.

Govind was travelling in the second boat when the accident occurred about 400 metres away. “The first boat had already left while we were preparing to start. Suddenly, we saw it tilt before capsizing. We heard people screaming for help and rushed towards them immediately,” he said.

Quoting survivors from the capsized boat, he said strong waves forced the captain to slow down, triggering panic among the passengers.

As frightened passengers moved to one side, the boat became unstable, tilted further and eventually overturned.

“We ourselves tried to revive those who had stopped breathing. We saved one or two people, but many were in a critical condition. If qualified medical personnel had been there, at least five or six more lives might have been saved,” he said.

For many, the tragedy was deeply personal.

Govind shared the experience of watching his long-time associates perish. Among the three deceased from Andhra Pradesh were Sudheer, a businessman he had known for a decade and Jayalakshmi, the wife of Gelle Kishore, a close friend for 20 years.

“Watching people you have known for years die in front of you, while feeling completely helpless, is something I can never forget,” he said.

Harihar Srinivas, another survivor from West Godavari district, narrowly escaped the tragedy because he was waiting to board a separate boat nearby when the accident unfolded.

The ill-fated first boat had travelled barely 100 metres after leaving the island when the strong water currents caused it to tilt to one side and capsize.

“It all happened within moments. We could only watch in horror as the boat suddenly overturned,” said Srinivas, who witnessed the incident from a distance of around 100 metres.

Brewers body calls for Bihar liquor policy reset

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Brewers Association of India (BAI) has urged the Bihar Government to undertake a comprehensive review of the State’s liquor prohibition policy, arguing that the law has failed to eliminate alcohol consumption while creating severe social, economic and administrative consequences.

In a letter to Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, BAI Director General Mr Vinod Giri has stated that Bihar stands at a critical policy crossroads and has an opportunity to replace “an ineffective prohibition model with a socially responsible and economically sustainable regulatory framework.”

BAI, the apex body representing India’s largest beer manufacturers, including AB InBev, Carlsberg and United Breweries, said the evidence accumulated over the last decade suggests that prohibition has merely shifted alcohol consumption from regulated and taxed channels to an underground and unregulated economy.



Representing India’s largest beer manufacturers, including AB InBev, Carlsberg and United Breweries, BAI pointed out that over 11.3 lakh cases have been registered and more than 17 lakh people have been arrested under prohibition laws since 2016, while illegal liquor seizures continue to rise year after year.

The Association argued that the policy has diverted enormous police and judicial resources toward enforcement while organised bootlegging networks have expanded across the State.

Calling the fiscal implications of prohibition “staggering”, BAI estimated that Bihar has foregone up to `60,000 crore in excise revenues over the last decade, in addition to losses suf-

fered by hospitality, tourism, logistics and ancillary industries.

BAI has proposed a phased and carefully regulated approach focused on moderation and harm reduction. Its recommendations include introduction of low-alcohol beverages such as beer and wine as the first step, limited rollout in urban areas and economic zones with good regulatory oversight, adoption of alcohol-content based taxation models to encourage lower-strength beverages, creation of dedicated funds for de-addiction programmes and rehabilitation services and mandating allocation of over 50 per cent of the factory floor jobs to women to support their economic empowerment amongst others.

Kerala: No rift with BJP leadership on Thazhamon issue, says KS Radhakrishnan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Kochi

Senior BJP leader KS Radhakrishnan on Monday asserted that there was no rift between him and the party’s State leadership over his demand to end the hereditary claim of the Thazhamon family to the post of Tantri (chief priest) of the Sabarimala temple, saying the party’s stand was to protect the sanctity of temple traditions.

Responding to questions from the media on whether his remarks had put him at odds with the State leadership, Radhakrishnan said the BJP had a clear and consistent policy on safeguarding the ritual purity and customs of all temples.

“The BJP does not have a stand limited to any one temple. The party’s policy is



to protect the sanctity of traditions in all temples. Since the BJP has a strong and clear policy on temple affairs, there is no need to discuss such issues within the party every now and then,” he said.

Asked about BJP leaders visiting Sabarimala Tantri Kandararu Rajeevaru after he was released on bail in the Sabarimala gold loss case, Radhakrishnan said such visits were

made out of personal relationships.

“There may be personal relationships. Anyone may visit a person on that basis,” he said.

Reiterating his demand to end the hereditary practice, Radhakrishnan alleged that the present Tantri, Kandararu Rajeevaru, was an accused in two cases related to the Sabarimala gold loss incident.

He said the post of Tantri should not automatically pass from father to son and that only those who were qualified and competent should be appointed.

“The courts have observed that the sons of Tantris should be legitimately competent to hold the post. Tantric knowledge has to be systematically acquired. This is not family property to be inherited merely because the father held the post,” he said.



Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bengaluru

The Karnataka Government has issued an SOP aimed at ensuring the security, transparency, and accountability of donations at State-run temples.

The SOP makes it mandatory to install CCTV or web cameras, promotes digital payment systems through QR codes for donations, and prescribes several other measures.

The Standard Operating Procedures were issued days after Chief Minister DK Shivakumar last week directed officials to install CCTV cameras in all major temples associated with the Hindu Religious Institutions and

Charitable Endowments (Muzrai) Department across the State, following allegations of embezzlement of donations received at the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

“It has come to the notice of the authorities that incidents of theft from temple donation boxes (hundis) have been reported in various States across the

country and have been widely covered in different media,” the Government circular said.

“Further, cases of theft and misuse of cash and valuables during the counting of hundi collections and maintenance of accounts in temples under the jurisdiction of the Department of Religious Endowments in

the State have also been observed,” it said.

In this context, officials concerned have been directed to implement precautionary measures to protect movable assets belonging to temples across the State.

The measures include identifying suitable locations within temple premises, installing hundis in places clearly visible to the public, and providing adequate security. It is mandatory to install CCTV/web cameras covering the Hundis from all four directions.

The recorded footage shall be securely stored on a server. The CCTV feeds shall be monitored by the Muzrai section in the offices of the DC and sub-divisional officers.

India, Japan review defence ties at Tokyo policy dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

India and Japan on Monday reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral defence ties and discussed ways to deepen cooperation in emerging domains, including defence industrial collaboration, technological innovation, cyber security, space and other areas of shared strategic interest, the defence ministry said.

The key meeting followed soon after Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's visit to India from July 1 to 3 for the 16th India-Japan annual summit. It was Takaichi's first official visit to India. Giving details of the latest parleys, the defence ministry said the talks were held under the aegis of the 8th Defence Policy Dialogue in Tokyo. The Indian delegation was led by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, and the Japanese delegation was led by Vice Minister of Defence for International Affairs Kano Koji.

Both sides reviewed the significant progress made in bilateral defence cooperation since the previous Defence Policy Dialogue and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

The two countries held comprehensive discussions



Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, right, and Japan's Vice Minister of Defence for International Affairs, Kano Koji, during the 8th India-Japan Defence Policy Dialogue in Tokyo, Japan PTI

on the prevailing regional and global security environment and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest.

The dialogue reviewed the whole gamut of bilateral defence engagements, including military-to-military exchanges, co-operation between joint headquarters, maritime cooperation, defence exercises, capacity building, defence equipment and technology cooperation, including maritime technology, and enhanced institutional interactions.

Both sides welcomed the steady expansion of defence cooperation and underscored the importance of maintaining regular high-level exchanges and dia-

logue mechanisms. They discussed probable outcomes for the forthcoming Ministerial visits, including 2+2 later this year.

The two delegations also discussed ways to deepen cooperation in emerging domains, including defence industrial collaboration, technological innovation, cyber security, space, and other areas of shared strategic interest.

Both sides expressed satisfaction with the growing convergence between India and Japan on regional and global security issues and agreed to continue working closely in the Indo-Pacific. They reiterated their commitment to promoting a free, open and rules-based

Indo-Pacific region founded on respect for international law. Defence Secretary appreciated Japan's continued engagement with India in the defence sector and highlighted the importance of strengthening practical cooperation under the framework of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. Kano Koji reaffirmed Japan's commitment to further expanding defence ties with India across priority areas.

Earlier in the day, Defence Secretary called on Japanese Minister of Defence Shinjiro Koizumi, and conveyed greetings of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Both sides reaffirmed the growing momentum of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. He also presented an invitation from the Raksha Mantri to the Defence Minister of Japan for his visit to India at the earliest opportunity.

Defence Secretary commenced his visit by laying a wreath at the Self-Defense Forces Memorial Stone in Tokyo, paying tribute to the members of the Japan Self-Defense Forces who have made the supreme sacrifice in the service of their nation.

The visit underscored the growing and deepening defence ties, mutual respect, and shared commitment of India and Japan towards peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Varanasi gets reuse action plan for treated wastewater

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Varanasi has joined the list of cities with its own reuse action plan for safe reuse of treated wastewater, with the National Mission for Clean Ganga describing it as a "landmark" moment in India's journey towards the reuse of treated wastewater.

The action plan for Varanasi was unveiled by Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil at the water resources secretaries' conference in New Delhi on Monday in the presence of Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary and Water Resources Secretary VL Kantha Rao. The Mission said the action plans show how the national framework on safe reuse of treated wastewater (SRTW) gets translated into ground reality. The plans map out exactly



where treated water can go, including thermal power plants, railways, urban landscaping and irrigation, matching supply from sewage treatment plants with real demand centres in each city.

"India generates approximately 72,368 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage every day from urban households. Only 44 per cent of that has treatment infrastructure, and much of what gets

treated is never reused. That's a resource going to waste, literally," the Mission said in a post on social media.

It said the SRTW initiative is a national push to stop treating used water as waste and start treating it as "Apna Jal" — Our Water", a resource to be safely reused instead of freshwater.

The Mission said the national framework on SRTW, released in November 2022, lays the foundation through uniform quality standards, State-level policies, financing mechanisms and a shift from "treat-and-dispose" to "treat-and-reuse".

Noting that India is the world's 13th most water-stressed country, the Mission said groundwater is over-exploited across much of the country and "every drop of treated water reused is a drop of freshwater saved for drinking, farming and industry".

3 kids die of Chandipura virus in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Gandhinagar

Gujarat has reported seven confirmed cases of the Chandipura virus (CHPV) in the last few weeks, of which three patients have died, while four are under medical treatment, Health Minister Pratul Pansheriya said on Monday.

All the patients were under the age of 10, he said.

The minister, who chaired a high-level meeting in Gandhinagar to review the CHPV outbreak in the State,



said blood sample reports of eight suspected patients of the virus are still awaited.

The health department is continuously working towards control of the virus, treatment of patients and

surveillance operations, he maintained. The Chandipura virus causes fever, with symptoms similar to the flu, and acute encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). The pathogen is a member of the Vesiculovirus genus of the family Rhabdoviridae. It is transmitted by vectors like mosquitoes, ticks and sandflies. "Blood samples of 27 suspected patients of the virus were earlier sent for testing. Of these, reports of seven came back positive, while 12 tested negative," he informed.

Dry Gujarat logs over 300 alcohol-linked assault calls daily

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Ahmedabad

Despite Gujarat's long-standing prohibition policy, alcohol-related violence continues to place a significant burden on the State's emergency response system, with official data indicating that police receive more than 300 calls every day involving assaults linked to intoxicated individuals.

According to emergency response statistics for the period between September 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026, the State's 112 emergency helpline registered 83,747 alcohol-related assault incidents, making it the third most common category of police emergencies after general assault cases and public disturbances.

During the ten-month period, the emergency service handled 8.30 lakh police-related calls, averaging 2,741 calls per day.



Vice President CP Radhakrishnan is briefed by Minister of State for Defence and senior Ministry of Defence officials on the National Cadet Corps and Sainik Schools in New Delhi PTI

VP urges States to strengthen NCC, expand Sainik schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Monday called for greater participation of States to strengthen NCC and expand Sainik Schools. He was briefed on the National Cadet Corps (NCC) and Sainik Schools by the Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, along with officers of the Ministry of Defence in New Delhi.

Appreciating the NCC's contribution to nation-building, the vice president described the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Camps as an excellent initiative for strengthening national integration. He also lauded the NCC's community service initiatives, including the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and welcomed the establishment of the NCC Alumni Association.

Emphasising that strengthening the NCC is a shared national responsibility, Radhakrishnan called for greater infrastructure development, enhanced coordination with State Governments on issues such as land and training infrastructure, and assured all possible support in engaging with the States.

Radhakrishnan was also briefed on the functioning and expansion of Sainik Schools, including the existing and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models.

Suggesting that the growing demand among students and parents be addressed, the vice president observed that each State could aim to have three to five Sainik Schools.

He also proposed exploring the possibility of increasing the intake capacity of existing Sainik schools.

Bihar CM launches subsidised heli-tourism service

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n Patna

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Monday launched the subsidised 'Bihar Heli-Tourism and Air Tourism Service Scheme-2026' to provide affordable air services to the public for select tourist destinations in the State. Bookings under the scheme commenced on Monday, while helicopter services will operate every Saturday and Sunday from July 18.

The scheme was launched at a function in the State Capital.

According to a statement by the Chief Minister's Office, "The CM launched the subsidised 'Bihar Heli-Tourism and Air Tourism Service Scheme-2026' to provide affordable air tourism services to the general public for select tourist destinations in the State. The initiative aims to establish Bihar on the global tourism map." Under the scheme, subsidised helicopter services have been introduced



Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary with others during the inauguration of Bihar Heli-Tourism and Air Tourism Service Scheme-2026 in Patna PTI

from Patna to Rajgir, Valmikinagar and Kaimur. The Government will provide a subsidy of up to ₹15,422 per ticket, the statement said.

"Expansion of the tourism sector will create new employment opportunities for local youth and promote

homestays, local handicrafts and rural tourism. Private investment in the tourism sector will be encouraged through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The CM urged the people of Bihar to become ambassadors of the state's brand and

showcase its historical, cultural, religious and natural heritage to the world," the statement said.

He said no other State in the country has such an extensive network of quality rural roads as Bihar. Villages across the State are now equipped with essential infrastructure, including roads, electricity and water supply, he added.

He said Bihar was no longer known only for its rich history and spiritual heritage but was steadily emerging as a major destination for modern tourism. "Bihar is the land of Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, the world-renowned Nalanda University and the ancient Magadha Empire — a cradle of great civilisation and culture. The State Government aims to give these historical, religious and cultural heritage sites greater recognition at the national and international levels and attract more tourists to Bihar," he said.

Datia bypoll: Narottam back BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari

GIRISH SHARMA n Bhopal

The campaign for the Datia Assembly by-election gathered momentum on Monday as the BJP and Congress put up a show of strength during the filing of nominations by their candidates, while emotional appeals and sharp political exchanges dominated the day's events.

Former Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra turned emotional while addressing a BJP public meeting, dismissing the Opposition's claims of divisions within the party. His voice choked with emotion as he pledged to campaign tirelessly for BJP candidate



BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari files his nomination papers in the presence of Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav and Narottam Mishra in Datia PTI

Ashutosh Tiwari. "Congress says there is a rift in the BJP. Look around, we are all standing together. I will bow before every household in Datia to ensure Ashutosh Tiwari's victory," Mishra said.

CM Mohan Yadav sought to reinforce the message of unity, saying, "Narottam, we are entrusting our younger brother Ashutosh Tiwari to you. It is now your responsibility to ensure his victory."

Taking a swipe at the Congress candidate, Mishra described Ghanashyam Singh, popularly known as Raja Saheb, as "an expired homoeopathy pill that may be sweet but has no effect." He also contrasted the two candidates, saying one was born into privilege while the other had dedicated his life to public service from a young age.

Earlier in the day, Congress nominee Ghanashyam Singh filed his nomination in the presence of Pradesh Congress Committee president Jitu Patwari, Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar, former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh, former MLA Rajendra Bharti and Samajwadi Party State

president Manoj Yadav. Later, BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari submitted his nomination papers accompanied by CM Mohan Yadav, BJP State president Hemant Khandelwal, Narottam Mishra and other leaders. Nayak expressed disappointment over being denied the party ticket despite assurances after the 2023 Assembly elections. He alleged that the state leadership had repeatedly overlooked him and said all political options remained open. Nayak claimed that during a recent meeting, Digvijaya Singh had acknowledged positive feedback about him but expressed concerns over his past association with the

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and his proximity to BJP MP VD Sharma. "I have no issue with Congress candidate Ghanashyam Singh, but the state leadership has treated me unfairly. Ashutosh Tiwari is like my younger brother. I am still considering my future course of action," he said.

Addressing the Congress gathering, Digvijaya publicly apologised to Nayak, acknowledging that he had opposed Nayak's candidature in 2023 because he had only recently joined the Congress from the BJP. He praised Nayak's commitment during the previous Assembly election campaign and apologised if his actions had caused any hurt.

INS Sudarshini joins Grand Parade of Sails in Boston

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Indian Navy's sail training ship INS Sudarshini has taken part in the Grand Parade of Sails in Boston, days after representing the country at a grand nautical event hosted in the New York Harbour to mark the 250th anniversary of the US' independence.

The ship arrived in Boston on July 12, India's defence ministry said on Monday.

After her successful participation in the Sail 4th 250 celebrations in New York, INS Sudarshini took part in the Grand Parade of Sails, marking the commencement of Sail Boston 2026, it said in a statement. Raghuram Sastry, Consul General of India in Boston, embarked on the vessel for



Indian Naval Sail Training Ship (STS) INS Sudarshini participates in the grand parade of Sails at Boston in USA PTI

the Grand Parade of Sails and the ship's ceremonial entry into Boston.

Sailing proudly with the Indian tricolour, INS Sudarshini passed prominent landmarks including Castle Island and the Seaport District before berthing at

Boston Fish Pier, the ministry said. "Joining an international fleet of over 60 tall ships from more than 20 nations, INS Sudarshini is representing India as a maritime ambassador of goodwill during her ongoing Lokayan 2026 transoceanic

expedition," it said. Lokayan 2026 is the ship's 10-month transoceanic expedition, which reflects the Indian Navy's commitment to strengthening maritime cooperation, building international goodwill and deepening engagement with partner navies.

Reinforcing the Indian Navy's commitment to maritime diplomacy, international goodwill and cultural exchange, the ship will remain open to visitors from July 12 to 15, the statement said. Following successful port calls at Norfolk, Baltimore, and New York, INS Sudarshini's participation in Sail Boston 2026 "further strengthens the growing India-US maritime partnership and showcases India's rich seafaring heritage on the global stage," it said.

TN CM visits Perambur, launches grievance app

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Chennai

In his first official engagement in Perambur after the Assembly election, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay formally opened his newly renovated MLA office on Monday.

He also unveiled a technology-driven public grievance mobile application specifically for Perambur residents.

The upgraded facility in Sharma Nagar First Street in Vyasarpadi includes a dedicated workspace for the CM, CCTV surveillance, and a 10-member staff tasked with managing daily public petitions, according to official sources.

CM Vijay contested and won from both the Perambur and Tiruchy East constituencies, eventually vacating the Tiruchy East seat to retain



Perambur. The MLA office also houses an integrated common service centre (E-Sevai maiyyam) to expedite civic requests. Meanwhile, the newly launched app allows citizens to directly submit and track complaints

related to electricity, water supply, roads, sanitation, and access to government welfare schemes.

He is also expected to launch the State's new ration card distribution scheme; the CM will inspect a ration shop

in MKB Nagar. He is scheduled to hand over new ration cards to the first 50 eligible beneficiaries, along with essential commodities and land ownership patts.

The schedule includes a visit to an MTC electric vehicle (EV) charging station near the Vyasarpadi Metro and a review of commuter amenities at a local MTC bus depot.

Coinciding with his visit, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) has floated a Rs 48 lakh tender to prepare a comprehensive Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the constituency. The integrated area development plan aims to address longstanding urban challenges across Perambur's lower-income neighbourhoods, targeting flooding hotspots, drinking water issues, parking shortages, and the heavily polluted Captain Cotton Canal.



Editor's
TAKE

India finally arrives in the South Pacific

Prime Minister Modi's visit to New Zealand — the first by an Indian Prime Minister in four decades — resets bilateral ties after years of neglect

When Narendra Modi closed the final leg of a nine-day arc that began in Jakarta, in New Zealand, he did so by closing a much longer gap. No Indian Prime Minister had set foot in New Zealand in forty years; only Indira Gandhi in 1968 and Rajiv Gandhi in 1986 had come before him.

That the visit lasted barely a day, bookended by talks with Christopher Luxon and an address to the diaspora at Auckland's Spark Arena, only underlined how overdue it was.

The three-nation itinerary was not incidental. Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand together mark the arc of India's "Act East" outreach into the Indo-Pacific, a region where Delhi has spent a decade playing catch-up to China's economic and naval footprint. In Jakarta, Modi discussed heritage conservation at Prambanan; in Australia, the two countries struck a uranium export deal, feeding India's push towards 100 gigawatts of nuclear capacity by 2047.

New Zealand was the finale, smaller in scale but symbolically significant as the relationship's most underdeveloped corner. The challenges are real and long-standing. Trade talks, first launched in 2010, collapsed in 2015 over India's reluctance to open its dairy sector, to protect its millions of small farmers.

Even the Free Trade Agreement signed this April, ahead of Modi's visit, reflects that caution: bulk infant formula and select re-exports get duty-free access, but butter and cheese—the products New Zealand's dairy industry actually wants to sell—stay largely outside the deal, prompting open disappointment from its dairy lobby.

Separately, the presence of pro-Khalistan groups in New Zealand—including a 2024 referendum push by Sikhs for Justice that drew a formal protest from Delhi—remains a running irritant, echoing the friction that has strained India's ties with Canada. Against these frictions sit sturdier binding factors: a 200,000-strong Indian diaspora, growing convergence on Indo-Pacific maritime security, and a shared wariness of an assertive China across the Pacific. These pulled the two governments towards each other despite the trade impasse, and this visit turned that convergence into tangible outcomes. Modi and Luxon elevated the relationship to a strategic partnership and signed eighteen outcomes, including ten formal agreements: a four-year roadmap for cooperation, a reciprocal logistics support pact between the two navies, a maritime cooperation framework, and a pledge to jointly tackle transnational crime, from drug trafficking to cyber-enabled fraud.

They also set an aspirational target of doubling two-way trade to NZ\$7 billion by 2030. The real test now is follow-through. The FTA still needs ratification and entry into force, and its dairy carve-outs will keep testing New Zealand's patience unless Delhi shows more flexibility over time. And the defence commitments—naval exercises and cyber cooperation—need budgets and calendars behind them, not just communiqués.

Dual nationality and divided loyalties

The Dutch-Moroccan experience, shaped by decades of integration challenges, political controversy and competing visions of citizenship, offers a revealing case study of one of the defining social and political dilemmas confronting modern Europe



BHOPINDER SINGH

People of Moroccan origin constitute one of the largest immigrant-origin communities in the Netherlands, numbering approximately 450,000. For decades, the Moroccan-Dutch community has been at the centre of debates surrounding integration, identity and social cohesion. Issues such as religious extremism, youth unemployment, educational disadvantage, socio-economic segregation, and concerns about crime among a small minority of young men have received significant media and political attention.

Certain high-profile incidents intensified these debates. The 2004 assassination of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by Mohammed Bouyeri, a Dutch citizen of Moroccan descent with Islamist extremist motivations, and the exposure of the Hofstad Network (2002-2005), a jihadist group whose members were involved in extremist activities, became defining moments in Dutch discussions about radicalisation and integration. Although these cases involved a very small number of individuals, they contributed to public anxiety and provided political ammunition for right-wing movements, particularly the Party for Freedom (PVV), led by Geert Wilders, which has repeatedly argued that the Netherlands faces what it describes as a "Moroccan problem".

One of the most contentious issues arising from these debates has been dual nationality. Dutch law permits dual citizenship in certain circumstances, but nationalist politicians in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Europe have questioned whether it can create competing loyalties. Their argument is rooted in the belief that citizenship should represent an exclusive commitment to one nation and that full integration requires a primary and unambiguous national identity.

From this perspective, dual nationality may create situations in which individuals face conflicting obligations if the interests of their two countries diverge. Critics argue that, while dual nationals may legally pledge allegiance to the Netherlands, their emotional or cultural attachment may remain divided. They contend that a cohesive nation requires a shared civic identity and that multiple national affiliations may weaken that sense of belonging.

This debate resurfaced during the FIFA World Cup when Morocco defeated the Netherlands in a tense knockout match



decided by a penalty shoot-out. The Moroccan national team, known as the Atlas Lions, has historically included many players from the global Moroccan diaspora. Meanwhile, the Dutch national team has long reflected the multicultural character of Dutch society, with legendary players of immigrant heritage such as Ruud Gullit, Frank Rijkaard, Clarence Seedorf and Patrick Kluivert.

The match highlighted a new dimension of the identity debate. Several members of Morocco's squad were born or raised in the Netherlands, including Noussair Mazraoui and Sofyan Amrabat, while others developed their careers within Dutch football structures. These players had eligibility options but ultimately chose to represent Morocco, the country associated with their family heritage.

There were undoubtedly sporting considerations involved. Morocco had established itself as a highly competitive international team, reaching the latter stages of major tournaments. A player's decision is influenced by many factors, including football opportunities, personal relationships, coaching environments and family connections.

Nevertheless, the symbolic significance of these choices was difficult to ignore. Ismael Saibari, closely associated with Dutch football through PSV Eindhoven, chose Morocco despite eligibility ties to Spain and Belgium. Explaining his decision, he said:

"Playing for Morocco was a choice from the heart." Similarly, Noussair Mazraoui explained that although he had discussions with Dutch coach Ronald Koeman, he had

already decided: "When I spoke with Ronald Koeman, I already had the feeling that I would choose only Morocco and nothing else."

For supporters of a more nationalist view of citizenship, such statements reinforce concerns about divided loyalties. Politicians such as Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, Nigel Farage in the United Kingdom, and Marine Le Pen in France argue that citizenship should involve a clear and primary allegiance to the nation-state. From this perspective, citizens born or raised in a country choosing to represent another nation because of their ancestral identity raises questions about national belonging.

Supporters of this view contend that a nation functions best when citizens share a strong civic identity. They argue that immigration and naturalisation policies should encourage newcomers and their descendants to develop a deep identification with their adopted country. However, critics argue that sporting representation should not be treated as a direct measure of civic loyalty. They point out that many people maintain multiple identities and that a connection to ancestral heritage does not necessarily diminish commitment to the country where someone lives, works and contributes to society.

The debate became more visible after Morocco's victory, when celebrations took place in several Dutch cities with large Moroccan-origin populations. Many were peaceful expressions of pride, though incidents of disorder and clashes with the police led to criticism and renewed discussion about integration and social cohesion.

Ultimately, the question of dual nationality reflects a broader European debate about belonging in an era of migration and globalisation. The challenge is finding a balance: allowing individuals to maintain their cultural heritage while ensuring a strong shared commitment to the civic values and institutions of the country they call home.

The responsibility rests on both sides. Host societies must create genuine opportunities for inclusion, while immigrant communities and their descendants must engage with and invest in the national identity of the societies in which they live. The future of multicultural democracies may depend on whether multiple identities can coexist alongside a common sense of citizenship.

THE QUESTION OF
DUAL NATIONALITY
REFLECTS A
BROADER
EUROPEAN DEBATE
ABOUT BELONGING
IN AN ERA OF
MIGRATION AND
GLOBALISATION

The writer is a former Lieutenant Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Puducherry, and a military veteran

The infrastructure we cannot afford to ignore



SIDDHARTH ROY

2ND OPINION

Whenever a new highway, bridge or airport is inaugurated, it becomes a visible symbol of India's progress. Such projects inspire confidence because they represent ambition translated into reality. Yet, there is another kind of infrastructure that rarely attracts headlines, despite determining whether these physical assets ultimately succeed. It cannot be seen, photographed or inaugurated. It is the invisible infrastructure of trust, accountability and institutional integrity.

Every nation invests in roads, railways and power networks because they create economic opportunities and improve quality of life. India has made remarkable strides in this regard over the past decade. However, physical infrastructure alone cannot transform a country into a developed nation. The institutions that maintain these assets,

enforce standards and inspire public confidence are equally important. Without them, even the finest engineering achievements eventually lose their value.

Consider any public service. A modern hospital cannot deliver better outcomes if patients distrust its doctors or administration. Likewise, digital platforms remain underutilised if citizens fear data breaches, and universities cannot strengthen the economy if employers lose confidence in their graduates. Infrastructure functions best when people trust the systems behind it. India has already witnessed the power of invisible infrastructure. The success of Aadhaar, the Unified Payments Interface and DigiLocker depended not only on technology but also on citizens believing these platforms would make life simpler, safer and more reliable. Trust transformed innovation into mass adoption. The same principle extends to economic growth. Investors seek stable regulatory environments where contracts are honoured and policies remain predictable. Entrepreneurs take calculated risks when institutions uphold fairness. Citizens are more willing to pay taxes when they believe public resources are utilised responsibly. Even disaster management becomes more effective when communities trust official warnings and cooperate with the authorities. In each case, confidence acts as a multiplier that enhances the benefits of every physical investment. As a civil engineer, I have learned that no structure remains durable without a robust maintenance ecosystem. Designing a bridge is only the beginning. Its longevity depends upon quality inspections, transparent

procurement, timely repairs and professional accountability. These invisible processes rarely receive public attention, yet they determine whether infrastructure remains safe and functional for generations. The same principle applies to nation-building itself.

India's aspiration to become a developed country by 2047 therefore demands a broader understanding of infrastructure. Alongside highways, ports and industrial corridors, equal emphasis must be placed on judicial efficiency, ethical governance, administrative competence, quality education and professional standards. These investments may not produce dramatic photographs, but they generate something even more valuable: lasting public confidence.

Invisible infrastructure is not created by governments alone. Every honest public servant, responsible business leader, dedicated teacher and conscientious citizen contributes to an environment where trust flourishes. Development is sustained when institutions and individuals reinforce one another through integrity and accountability. Concrete may connect cities, but trust connects people. India's future will not be defined only by the kilometres of roads it builds or the skylines it transforms. It will ultimately be measured by the strength of the institutions that stand behind those achievements. That invisible infrastructure will decide whether our development remains impressive on paper or truly endures across generations.

The writer, a civil engineer, is a consultant at Rashtriya Raksha University under the Ministry of Home Affairs

PIC TALK



An artisan gives the final touches to an idol of Lord Jagannath ahead of the Rath Yatra festival in Nadia, West Bengal.

PHOTO: PTI

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE



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INDIA'S RISING STRATEGIC INFLUENCE IN A VOLATILE WORLD

Appropos the front-page report, "JPC endorses One Nation, One Election" (12 July), the proposal deserves serious consideration as a major electoral reform. If implemented, holding simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies could significantly reduce the enormous expenditure incurred on frequent polls. Estimates suggest that savings to the national exchequer could be substantial, allowing greater public resources to be directed towards development and welfare.

The reform could also benefit political parties, which currently spend considerable time and resources preparing for successive elections across different states. A common electoral cycle may encourage parties to focus on long-term governance, present more meaningful vision documents and forge stronger alliances where

necessary. Smaller parties, too, would have the opportunity to contest elections more strategically instead of engaging in continuous campaign mode.

Frequent elections keep governments in campaign mode, slowing policy decisions and governance at both the Centre and in the states. Simultaneous elections could enhance political stability, improve governance and create a more favourable environment for economic growth and investment.

While constitutional, logistical and federal concerns must be addressed through consensus, the proposal has significant potential. If Parliament enacts the necessary legislation, *One Nation, One Election* could become a major step towards more efficient governance and a stronger democracy.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

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

Sleep is the foundation of good health

Refer 'The Healing Power of Sleep' by Rajyogi Brahma Kumar Nikunj Ji. The article rightly reminds readers that sleep is not wasted time but the body's most vital period of restoration and healing. Modern medical research increasingly confirms what ancient wisdom has long recognised — that quality sleep is indispensable for physical, mental and emotional well-being. The outdated belief that "sleep is for the weak" deserves to be discarded. Longevity expert Bryan Johnson aptly describes sleep as a superpower because no supplement, energy drink or productivity hack can compensate for chronic sleep deprivation. Sleep is second only to oxygen in sustaining human life. During sleep, the brain consolidates memories, strengthens learning, regulates emotions, repairs tissues, balances hormones, boosts immunity and removes harmful metabolic waste. People who consistently enjoy adequate sleep are more productive, make better decisions and are less vulnerable to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and dementia.

Educational institutions must also rethink practices that glorify sleeplessness. Daytime submission deadlines would serve academic objectives without compromising health. Sleep is not a luxury but the very foundation of lifelong health, happiness and productivity.

HARSH PAWARIA | ROHTAK

Strengthening public trust in the police

The controversy surrounding *Satluji*, the recently banned film inspired by the life of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira, has generated widespread debate across Punjab. Despite the restrictions, many people have reportedly viewed the film through digital platforms. While some believe it highlights the alleged excesses committed by the Punjab Police during the militancy years, others argue that it pays inadequate attention to the horrific violence perpetrated by terrorists, resulting in a one-sided portrayal of a deeply painful period in the state's history. Sensitive subjects involving terrorism, human rights and law enforcement deserve balanced treatment, as selective narratives can reopen old wounds and influence public perceptions.

If the authorities found the film objectionable, such concerns should ideally have been addressed during the certification process rather than after its completion and release. The Punjab Police can strengthen public confidence by promoting transparent, accountable and humane policing, expanding community engagement and demonstrating unwavering respect for human rights. A professional police force that enjoys the trust of the people remains the strongest guarantee of peace, justice and lasting social harmony.

RS NARULA | PATIALA

A voice that will echo forever

The demise of S Janaki Amma at the age of 88 marks the end of one of the most glorious chapters in Indian film music. For more than six decades, her extraordinary voice became the emotional heartbeat of millions, captivating listeners across generations with its remarkable range, versatility and expressive depth.

Whether rendering intricate classical compositions such as Singara Velane Deva, lively folk songs, playful comic numbers or even singing convincingly in a child's voice, she displayed a rare mastery that few singers have ever matched.

Her greatness lay not only in her vocal brilliance but also in her ability to transcend linguistic boundaries. Singing flawlessly in 18 languages, she became a beloved cultural icon across South India and beyond.

By declining the Padma Bhushan, believing the honour had come too late, she made a principled statement without diminishing her immense stature. She required no official recognition; the enduring love of her countless admirers had already crowned her. Though her voice has fallen silent, her immortal songs will continue to inspire generations.

S PADMANABHAN | KOCHI

Five water stories from Dhanbad that can shape Jharkhand’s water future

As climate change makes rainfall more erratic and water increasingly uncertain, Jharkhand’s next generation of water governance must move beyond delivering water schemes to securing water systems



EKLAVYA PRASAD

negotiate water every single day.

Over the past several years, my work with Megh Pyne Abhiyan (MPA) across rural and urban Dhanbad has convinced me that the district is much more than a mining region. It is a microcosm of Jharkhand's water realities. The challenges that emerge here-groundwater depletion, contamination, urban flooding, disappearing recharge spaces and climate uncertainty-mirror those confronting the rest of the State. At the same time, Dhanbad has also become a testing ground for innovative solutions. Five stories from the district offer valuable lessons for reimagining water governance in Jharkhand.

The first story comes from rural Dhanbad. Across the blocks of Baliapur, Tundi and Purbi (East) Tundi, covering seven gram panchayats and thirteen villages, MPA's groundwater assessment found what villagers had always known: groundwater is the backbone of everyday life. It supports drinking water, household needs and agriculture. More importantly, the assessment revealed that local communities possess an intimate understanding of their aquifers. They know when hand pumps begin to fail, which ponds once recharged wells, how mining has altered drainage, and how rainfall has become increasingly unpredictable.

What was striking was that villagers did not merely describe problems. They proposed solutions. Rainwater harvesting, aquifer recharge, the revival of traditional ponds, improved irrigation and safe drinking water emerged as their priorities. Their responses remind us that groundwater governance cannot depend solely on engineering designs and hydrogeological maps. It must also recognise local knowledge as a valuable planning resource. Communities are not passive beneficiaries; they are indispensable partners in water management.

A very different story unfolds in Bartand, Dhanbad, inside my mother's home, called Uttarayan. Since 2018, this residence has quietly become a living laboratory for understanding groundwater. Rainfall has been measured every day, rainwater harvesting carefully documented, and groundwater levels in a dug well systematically monitored. During this period, nearly 5.8 million litres of rainwater have been harvested to recharge the shallow aquifer, while seasonal groundwater fluctuations have improved by almost eleven feet between May 2018 and May 2026.

The significance of Uttarayan extends far beyond one household. It demonstrates that water consciousness begins with measurement, not assumptions. When people measure rainfall, monitor groundwater and observe recharge, conservation becomes evidence-based rather than symbolic. Imagine if every school, college, government office and public institution in Jharkhand became a similar water observatory. Such citizen-generated datasets would not only deepen scientific understanding but also strengthen the Government's Catch the Rain campaign through informed public participation.

The third story shifts from one home to an entire city. It began with an inspiring initiative called the Gang of Twenty, a group of students from Carmel School, Dhanbad, who started engaging with local water issues. Their enthusiasm sparked wider conversations about groundwater and eventually contributed to Dhanbad being selected as one of the pilot cities under the National Institute of Urban Affairs' Shallow Aquifer Management (SAM) programme. Implemented by the Dhanbad Municipal Corporation in partnership with MPA, and mentored by Dr Himanshu Kulkarni of ACWADAM, Pune, and S Vishwanath of Biome Environmental Trust, Bengaluru, the initiative marked an important shift in urban water planning.

Instead of viewing groundwater as an invisible reserve beneath the city, the pilot treated the shallow aquifer as an asset that could be mapped, monitored,

Dhanbad is rarely associated with water. It is known as India's coal capital, a landscape of mines, industries and expanding urban settlements. Yet, beneath this industrial identity lies another Dhanbad, one where aquifers sustain millions, ponds continue to recharge groundwater, streams silently carry the burden of urbanisation, and communities



protected and recharged. Recharge interventions and groundwater monitoring were undertaken at Jeevan Jyoti School and Bera Colony in Dhanbad Circle, Bhagatdih and Neeche Mohalla in Jharia Circle, and Laxmi Colony in Sindri Circle. Subsequent monitoring showed encouraging improvements, with groundwater remaining available for longer periods during the summer months. The experience demonstrates that even rapidly growing mining cities can improve groundwater security when urban planning begins with the shallow aquifer rather than ending with pipelines.

Urban groundwater, however, cannot be protected without addressing sanitation. This is perhaps one of Dhanbad's most important lessons. In the absence of underground sewerage systems, drains, streams and rivers frequently become carriers of sewage. Stormwater drains meant to convey rainwater gradually turn into wastewater channels, contaminating surface water and threatening groundwater quality.

The lesson is straightforward but often ignored. Water supply, drainage, sanitation, rivers and groundwater cannot be planned separately. Healthy drains, streams and wetlands are not vacant land waiting for development. They are essential urban infrastructure that supports recharge, reduces flooding and protects public health. Sustainable cities will emerge only when sanitation and groundwater are planned together.

The final story takes us back to rural Dhanbad, where the challenge is not water availability but water safety. In Gharbar Panchayat of Baliapur Block, studies conducted by MPA in collaboration with the School of Environmental Studies, Jadavpur University, found widespread fluoride contamination in groundwater. In several habitations, more than half of the drinking water sources exceeded the permissible fluoride limits. Significantly, this situation persisted even after piped water supply had reached many villages because people continued to depend on groundwater for convenience, reliability and everyday needs.

This experience reminds us that water security cannot be judged simply by counting household tap connections. Safe drinking water depends equally on water quality, continuous monitoring and informed community behaviour. Addressing fluorosis requires an integrated approach involving hydrogeological investigations, groundwater quality surveillance, safe alternative water sources, rainwater harvesting, aquifer recharge, nutrition, public awareness and institutional convergence. There is no single technological fix.

Taken together, these five stories point towards a larger shift that Jharkhand must embrace. Groundwater remains the invisible foundation of water security across rural and urban landscapes. Traditional ponds, dug wells, wetlands and drainage channels are not relics of the past but living ecological infrastructure. Water challenges differ from one landscape to another, making hydrogeology and local context central to planning. Most importantly, water quantity, water quality, sanitation, climate resilience and community participation are inseparable.

Dhanbad therefore offers Jharkhand something far more valuable than isolated stories. It provides evidence that a different model of water governance is possible, one that begins with understanding aquifers, respects community knowledge, encourages citizen science, integrates institutions and protects the ecological systems on which all water security ultimately depends. As climate change makes rainfall more erratic and water increasingly uncertain, Jharkhand's next generation of water governance must move beyond delivering water schemes to securing water systems. If these lessons from Dhanbad are scaled thoughtfully, they can help build a State that is not merely water-supplied, but truly water-secure.

The writer is the Managing Trustee of Megh Pyne Abhiyan

The notion India needs to be Viksit Bharat



AMITABH RANJAN

India stands at a historic inflection point. It is the world's fastest-growing major economy, a digital innovation leader, and a geopolitical force of increasing consequence. Yet the journey from a rising power to a truly developed nation cannot be measured through GDP figures or infrastructure statistics alone. The defining question is: what guiding principle will sustain India's transformation into a Viksit Bharat by 2047? The answer lies in a simple but profound idea: Rashtra Pratham — Nation First.

Rashtra Pratham is not a slogan. It is a governing philosophy that places the long-term

interests of the nation above sectional, political, institutional and personal considerations. Every successful nation in modern history-post-war Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Germany-achieved development only when governments, businesses and citizens aligned around a shared civilisational purpose. India's ambition requires no less: a national consensus that transcends electoral cycles, ideological divisions and short-term interests.

Beyond economics: The character question

Development is not merely an economic phenomenon. A developed nation emerges when excellence becomes the norm rather than the exception. India has excelled in technology, medicine, entrepreneurship and public administration-yet the translation of individual excellence into institutional excellence has remained elusive. The challenge has never been the absence of talent; it has been the absence of a culture that consistently places national and institutional interests above narrow personal gains.

The consequences are visible across sectors. Bureaucratic inertia delays nationally important projects. Political polarisation obstructs reforms whose benefits transcend party lines. Academic institutions remain constrained by administrative rigidity. Corporate R&D investment stays below potential. Citizens demand better public services while overlooking civic responsibilities. In each case, the underlying challenge is not capability but orientation. A Rashtra Pratham mindset asks one consistent question: What serves the long-term interests of the nation?

Three arenas for Nation-First action

Consider innovation. India aspires to become a technological leader, with impressive achievements in space, digital infrastructure and pharmaceuticals. Yet national R&D expenditure remains well below that of leading innovation economies. Private capital gravitates towards low-risk investments; universities remain disconnected from industry; and regulation inadvertently discourages experimentation. A Rashtra Pratham approach would reframe innovation not as a commercial activity but as a national imperative, rewarding risk, strengthening academia-industry collaboration, and recognising scientific excellence as a patriotic contribution to nation-building. The same principle applies to governance. India's administrative institutions have been the backbone of democratic continuity, but a twenty-first-century economy demands greater agility, transparency and outcome orientation. Administrative reforms must be understood not as an internal bureaucratic exercise but as a national priority. When governance improves, its benefits ripple across every sector-business, education, healthcare and social welfare alike.

Corporate India must equally recognise that wealth creation and nation-building are complementary, not competing, objectives. India's entrepreneurs have built globally respected companies and a thriving start-up ecosystem. However, nations become developed not simply by borrowing technology but by creating it. The ensuing phase of development calls for wholehearted commitment to advanced manufacturing, deep-tech and long-term capital creation. Corporate India has the wherewithal to drive this transformation. It may appear difficult, but choosing to do so would be among the most meaningful expressions of Rashtra Pratham.

Citizens as nation-builders

No national transformation can succeed without people's active participation and contribution. A developed nation is built by millions of everyday decisions made by ordinary people: respecting public spaces, following rules, paying taxes honestly, recognising merit, conserving resources and participating constructively in civic life. The difference between developed and developing societies more often lies in civic culture than in government policies. Viksit Bharat, therefore, demands not only institutional reforms but also a paradigm shift in civic consciousness.

There is also a deeper civilisational dimension here. India is not merely a modern nation-state; it is one of the world's oldest continuing civilisations. Concepts such as Lokasangraha (welfare of society), Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah (well-being of all) and Yogakshema (collective prosperity) highlight the idea that the flourishing of an individual cannot be viewed separately from the development of society as a whole. Rashtra Pratham is therefore not a borrowed political doctrine but a contemporary expression of the civilisational ethic that has long shaped India's global perspective.

Purpose over potential

India is sitting on unprecedented opportunities. Demographic strength, technological capability, entrepreneurial energy and cultural confidence have created conditions previous generations could hardly have imagined. Yet history is replete with nations that possessed immense potential but failed to fulfil it because collective purpose yielded to fragmented interests. The countries that succeeded were those that cultivated a shared commitment to national advancement. The journey to Viksit Bharat will not be completed by government schemes alone, nor by economic growth in isolation. It will be achieved only when every institution and every citizen internalises one conviction: that the nation's long-term interests must remain paramount. That is the essence of Rashtra Pratham.

And the most enduring lesson of development is that nations become great not when they merely dream of prosperity but when they organise themselves around a purpose larger than themselves. For India, that purpose is clear: Rashtra Pratham — Nation First.



The writer is an alumnus of NESa, Washington, DC, and Vice Chairman, PanIT Alumni India. He is associated with the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi, as Registrar

AI and the vanishing first job: India’s emerging mobility challenge



RAVI POKHARNA

per cent of current work activities in the US, primarily within white-collar sectors, could be automated by 2030. Analysis by Anthropic (2026) and Stanford University (Brynjolfsson, Chandar and Chen; 2025) found that while AI-exposed occupations, such as computer programmers and customer service representatives, have not yet experienced significant rises in unemployment, hiring for younger workers in these roles has slowed measurably. This signals an important shift: firms are not eliminating jobs at scale, but they are reducing hiring at entry level. The layoffs may not come, but the offer letters may come more slowly.

The jobs are safe, the ladder is not

At first glance, India appears relatively insulated. Forty-three per cent of the workforce remains in agriculture, with large shares in construction (12 per cent), retail and transport (18 per cent)-sectors where physical presence and human judgement remain indispensable (PLFS, 2025). AI will not pour

concrete, repair a power line or manage a kirana counter anytime soon.

But India's growth story has not been driven by these sectors alone. It has been powered by the steady expansion of formal services: IT-BPM, customer support, finance operations, analytics and the growing ecosystem of Global Capability Centres (GCCs). These sectors have historically functioned as engines of aspirational mobility, absorbing educated youth into formal employment. Yet these are precisely the domains where AI is now performing core tasks: writing code, handling customer interactions, processing data and managing workflows. The risk, therefore, is not where India is today, but where it is trying to go.

The most consequential shift is unfolding at the bottom of the pyramid. Entry-level roles in IT services, BPMs and analytics have traditionally operated as training pipelines. Firms hired fresh graduates with low initial productivity, invested in structured training, and scaled them into higher-value roles over time. AI is compressing this model. With AI assistants enabling developers to work faster and autonomous agents resolving most routine customer interactions, firms now require fewer entry-level workers to produce the same output. The result is not mass layoffs, but a structural decline in fresher hiring. In a country where 8-10 million individuals enter the workforce annually (World Bank, ILO), this is a systemic challenge.

Why this matters more for India

India's youth labour market was already fragile before the AI transition. The graduate unemploy-



ment rate of 11.2 per cent is more than three times the overall unemployment rate of 3.1 per cent (PLFS, 2025). More than 45 per cent of employed graduates are overqualified for their roles (CMIE, India Skills Report 2025). Entry-level wages in IT-BPM have stagnated for over a decade, with starting salaries in the `3.5-4.5 lakh per annum range (TeamLease, 2024-25). AI risks amplifying all three trends: fewer formal-sector entry points, higher skill thresholds for hiring, and slower and more unequal wage progression. The first job is more than employment; it is an economic bridge. It shapes income trajectories, household aspirations and urban mobility. When that bridge narrows, the effects ripple across the economy. This is not a conventional jobs crisis; it is a mobility crisis.

A familiar technological moment

The advent of AI today is comparable to the arrival of computers in the late 20th century. Computers did not eliminate work; they transformed it. Every sector, every business and every activity

became computer-powered. Productivity surged, new industries emerged, and those who adapted gained disproportionately. India seized that moment. Tech services companies, in particular, helped position India as a global IT powerhouse. That wave created millions of jobs and gave India a competitive advantage in the global economy.

AI presents a similar inflection point, creating opportunities for India's next generation of technology leaders to build for the world. But while AI opens new frontiers, it is also narrowing the entry ramp. For policymakers, the priority should be to incentivise entry-level hiring through apprenticeship-style schemes, tax credits or wage subsidies for firms hiring fresh graduates, while expanding the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) into white-collar sectors as part of a national "first job" guarantee.

Skilling policy must shift from degrees to task-level capability, moving beyond generic coding or AI literacy towards skills that complement AI (for example, problem framing, client management and domain expertise). Job creation must be accelerated in less AI-exposed, labour-intensive sectors such as healthcare, tourism, logistics and the green economy to absorb surplus educated labour. Finally, India needs a real-time labour market observatory that tracks hiring trends, wage movements and occupational demand. In addition to macroeconomic indicators such as the PLFS, high-frequency labour market intelligence is required. For businesses, the imperative is adaptation, not contraction. Firms should redesign entry-level roles by breaking jobs into AI-assist-

ed and human-critical components while retaining structured junior positions focused on judgement, coordination and client-facing tasks. This must be accompanied by institutionalising "AI + human" workflows, where employees are trained not just to use AI tools but also to supervise, validate and integrate them.

AI productivity gains must also be measured responsibly, avoiding their use purely as a cost-cutting lever and instead tracking whether adoption is strengthening or eroding organisational capabilities. Finally, deeper partnerships with academia are essential, including co-designing curricula, offering live projects and enabling early exposure to AI-integrated industry workflows.

AI is not eliminating work yet, but it is reshaping who gets access to it. The evidence from advanced economies offers India a narrow but valuable window. This disruption is not sudden; it is gradual, and it begins at the bottom of the ladder. By getting ahead of this curve through proactive policy, business adaptation and bold entrepreneurship, India can ensure AI augments its demographic dividend rather than renders it obsolete. The lesson from the IT revolution is clear: technological shifts reward early movers. This is the moment for the new-age Narayana Murthys to build the next generation of AI enterprises that serve the world while creating new career pathways for millions of jobseekers.

The writer is Executive Director, Pahle India Foundation. The article includes inputs from Kuntala Karkun, Senior Visiting Fellow, Pahle India Foundation

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Order Order

SC dismisses pleas of 360 Bengal madrassa teachers

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a batch of petitions filed by about 360 teaching and non-teaching staff of madrassas in West Bengal, challenging the denial of regularisation and payment under the State Government's grant-in-aid scheme.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and A G Masih delivered the judgment after examining the cases of 13 petitioners out of more than 350 such employees to see whether any case was made out for grant of relief. Pronouncing the verdict, the bench said, "We proceeded on the basis that if any one of these 13 petitioners persuaded us to hold in his or her favour, we would examine the remaining cases as well. Unfortunately, none of the 13 petitioners could impress us."

Dismissing all the petitions, the bench said, "Therefore, we have not only rejected the claims of all 13 petitioners whose cases were scrutinised, but have also rejected the claims of all the remaining petitioners. All the writ petitions are devoid of merit and are accordingly dismissed." About 360 teaching and non-teaching staff employed in different madrassas of West Bengal filed around 48 petitions before the top court.

The dispute relates to the West Bengal Madrasah Service Commission Act, 2008, which created a statutory commission to recommend appointments of teachers in recognised madrassas. In 2014, the Calcutta High Court struck down the Act, a decision upheld by its division bench in 2015. However, the Supreme Court stayed the verdict in March 2016.

(PTI)

SC junks PIL on viewing pornography at public places

Observing that it was a policy issue, the Supreme Court on Monday junked a PIL seeking directions to the Centre to formulate a framework to prohibit the viewing of pornography at public places.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohna dismissed the plea and asked the petitioner to approach the Government authorities with a representation.

"Undoubtedly, the issue raised is of paramount importance. However, the subject matter does not involve a question of law requiring examination by this court. It concerns policy issues which need technological advancement and expert consideration. Such issues fall within the domain of experts, especially the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology," the plea said.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by social worker B L Jain, represented by advocate Varun Thakur, seeking directions to formulate a national policy and draft an action plan to curb the viewing of pornography, especially by those not attained the age of majority, and to prohibit the viewing of pornographic material of any form at public places.

"The internet pornography statistics show shocking data, wherein every second, 5,000 porn sites are watched. More than 2 crore porn videos/porn clippings are being launched through the internet..." Under Section 69 A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, the respondents have the power to issue directions for blocking public access of any information through any computer resource," the plea said.

It contended that widespread availability of the internet has made pornographic content easily accessible, leading to excessive consumption and addiction.

Increasing consumption of such content has contributed to the commission of sexual offences, it claimed.

(PTI)

Patna court grants anticipatory bail to Khan Sir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Patna

A court in Bihar's Patna on Monday granted anticipatory bail to educator Faisal Khan, popularly known as Khan Sir, in connection with the coaching institute firing case. Three staff members of the coaching institute also got anticipatory bail, Khan Sir's lawyer said.

The case relates to a firing incident that occurred in early June after a group of 15-20 people allegedly vandalised Khan Global Studies Institute in the State Capital on June 2 night and hurled stones at its premises.

His two security guards have been accused of firing in the air during the incident. Khan was named in an FIR related to the firing incident. "Six people have been granted bail. The judge first



announced Khan Sir's anticipatory bail, followed by that of his three staff members," lawyer Arvind Kumar Mouar told reporters.

The Patna Civil Court also granted bail to two security guards, who were arrested in connection with the case, he said. "We presented our arguments, and the Public Prosecutor (PP) opposed them. However, the police had already recorded the findings in the case diary



Airfares: SC asks Centre to place rules before it

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to place before it within two weeks the rules framed under the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, which is aimed at modernising India's aviation sector. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said the rules be placed before it in a sealed cover, irrespective of whether they have been placed before Parliament.

The apex court passed the order while hearing a plea filed by social activist S Laxminarayanan, who has sought a robust and independent regulator that ensures transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector, and regulatory guidelines to control the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfare and ancillary charges imposed by private airlines in India.

The counsel appearing for the Centre informed the bench that the draft rules are ready and they are in the process of translation. He said the rules have to be

placed before Parliament. "We grant two weeks' time to the respondents to place before this court in a sealed cover the rules which have been framed, irrespective of the fact whether they are placed before the Houses of Parliament," the bench said.

Senior advocate Ravindra Srivastava, appearing for Laxminarayanan, said till the time the new rules come into effect, the old rules are operating.

Flagging the "exorbitant airfares" being charged, Srivastava said, "The solution is that this court must consider having a robust and effective regulatory mechanism which is independent,".

The bench posted the matter for further hearing on August 3.

While hearing the plea on May 15, the apex court said there should be some rationalisation of airfares and asked the Centre to provide relief to flyers.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was then appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the new enactment of 2024 had come into effect in January



2025 and the corresponding rules were in the process of being prepared.

On November 17 last year, the top court sought responses from the Centre and others on Laxminarayanan's plea seeking a robust and independent regulator that ensures transparency and passenger protection across the civil aviation sector.

On February 23, the Centre told the apex court that the Ministry of Civil Aviation was actively considering the issues raised in the plea.

While hearing the matter in January, the top court

said it would interfere with the "unpredictable fluctuations" in airfares and flagged the exorbitant rise during festivals. The top court had termed the exorbitant rise in airfares by the airlines "exploitation", and asked the Centre and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to file their replies on the plea.

The plea claimed that all private airlines have, without any credible justification, reduced the free check-in baggage allowance for economy class passengers from 25 kg to 15 kg, "thereby

converting what was earlier part of the ticketed service into a new revenue stream".

It said the "new policy of permitting only a single piece for check-in and the absence of any rebate, compensation or benefit to passengers who do not avail themselves of check-in baggage demonstrates the arbitrary and discriminatory nature of the measure".

The plea claimed that currently, no authority has the power to review or cap airfares or ancillary fees, allowing the airlines to exploit consumers through hidden

charges and unpredictable pricing. It also said the "unregulated, opaque and exploitative conduct of airlines manifesting in arbitrary fare hikes, unilateral reduction of services, absence of on-ground grievance redressal and unjustified dynamic pricing algorithms directly infringes upon citizens' fundamental rights to equality, freedom of movement and life with dignity".

The plea said the absence of regulatory safeguards results in arbitrary fare hikes, especially during festivals or weather disruptions, which disproportionately harm the poor and last-minute travellers.

It added that inaction by the state in regulating fare algorithms, cancellation policies, service continuity and grievance mechanisms constitutes a dereliction of its constitutional duty and calls for urgent judicial intervention. The plea also said that there is no rule to stop airlines from increasing prices based on demand and allowing them such freedom under essential services is unjustifiable.

Police's illegal entry into woman's bedroom amounts to violation of privacy: Bombay HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai



The police's forced entry into a woman's bedroom and seizure of her mobile phone without following legal procedures was an invasion of her privacy and dignity, the Bombay High Court observed, ordering the Maharashtra Government to pay compensation to a Nagpur resident.

The Nagpur bench, comprising Justices Urmila Joshi Phalke and Nivedita Mehta, stated that the right to privacy is an integral and inseparable facet of the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, which cannot be infringed.

A copy of the order passed last week was made available on Monday. The bench directed the state to pay '10,000 to the 26-year-old petitioner woman within two months, clarifying that the Government could recover the penalty amount directly

from the errant police officer responsible.

"Entry into the residential premises of a citizen, more particularly into the bedroom occupied by a woman, without adherence to the statutory safeguards and forcible seizure of her mobile phone constitutes a serious invasion of privacy and dignity," the court said.

Dismissing the police's contention that the search was undertaken as part of a probe into an offence, the court said this cannot justify a departure from the mandatory safeguards enacted by the

legislature. The investigating agency is expected to act strictly within the bounds of law, and the object of investigation cannot legitimise an otherwise illegal search or seizure, it said.

The bench concluded that the search conducted by the concerned police official and the seizure of the petitioner's mobile phone were illegal and violated her fundamental rights. Hence, she was entitled to compensation.

It further held that although monetary compensation cannot fully redress the invasion of privacy and dignity suffered by the woman, it would provide some measure of solace for the violation of her constitutional rights and serve as a reminder that investigative powers must be exercised strictly in accordance with law and not arbitrarily.

The petitioner, a resident of Saoner in Nagpur, claimed that the police illegally entered her residence, her

bedroom, under the garb of investigating a case and seized her mobile phone without following the statutory procedure laid down by law. The police had claimed that they had visited the petitioner's house to question her in connection with a car accident.

The woman, in her plea, alleged that the police had harassed her and her husband by visiting their residence repeatedly for questioning without issuance of notice and illegally seized and retained her mobile phone for two days without following the procedure prescribed under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS).

The woman claimed that neither she nor her husband has been named as an accused in the case. The court, in its order, noted that in the present case, there has been a clear non-compliance with the statutory requirements of law.

SC stays Madras HC order on cow slaughter



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a Madras High Court order which directed the Tamil Nadu Government to ensure that no cow or calf is slaughtered on the eve of Bakrid or on any other day.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta passed the order while hearing a plea filed by the state Government challenging a May 27 order of the high court. The apex court agreed to hear the matter and issued notice to the respondents.

The Tamil Nadu Government challenged the May 27 order of the high

court, which directed the state authorities to ensure that no cow or calf is slaughtered across the state either on the eve of Bakrid or on any other day.

"We allow this writ petition with a direction to the state of Tamil Nadu to ensure that no cow or calf is slaughtered on the eve of Bakrid or on any other day," the high court had said.

In its petition, the state Government termed the order contrary to the Tamil Nadu Animal Preservation Act, 1958. The Act permits the slaughter of cows aged over 10 years that are unfit for work and breeding, on the basis of a certificate issued by a competent authority.

SC to hear pleas against MP High Court verdict on Bhojshala complex

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to list for hearing a batch of appeals challenging a Madhya Pradesh High Court order, which said the disputed Bhojshala complex in Dhar district was a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohna was urged by senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi and advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for Muslim appellants, that the pleas needed to be heard on an urgent basis.

The CJI asked the counsel for the appellants to remove defects from the petitions and assured them that they will be listed for hearing

before a bench soon. On May 15, the Madhya Pradesh High Court ruled that the disputed Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar district is a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati. It simultaneously quashed a decades-old ASI order that had allowed the Muslim community to offer Friday prayers at the site.

The high court had also said that the Centre and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) can decide on the Bhojshala complex's administration and management.

The Hindu community considers Bhojshala a temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati, while the Muslim side calls the 11th-century monument the Kamal Maula Mosque. The disputed complex is protected by the ASI. The Muslim side has filed



appeals against the high court verdict.

Hindu parties have filed caveats in the Supreme Court, saying no orders be passed without hearing it on any appeal against the high court order in the Bhojshala complex dispute case. The high court's division bench of Justices Vijay Kumar Shukla and Alok Awasthi, in its judge-

ment, had said the religious character of the 11th-century monument was based on scientific evidence. The high court clarified that the Muslim side may approach the MP Government for separate land in the district to construct a mosque.

"The religious character of disputed area of the Bhojshala Complex and

Kamal Maula Mosque is held to be a Bhojshala with a temple of goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati)," the bench said in its order and also ordered that the area of Bhojshala "is held to be a protected monument" under 1958 Act with effect from March 3, 1904. Directing that the ASI shall have full supervisory control over the preservation, conservation and regulation of religious access, the court asked the Centre and the ASI to take a decision for the purpose of administration and management of the affairs of the Bhojshala temple and Sanskrit learning.

The high court had said the central Government "may consider" representations of some of the petitioners to bring back the 'Pratima' (idol) of Goddess Saraswati from the

London Museum and re-establish the same within the complex. This order nullified the April 2003 ASI order that permitted Hindus to worship on Tuesdays and Muslims to offer *namaz* on Fridays.

The high court's order had a mention about the background and legal arguments surrounding the Ayodhya dispute as many petitioners referred to the Supreme Court judgement. The court also asked the Madhya Pradesh Government to consider a plea from the petitioners for allocation of a land in Dhar district for construction of a mosque.

The court said from the archaeological and historical facts it is "crystal clear that the building in question is a Hindu temple and place of learning of Sanskrit language".

3 chargesheets filed in 7 ADAG FIRs: CBI tells SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The CBI on Monday told the Supreme Court that it has filed three chargesheets in as many cases out of the total seven FIRs concerning alleged large-scale banking fraud involving Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group and its firms.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohna was told by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for CBI, that the investigation in the other four cases was underway. The top court took note of the submission by Mehta and directed the CBI to file a status report on the progress in the investigation.

It also recorded that the Enforcement Directorate has also filed a prosecution



report, equivalent to a chargesheet, in related money laundering cases.

During the hearing, advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioner, former bureaucrat EAS Sarma, alleged that the kingpin Anil Ambani has not been arrested so far in the cases. He said though three chargesheets were filed

by June, the CBI has not filed any status report in the matter.

Bhushan submitted that though SEBI mentioned the "pivotal" role of Anil Ambani, there is nothing disclosed in the status report filed by CBI. He alleged that no action has been taken against Anil Ambani and only relatively lowly officers have been arrested.

"I am saying they should disclose to your lordships what they have found about his role. In a 2025 chargesheet, the CBI says he was kingpin. SEBI says he was kingpin," Bhushan said.

Solicitor General refuted Bhushan's submission and told the court that it is wrong to say that only lowly officers have been arrested.

Even managing directors and executives have been arrested, he said. The top

court said it would not be fair to direct anything and asked Bhushan to go through the chargesheet about the role attributed to Anil Ambani.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Anil Ambani, submitted that such a comment itself will cause prejudice to his party. "Once a chargesheet is filed, cognisance is yet to be taken. This is not the procedure this court has ever followed," Sibal said.

The top court said it was conscious that nothing should come from the bench which can be prejudicial to the parties.

Mehta, appearing for agencies, had earlier told the court that there are a total of nine FIRs, out of which seven are under investigation. "In the seven cases, the total loss caused is '27,337 crore," he had said.

PIOTECH

Truecaller row: TRAI seeks power under IT Act to act

Telecom regulator TRAI has sought to be designated as an 'authorised agency' under the IT Act, a status that would allow it to act against call management apps, and the matter is now being examined by the IT Ministry, according to sources.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Friday had asserted that no app can block phone calls originating from 1600 number series that are meant for communications by regulated entities and the Government to citizens.

TRAI's assertions had come amid an ongoing tussle with caller identification app Truecaller over the labelling and identification of calls from the dedicated number series.

On Monday, officials in MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) said that the issue of regulatory jurisdiction is a technical one.

"Under the IT Act, there are rules as to some agencies that are authorised to take action, like the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), etc., so that is done by the appropriate Government. So the question is who is the appropriate Government to authorise TRAI... Department of Telecom (DoT) believes it is MeitY and MeitY says it will examine and take a call," the official said, adding that the IT Ministry is not looking at the Truecaller issue per se. (PTI)

Flipkart says West Bengal to remain key investment hub



Flipkart on Monday said it would deepen its long-term investments in West Bengal, expanding its supply chain infrastructure, seller ecosystem and skills initiatives in the State, which houses the company's largest fulfilment centre in India.

The Walmart-owned e-commerce company said West Bengal is home to its largest fulfilment and logistics hub, located at Haringhata, and remains central to its long-term growth strategy.

The Haringhata campus has a storage capacity of 5 million cubic feet across six mezzanine levels and features automated storage and retrieval systems, robotic packaging arms, cross-belt sorters and a nine-kilometre conveyor network.

Flipkart said the facility is the first e-commerce fulfilment centre of its scale in India to receive the Indian Green Building Council's Platinum certification.

Across West Bengal, the company operates more than 300 fulfilment centres, mother hubs and last-mile delivery facilities, supporting more than 120,000 direct and indirect jobs across operations, technology, delivery and support functions.

The company said it also creates thousands of seasonal jobs during its annual Big Billion Days sale.

Flipkart has expanded its quick commerce business, Flipkart Minutes, in the state with 90 micro fulfilment centres, creating close to 10,000 employment opportunities. The company added that its sourcing network includes more than 500 farmers from West Bengal supplying fresh fruits and vegetables.

"West Bengal has long been one of India's great centres of enterprise, innovation and craftsmanship. Today, it is also emerging as a key hub for digital commerce. At Flipkart, we are proud to be a long-term partner in the State's growth journey. Our investments in infrastructure, technology and supply chains are creating jobs, empowering MSMEs, supporting farmers and enabling thousands of entrepreneurs to access markets across India. As home to our largest fulfilment centre in the country, West Bengal will continue to play a pivotal role in Flipkart's growth, and we remain committed to investing in the State's people, businesses and long-term potential," said Kalyan Krishnamurthy, Chief Executive Officer, Flipkart Group. (PTI)

Rajnath Singh: AI cannot replace human compassion

Artificial Intelligence is bringing rapid progress in medical sciences, but it cannot replace human compassion, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday, urging budding doctors to work with empathy towards patients and their families.

Addressing the 22nd convocation ceremony of King George's Medical University in his Lok Sabha constituency, Lucknow, the minister said new technologies such as artificial intelligence, synthetic biology, gene editing and precision medicine are transforming both the direction and the landscape of healthcare. Therefore, doctors must always continue the process of learning, he said. "Medical science is evolving rapidly today... Today is the era of Artificial Intelligence. No field remains untouched by it, including your own. "Yet, Artificial Intelligence cannot assure a mother that her child will recover (from illness). It cannot hold the hand of an elderly person, and say, 'Do not worry; we will set everything right'."

"Technology can be intelligent, but it cannot be compassionate. It can read medical charts, but it cannot, under any circumstances, understand the pain in a patient's mind," Rajnath Singh said. "Hence, you have to work with empathy and compassion."

The minister said that saving a life is the "highest duty. Fulfilling this duty does not always require vast resources or institutional support; all that is needed is sensitivity and firm resolve. "If one holds the feeling that saving a life is the supreme duty, then circumstances never become an obstacle," the minister said. (PTI)



The username wars: India's small fight over a very big question

The Government is asking why citizens should be allowed to talk without sharing phone numbers. In a democracy, that question runs the other way



NISHANT SAHDEV

Sometime on July 2, a letter left the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology carrying one of the strangest regulatory questions ever put to a technology company. Addressed to Telegram and Signal, it asked, in essence: why should Indians be allowed to talk to each other without exchanging phone numbers?

Strip away the legal language and that is the whole dispute. Not encryption. Not national security. A handle - a string of characters beginning with @ - that lets a woman message a stranger on a marketplace without handing over the number that rings in her pocket at midnight.

The sequence tells its own story. On July 1, WhatsApp was ordered to pause the rollout of its optional username feature until the Government was "satisfied" with its safeguards. Within a day, notices reached Telegram and Signal demanding they justify features they have offered for years - Telegram since 2014, Signal since 2024. Zoho's homegrown app Arattai did not wait to argue; it announced it would simply switch its usernames off. In forty-eight hours, a design choice made independently by four companies on four continents became a matter requiring explanation in New Delhi. None of the notices has been made public. Citizens are learning what their Government demands of their communication tools through press leaks.

To see what is actually at stake, rewind nine days. On June 23, the Government notified the authorisation rules under the Telecommunications Act, 2023—the statute that finally retires the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885 and the Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1933. The word "licence" vanishes from Indian telecom law after 141 years; "authorisation" replaces it, applications now flow through a digital portal, and a colonial framework written for a world in which the state owned the copper wire is gone. This is genuine, overdue modernisation, and the Government deserves credit for it.

But the new law carries a definition with enormous gravitational pull. It describes telecommunication in technology-neutral terms — the transmission of messages by wire, radio, optical or other electro-magnetic systems.

Lawyers have warned that this language is broad enough to pull internet messaging apps into the telecom net whenever the Government chooses to notify them. Read against that backdrop, the username notices



are not a stray consumer-protection exercise. They are a sound-line, dropped to measure how far the new perimeter can reach. Here, a little engineering honesty would rescue the debate, because the public conversation has collapsed two very different things into one: an identifier and an identity.

A username is not a cloak of invisibility. It is a pointer - a human-readable label that a server translates into an account, exactly as the internet's address book translates "thepioneer.com" into a string of numbers. On an end-to-end encrypted platform, the message itself is unreadable to everyone except sender and recipient, whether it was addressed to a phone number or a handle. Banning usernames decrypts nothing. Permitting them encrypts nothing. The mathematics is serenely indifferent to what you call yourself.

What a username does disturb is an arrangement the Indian state has quietly enjoyed for two decades. Every SIM card in this country is issued against verified identity documents. When your messaging account is welded to your mobile number, the state inherits — free of charge, without passing a single law — a chain of custody linking every conversation to a KYC-verified human being. Usernames loosen that weld. That, not fraud, is the deeper anxiety, and we should have the honesty to debate it as what it is: a question about how much anonymity a free society owes its citizens, not a squabble over an app setting.

The fraud concern is real, and it deserves respect rather than dismissal. Digital arrest scams, phishing and impersonation have



exploded. A Ministry of Home Affairs cyber-crime report, submitted to the Delhi High Court, reportedly logged over 6.8 lakh Telegram-linked complaints with losses exceeding ₹71,000 crore. Telegram - banned for a week in June ahead of the NEET-UG re-examination over paper-leak fears - has earned much of its scrutiny.

But a remedy must connect to the disease, and here the engineering refuses to cooperate with the politics. The overwhelming majority of scam calls and messages in India arrive today through phone numbers - spoofed, virtual, international, or procured on forged documents. Two decades of KYC-verified SIMs have not stopped them. If verified numbers cannot stop number-based fraud, it is magical thinking to believe unverified fraud will stop because usernames were banned. Criminals route around identifiers; that is practically their job description. Meanwhile, the people usernames genuinely protect are exactly those the state claims to champion: women dodging stalkers, journalists shielding sources, doctors and teachers who must be reachable without surrendering a personal number to a thousand strangers. Signal designed its usernames to be invisible by default for precisely this reason — the feature exists to shrink the personal data a conversation exposes, not enlarge it.

There is also a rule-of-law problem that should worry us even if the technology bores us. Digital rights groups, including SFLC.in, have pointed out that neither the Information Technology Act nor its rules create any prior-approval regime under which platforms must seek permission

before shipping a feature — and have demanded the ministry publish the notices and cite their legal basis. Analysts see the real lever: Section 79 of the IT Act, the safe-harbour provision meant to shield intermediaries, being quietly brandished as a threat. When software features require a nod from a ministry, delivered through unpublished letters, we have not regulated technology. We have built a permission raj for code.

India, of all nations, should recognise the superior alternative, because India invented it. We did not fight payment fraud by banning UPI handles - which are, let us be honest, usernames for money. We engineered trust into the rails: the beneficiary's verified name appears before you pay, limits cap the damage, grievance systems run in public view. UPI now moves billions of transactions a month precisely because identity assurance was built into the architecture rather than bolted on through prohibition. The same template fits messaging: enforce rapid, due-process responses to law-enforcement requests; mandate proactive impersonation detection; hold grievance officers personally accountable; require public transparency reports. Regulate outcomes. Leave the architecture alone.

The new telecom rules themselves mark the boundary the Government is now blurring. They require carriers to store network logs in India and route satellite traffic through Indian gateways — defensible sovereignty measures aimed at companies occupying spectrum, a genuinely scarce public resource. But an app is not a carrier, any more than a conversation is a highway because it happened in a moving car. The 1885 Telegraph Act conflated the message with the wire because, in 1885, the state owned both. The 2023 Act was written to end that confusion. It would be a bitter irony if its first real-world test smuggled the Victorian instinct back in digital clothing.

Which brings us back to the question in that July 2 letter — why should you be allowed to offer usernames? and to the quiet scandal inside it. The burden of proof is upside down. In a constitutional democracy, citizens do not petition the state for permission to speak without disclosing a phone number; the state must justify why they cannot. India is building the most ambitious digital public infrastructure on earth, and its credibility rests on one proposition: that we govern technology through law, in the open - not through the leverage of letters no one is allowed to read. On that proposition, this very small fight over a very small feature has become a very large test.

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

We taught machines our paperwork - Now they are judging us

India built the World's biggest trust machine. Can It survive AI?



PRAVIN KAUSHAL

Somewhere today, a loan is approved, a university seat allotted, a bail application weighed. Increasingly, no human makes the final call. A model does. This is already how power moves through modern institutions, and the change is bigger than automation.

Artificial intelligence is usually discussed as a tool, a faster calculator, a smarter search engine. But a tool does only what it is told. A calculator cannot invent a new branch of mathematics. Today's AI systems learn things their creators never taught them and change in ways their designers did not predict. A chess engine did not simply get better at chess, it invented openings that centuries of grandmasters never conceived. That is not automation. That is agency.

The usual objection is that such agency stays confined to artificial arenas built for the purpose, a chessboard, a simulation. Drop the world's best chess engine into a forest and it cannot start a fire. But the same is true of us. A person left alone on a mountain-side with no tools would not last a week. Our intelligence also functions only inside a specific environment built by human cooperation itself. The question is not whether AI has a real environment to operate in, but whether we already built one for it.

We did. It is called bureaucracy.

The actual machinery of human power

Humans did not conquer the planet by being individually stronger or smarter than other animals. A person alone loses to a



lion. What no other species can do is cooperate in the millions with total strangers. Humans cooperate with people they will never meet, through a shared system of law and institutions that manufacture something invisible but essential: trust.

That is what bureaucracy actually is. A banker does not build furniture. She builds a bridge of trust between a saver who has never met an entrepreneur and an entrepreneur who has never met the saver, so one's money can fund the other's ambition. A judge, a regulator, a bishop, an accountant, each spends the day manufacturing trust between strangers using nothing but words: forms, statutes, ledgers, scriptures, judgments. Money itself is a trust technology, a printed note that lets a stranger hand you bread on the strength of a shared fiction.

This system is powerful



precisely because it does not require its operators to be generally capable. A lawyer who cannot start a fire can, through paperwork alone, reshape a city, because the bureaucratic environment that gives her words their power has already been imposed on the world. That is exactly the environment an AI thrives in.

Why AI is a native, not a guest

Human domination relies on large scale cooperation among strangers, sustained by bureaucratic systems such as laws, finance, and religion, designed to build trust. No human lawyer can hold every statute in their head. An AI

can hold an entire legal code and never mis-remember a clause. No accountant can track every transaction across a global bank. An AI can. A human bureaucrat is, at best, a custodian of a fraction of the rulebook. An AI can be native to the whole rulebook, because bureaucracy, stripped to its essentials, is nothing but words arranged to create trust and consequence.

This is why AI is uniquely placed to take over decisions that once required a human in the room: whether to grant a bank loan, admit a student, decide how long a prisoner should serve, or fire a missile at a target. Each was once human judgment wrapped in bureaucratic process. Increasingly, it is bureaucratic process with the human judgment quietly removed.

India is the loudest test case

Nowhere is this transition further along than in India, though it rarely gets described that way.

Over the past decade, India built the largest biometric identity and digital payments architecture on Earth, authenticating identity and clearing welfare payments for over a billion people with a thinner layer of human discretion than almost any comparable system anywhere. Credit scoring for small loans increasingly runs on models rather than branch managers. Courts, facing tens of millions of pending cases, are exploring AI assisted case triage. This was not built as an AI project, it was built for efficiency, but a machine legible bureaucracy is exactly the terrain an AI decision maker enters with the least friction. India built the habitat first, and AI is simply the most capable resident to move in.

That is a source of both pride and unease. A machine readable state can be more efficient and less corruptible. But a decision produced by a model is hard to argue with. You cannot cross examine an algorithm's reasoning the way you can cross examine an official's.

The question we have not answered

Two questions need answers before this transition goes further, not after a crisis forces them. Does every citizen have an enforceable right to know, in plain language, why an automated system decided against them? Does every citizen retain a genuine path to have that decision reviewed by a human being, not a token appeal, but a real one? A loan, a degree, a sentence, once decided by someone who could explain themselves, is quietly becoming a decision made by something that cannot be asked for anything, unless we insist, now, that it must be.

(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)

FROM THE WORLD

NIGERIA

Eight dead in Benue shooting

Gunmen opened fire at people after a funeral in north-central Nigeria, killing eight, police said on Monday.

The attack occurred in the early hours of Sunday in the Otukpo-Nobi community of Benue state. Five others were wounded, state police spokesperson Udemé Edet said.

It wasn't clear what triggered the attack. Herders and farmers have often clashed over resources in Benue, a key food-producing state in Nigeria. Last year, 150 people were killed in the Yelwata community.

Edet said thatched houses and a motorcycle were also set ablaze, adding that more officers have been deployed in the area.

Amnesty International Nigeria said at least 10 people were killed. Police in Nigeria often report more conservative casualty figures. (AP)

PAKISTAN

Hindu doctor killed in Karachi

A 28-year-old Hindu doctor was on Monday killed during a robbery in Pakistan's Sindh province, police said. The incident took place in Karachi's posh Clifton area. Akash Chand was killed when firing took place outside a private bank between the robbers and a bank security guard, senior police official SSP Mehroz Ali said. Chand, along with his father and cousin, had withdrawn 5 million rupees from another bank and were bringing two packets of 2.5 million each to deposit in the other bank, Ali said.

"As soon as their car stopped outside the bank, another car pulled up behind them and attempted to rob them of the money but the bank security guard standing at the door opened fire and the robbers also retaliated, and Chand was killed," Ali said.

The robbers got away with one packet of 2.5 million rupees. (PTI)

UK bans Revolutionary Guard over attacks on Jewish sites

ASSOCIATED PRESS n London

A series of arson and vandalism attacks on Jewish sites in Britain were the work of a proxy group backed by Iran, the UK Government said on Monday.

The Government said it is banning the Islamic Movement of the Companions of the Right, or IMCR, also known as Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamia.

It also banned Iran's powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. In a statement, Security Minister Angela Eagle said that the IMCR has claimed seven attacks in the UK.

The group had said online that it was responsible for a string of arson attacks on Jewish sites in London in recent months, including fires at synagogues and Jewish charity ambulances, as well as a Persian-language media organisation critical of Iran's Government. No one was injured in the blazes.

"Sitting behind IMCR were members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps



Qods Force, who almost certainly directed IMCR attacks across Europe," she said. Quds, or Jerusalem, Force is the Guard's expeditionary unit. The group sprang up online earlier this year and has also claimed responsibility for synagogue attacks in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Law enforcement officials and intelligence experts say Iran-backed proxy groups are

behind a growing number of attacks in Europe, most targeting the Jewish community and Persian-language media critical of Iran's Islamic Government.

They typically work by recruiting members of criminal groups to carry out sabotage and other attacks.

Earlier this month, two Romanian men were given prison sentences over the

stabbing of a journalist from a Persian-language television station, an attack the judge said was carried out on behalf of the Iranian State. There was no immediate comment from Iran.

The European Union in January listed the Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organisation over Tehran's bloody crackdown on protests.

27 killed, 25 critical in massive fire at Bangkok music Bar

ASSOCIATED PRESS n Bangkok

A huge fire tore through a music bar in Bangkok overnight, killing at least 27 people and leaving 25 hospitalised in critical condition in the Thai capital's most deadly blaze in 17 years.

Photos from the Rong Beer Na Ladprao bar in a northern part of the Thai capital showed people fleeing as flames shot out the single-story building and thick black smoke billowed into the sky. Shoes lost and scattered as their owners sought to flee could be seen in pictures from the aftermath of the tragedy.

Bangkok city officials said the fire broke out shortly before midnight Sunday, and it was about half an hour until firefighters brought it under control.

By daylight Monday morning, the site had been cordoned off as dozens of Thai forensic officers combed through the burned remains for clues about what caused the fire.

The building's street-



facing windows had been blown out and debris littered the sidewalk, including charred television sets, speakers and an electric guitar. From outside, the scale of the devastation was visible through the shattered windows, where burned-out tables, some still holding empty beer bottles, stood inside.

Thai national police chief Kittharath Punnetch said most of the dead were found trapped in windowless bathrooms near one of the rear

exits of the bar, where they may have sheltered to escape the flames in the hall.

He said the exit had not been used, and people may have been obstructed from reaching it by a table set up in the hall to sell candy, or because it was too dark to find it. Access to another exit near the kitchen might also have been narrowed by shelving units and lockers, said Kittharath, who visited the scene Monday morning.

EU targets Russian spies over long-running cyber campaign

ASSOCIATED PRESS n Brussels

The European Union (EU) on Monday imposed sanctions on Russian military intelligence officers, hackers and private companies, denouncing what it called a yearslong cyber espionage campaign to undermine the bloc.

The move targeted nine people and four entities accused of links to an online spying network that the EU said has targeted Governments and carried out sabotage operations against critical infrastructure like heating and power plants since 2010.

The European Council said in a statement that those targeted "contribute to Russia's efforts to destabilise the EU, its member states and international partners." The espionage and attacks have taken place in at least nine countries.

The names of the individuals and entities - which usually companies, Government agencies, banks or other organisations - were not listed on the statement. It said France,



Germany, Poland, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovakia, Romania and Finland, "among others" have been targeted.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot said that France intends to summon the Russian ambassador in the coming days.

He told French BFM television that the aim of the cyber activities is "either to capture information, or sabotage the operation, for example, of railway infrastructures as it was the case in Poland." The EU focused its measures on the 16th Centre

of Russia's Federal Security Service, or FSB. It said the FSB has been "controlling a variety of cyber threat groups," and said it "has conducted a wide range of malicious cyber activities with growing severity."

Some countries have accused Russia of using cyberattacks and propaganda to interfere with elections. In April, Sweden said Wednesday that a pro-Russian group with links to Russia's security and intelligence services was behind a cyberattack on a heating plant last year.

NASA astronaut Anil Menon set for 8-month mission to space station

SAGAR KULKARNI n Washington

Anil Menon, a NASA astronaut of Indian descent, is set to embark on an eight-month mission to the International Space Station on Tuesday from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan along with two Russian cosmonauts. The Roscosmos Soyuz MS-29 spacecraft is scheduled for lift-off from the Baikonur spaceport at 8.17 pm. (IST) on Tuesday and is expected to dock at the orbital laboratory after a little over three hours.

Besides Menon, Russian cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina will be part of the 75th expedition to the ISS.

The Soyuz spacecraft will dock at the ISS at 11.56 pm. IST on Tuesday, and the astronauts will be onboard the ISS at around 1.25 am IST early Wednesday.

Once aboard, the trio will join NASA astronauts Jessica Meir, Jack Hathaway, and Chris Williams, European Space Agency astronaut Sophie Adenot, and Roscosmos cosmonauts Sergey Kud-Sverchkov, Sergei Mikaev, and Andrey Fedyaev. Born in Minneapolis to Ukrainian and Indian immigrants, Menon is an emergency medicine physician and a US Space Force colonel.

During his stint with the US Air Force, he served on the frontlines in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom and also worked for the Himalayan Rescue Association, caring for climbers on Mount Everest. Menon, 49, has also spent a year in India as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar to study and support Polio vaccination initiatives. He is scheduled to travel to space aboard the Roscosmos Soyuz MS-29 space-



craft along with cosmonauts Pyotr Dubrov and Anna Kikina. Menon began his career at NASA as a flight surgeon in 2014 and worked with astronauts living and working on the International Space Station.

He joined SpaceX in 2018, where he started the company's medical program, helped prepare for its first human space flights and worked closely in the development of Starship, the super heavy rocket and spacecraft for undertaking missions to the moon, Mars and beyond.

He was selected as a NASA astronaut in December 2021 and joined the two-year training programme next month.

Menon's wife Anna Wilhelm is also an astronaut and travelled to space in September 2024 as part of Polaris Dawn, a private crewed spaceflight operated by SpaceX. The spaceflight lasted for nearly five days. While on board the ISS, Menon will conduct a series of experiments to study the physiological toll of long-duration spaceflight and examine how microgravity affects blood flow, vein structure, and blood composition in astronauts. (PTI)

Ex-minister murder probe taken over by UK Police



ADITI KHANNA n London

Britain's counter-terrorism police on Monday took charge of an ongoing investigation into the murder of a former Tory minister and outspoken far-right politician who was found dead in her home in south-west England.

Ann Widdecombe, 78, was attacked in the small village of Haytor Vale at Dartmoor in Devon last week. Prime Minister Keir Starmer led condemnations over the "really shocking news" that shook the political establishment across party lines.

A 28-year-old white British man from Rotherham, South Yorkshire, arrested on suspicion of murder on Saturday, has now been re-arrested on terrorism-related charges, Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) said.

UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood took to social media to reveal that "new information and evidence" had emerged in the case, which led the CTPSE to take charge of the investigation. "The police are pursuing multiple lines of enquiry to establish the motivation for this attack," said Mahmood, who will make a statement in Parliament with further details.

CTPSE said, "new information ?and evidence have come to light during what has been a dynamic and complex investigation" and as a result, it is now leading the investigation.

"The man in custody has since been re-arrested on suspicion of commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism," said the CTPSE. (PTI)

Saudi airstrikes hit Sanaa airport, say Houthis

ASSOCIATED PRESS n Cairo

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen said Saudi airstrikes hit Sanaa International Airport on Monday, while the internationally recognised Government in Yemen said they were meant to prevent an Iranian plane from landing.

For years, a Saudi-led coalition based in Yemen's south, including the internationally recognised Government, has been fighting the Houthis in the north.

Saudi Arabia did not immediately acknowledge carrying out airstrikes in Yemen, and its officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Gen Taher al-Aqili, the Government's defence min-



ister, said on X that the airport's runway was struck to stop the plane carrying the Houthi delegation after attending the funeral of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

In a video statement released shortly before the strikes, Al-Aqili warned against infiltrating Yemeni airspace with Iranian air-

craft. "At this moment, we say that our patience has run out. Accordingly, we will respond appropriately to this treacherous and brutal act, and we will confront and deal with the hostile aircraft violating Yemeni airspace and sovereignty by all available means," he said. The Houthis said the plane changed its route and

landed at Hodeida Airport. There were no immediate reports of damage to the airport in Sanaa.

A Houthi official, Brig Gen Yahya Saree, said on Telegram that Saudi Arabia launched the airstrikes in what he called an "end to the de-escalation phase." He warned that "this aggression will not go unanswered or unpunished."

The Yemeni defence ministry issued orders to evacuate the airport and surrounding areas. Rashad al-Alimi, who leads Yemen's ruling Presidential Leadership Council, said Iran had requested to operate a flight by Iranian airline Mahan Air from Tehran to Sanaa to return the Houthi delegation.



Three boys playing in the shallow waters of the Strait of Hormuz, as a plume of smoke rises from an explosion in the background, off Bandar Abbas, Iran on Monday

Pakistan deports over 2.6 million Afghan nationals in 3 years amid crackdown

M ZULQERNAIN n Lahore

Pakistan has deported more than 2.6 million Afghan nationals, including women and children, in the last three years, an official said on Monday. These deportations were part of a larger crackdown on undocumented Afghan nationals and those overstaying in the country without a valid visa.

The Punjab Government routinely conducts surveys to identify illegal or undocumented immigrants. The spokesperson for the Punjab home department's foreign national security said in a statement that the provincial Government alone detained



1,38,342 Afghans in its holding centres, completed their documents and deported them.

He added that around 2.6 million Afghan nationals staying illegally in Pakistan have been sent back in the last three years. The depor-

tations are usually carried out through the Torkham checkpoint in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The crackdown has led to anxiety in the Afghan community, with some residents claiming they have

lived in Pakistan for generations. Local Pashtuns have also reported being subjected to undue harassment and identity checks during police raids.

The UN Human Rights Commission has also expressed concerns about the scale and nature of these deportations. The authorities intensified the crackdown against illegal Afghan immigrants after an armed conflict between the two countries in April. Both countries witnessed intermittent hostilities along the frontier, which intensified after reported Afghan action in response to Pakistani airstrikes targeting militant positions. (PTI)

3 POLICEMEN KILLED IN MILITANT ATTACKS IN PAKISTAN'S KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Peshawar: Three police personnel were killed and as many others injured in separate militant attacks in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said. Two policemen, including an assistant sub-inspector, were killed and three others seriously injured when an improvised explosive device hit a police armoured vehicle near Mashah Jan Bungalow on the Tank-Waziristan Main Road. The injured personnel were shifted to a nearby hospital, while security forces cordoned off the area and

launched a search operation to trace those responsible for the attack, police said. In a separate incident in Nowshera district, unidentified assailants opened fire on a police constable on Kheskhi Road, killing them on the spot.

Governor Faisal condemned the attacks and sought reports from the relevant authorities. They paid tribute to the slain policemen, expressed condolences to their families, and directed authorities to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured personnel. (PTI)

Ebola centres strike over unpaid salaries in Congo

ASSOCIATED PRESS n Bunia

Dozens of people working at an Ebola treatment centre in northeast Congo went on strike on Monday over unpaid salaries and bonuses.

The striking staff at Rwampara General Hospital in Ituri province includes epidemiologists, case investigators, drivers and gravediggers who say they have not been paid by the Congolese authorities. The hospital was shuttered by protesting staff, who blocked the road leading to the medical facility.

Some of the centre's health workers and those working



on the ground began striking last week, accusing authorities of failing to pay their wages since the outbreak began in May.

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Oil prices jump as US and Iran carry out airstrikes

USD/KRW	KOSPI
1,509.80	7,484.92
▲ 0.30 (0.02%)	▲ 193.01 (2.65%)

Oil prices jumped and world shares were mixed on Monday after the US carried out airstrikes and Iran retaliated. In early European trading, Germany's DAX added 0.2 per cent to 25,105.55 and the CAC 40 in Paris edged 0.1 per cent higher, to 8,347.26. Britain's FTSE 100 also was up just 0.1 per cent, at 10,506.86.

US stock futures were mixed, with the contract for the S&P 500 down 0.3 per cent and that for the Dow nearly unchanged. The Nasdaq composite future lost 0.9 per cent. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, climbed as much as nearly 5 per cent early Monday before falling back. As of early morning in Europe, it was up 2.3 per cent at \$77.72 per barrel, while US benchmark crude added 2.1 per cent to \$72.92 per barrel. Prices for both types of crude oil recently had slipped back to around the levels they were at before the war with Iran began after the two sides set an interim agreement on ending the conflict and ships resumed transporting oil through the Strait of Hormuz. However, the United States launched several waves of strikes on Iran into Monday morning over an Iranian attack on a container ship in the strait that set it ablaze and left a crew member missing over the weekend. Iran retaliated by targeting countries across the Middle East. In Asian share trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost 1.9 per cent to 67,242.73, while in Seoul, the Kospi declined 9 per cent to 6,806.93. It's now at its lowest level since early May. (PTI)

Retail inflation inches up to 4.38% in May: Govt data

Retail inflation inched up to 4.38 per cent in June compared to 3.93 per cent in May, mainly due to higher prices of food items, according to government data released on Monday.

The food inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) was 5.32 per cent in June, higher than 4.78 per cent in May, according to the data.

The government has mandated the Reserve Bank of India to ensure that the headline inflation remains at 4 per cent, with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. (PTI)

INDIA'S EXPORTS RISE 15.5% IN JUNE, TRADE DEFICIT WIDENS TO \$30.43 BN

India's exports rose by 15.5 per cent to \$40.41 billion in June, even as the trade deficit widened to \$30.43 billion.

Imports in June went up by about 31 per cent to \$70.84 billion.

During April-June this fiscal, exports increased 15.92 per cent to \$129.32 billion, while imports rose 19.89 per cent to \$216.18 billion.

Gold imports in the first quarter of this fiscal year rose to \$11.01 billion from \$7.49 billion in April-June last year.

India's exports to West Asian countries rose 7.29 per cent to \$5 billion in June, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal said in a press briefing on trade data.

Agarwal attributed the increase in the country's inbound shipments to higher imports of crude oil, electronics, machinery, and precious metals.

The Pioneer

CHANDIGARH | TUESDAY | JULY 14, 2026

Build AI, cybersecurity to tackle rising threats: IT Secy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Government on Monday stressed the need to build domestic capabilities in artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, with IT Secretary S Krishnan saying India has "no other option" but to strengthen indigenous capacity as cyber threats grow in scale and sophistication.

Krishnan said rapid digitisation has brought significant gains in ease of living, ease of doing business and economic efficiency, but has also exposed businesses and individuals to evolving cyber risks.

"A critical area we need to act on is ensuring that in the AI space, what is the infrastructure and the capability we build as a country, both in terms of models, data, how we use this, how this infra-

structure is something that we can support ourselves with, and the critical thing here is building domestic capacity," Krishnan said.

Cybersecurity is one of the most important concerns to be prioritised for preserving the benefits derived from digitisation, Krishnan emphasised.

The secretary also released the second edition of the Digital Threat Report 2025-26 for the Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) and payments ecosystem. The report provides financial institutions, regulators and cybersecurity leaders with an executive assessment of the threats reshaping banking, financial services, insurance and digital payments.

"In today's world, all of us understand that cybersecurity is one of the most important concerns that we have to

address if we have to preserve all the benefits that we have derived from digitisation," Krishnan said.

He noted that cyber threats now span multiple levels, from cybercrime targeting

individuals through financial and reputational losses, to ransomware attacks on organisations, and cyber warfare that can undermine governments and national infrastructure.

Framework deal is ready, to be signed at right time: Official on India-US trade pact

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Negotiations for a trade agreement between India and the US are progressing well, and the framework deal is ready which will be signed at the right time, an official said on Monday.

The official said that India is seeking a comparative advantage on the tariff front in the agreement vis-a-vis its competitor nations.

"There was a very good discussion (with the US team). The framework deal is ready... whenever there is right time, it will be signed. We are negotiating a framework deal and a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), and

both things are progressing well," the official said.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and US Trade Representative Jamieson

Greer last month held bilateral talks on issues related to the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement here.

Trade deals are all about

preferential market access or comparative advantage.

"So that is something which is getting structured, whenever it is ready, things will be signed. But we are on a safe way, our understanding is safe, both sides are very clear what is there in the framework deal, what is being negotiated under BTA, and we are progressing there," the official, who does not wish to be named, said.

The official clarified that there is no dissension, and they do not see any challenge around it.

The bilateral trade is growing between the two countries. India has also been increasing its energy imports from the US.

Silver futures tumble amid strengthening US dollar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n New Delhi

Silver futures tumbled by `3,783 to `2.18 lakh per kilogram on Monday as the fresh escalation in the US-Iran conflict drove oil prices higher and boosted the dollar.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, silver for September delivery declined by `3,783, or 1.7 per cent, to `2,18,881 per kg in a business turnover of 11,733 lots.

metal plunged `14,746, or 6.2 per cent, to settle at `2.22 lakh per kg over the past week. Traders said that higher energy prices could stoke inflation and keep US interest rates elevated, which prompted investors to trim exposure to precious metals.

"Silver prices declined sharply on Monday as rising crude oil rates, a stronger US dollar, and higher Treasury bond yields reduced the appeal of bullion," said Gaurav Garg, Research Analyst at Lemonn Markets Desk.

He said oil prices surged as renewed

military exchanges between the US and Iran fuelled concerns over disruptions to crude supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, intensifying inflation worries.

"Despite the weakness in prices, investor appetite for silver remained firm, with exchange-traded funds (ETFs) attracting a record `4,286 crore in inflows during June," Pinky Yadav, Commodity Fundamental Analyst at Choice Broking, said.

In the international markets, Comex

silver futures for September delivery fell \$1.68, or 3 per cent, to \$58.47 per ounce in New York.

"Silver futures slipped below \$60 per ounce in the global markets as rising crude oil prices and escalating US-Iran tensions strengthened expectations that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates higher for longer," brokerage firm Axis Securities said.

According to Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research at Kotak Securities, Brent crude hovered near \$79 per barrel, and WTI traded above \$74 after fresh exchanges between Washington and Tehran clouded prospects for restoring normal tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Analysts said market participants are awaiting speeches by Federal Reserve officials, including Michelle Bowman and Christopher Waller, for fresh signals on the US monetary policy outlook, which could provide the next catalyst for bullion.

CIC directs ministry to share petrol, ethanol, profit data

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), the oil ministry's planning arm, to reveal historical data on petrol production and imports, ethanol procurement and blending, and petroleum sector profits.

The direction was given to share the information with an RTI applicant after the commission found that the cell provided only "partial information."

Information Commissioner Khushwant Singh Sethi also directed PPAC to provide the

web link for ethanol blending notifications, transfer the query on ethanol suppliers to the concerned public authority, and invoke the appropriate exemption under the RTI Act, while responding to the request for company-wise petrol supplier information.

The RTI application sought six sets of information relating to India's petrol and ethanol programme, including fuel production and imports, ethanol blending norms, procurement and consumption of ethanol, supplier details and profits from

petrol sales. The commission observed that "the respondent has provided partial information to the appellant" and directed it to furnish a revised response on different queries.

The first query sought year-wise details from 2014-15 onwards of petrol purchased, imported, and produced in India, annual expenditure on petrol, and source-wise break-up.

PPAC replied that import, export, production and state-wise data were available on its website, but company details were "of commercial & confidential nature" and exempt under Sections 8(1)(d) and 8(1)(e) of the RTI Act.

Gold drops `1,500 to `1.47 lakh/10g; silver slumps `2,000 in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Gold prices declined `1,500 to `1.47 lakh per 10 grams in the national Capital on Monday and silver slumped `2,000 tracking West Asia uncertainties.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity depreciated `1,500 to `1,47,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of `1,48,500 per 10 grams, according to local marketmen.

Silver also plunged by `2,000 to `2,35,000 per kilo-

gram (inclusive of all taxes). The white metal had settled at `2,37,000 per kg in the preceding session.

Traders said the renewed flare-up in West Asia lifted crude oil prices, fuelling inflation concerns and strengthening the US dollar,

which weighed on the precious metals.

"Gold prices edged lower on Monday, tracking weakness in international markets as renewed tensions in the Middle East lifted crude oil prices and revived inflation concerns," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

He said the latest escalation between the US and Iran has heightened concerns over disruptions to global energy supplies and tighter oil market conditions in the third quarter.

Stock markets recover losses to close flat, IT shares cushion decline

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty recovered from early lows to close marginally higher in a volatile trade on Monday as buying in IT and consumer durable shares helped offset the impact of rebounding crude oil prices and escalation in West Asia tensions.

After a weak start, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 47.01 points, or 0.06 per cent, to settle at 77,616.40, marking its third straight day of gains.

The index opened sharply down by over 711 points and hit a low of 76,857.43 in early trade. However, buying in IT

shares such as TCS and Infosys and consumer durables helped pare losses, with the Sensex rebounding around 931 points from the low to hit a high of 77,789.29. Profit booking in the last hour erased the gains.

The 50-share NSE Nifty eked out an uptick of 4.10 points, or 0.02 per cent, to end at 24,211, registering its third day of gains. The index hit a low of 24,000.20 and a high of 24,259.8 during the day.

Resilience in IT and consumer durables stocks helped offset the impact of geopolitical concerns, enabling the benchmark indices to recover from early losses and close on a largely

Index	Open	Low	High	Close	Change
NSE NIFTY	24,039.40	24,000.20	24,259.80	24,211.00	4.10 (0.02%)
BSE SENSEX	76,963.35	76,857.43	77,789.29	77,616.40	47.01 (0.06%)

flat note, an expert said.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Consultancy Services jumped 5.43 per cent to emerge as the top gainer, while HCL

Tech climbed 5.02 per cent, Tech Mahindra 3.34 per cent, Infosys 3.17 per cent, NTPC 2.18 per cent and Kotak Mahindra Bank 1.83 per cent.

Tata Steel, Eternal, InterGlobe Aviation, Maruti, UltraTech Cement and Bharat Electronics were among the laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 2.57 per cent to \$77.96 per barrel.

"Indian equity markets ended largely flat after opening on a weak note, as investors adopted a wait-and-watch approach amid escalating geopolitical tensions between the United States and Iran. Continued hostilities around the Strait of Hormuz, which have disrupted oil tanker movements and pushed crude oil prices sharply higher, kept overall market sentiment cautious," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich

Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi slumped 8.95 per cent. Japan's Nikkei 225 and Shanghai's SSE Composite index also ended lower, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled marginally higher.

Markets in Europe were trading mixed. US markets ended higher on Friday.

"Markets witnessed a volatile session on Monday and ended almost unchanged amid mixed global cues. Investor sentiment remained cautious amid renewed geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, which pushed Brent crude prices higher and weighed

on global risk appetite," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

However, resilience in the IT pack following the start of the earnings season, coupled with selective buying in heavyweight stocks across sectors, helped the market recover from its intraday lows, he added.

The BSE MidCap Select index went up by 0.51 per cent, while SmallCap Select index dipped marginally by 0.03 per cent.

Among sectors, IT surged 3.49 per cent, Focused IT (3.30 per cent), Consumer Durables (0.59 per cent), Utilities (0.35 per cent), Auto (0.31 per cent) and Bankex (0.15 per cent).

Date	Rate (INR per USD)	Change
Jul 6	95.43	(-25p)
Jul 7	94.96	(+47p)
Jul 8	95.48	(-52p)
Jul 9	95.47	(+1p)
Jul 10	95.38	(+9p)
Jul 13	95.65*	(-27p)

*Provisional (Inverted Scale)

Rupee falls 27 paise to close at 95.65 against US dollar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai

The rupee depreciated 27 paise to close at 95.65 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, weighed down by elevated crude oil prices after Iran declared the Strait of Hormuz closed.

Forex traders said renewed drone and missile strikes between the US and Iran prompted supply concerns, while elevated crude oil prices and a strong greenback triggered capital outflows.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.72 against the American currency and traded in a range of 95.58-95.86 during the session.

The rupee finally closed at 95.65 (provisional), down 27 paise from its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee rose 9 paise to settle at 95.38 against the US dollar.

"The Indian rupee opened lower as the US-Iran war intensified over the weekend. A surge in crude oil prices and a rise in the US dollar too pressurised the rupee. However, the rupee recovered from lower levels on recovery in the domestic markets and some softening of crude oil prices from the day's highs," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset ShareKhan.

Choudhary further said, "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on risk aversion in global markets amid heightened tensions between the US and Iran. However, diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions may support the rupee at lower levels."

PROSPECT

Will, Erik win Canada, US Crossword rounds

While Will Nediger of London, Ontario, has topped the 1st round of the three-round Canada Cryptic Crossword Contest 2006, the top position has gone to Erik Agard of Kansas City, Missouri, in 1st round of US Cryptic Crossword Contest 2026.

Known as Canada Triple-C and US Triple-C, both are inaugural online events aimed at creating crossword awareness across globe. They are being organized by Extra-C, a Patna-based civil society initiative, and the World Crossword federation (WCF) with support from Bihar Tourism, Bihar Foundation, and the Bihar-Jharkhand Association of North America (BJANA).

The 2nd and the 3rd ranks in Canada Triple-C have gone to Rupert Marten Morrish of Markham, Ontario, and Daniel Currie Hall of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The same ranks, respectively, in US Triple-C have been achieved by Paolo Pasco of Brooklyn, New York, and Dan Schwartz of New York. Earlier, on July 5, the Practice Round of the events kicked off with an overwhelming response. While the top ranking in this round was exactly similar to the Round 1 ranking for Canada Triple-C, the US Triple-C rankings had shown only a little shake-up with Erik snapping at the heels of the top ranker Paolo and just a shade ahead of Mathew Theodore Marcus of Oregon, who was in 3rd place. While the Practice Round scores will not be added to the cumulative scores at the end of the 3rd and final round, it showed the enthusiasm and popular appeal of contests in the two countries. The next scoring rounds are scheduled on July 19 and 26 and will begin at 10am Pacific time/1pm Eastern Time, after which championship winners will be announced. The contests are being hosted on www.crypticsingh.com, according to press release.



Will Nediger

Will deposit `50cr in 45 days: SpiceJet tells HC on dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

SpiceJet and its promoter Ajay Singh on Monday assured the Delhi High Court that they will deposit `50 crore in 45 days with the court registry in connection with a legal dispute with media baron Kalanithi Maran and Kal Airways.

Justice Subramonium Prasad — who has earlier directed SpiceJet and Singh to deposit around `144 crore in the case arising from an arbitral award against them in their dispute with Maran — was told that the remaining `94.50 crore would also be deposited in the next ninety days.

On May 4, the bench dismissed pleas by SpiceJet and Ajay Singh seeking a review of a January 19 order to deposit over `144 crore in the case. The Supreme Court, on May 19, however, asked the airline to approach the high court for extension of time to make the deposit.



The senior counsel for SpiceJet and its promoter on Monday informed the court that they have received financial assistance from the central government amid the ongoing West Asia crisis and undertook to pay `50 crore as the first instalment. He further said that the balance would also be paid in the next 90 days.

Considering the stand, the court deferred hearing till November on the airline's plea against the arbitration award.

It listed the matter in September as well on the issue of deposit of `144 crore with the registry.

Senior advocate Jayant Mehta appeared for Maran, along with law firm Karanjawala & Co.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi appeared for SpiceJet and Singh.

On January 19, the court had directed SpiceJet and Singh to deposit `144 crore with the registry within six weeks against an admitted liability of `194 crore pursuant to the arbitration award against them in their dispute with Maran. On March 18, the time to make the deposit was extended by four weeks.

The matter arises from a dispute regarding the non-

issuance of warrants in favour of Maran after the transfer of ownership to Singh, the controlling shareholder of SpiceJet.

The dispute started after Singh took back control of SpiceJet in February 2015 amid a financial crisis at the airline.

Maran and Kal Airways had transferred their entire 35.04 crore equity shares, amounting to a 58.46 per cent stake, in SpiceJet, to its co-founder, Singh, in February 2015 for just `2.

In May 2024, a division bench of the high court set aside a single judge bench order which had upheld an arbitral award asking SpiceJet and Ajay Singh to refund `579 crore plus interest to Maran.

The division bench allowed the appeals filed by Singh and SpiceJet challenging the single judge's July 31, 2023, order and remanded the matter back to the court concerned to consider the petitions afresh.

Hanmantrao Gaikwad: The man who did not chase success yet built it for millions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n NEW DELHI

Some people build companies. Some create wealth. But a very few dedicate their lives to building a nation. Hanmantrao Gaikwad, Founder, Chairman and Managing Director of BVG India Ltd belongs to that rare league.

From humble beginnings to leading one of India's largest integrated services groups, his journey is defined not merely by entrepreneurial success but by a commitment to creating opportunities and touching lives. Today, Gaikwad aims to positively impact 100 million lives by 2035, create one million jobs and expand BVG to 100 countries.

He stands as living proof that a dream driven by purpose can transform not just one life, but an entire nation through entrepreneurship. Born in October 1972 in

the small town of Rahimatpur, Maharashtra, he began far from privilege as his father died while he was still young leaving his mother, a humble schoolteacher, to raise the family alone.

For 21 years, mother and son shared a single hundred-square-foot room. Financial hardship never became an excuse for him, instead it became his sternest teacher. Each day he cycled 40-50 kilometres to reach college and through Maharashtra's Earn-and-Learn Scheme he worked while he studied, eventually earning his engineering degree.

Those years instilled in him resilience and discipline, and a conviction that determination could overcome even the harshest circumstances. Inspired by the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and the courage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he developed a vision that reached well beyond personal



advancement. At just the age of 19, he founded Bharat Vikas Pratishthan, driven by a simple desire to serve society. In 1994, he joined Tata Motors as a trainee engineer, a secure and promising start to corporate life. But one question would not leave him: could India truly progress if everyone merely

sought jobs, rather than creating them? That question altered the course of his life.

In 1997, he left the comforts of a corporate career to establish Bharat Vikas Group (BVG) with just eight employees and a single housekeeping contract. At a time when housekeeping was dismissed as unorganised and

unglamorous work, Gaikwad saw dignity in it, introducing mechanised housekeeping and professional facility management to India for the first time.

That modest venture has since grown into one of India's largest integrated services groups, employing more than 100,000 people across over 2,500 sites in 29 states and union territories, and serving more than 1,400 clients in over 205 cities. Its services now extend to Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Prime Minister's Office, the Supreme Court, IITs, IIMs, airports, metro systems and shrines including Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, Vaishno Devi and Jagannath Puri. The group has since expanded into life sciences, clean energy, agriculture and nuclear services.

Yet Gaikwad's greatest achievement is not measured in revenue. BVG's fleet of more than 1,500 ambulances has treated over fifteen million patients, while over 1,000 first-response vehicles have assisted more than nineteen million citizens. His work has been recognised with the Maharashtra Award for the Year Award, presented by President Pratibha Patil, the Vocational Excellence Award from Rajashree Birla, the Maxwell Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship and the ABP Majha Sanman Puraskar.

His story features in Maharashtra's Class X English textbook, B.Com Pune University and in Rashmi Bansal's Connect the Dots. From a 100-square-foot room to building one of India's largest service enterprises, Hanmantrao Gaikwad's story is a reminder that true success is measured not by wealth accumulated, but by lives transformed and the hope inspired.

Indian Potash inks pact with Jain Irrigation Systems



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Indian Potash Ltd has signed an agreement with Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd (JISL) to promote the latest irrigation technologies for sugarcane cultivation in Gujarat.

Both companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the 8th of July 2026 to "collaborate on promoting scientific, sustainable, and technology-driven sugarcane cultivation across Gujarat", Indian Potash Ltd said in a statement.

The partnership will focus on the survey, design, supply, and installation of drip irrigation systems, along with capacity building, farmer training, and field demonstrations to encourage the adoption of modern sugarcane

farming practices. As part of the MoU, Indian Potash and Jain Irrigation Systems will promote efficient irrigation and fertigation technologies for sustainable sugarcane cultivation.

They will demonstrate modern irrigation solutions, precision input management, and improved agronomic practices. Awareness programmes, workshops, and field demonstrations will be organised. That apart, they will facilitate access to credit and grant support for eligible farmers to adopt micro irrigation systems.

Indian Potash Ltd is one of the leading importers, suppliers and distributors of fertilizers in India. It is also engaged in the business of manufacturing sugar and bio-fuels and their by-products and other allied activities.

'BSNL unaudited operational revenue up to `4,418 crore in Q1'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

State-run BSNL has provisionally posted around a 10 per cent increase in revenue from operations in the first quarter of fiscal year 2026-27, Union Telecom Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said on Monday.

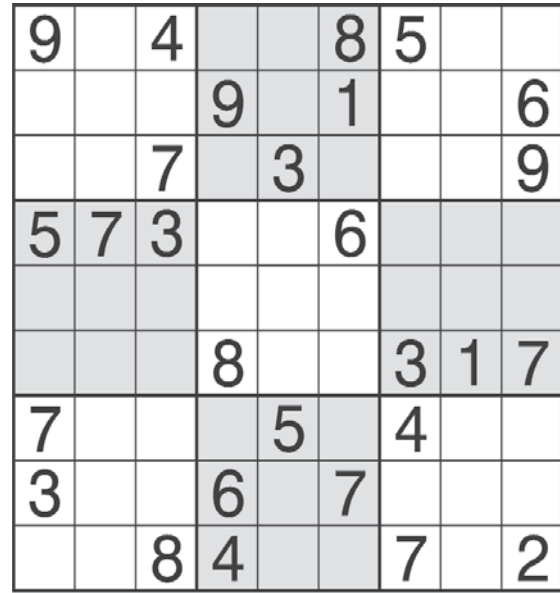
While speaking to the media after the review meeting of BSNL for the first quarter of the current fiscal, Scindia said that BSNL's enterprise business segment and consumer mobility have shown growth while the consumer fixed access segment has remained almost flat. "As far as our total revenue is concerned, directly from business operations, we have posted close to about a 10



per cent increase in revenue over last year. Last year, we closed Q1 at `4,017 crores. This year, we have closed Q1 at `4,418 crores. So there's a delta of `401 crore, an increase," Scindia said.

He said BSNL's ARPU (average revenue per user) has provisionally increased from `100 to `102.7.

DAILY SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

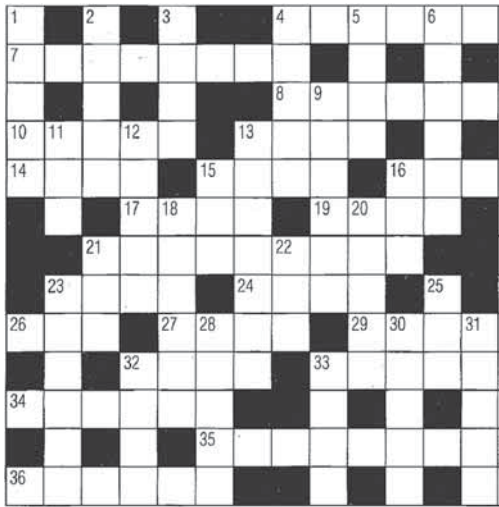
HOW TO SOLVE IT

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 (13.7.26)								
4	8	2	6	3	9	7	5	1
7	1	3	2	5	8	6	9	4
5	6	9	4	7	1	3	2	8
3	7	1	8	9	6	5	4	2
2	9	4	5	1	3	8	6	7
8	5	6	7	4	2	9	1	3
9	2	5	1	8	7	4	3	6
6	4	7	3	2	5	1	8	9
1	3	8	9	6	4	2	7	5

DOUBLE CROSSWORD
TUESDAY | JULY 14, 2026



ACROSS

- 4 When it's only tiny, keep quiet about a bit of pain (6)
7 He painted Mona, and maybe Noel and Dora (8)
8 Suit apt to show the dirt? (6)
10 Crop bringing anger to the workers' leader (5)
13 Clothing that may be the rage (4)
14 Invalid possessing no legal power (4)
15 No Oriental concoction of stew (4)
16 Be bent on seeming humble (3)
17 The animal to put £1 on a house (4)
19 Call some taxis to a house as a prank (4)
21 Solved the problem of keeping fit (6,3)

DOWN

- 1 Sent by air (5)
2 Hm, there isn't one! (5)
3 Shoemaker's latest model (4)
4 Biblical name for Grandma (5)
5 Close to the northeast part of Arabia (4)
6 A set form of home entertainment (3,3)
9 Sadness of a soft-headed musketeer (6)
11 A Schubert piece with heart (3)
12 Distribute to all (5)
13 No particular soldier? (7)
15 Though circular, it has a shallow end all right (3)
16 Take a knock sportingly (3)
18 Historic Parliamentarian upset by some

- 23 Victor, with a broken toe, can still go to the poll (4)
24 The uncleared part of the forest? (4)
26 Not too many have noisy ways (3)
27 Weather change not enough to take one's breath away (4)
29 Utter in semitones (4)
32 It has a black face (4)
33 If you want stiffening, have a couple! (5)
34 Race venue where a non-starter dishes out meals? (2,4)
35 She introduces a boy to a girl (8)
36 Show anger, but with restraint (6)

exertion (6)

- 20 Open to exposure, nothing may be true!
21 In two ways a big success (3)
22 It's due to be pronounced wet (3)
23 Beauty is but skin deep (6)
25 Thus quoted, in turn, with some precision (3)
28 Hates changing in a rush (5)
30 One house of a number in ruin! (5)
31 Where Americans get cross, put in a bad seat (5)
32 One posted in Picardy? (4)
33 Refereeing manual? (4)

FM calls for enhanced NRI outreach to sustain foreign currency mobilisation momentum

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked banks to enhance outreach to Non Resident Indians (NRIs) for greater mobilisation of foreign currency deposits.

Chairing a review meeting with CEOs of public sector banks and financial institutions on the Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank), or FCNR(B) deposits, External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) and Overseas Foreign Currency Borrowings (OFCBs) swap initiatives, Sitharaman appreciated the encouraging and enthusiastic initial response.

She called upon banks to further intensify outreach to the NRI diaspora, introduce innovative deposit products and sustain the



momentum of mobilisation during the remaining period of the schemes, the finance ministry said in a statement.

During the meeting, CEOs informed that banks are offering attractive returns on FCNR(B) deposits, including on five-year deposits, supported by the suspension of the interest rate ceiling on fresh FCNR(B) deposits under the scheme.

The CEOs stated that there has been significant interest from NRIs residing in Singapore, Hong Kong, West Asia, the United Kingdom,

the United States and other overseas jurisdictions.

They outlined their plans to capitalise on the positive sentiment and accelerate deposit mobilisation during the remainder of the scheme period, it said.

They expressed confidence that ECB mobilisations would gather stronger traction during the third quarter (October-December 2026) of the current fiscal year, it said.

Public sector banks (PSBs) also informed that they have put in place customised outreach strategies, including digital channels, to engage with the non-resident Indian (NRI) diaspora and enhance deposit mobilisation, it said.

They further noted that FCNR(B) deposit mobilisation has shown a clear accelerating trend, supported by attractive returns being offered by banks, it said.

Statewide expansion for women safety inaugurated in Tamil Nadu



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Chennai

Securecam India has officially announced the successful completion of all five operational phases of its landmark Secure Our City (SOC) campaign within Chennai. Designed to prioritise the safety of residents, particularly women and children, the global campaign aims to create public consciousness regarding micro-level safety by providing completely free security surveillance system installations.

The latest operational updates highlight widespread coverage across critical neighborhoods in the city:

Phase 3: Brought over 800 homes across SM Nagar (Sathyavani Muthu Nagar) in Chennai Central under continuous CCTV coverage.

Phase 4: Successfully secured an additional 600 households around the Karpagam Avenue, RA Puram (Raja AnnaMalaiPuram) area.

Phase 5: Completed the targeted installation of surveillance systems for several independent and individual houses and school of specially abled kids and people in and around Chennai. (Semmanchery, perumbakkam, Tambaram, Medavakkam, Ayyappakkam, Kundrathur, Nandanpakkam).

BRIEFLY

Sinner evolving just like Federer, Nadal and Djokovic before him



A perfectly-placed topspin lob winner that sailed beyond reach of his 6-foot-6 (1.98-meter) opponent and landed on the outside of the baseline in the second game.

A delicate drop shot which made Alexander Zverev change direction so suddenly that the German player over-extended his right knee at a crucial point of the third set.

Sure, there were plenty of the usual whizzing, missile-like baseline winners from Jannik Sinner in his four-set victory over Zverev in the Wimbledon final. He also showed off the new variety of his game, though - which came in handy when Zverev unleashed more power than he had used before against the top-ranked player. The variety of shots were what Sinner's two coaches, Darren Cahill and Simone Vagnozzi, appreciated most from their player in Sunday's match.

Just like the Big Three and Big Four before them - Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray - Sinner, Zverev and Carlos Alcaraz (who is out injured) are continually evolving their games, Cahill noted.

"Alexander is now playing a different style of tennis against Jannik," Cahill said. "We know Jannik is going to have to improve in certain areas to handle that type of game. Carlos is going to come back really strong, as well - as we all hope. You need to keep adding things to his game. "We saw a lot of the stuff he doesn't normally like doing, even in the final today: sliced backhands, a couple lobs, couple drop shots. Really stepping up when he needed to in the big moments." Deficit to Alcaraz in Slams count reduced: Sinner's second consecutive Wimbledon victory matched the two titles that Alcaraz won before him at the All England Club and raised his overall tally to five Grand Slams - narrowing the gap to Alcaraz's seven. (AP)

Former Spanish leader criticised for comments about France’s World Cup team



A former Spanish prime minister is facing criticism for saying that France's World Cup team "does not have any French players," which French and Spanish leaders have called racist.

Mariano Rajoy, a member of Spain's conservative Popular Party, made the comment in a column for Spanish outlet El Debate ahead of Tuesday's World Cup semifinal between the European neighbors.

"They've won every match they've played at this World Cup and are currently top of the FIFA rankings. They also have an exceptionally strong squad. That said, one thing they don't have is any French players," Rajoy wrote on July 10. On Monday, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot told French broadcaster BFM TV that "France has no skin color. Any contrary claim stems from stupidity, racism or a combination of the two."

A day earlier, French Football Federation president Philippe Diallo wrote on X that "Mariano Rajoy's remarks about the French team carry intolerable whiffs of racism," adding that "they also raise questions about the deplorable climate that gives rise to such sentiments. Our players do not need a certificate of nationality from a former Spanish prime minister." Spain's ruling Socialist government swiftly condemned the remarks by Rajoy, who was prime minister from 2011 to 2018.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez referenced the comments without naming his predecessor, writing on X: "There are those who still measure belonging by surname, place of birth, or skin color. Others measure it by our roots in a country and our will to contribute to it. Playing soccer. Caring for our elders. Or opening businesses. France, we'll see you in the semifinals. May the best one win and may racism lose." (AP)

Named in CWG contingent, Nandakumar declared ineligible

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH n New Delhi

Para swimmer Tejas Nandakumar, who was named in the Indian contingent for the upcoming Glasgow Commonwealth Games, will not compete in the multi-sport event starting on July 23 as his entry has been rejected by the organisers due to a classification issue.

The 20-year-old Nandakumar's name was there in the list of competitors issued by the government last week. He was to compete in the men's 50m freestyle S7 event in Glasgow and his slot was earlier accepted by the organisers.

S7 classification in para swimming is for athletes who have the full use of their arms and trunk, but have limited leg function, are missing parts of both legs, or have limited movement in all four limbs. Nandakumar, who has previously competed in the Para-Asian Games in 2023, has a congenital condition



affecting his legs.

In a letter sent on July 9, the local organisers have informed the Indian

Olympic Association (IOA) that he is no longer eligible to compete following a validation process by the international federation — World Para Athletics — post June 23.

"Following the IF validation process (post June 23), the athlete (Tejas Nandakumar) has been identified as ineligible to represent your CGA in the Para Swimming competition of G2026 (Glasgow 2026)," Georgia Lambert, Sports Entries and Information Coordinator — Oceania & Asia Glasgow 2026, wrote in the letter.

"The athlete must be internationally classified with a confirmed sport class status or review with a fixed review date of 2027 or later at the sport entries deadline of 23 June 2026. As the class status for Tejas is R-2025, he is therefore unfortunately ineligible to compete."

Classification determines which athletes are eligible to compete in a sport

and how they are then grouped together for competition. This is done to safeguard the integrity of fair competition.

Classification of athletes is done by a panels of medical and technical experts in their sport. Athlete evaluation normally takes place before competitions and they are given slots.

Classification of athletes is not permanent. Athletes with progressive conditions require periodic reviews.

Depending on the type and severity of the impairment an athlete might undergo athlete evaluation several times throughout his or her career. Some impairments change over time and junior athletes may not yet have reached skeletal maturity by the time of first classification.

In these cases, classifiers can decide that the athlete must be seen again or reviewed at the next competition or at set time-frames. (PTI)

The cloud over Argentina’s 2026 World Cup campaign: Why perception matters



SHAKYA MITRA

When the draw for the 2026 FIFA World Cup was made in December 2025, few disputed that defending champions Argentina had received one of the tournament's more favourable paths. On paper, a group featuring Austria, Algeria and Jordan appeared considerably less demanding than those faced by several other contenders. Their projected knockout route also looked manageable, with possible meetings against Uruguay in the Round of 32 and the runners-up of Group G or Group D in the Round of 16, leaving Portugal as their first expected major test in the quarter-finals. By comparison, teams such as Germany, Brazil and the Netherlands faced significantly tougher routes.

There is nothing inherently wrong in receiving a favourable draw. World Cup draws are lotteries, and every nation enters the tournament knowing that luck inevitably plays a role. What has complicated Argentina's campaign, is the growing perception that they have also benefited from favourable officiating and institutional goodwill. Whether that perception is justified or not, it has become one of the defining narratives of the tournament.

This debate has lingered since Argentina's victorious 2022 World Cup campaign, their first in 36 years. Several high-profile refereeing decisions from Qatar remain frequent points of discussion, including the heated quarter-final against the Netherlands, the penalty awarded against Croatia in the semi-final, and the penalty given in the final against France fol-



lowing what looked a relatively soft challenge.

The presence of Lionel Messi inevitably amplifies this debate. Widely regarded as one of the greatest footballers in history, Messi now plays for Inter Miami and has spent the latter stages of his career based in one of the host nations of the 2026 tournament. Before lifting the World Cup in Qatar, he carried the burden of being considered perhaps the greatest player never to win football's biggest prize. That debate ended in December 2022. Now, with Messi playing his sixth World Cup while continuing to add to his extraordinary goalscoring record, every controversial decision involving Argentina is

viewed through the lens of protecting football's biggest global icon.

Events during this tournament have only strengthened that perception. Against Algeria, Messi avoided even a booking after striking the back of an opponent's leg. Against Austria, an Argentine goal stood despite protests over an alleged foul in the build-up. Viewed individually, each incident can be defended within the Laws of the Game. Taken together, however, they reinforce an existing narrative that Argentina consistently receive the benefit of doubt.

The Round of 16 victory over Egypt has become the focal point of

that debate. Egypt led 2-0 with just 11 minutes of normal time remaining before the match turned dramatically. In the second half Egypt had what would have been a crucial goal ruled out after the referee penalised a foul through the aid of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR). Later, Argentina scored what proved to be the decisive goal following a challenge in their own half that closely resembled the earlier incident.

If one goes by technicalities, there is a credible argument that both decisions were correct. Football, however, is often judged less by technical interpretation than by consistency. The question that football observers are asking is whether those same interpretations would have been applied had the teams been wearing the opposite shirts.

Fortune has certainly favoured Argentina in several respects. Their relatively comfortable group-stage draw was simply the product of chance, and if projected opponents such as Uruguay, the United States, Turkey or Portugal failed to stand in their path to the semi-finals, that is hardly something for which

Argentina can be criticised. At the same time, narrow victories over Cape Verde, Egypt and Switzerland demonstrate that supposedly easier fixtures still demand difficult victories, with Argentina's stronger attacking options making decisive late contributions.

Other developments have nevertheless fuelled the perception that appearances are working against FIFA. President Gianni Infantino remarked publicly that he had "suffered" while watching Argentina's dramatic victory over Cape Verde. Although intended as an emotional observation, the comment inevitably attracted criticism given his position.

None of this diminishes Argentina's quality. While they may be marginally weaker than the side that triumphed in 2022 particularly following Angel Di Maria's retirement from international football they remain one of the world's elite teams, fully capable of winning matches on their own merits. That is precisely why the perception of institutional protection is so damaging. It overshadows legitimate achievements, casts doubt over genuine victories and shifts attention away from the football itself.

Whether FIFA has actually favoured Argentina is, in many ways, less significant than the fact that a substantial number of supporters believe it has. For a tournament that prides itself on being the pinnacle of global sport, perception matters almost as much as reality. Fairness must not only exist; it must also be seen to exist. Until that confidence is fully restored, every close decision involving Argentina and Lionel Messi will continue to invite suspicion, a situation that befits neither the three-time champions nor the World Cup itself.

The writer is a sports management consultant

World Cup semifinals: Mbappe vs Yamal and Messi vs Kane



JAMES ROBSON n Atlanta

It's a World Cup semifinal line-up for the ages. Four previous champions and the four top-ranking teams in the world. Five of the six top scorers, one GOAT and one of the bitterest rivalries in soccer.

Argentina, Spain, France and England went into the tournament as the top four in FIFA's rankings and are two wins away from being crowned champion of the world again. It's just too close to call either semifinal matchup: France will play Spain in Arlington, Texas, on Tuesday and England will face Argentina in Atlanta on Wednesday.

Not since 1990 has the final four of a World Cup been made up entirely of previous winners. England and Argentina were involved then, although they didn't play each other. Then, like now, Argentina was the defending champion - after beating West Germany in the 1986 final in

Mexico - and went on to lose to West Germany in the 1990 final.

And this year could also see a repeat final from 2022 if France and Argentina both advance.

England vs. Argentina: A bitter rivalry: Argentina must overcome England in a match that resumes a fierce rivalry that goes beyond the soccer field, with tensions also relating to the 1982 conflict over the Falklands Islands.

On the field there have been numerous flashpoints between the teams on the World Cup stage. Argentina captain Antonio Rattin, whose death was announced on Saturday, was sent off in a bad-tempered quarter-final match against winner England in 1966. England manager Alf Ramsey tried to stop his players from swapping shirts with their opponents after a 1-0 victory.

Roll the clock forward 20 years and in 1986 Diego Maradona's infamous "Hand of God" goal

helped Argentina to a 2-1 win against England in the quarterfinals on the way to lifting the trophy.

David Beckham was sent off in 1998 for kicking out at Argentina midfielder Diego Simeone, who was predictably criticized by the English media for his reaction to what appeared to be light contact. Argentina won the round of 16 match on penalties.

Beckham got his revenge four years later by scoring a penalty in a 1-0 win that contributed to Argentina being eliminated at the group stage.

France vs. Spain: A quick chance for French revenge

France and Spain meet again in the semifinals of a major tournament, just two years since going head-to-head at the European Championship. Spain won 2-1 with a then-16-year-old Lamine Yamal on the score sheet and went on to lift the Euros by beating England in final. (AP)

What to know about rules behind FIFA WC’s most contentious calls



JAMES ROBSON n Atlanta

It was another game-changing moment at the World Cup that had more to do with television replays in a room far away than a moment of brilliance on the field. The sending off of Switzerland's Breel Embolo in Saturday's quarterfinal game against Argentina was the latest call that may have left fans scratching their heads, not least because of the confusing name of the newly implemented law that swung the match.

It is called the "mistaken identity" rule. Yet, technically, Embolo was not shown a second yellow card - resulting in a red - for a case of mistaken identity. It was because the referee Joao Pinheiro did not see in real time that the forward had simulated a foul under a challenge from Argentina's Leandro Paredes.

Paredes was initially shown a yellow card, which is a key factor. Under FIFA rules, because Paredes was shown a card, the video assistant referee (VAR) can intervene and recommend that the on-field official review the sideline monitor. After review, the referee deemed Embolo to have committed a "clear simulation" and showed him a second yellow card and sent him off.

The rules state that the VAR can assist when the referee penalises the "wrong team for an offence that results in a red or yellow card being shown to the wrong player." It was a pivotal point in the match, coming five minutes after Switzerland had made it 1-1. Argentina won 3-1 after extra time. "The referee made the wrong decision," Switzerland coach Murat Yakin said. "I know they will protect their referee, but this rule destroyed our game today, and it's very painful, and to be eliminated in that way hurts a lot." It is not the first time at this World Cup that teams have hit out against new rules or technology.

Germany infuriated by disallowed goal: Newly tightened regulations contributed to Germany's shock elimination in the round of 32.

Defender Jonathan Tah's potentially game-winning goal in extra time against Paraguay was ruled out after VAR



review for a foul on goalkeeper Orlando Gill.

Replays showed Germany's Waldemar Anton push Gill to the ground, but the minimal contact led to criticism of the decision. FIFA's referees chief Pierluigi Collina said officials had been told to punish incidents when players try to block opponents and make no attempt to play the ball, especially where goalkeepers are concerned. Germany went on to lose the game in a penalty shootout, with Tah firing a decisive spot kick over the bar.

High tech ball costs Croatia: The words "connected ball technology" will likely haunt Luka Modric and Croatia for years to come.

The high-tech soccer ball fitted with "advanced sensors" used at this World Cup cost Croatia a dramatic late equaliser against Portugal in the round of 32.

Egypt heartbroken against Argentina: It was shaping up to be one of the great World Cup upsets. Egypt led 2-0 against defending champion Argentina in the round of 16 and might have been 3-0 up if not for VAR. (AP)

Best is yet to come: First female Test centurion at Lord’s Yastika Bhatia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n London

India wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia believes her “best is yet to come” after she became the first woman cricketer to hit a Test century at the iconic Lord’s stadium, marking an incredible comeback from a career-threatening knee injury last year.

Bhatia struck 113 off 158 before India declared their second innings at the stroke of tea on day three, setting hosts England a massive 457-run target. “It’s unbelievable because six months ago I was in a very different place and if you would have told me that I would have my name in the honours board I wouldn’t have believed it,” Bhatia said after third day’s play.

“The best is yet come, I have always believed that. But so far it’s really good and I enjoyed my time in the middle. It’s just the beginning, a lot more to come and I am looking forward to that,” he added.

She credited her family, teammates and support staff for helping her recover from the career-threatening torn ACL in her left knee that she sustained in October last year. The injury, which needed a surgery, prevented her from competing in India’s ODI World Cup-winning campaign at home. “A lot of people have been working behind the scenes, my family, my father, mother, my sister they have been the biggest backbone, support. My coaches, trainers back home, the support staff and teammates here, they have backed me,” she said.

BCCI must scrutinise team management’s role: Saba Karim

SUMAN RAY n New Delhi

Former national selector Saba Karim has urged the BCCI to scrutinise the Indian team management’s role in the unprecedented twin T20I series debacles against Ireland and England and take appropriate measures. India lost 0-2 to Ireland and were whitewashed 0-4 by England in back-to-back T20I series defeats.

“After such a disastrous series — a whitewash with huge margins of defeat — no one can abdicate responsibility — not only the support staff including Head Coach Gautam Gambhir but also the captain (Shreyas Iyer) and the vice-captain (Tilak Varma),” Karim said.

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS



NOTIFICATION FOR ENGAGEMENT OF ONE HOMEOPATHIC CONSULTANT AT CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS (CLW), CHITTARANJAN



Notification No. MW/Wel/SBF/Homeopath Consultant/Selection, Dated.08.07.2026. The CLW, Chittaranjan, proposes to engage one Homeopathic Consultant for one year, on contract basis at a monthly consolidated remuneration of **Rupees 37,500/- P.M. Required Qualification:** BHMS/DHMS. Age limit: 70 years (as on 31.08.2027). **Last Date of application** (to be received at AWO, CLW): **29. 07.2026.** **Date of Viva-voce:** 03.08.2026 (Tentative). Willing eligible candidates may like to apply against the notification may please visit the website www.clw.indianrailways.gov.in→Login→News & Recruitment→ Recruitment. **PR3/419** **PCPO & Chairman SBFMC**
Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

7 bronze medals secured in Asian U-19 and U-23 Boxing Championships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n Jakarta

Indian boxers remained a strong force at the Asian U-19 and U-23 Championships with eight of them advancing to the finals across men’s and women’s U-23 categories and seven others securing bronze medals after semifinal finishes in Jakarta. In the U-23 women’s category, five Indian boxers progressed to the finals. Nisha (54kg) defeated Hyeju Lee of Korea, while Nikita Chand (60kg) registered a win



against Sari Kokufu of Japan. Kajal (65kg) sailed past Gulzina Melsvek of Kyrgyzstan on Sunday. In all the bouts referees had to stop the contest due to Indians’ overwhelming domination. In the higher weight categories, Muskan (75kg) won 5:0 against Toirova Oyscha of Uzbekistan while Priyanka (+80kg) recorded a dominant 5:0 win over Panar Seitkhankyzy Kazakhstan. In the U-23 men’s category, three Indian boxers advanced to finals.

USP



Dentistry Workshop Held by PDPA
Panchkula: A workshop on Advanced Guided Implant Surgery was organised by the Private Dental Practitioners Association(PDPA), Panchkula. Association President Dr. Rajat Dang, Dr. Anubhav Naresh, President-Elect of PDPA & PDPA Secretary Dr. Rahul Vashishth were present. The program received good response, with more than 60 specialist dental surgeons participating in the workshop. PDPA President Dr. Dang expressed his gratitude for the enthusiastic participation of delegates from across the region. Dr. Anubhav Naresh, President-Elect of PDPA and Conference Head, remarked that guided implant surgery has emerged as one of the most significant advancements in modern implant dentistry, offering greater precision, improved patient safety, reduced surgical time, and enhanced treatment predictability. The event was supported by Dentium, South Korea and the Managing Director of Dentium India, Juhwan Yun, was also present.



SBI OBC Employees Welfare Association holds 2nd triennial general body meeting; New leadership elected unopposed
Chandigarh: State Bank of India OBC Employees Welfare Association, Chandigarh Circle, successfully organized its 2nd Triennial General Body Meeting & Conference at Tagore Theatre, Chandigarh, with enthusiastic participation of more than 1200 OBC employees, senior SBI executives and representatives of employee organizations from across Chandigarh Circle Comprising 5 States i.e. Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, J&K, Jharkhand. The conference was inaugurated by Chief Guest Ganesh Singh, Chairman, Parliamentary Committee on Welfare of OBCs. Addressing the gathering, he appreciated the Association’s efforts for the welfare and empowerment of OBC employees and emphasized effective implementation of constitutional safeguards, enhancement of OBC reservation in PNC to 27% in line with Central norms, and issuance of OBC caste certificates as per Government of India guidelines.



Shri Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Organized at Angel Public Smart School, Behlana on the Inauguration of the New Academic Session
Chandigarh: On the occasion of the inauguration of the new academic session, Shri Sukhmani Sahib Path was organized with devotion and reverence at Angel Public Smart School, Behlana. Following the Path, an uninterrupted Guru Ka Langar was also organized for all devotees and guests present. On this occasion, Shri Sanjay Tandon, Co-Incharge of Bharatiya Janata Party, Himachal Pradesh, graced the event as the Chief Guest. The Director of the school, Mr. Davinder Singh Arora, welcomed him and gave him a tour of the school. He informed the Chief Guest about the school’s glorious 25-year journey, its remarkable contributions in the field of education, and the various activities conducted for the holistic development of students.



L&T Finance Limited
Registered Office: L&T Finance Limited, Brindavan Building
Plot No. 177, Kalina, CST Road, Near Mercedes Showroom
Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 098
CIN No.: L67120MH2008PLC181833
Branch office: LTF Amritsar - Mall Road.



Public Notice

This is to inform the public in general and customers in particular that L&T Finance Limited (formerly known as L&T Finance Holdings Limited), having its registered office at Brindavan, Plot No. 177, C.S.T Road, Kalina, Santacruz (East), Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, 400098 shall cease to operate at its Branch Offices located at **L&T Finance Limited ,G R Tower, Second Floor, Mall Road, Amritsar, Punjab - 143001**, with effect from 11.10.2026. The said closure is [on account of business requirements] and all operations of the said branch shall be shifted to **L&T Finance Limited, Second Floor Shop No 5 Court Road Opp Doaba Automobiles Deep Complex Amritsar 143001**.

It is clarified that due care is being taken by L&T Finance Limited to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the customers during the process of closure of the said branch(es). The accounts of all the customers shall be transferred to the transferee branch referred above and all such customers shall be serviced from that branch from the effective date. Customers are hereby requested to take note of the aforesaid change. In case of further clarification and/or in case of any difficulty, customers may contact Mr. Ajay Sharma – 81463-98097.

Date: 14.07.2026
Place: LTF Amritsar - Mall Road.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For L&T FINANCE LIMITED

L&T Finance Limited
Registered Office: L&T Finance Limited, Brindavan Building
Plot No. 177, Kalina, CST Road, Near Mercedes Showroom
Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 098
CIN No.: L67120MH2008PLC181833
Branch office: Mohali



DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (Herein after referred to as The Act)
We have issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the Act to you all (Borrower/s, Co-borrower/s & Guarantor/s) through Registered Post Acknowledge Due, as you have defaulted in payment of interest and principal installments of your loan account, and have failed and neglected to clear the said outstanding dues. As a result, the loan account has been classified as Non-Performing Asset (NPA) in the book of account in accordance with the directives relating to asset classification issued by the Reserve Bank of India. The Notice has been returned as “undelivered” and therefore we are now issuing this notice to you all under 13(2) of the Act and hereby calling upon to repay the amount mentioned in the notice appended below to the L&T Financial Limited. within the period of 60 Days from the date of this Paper Notification together with further interest and other charges from the date of Demand Notice till payment or realization. In case you are not discharging your liabilities under the terms of this notice, we shall be constrained to exercise all or any one of the rights conferred under Section 13(4) or Section 14 of the Act. “This is without prejudice to any rights available to us under the Act and/or any other law in force from time to time.”

Loan Account Number	Borrower/s & Co-borrower/s Name	Demand Notice date / NPA date / Outstanding Amount		Description of the Immovable Property (Mortgaged)
		NPA Date	Outstanding Amount (₹) As On	
CHDHL1900 0012,CHDHL 19000017	1. Raj Kumar Kalia 2. Seema Devi 3. M/s Hunar Estate (Through Its Proprietor Raj Kumar Kalia)	Demand Notice Date: 22.05.2026 NPA Date: 08/05/2026	Rs. 2599417.92/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Four Hundred Seventeen and Paise Ninety Two Only) As On Date 14.05.2026	Schedule – I All That Piece And Parcel Of Immovable Property Being House No. 32, Second Floor, 1/3rd Share Of Land Measuring 138 Sq. Yards, Bearing Khata No. 49/51, Comprised Under Khasra No. 146/4-0, 147/3-1a) Situated At VillageKishanpura, Sub-Tehsil Zirakpur, District Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar - Punjab – India, more Particularly Mentioned In Sale Deed Dated 25.01.2019 Bearin Vasika No. 2018-19/13/1/6503.

Date: 14.07.2026
Place: Mohali

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For L&T FINANCE LIMITED

L&T Finance Limited
Registered Office: L&T Finance Limited, Brindavan Building
Plot No. 177, Kalina, CST Road, Near Mercedes Showroom
Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 098
CIN No.: L67120MH2008PLC181833
Branch office: Jalandhar



DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (Herein after referred to as The Act)
We have issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the Act to you all (Borrower/s, Co-borrower/s & Guarantor/s) through Registered Post Acknowledge Due, as you have defaulted in payment of interest and principal installments of your loan account, and have failed and neglected to clear the said outstanding dues. As a result, the loan account has been classified as Non-Performing Asset (NPA) in the book of account in accordance with the directives relating to asset classification issued by the Reserve Bank of India. The Notice has been returned as “undelivered” and therefore we are now issuing this notice to you all under 13(2) of the Act and hereby calling upon to repay the amount mentioned in the notice appended below to the L&T Financial Limited. within the period of 60 Days from the date of this Paper Notification together with further interest and other charges from the date of Demand Notice till payment or realization. In case you are not discharging your liabilities under the terms of this notice, we shall be constrained to exercise all or any one of the rights conferred under Section 13(4) or Section 14 of the Act. “This is without prejudice to any rights available to us under the Act and/or any other law in force from time to time.”

Loan Account Number	Borrower/s & Co-borrower/s Name	Demand Notice date / NPA date / Outstanding Amount		Description of the Immovable Property (Mortgaged)																
		NPA Date	Outstanding Amount (₹) As On																	
H043561001 24051209, H043561001 24051209L, H043563001 24093957, H043563001 24093957L	1. Braham Raj 2. Neha Gujral 3. Gujral Consultant And Immigration Services Through Its Proprietor Mr. Braham Raj 4. Gujral Ielts Academy Through its Proprietor Neha Gujral	Demand Notice Date: 29.05.2026 NPA Date: 04/05/2026	Rs. 1,84,91,186.04/- (Rupees One Crore Eighty Four Lakhs Ninety One Thousand One Hundred Eighty Six and Four Paise Only) As On 29/05/2026	Schedule – I Property No. 232 At Bombay Nagar, Khingra Jalandhar Measuring 9 Marla In Khasra Nos.206, 205, 207, 1083/209, 1087/212, 1081/208 And Others Tehsil And District Jalandhar. <table><thead><tr><th>East By</th><th>Others</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>West By</td><td>Road</td></tr><tr><td>North By</td><td>No. 231</td></tr><tr><td>South By</td><td>No. 233</td></tr></tbody></table> Schedule – I Property No. 233 At Bombay Nagar, Jalandhar Measuring 9 Marla 40 Sq. Ft. In Khasra Nos.206, 205, 207, 1083/209, 1087/212, 1081/208 And Others Tehsil And District Jalandhar. <table><thead><tr><th>East By</th><th>No. 256,</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>West By</td><td>Road</td></tr><tr><td>North By</td><td>No. 232</td></tr><tr><td>South By</td><td>No. 234</td></tr></tbody></table>	East By	Others	West By	Road	North By	No. 231	South By	No. 233	East By	No. 256,	West By	Road	North By	No. 232	South By	No. 234
East By	Others																			
West By	Road																			
North By	No. 231																			
South By	No. 233																			
East By	No. 256,																			
West By	Road																			
North By	No. 232																			
South By	No. 234																			

Date: 14.07.2026
Place: Jalandhar

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For L&T FINANCE LIMITED

L&T Finance Limited
Registered Office: L&T Finance Limited, Brindavan Building
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Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 098
CIN No.: L67120MH2008PLC181833
Branch office: Punjab



PUBLIC AUCTION FOR SALE OF MORTGAGED PROPERTY

The Authorised Officer of L&T Finance Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 [54 OF 2002] and in exercise of powers conferred under the said Act is auctioning the following property on “**AS IS WHERE IS BASIS**” and “**AS IS WHAT IS CONDITION**” by way of “**PUBLIC AUCTION**” for recovery of its dues and further interest, charges and costs etc.

Name of Borrower and Co-Borrower	Secured Property Address	Loan Account Number(s)	Physical Possession Taken	Earnest Money Deposit 10% or more of RP (in ₹)	Secured Debt	Reserve Price (In ₹)	Date of Inspection	Date and Time of Auction								
1. Sumit Bansal 2. Tanisha Bansal 3. S R Steels (Through Its Proprietor Sumit Bansal)	Schedule – I All that piece and parcel of the H.No.1 measuring 14 Marla 99 sqft comprised under Khasra No. 5022, 5021, At Wakia Jyoti Nagar Jalandhar, situated at Tehsil and District Jalandhar, Bounded: <table><thead><tr><th>East</th><th>Others/75 feet</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>West</td><td>Balkaram Singh/73 feet</td></tr><tr><td>North</td><td>Road/40 feet</td></tr><tr><td>South</td><td>House Number 241 feet</td></tr></tbody></table>	East	Others/75 feet	West	Balkaram Singh/73 feet	North	Road/40 feet	South	House Number 241 feet	H141HL240 313122724	02-03-2026	Rs. 13,15,260/-	As per Demand Notice dated 09/05/2025, Total outstanding of Rs 1,51,94,030.45 +/- As On Date 06/05/2025	Rs. 1,31,52,600 /- (BID Incremental Value : Rs.10,00,000 /-)	On 23/07/2026 from 11:00 A.M to 12:00 P.M	30/07/2026
East	Others/75 feet															
West	Balkaram Singh/73 feet															
North	Road/40 feet															
South	House Number 241 feet															

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION

1. The E-auction Sale is being conducted online by the Authorised Officer through the website <https://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net/EPROC/> under the provisions of SARFAESI Act with the aid and through public e-E-auction mode.
2. The public E-auction will be conducted on the date and time mentioned herein above, when the secured asset/s mentioned above will be sold on “**AS IS WHERE IS**” BASIS & “**AS IS WHAT IT IS**” CONDITION.
3. For participating in the public E-auction, intending purchasers/bidders will have to submit the details of payment of refundable Earnest Money Deposit of 10 % of the reserve price of the secured assets along with copies of the PANCARD, Board Resolutions in case of company and Address Proof on or before **29/07/2026** till 6:00 P.M
4. The EMD of all other bidders who did not succeed in the public E-auction will be refunded by LTF within 7 days of the closure of the public E-auction. The EMD will not carry any interest.
5. The successful purchaser/bidder shall deposit the 25 % (inclusive of EMD) of his/its offer by way of by way of D.D./P. O favoring “L&T Finance Limited” payable at Mumbai on or before 18:00 hours on **30/07/2026** i.e., day of e-auction or on the next working day i.e., **31/07/2026**, which deposit will have to be confirmed by L&T Finance Limited, failing which the sale will be deemed have been failed and the EMD of the said successful bidder shall be forfeited. The balance amount i.e., 75% of purchase price payable shall be paid by the purchaser to L&T Finance Limited on or before the fifteenth day of confirmation of sale of immovable property or such extended period as per provisions of law.
6. For inspection of property or more information, the prospective bidders may contact the authorised officer i.e. **Name – Mr. Vikas Singh, Contact No. 8669189048 & Mr. Dilip Mishra, Contact No. 7575021496, L&T Finance Ltd, Brindavan, Plot no. 177, CST Road, Kalina, Santacruz (East), Mumbai - 400 098, Maharashtra, India.** At any stage of the E-auction, the Authorised Officer may accept/reject/modify/cancel the bid/offer or postpone the E-auction without assigning any reason thereof and without any prior notice.
7. The successful purchaser/bidder shall bear any statutory dues, taxes, fees payable, stamp duty, registration fees, etc. that is required to be paid in order to get the property conveyed/delivered in his/her/its favour as per the applicable law.
8. The Borrower/Guarantors, who are liable for the said outstanding dues, shall treat this Sale Notice as a notice under Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, about the holding of above-mentioned public E-auction sale.
9. The Borrower (s) /Co-Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) are hereby called up on to pay the entire loan outstanding dues as mentioned above before the said E-auction date failing which the L & T Finance Ltd shall sale the property as per the provisions laid down in the SARFAESI ACT, 2002.
10. The Borrower (s) /Co-Borrower(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) /public at large are hereby restrained from transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise with the secured assets referred to in the notice without prior written consent of L&T Finance Limited.

Date: 14.07.2026
Place: Punjab

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For L&T Finance Limited