

Lakshmi Yojana cleared, ₹2,500 monthly aid for 17 lakh women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana, a flagship welfare scheme that promises monthly financial assistance of ₹2,500 to eligible women. The Government is targeting to roll out the first instalment on Raksha Bandhan.

The scheme, approved at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, is expected to benefit more than 17 lakh women across the national Capital. The Delhi Government has earmarked ₹5,110 crore for the scheme in the 2026-27 Budget.

Announcing the decision after the Cabinet meeting, Gupta said the scheme fulfils a key promise made by her Government to strengthen the

economic independence of women. She described the initiative as a step towards ensuring financial security and self-reliance for women in Delhi.

Under the scheme, women aged between 21 and 60 years with an annual family income of up to ₹2.5 lakh will be eligible for assistance. The scheme will initially remain in force for three years, with provision for continuation or modification thereafter.

The application process will be conducted entirely online through the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana portal, which will open on August 1. The Government aims to release the first instalment to eligible beneficiaries on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

Beneficiaries will have two options for receiving the monthly assistance. Under

the first option, ₹1,500 will be deposited in a recurring or fixed deposit account, while ₹1,000 will be credited to a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) Digital Rupee wallet. The amount in the digital wallet can only be spent on goods and services permitted by the Government. The second option allows beneficiaries to receive the entire ₹2,500 in a recurring or fixed deposit to encourage long-term savings.

The amount credited to the Digital Wallet can be spent only on permitted goods and services as specified under the Government's prescribed Negative List. Under the second option, beneficiaries may choose to receive the entire ₹2,500 in an RD/FD. This option is intended to help women build long-



term savings and Capital.

The CM said the entire application process will be conducted online through the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana Portal.

The portal will open on August 1, allowing eligible women to submit their applications.

The Government has also put in place a district-level

scheme. Women already receiving benefits under any other financial assistance scheme or pension, income taxpayers, GST return filers, Government employees, women with more than three living children, and women with a criminal record will not be eligible.

The Chief Minister clarified that certain categories of women will not be eligible under the scheme. These include women already receiving benefits under any other financial assistance scheme or pension, income taxpayers, GST return filers, government employees, women with more than three living children, families with annual electricity consumption exceeding 2,400 units, families with a member employed by the State Government, the Government

of India, a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) or any Government organisation, families owning a four-wheeler, and women with a criminal record.

Besides providing financial assistance, the Government said the scheme will encourage beneficiaries to enroll children in schools, create APAAR and ABHA IDs, ensure timely immunisation, register on the POSHAN Tracker, participate in environmental campaigns, and join self-help groups and skill development programmes.

The CM said the initiative would promote a culture of savings while supporting education, healthcare and skill development, adding that it is expected to play a key role in empowering women across Delhi.

Delhi Cabinet approves higher grants for Kanwar camps

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Cabinet on Tuesday approved an increase in financial assistance for Kanwar camps across all categories for Kanwar Yatra 2026, with large camps spread over more than 20,000 square feet and operating for six to twelve days now eligible for up to Rs 15 lakh, up from the earlier Rs 11 lakh. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta made the announcement following the Cabinet meeting chaired by her at the Delhi Secretariat.

The Government cited the growing number of devo-

tees, the need to provide them with better facilities, and the rising cost of running the camps as the reasons for the enhanced assistance across all camp categories. The existing provision of free electricity of up to 1,200 units for Kanwar committees will also continue.

The Chief Minister said the decision ensures that Kanwar committees receive adequate support to provide better, safer, and well-organised facilities to devotees, with the enhanced amounts reflecting both rising operational costs and the expanding scale of the annual pilgrimage. The government also confirmed that all existing arrangements



for the Kanwar Yatra will continue, including coordination among various departments, the single-window system, sanitation, drinking water, healthcare services, mobile toilets, uninterrupted power supply, security

arrangements, and traffic management.

The number of Kanwar camps in Delhi has grown significantly in recent years, rising from 170 in 2024 to 308 in 2025. The Kanwar Yatra, during which lakhs of devo-

Assembly Session from August 7-11

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Monsoon Session of the Delhi Assembly will be held from August 7 to August 11, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Tuesday.

The Chief Minister stated that serious and meaningful discussions regarding important issues related to Delhi's development and public welfare schemes would take place during this session.

"The Monsoon Session of the Delhi Assembly will be held from August 7 to August 11. This decision was taken during a Cabinet meeting," Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said.



The CM added the Government is committed to making necessary decisions, prioritising the public interest above all else, and implementing them effectively.

PUBLIC NOTICE OF LOSS OF SHARE CERTIFICATES
To whomsoever it may concern

This is to inform the General Public that the following share certificates of Piccadilly Agro Industries Limited, registered office, Village Bhadson, Umri Indri Road, Teh. Distt. Karnal, Bhadson, Haryana, 132117 and Corporate Office: G-17, IMD Pacific Square, Sector-15 (Part-2), Gurugram, Haryana 122002 registered in the name of Ved Vati have not been in the possession of Mrs Ved Vati, -shareholder. These share certificates have been lost, misplaced/stolen and not found and the shareholder has applied to the company for issue of duplicate share certificates.

Name of the Shareholders/	Folio No.	Certificate No./s	No. of Shares	Distinctive No. from	Distinctive No. to
Ved Vati	14026	161796 155125 137467-69	600 300 300	51726541 26260771 23639921	51727140 26260770 23640220

The Public are hereby cautioned against purchasing or dealing in any way with the above referred share certificate. Any person who has any claim in respect of the said share certificate should lodge such complaint with the Company or its Registrar and transfer agents MAS Services Limited (Unit: Piccadilly Agro Industries Limited) T-34, 2nd Floor, Okhla Industrial Area Phase II, New Delhi 110020 within 15 days of publication of this notice after which no claim will be entertained and the Company shall proceed to issue Duplicate Share Certificates/Credit in Debit account.

Name of the Shareholder
Place: Delhi, Date: 28.07.2026
Ved Vati

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client i.e. ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mrs. Archana Sharma is claiming owner of Flat No. 08/110, On 8th Floor, in Block Alpine, Super Area 1545 Sq. Ft. In the project "Mahagun Woodwoods", Plot No. G9-04, Sector-16C, Greater Noida, vide Mutation Letter dated 20.05.2026 in the record of GNDA after demise of Mr. Ravi Shankar, All Persons are hereby informed that above claiming owner want to Sell the said property to Mr. Swadesh Kumar or his nominee who is taking a loan facility from our client against the said property. If anybody has any objection upon the ownership of above owner with respect of the said property, its sale / mortgage / any other kind of objection / litigation, charge etc., kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1Ind Flr, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N Delhi-15
legal@knalegal.com Ph: 011-41112527-28

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public on behalf of our client i.e. ICICI Bank Ltd. that Mr. C.S. Arora S/o Mr. S.S. Arora alias Sankar Singh Arora is owner of Industrial Plot No.26 (800 sq. mtrs) Block-A, Phase-II, Noida, Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P., vide Transfer Deed 04/04/05/2000, registration No. 1299, read with rectification deed dated 14.03.2001, executed by M/s A.V.S. International through its partners Mr. Anil Kumar Vashera and Mr. Sandeep Kumar. All Persons are hereby informed that above owner has updated his name from Mr. C. S. Arora to Mr. Chauraji Arora in the record of Noida Authority vide its letter No. Noida/Industrial/02/25272 dated 30.09.2025, now the ownership of above property shall be treated read as Mr. Chauraji Arora alias Mr. C. S. Arora, now Mr. Chauraji Arora want to Sell the above property to someone who is taking a loan facility from our client against the said property. If anybody has any objection upon the ownership of above owner with respect of the said property, its sale / mortgage / any other kind of objection / litigation, charge etc., kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, 1Ind Flr, 23, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, N Delhi-15
legal@knalegal.com Ph: 011-41112527-28

LOST & FOUND

Lost Original Sale Deed Regd. as Doc. No. 1446 in Addl. Book No.1, Volume No. 2464 at Pages 137 to 143 on 05/03/2008, in the office of Sub. Registrar Delhi Stands in the name of Smt. Pushpa Anand in respect of Plot Bearing No.19/90, area Mg 27.85 Sq.Mtrs., Situated at West Moti Bagh, Sarai Rohilla, Delhi -110035 Vide NCR Lodged LR No. 488495/2026 Dt.28/07/2026. Finder Please Contact To Mrs. Pushpa Anand (M: 9811140854).

Public Notice

As per Municipal Corporation Manesar records, Unit ID -1LT0RUK8 bearing flat number Flat No. 204, IMT View CGHS Ltd is in the name of Sh. Chaman Lal Chauhan as per conveyance deed no. 1513 dated 10-10-2013. Now, Sh. Chaman Lal Chauhan died on 22/07/2018 as per death certificate bearing MCQDLB-3218-004941721 issued on date 14/02/2018.

Based on application received from Sh. Manoj Chauhan, it is claimed that the lawful owner of the property ID -1LT0RUK8 is Sh. Manoj Chauhan after the death of Sh. Chaman Lal Chauhan according to the surviving member certificate (certificate no. 9066000031353) issued by North Delhi Municipal Corporation on date 29/06/2018 and deed of will (registration no.-1179 dated 9/10/2015) submitted by Sh. Manoj Chauhan. If anyone has an objection from updating name Sh. Manoj Chauhan on Unit ID no. 1LT0RUK8 address of Flat No. 204, IMT View CGHS Ltd falling in Municipal Corporation Manesar jurisdiction (for recovery of property tax) then he/she shall submit their objection in the good office of the undersigned within 30 days of publication date in newspaper. After completion of the stipulated time, the property will be named in favor of Sh. Manoj Chauhan in Municipal records, for which Municipal Corporation Manesar will not be responsible.

Endst. No. MCM/270/2026/6238 DATE: 28.07.26
Tax Assistant
Municipal Corporation Manesar

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

AMM/EMU/GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India Invites E-Tender against Tender No. 46265210 the details are as under:

Name of Work	Diesel generating set 750 KVA with AMF panel conforming to COFMOW Specification NO.CO/MOW/IR/D.G Set with AMF/2015 Rev-IV or Latest. Including PMC 02 Years + CAMC 05 years after warranty.	Quantity	01 Nos
Approx. cost of work	₹9599181.13/-		

Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender 25.08.2026 (11:00 hrs.)
Date of Time of Opening of tender document 25.08.2026 (11:00 Hrs.)
Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen www.ireps.gov.in
Note: (i) The tenderers must be registered on the Indian Railways E-Procurement System (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. (ii) Please refer to the tender document for all terms and conditions. (iii) No manual offers are acceptable.
NIT No.: 46265210 **Date:** 27.07.2026

SERVING CUSTOMER WITH A SMILE 2602/2026

AFFORDABLE GROUP HOUSING
SECTOR 4, SOHNA, GURUGRAM

Sriflex City
PUBLIC NOTICE

HRERA Reg. No.: 41 of 2024 dated 15/04/2024 | Licence No.: 133 of 2023 dated 26/06/2023
Building Plans Approved via Memo No.: ZP-1862/JD(RAJ)/2024/10267 dated 19/03/2024

Sriflex Projects Private Limited hereby informs the undermentioned allottees of Sriflex City to deposit their outstanding dues in full within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice.

In the event of failure to make the full payment of the outstanding dues within the stipulated period, the respective allotment shall stand cancelled in accordance with the Affordable Housing Policy, 2013 of the Government of Haryana, without any further notice or intimation.

Sr. No.	App. No.	Unit No.	Customer Name	Sr. No.	App. No.	Unit No.	Customer Name
1	144102	T2-1105	Mr. Mohd Asif	3	143958	T3-608	Mr. Gaurav
2	144428	T3-1902	Mr. Umid Singh	4	145488	T2-101	Ms.Sweera

Disclaimer: In case any of the above-mentioned applicants have already cleared their outstanding dues and their names are still reflected herein, kindly ignore this notice.

Sriflex Projects Private Limited
Corporate Address: TF-03, Third Floor, Ninex City Mart, Sector 49, Gurugram, Haryana-122018

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that my clients, Mr. Usman Tomar and Mrs. Kamarijahan Tomar, are the absolute owners and in peaceful possession of a freehold residential property admeasuring 333.75 square yards (comprising 166.87 square yards + 166.87 square yards, forming part of Kharsa No. 636, situated at Village Khara, under Nagar Palika Pilibhuva (Vibhor Toki to Shirram Hospital), Tehsil Dholana, District Hapur, Uttar Pradesh. Mr. Usman Tomar acquired an undivided 1/2 share in the aforesaid property by virtue of a Sale Deed dated 11.06.2021, as Doc. No. 4500, executed by Mr. Hanif. Mrs. Kamarijahan Tomar acquired the remaining undivided 1/2 share in the aforesaid property by virtue of a Sale Deed dated 08.02.2021, as Doc. No. 1439, executed by Mr. Hanif and Mrs. Bimilla. My clients are presently availing a loan from Piramal Finance Limited by creating a mortgage over the above-mentioned property.

All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise howsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)
Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower, Sec-4, Vaishali, Gzb., U.P., Mob 9810083351

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public at large is hereby informed that Entire Freehold property bearing No. F-1152, area measuring 182.27 sq. mtrs., Chittaranjan Park, New Delhi (except First Floor without roof rights, already sold by Shri Manas Kumar Chatterjee), presently owned by possessed by Shri Mritunjay Chatterjee as sole beneficiary of Will executed by his father Late Shri Manas Kumar Chatterjee (died on 09.01.2024), duly registered Regd. No.8011, dated 18.12.2009 and death of Smt Namita Chatterjee wife of Late Shri Manas Kumar Chatterjee on 13.12.2024. The Surviving Member Certificate No. 90660000275323 confirm the sole surviving membership of Present owner Shri Mritunjay Chatterjee and the above said complete property (except First Floor) is proposed to be offered as Security with State Bank of India, Home Loan Centre - Central, Thapar House, Jangpoh, New Delhi and as per present owner's version the said property is/are free from all sorts of encumbrance.

It is hereby notified that any person and / or Bank, HUF, beneficiary of Will/ legal heirs of Late Shri Manas Kumar Chatterjee (M.K. Chatterjee), financial institution having any claim, any charge, interest or lien or claim and / or objection to thereof, he / she / they may lodge / notify the same to the undersigned with documentary proof / court judgment within 15 days from the day of publication of this public notice, failing which any further / future claim / objection(s) shall be rejected and my client is free to create Equitable / Registered mortgage with SBI.

SATYENDR YADAV (ADVOCATE)
Chamber no. 561, 5th Floor, Saket Courts, New Delhi, Mobile: 9711212421
E-mail: satyender175@gmail.com

SOUTH COAST RAILWAY
VISAKHAPATNAM
Follow us on @SCoRailway
Website: www.scor.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE No. : VSKP-TRS-OT-06-2026-27, Dt-24.07.2026

For and on behalf of President of India Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/ TRS/Visakhapatnam invites e-Tenders for the following works:

(I) Name of work with its location : Certification of 55 Work Place Management System at Electric Loco Shed, Visakhapatnam for a period of three years. (II) Value of Tender : Rs 79,296/-, (III) Earnest Money to be deposited : Rs. 1,600/-, (IV) Cost of Tender Form : Rs. 1,180/-, (V) Address of the office : Electric Loco Shed, South Coast Railway, NAD Post, Visakhapatnam - 530 009, (VI) Completion period of the work : Three years (36 months), (VII) Bidding system : Single packet system (e-tendering), (VIII) Tender closing date and time : 17.08.2026 at 15.00 hrs., (IX) Website particulars : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Sr.Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS/SCoR-A118 Visakhapatnam

For further tender conditions/ details and for downloading the tender documents. Please visit website at <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

BSNL
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भारत संचार निगम लिमिटेड
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)
BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Enterprises)

No. BSNLCO-11/12(12)/1/2026-RECTT-CO

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) invites applications for "Empanelment of Advocates/ Law Firms" in BSNL Corporate Office, New Delhi.

Interested Advocates/ Law Firms may visit BSNL website www.bsnl.co.in for further details and updates.

BSNL CO, NEW DELHI

CBC 06204/12/0006/2627

JASCH
JASCH GAUGING TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED
CIN: L33111DL2021PLC381513
Regd. Office: 502, Block-C, NDM-2, N.S.P., Pitampura, NEW DELHI 110034
Website: www.jasch.net.in, Phone: 0130-2216666

3RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (POST LISTING) & e-VOTING
The process of sending emails containing weblink for Annual Report 2025-26 and notice of 3rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) (Post Listing) of the Company, scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 25-08-2026 at 10.00 hours through Video Conference/Other Audio Visual Means ("VC/OAVM") has been completed on 28-07-2026. Members who have not provided their email ids or did not receive our email may download the same from the website of the Company www.jasch.net.in under the link Investors > Annual Reports or that of BSE Ltd. Information as to user id & password and instructions for participating in the AGM through VC/OAVM and remote electronic voting (e-voting), are contained in the aforesaid notice and are equally applicable to persons who have become members of the Company after sending of notice. Only those persons, whose names are recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depository as on cut-off date 18-08-2026, are entitled to remote e-voting, which will commence at 09:00 hours on 22-08-2026 and will not be allowed beyond 17:00 hours on 24-08-2026. A member may participate in the AGM even after exercising his right to vote through remote e-voting but shall not be allowed to vote again in the meeting. Results will be declared within the time permitted by law and will be posted at the above website of the Company under the link "Notices". Grievances, if any, relating to non-receipt of the notice of AGM or relating to e-voting may be sent by email to ramap@alankit.com.

for Jasch Gauging Technologies Ltd
Sonipat,
28-07-2026
Sd/- Neeraj Kumar
Company Secretary

यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
प्रथम तल, कॉमर्शियल कॉम्प्लेक्स, ओमेगा-1 (पी-2), ग्रेटर नोएडा
Toll Free No. 18001808296 वेबसाइट : www.yamunalexpresswayauthority.com

पत्रांक : वाई ई.ए./मूलेख/108/2026 दिनांक : 27/07/2026

सार्वजनिक सूचना

निम्नलिखित भूमि यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण द्वारा आपसी सहमति के आधार पर काश्तकारों से क्रय किया जाना प्रस्तावित है। क्रय हेतु काश्तकार, गांटा संख्या, क्षेत्रफल व काश्तकार का हिस्सा निम्नलिखित तालिका में अंकित है -

औद्योगिक सेक्टर-08, ग्राम दस्तमपुर, रन्हेरा, मिल्क करीमाबाद

क्रां क्र	ग्राम का नाम	खाता संख्या	खसरा संख्या	खसरे का कुल क्षेत्रफल (हे० में)	खातेदार का नाम व पता	तहसील से प्राप्त रिपोर्ट के आधार पर काश्तकार का हिस्सा (हे० में)	काश्तकार का विक्रय हेतु क्षेत्रफल (हे० में)
1.	दस्तमपुर (सै०-8)	8	16	0.1030	अशोक कुमार पुत्र नारायण सिंह निवासी ग्राम कानपुर	में से	0.0086
2.	दस्तमपुर (सै०-8)	8	16	0.1030	धर्मवीर सिंह पुत्र नारायण सिंह निवासी कानपुर	में से	0.0086
3.	दस्तमपुर (सै०-8)	234	196	0.2530	प्रभाप सिंह पुत्र सुरेन्द्रपाल सिंह निवासी दस्तमपुर	में से	0.0158
4.	दस्तमपुर (सै०-8)	67	232	2.3580	त्रिलोकचन्द पुत्र आनन्द सिंह नि० ग्राम	में से	0.3800
5.	रन्हेरा (सै०-8)	114	1084	0.1390	श्यामवीर व देवानन्द व नौदू उर्फ नरेन्द्र पुत्रगण प्रेमचन्द व कमलेश पत्नी	में से	0.0098
		254	1083	0.0130	प्रेमचन्द निवासी रन्हेरा		0.0011
		254	1091	0.7920			0.0660
							0.2159
6.	मिल्क करीमाबाद (सै०-8)	38	15	1.1360	निर्मला पुत्री भगवत स्वरूप निवासी	में से	0.1262
		47	17M	0.0430	मिल्क करीमाबाद		0.0047

उपरोक्त भूमि क्रय किये जाने में यदि किसी व्यक्ति को कोई आपत्ति है तो वह लिखित रूप में 15 दिन के अन्दर अपर मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी, यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण कार्यालय में अपनी आपत्ति प्रस्तुत कर सकता है।

विशेष कार्यधिकारी
यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे प्राधिकरण

यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में प्राधिकरण द्वारा स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान के अतिरिक्त प्लॉटिंग/हाउसिंग/कॉलोनी या किसी भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह से अथैव है। सामान्यचन इस प्रकार की खरीद-फरोख्त से पूर्णतः सचेत रहें तथा कॉलोनाइजर के ग्रामक विज्ञापनों से बचें। अधिक जानकारी के लिए प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट www.yamunalexpresswayauthority.com देखें।

DRM (W), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
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PUBLIC NOTICE
Re: Plot No. NA, land admeasuring 50.00 sq.yrds., out of Kharsa no. 687, situated at Village Kulsera, Pargana Dadr, Tehsil & Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar; hereinafter called "the land".
NOTICE is hereby given to general public that our client Mrs. Poonam Mishra (hereinafter referred as the "owner") is the absolute owner of the said property vide Sale Deed dated 17.09.2024 executed by Mrs. Suman Devi, registered as Document No. 27980, in Book No. 1, Volume no. 45464, of pages 283-288, registered on dated 25/08/2026.
The said owner has informed that Original Sale Deed dated 09.08.2012 executed by Mr. Nitin Tyagi in favour of Mr. Abhishek Raj & Mrs. Neetu Devi our client registered as Document No.15452 forming part of "chain documents", is hereinafter called the "said document" has been lost/misplaced and is not traceable. A FIR to this effect has also been lodged with EAST DISTRICT/ Crime Branch, Delhi, NEW ASHOK NAGAR (e-Police Station), vide LR No. 403786/2026 dated 25/08/2026.
If the aforesaid original document (the said document) or any one of them is found or has been found by any person, the same may be returned and delivered to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below. Further, if any person, body, institution is having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said land, he/she may raise his/ their objection(s), in writing with documentary evidence, by Registered AD Post, to the undersigned at the address mentioned herein below within 07 days of publication of this notice. Otherwise, after expiry of 07 days from the date of publication of this notice, no objection shall be acceptable.
General Public may also take note that any deal or transaction done by anybody on the basis of the said document or any of the said document shall be illegal and not binding on our clients. The person doing so shall be liable to be prosecuted under the law.
SHIVKANT ARORA, ADVOCATE
FOR M/S/INLECTIVE LAW OFFICES
A-74, LOWER GROUND FLOOR,
DEFENCE COLONY, NEW DELHI-110024

The Pioneer
Classified

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Harpal Singh Rawat S/o
Prempal Singh Rawat R/o 212 Block-E Mansa Ram Park Uttam Nagar New Delhi - 110059 Have changed my Name to Harpal Singh.

PD(333)C
I, Mahendri Devi, Mother
of JC-473097M Nb Sub Raju, R/o- Vill- Milak Chakarpur, Post- Muradnagar, Dist- Ghaziabad, U.P.- 201206, have changed my name from Mahendri Devi to Surendri, vide affidavit dated 28/07/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(334)C
I, Islam Chauhan, Father
of No.16022730N Nk Faheem Chauhan, R/o- H.No.644, Rasheed Nagar, Gali No.4, Meerut, U.P.- 250002, have changed my name from Islam Chauhan to Mohd Islam, vide affidavit dated 28/07/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(335)C
I, Bano, Mother of
No.16022730N Nk Faheem Chauhan, R/o- H.No.644, Rasheed Nagar, Gali No.4, Meerut, U.P. - 250002, have changed my name from Bano to Khushird Bano, vide affidavit dated 28/07/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(336)C
I, Sulo Devi, Mother of Nk
(TA) Satyam Kumar, R/o- Vill- Kajichak, PO&P.S- Maheshkhunt, Teh- Gogri, Dist- Khagaria, Bihar- 851213, have changed my name from Sulo Devi to Virkhi Devi, vide Affidavit dated 28/07/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(337)C
I, V Saraswathi, W/o- JC-
334973F Nb Sub Vayyasi Suresh Babu, R/o- VPO- 197 Ramapuram, Teh- Gudipala, Dist- Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh- 517403, have changed my name from V Saraswathi to Vayyasi Saraswathi, vide affidavit dated 28/07/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(338)C
I, Shavitri Devi, W/o JC-
720950A Sub Ghanshyam Swami, R/o- Vill- Swamiyo Ki Dhani (Rahera), PO- Kalyan Pura Khurd, Teh- Kotputli, Dist- Jaipur, Rajasthan- 303108, have changed my name from Shavitri Devi to Savitri Devi, vide affidavit dated 28/07/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(339)C
I, hitherto known as Rajesh
Kumar alias Rajesh Chand S/o Hari Chand R/o H.No. 88, Kotla vihar Ph-4, Chanchal Park, Najafgarh Road, Tilang Pur Kotla, West Delhi, Delhi- 1100432 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rajesh Chand.

IN FOCUS



Cubs of tigress Rani playing near a pond inside their enclosure at Nahargarh Biological Park ahead of International Tiger Day on the outskirts of Jaipur, Rajasthan

PTI

India coordinating with Ukraine to trace two missing seafarers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

India on Tuesday said it is coordinating with Ukrainian authorities in the search for two Indian seafarers who were missing following an attack on a merchant vessel in Odesa port last week.

Four Indian crew members were onboard merchant ship MV AGN Ragnar when it was struck in Ukraine's Odesa port on July 25 and two of them were reported missing.

Two Indian crew members of MV Ragnar were safe and search for two others was continuing, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a media briefing. "The search is underway for them and the



Indian side is in touch with local authorities. We are also in touch with the families of the two missing Indian seafarers. We are doing everything we can to

help," he said.

In the last few months, India has consistently underlined the importance to ensure the safety and freedom of maritime navi-

gation and unimpeded international commerce. Jaiswal said India has a clear position that the Russia-Ukraine conflict should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. "We have been very clear in articulating to both parties, and our partners and friends and to others also, that under no circumstances, commercial shipping or seafarers or civilians or civilian infrastructure must be attacked," he said. "We have condemned those attacks which have happened in the Black Sea region," he said. Jaiswal said six Indian vessels are currently located west of the Strait of Hormuz, in the Persian Gulf, and there are 125 Indian seafarers on board these ships.

BJP MLA Rajeshwar proposes youth advisory council for Gen Z

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Rajeshwar Singh has proposed the creation of a youth advisory council at the State and the national level to enable the new generation, especially the Gen Zs, to become an integral part of policymaking in specific subjects of education, AI, competitive exams and startups among others.

The four-page letter by Singh, a former Enforcement Directorate officer, was sent to UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday. It comes in the backdrop of the nationwide Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protests, largely led by Gen Z students, following the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case that led to the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as the Union Education Minister.

Rajeshwar Singh was an ace investigator of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and a police officer of Uttar Pradesh. He was the Investigating Officer of high-profile cases like the 2G Scam and several anti-money laundering cases. He left the service and joined the BJP in 2022 and became MLA from Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow. According to the legislator, the proposed Youth Advisory Council would function like the advisory council of experts to the prime minister. They would act as police makers on subjects like youth employment, education, Artificial Intelligence, competitive examinations, and the digital economy. "The next phase of governance should empower young people not merely as beneficiaries of Government programmes but as active partners in shaping public policy," the letter stated,

"The proposed council will enable youth to share their ideas, aspirations and experiences becomes an integral part of policy-making," Singh, the MLA from the Sarojini Nagar assembly seat of Lucknow, said. He argued that "rapid" changes driven by AI, technological disruption, competitive examina-



tions, evolving labour markets, entrepreneurship, mental health challenges and the digital economy require Governments to maintain continuous engagement with young citizens rather than relying on "occasional" consultations.

Singh suggested that young members between 18 and 35 years of age should be selected to the proposed council through a transparent process. He said the proposed council should target students and youngsters who have prepared for UPSC and UPSCS exams, top performers in IIT-JEE and NEET, students and alumni of IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and NLU, and other leading global universities, young scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs, innovators, sportspersons, farmers and representatives from aspirational districts with at least 40 per cent representation from women.

"The council can be asked to submit regular 'Youth Pulse Reports' to the policy-makers, providing evidence-based recommendations on employment, education, recruitment reforms, skill development, startups, mental health, sports, digital safety and AI," he stated.

"The greatest strength of any developed nation is its young people. Governments become more responsive, innovative and future-ready when youth are treated not merely as beneficiaries but as partners in policymaking, and participatory governance is one of the strongest foundations of a vibrant democracy," the MLA added.

He said once this proposal is implemented in UP, the state would become the first in India to institutionalise a CM-led Youth Advisory Council, creating a governance model that could be replicated across the country.

LG Sandhu lays foundation stone for 1,500-dog Dwarka shelter



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Lt Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for a dog shelter with a capacity of around 1,500 stray dogs was laid in Delhi's Dwarka.

Spread over around 6,050 square metres in Dwarka Sector 29, the shelter will be developed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) with corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds from GMR Varalakshmi Foundation, a private multinational conglomerate. Officials said construction work will begin shortly and expected to be completed by November this year. BJP MP Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Kailash Gehlot, Mayor Pravesh Wahi and other senior officials were also present.

The L-G said the shelter would provide facilities for the

care and rehabilitation of stray dogs and asked the civic body to involve animal welfare organisations, veterinarians, dog lovers and subject experts so that the project is developed in a "sustainable and compassionate manner". He also visited Delhi's only cremation centre for small animals and reviewed its functioning.

Calling the project "an example of a public-private partnership", the L-G said the LG said, "This is backed by GMR and MCD won't have to spend a single penny," noting that the shelter is being developed at zero cost to the MCD through CSR support extended by the GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.

A senior MCD official had earlier said the Dwarka shelter is among several projects being undertaken to strengthen the city's stray dog management infrastructure.

20 people killed in PoJK poll violence

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ New Delhi

At least 20 people lost their lives, and dozens were injured in Dreik Eidgah and nearby parts of Rawalakot, during the first phase of legislative elections in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). Security was strict throughout the elections. Thousands of protesters connected to the banned Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC) attempted to march. Security forces, including local police, Punjab Rangers, and the military, responded with live ammunition, tear gas, and snipers.

The JKJAAC reported that Usman Nazir, the brother of committee leader Sardar Umar Nazir Kashmiri, was among those killed, along with people from Kotli, Hajira, and nearby towns. Protesters said they saw bodies in the streets and experienced power outages. Electricity and phone service were cut, and most of the region has been without internet since early June. Maulana Fazlur Rehman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) called the Rawalakot shooting "open terrorism" by forces "intoxicated with power" against unarmed people asking for their rights. He said the state failed to address these issues before they turned violent. Elections are taking place in phases amid heavy security, while sit-ins and marches continue. JKJAAC leaders say they will keep pushing for their demands.

Violence like this has happened before. Protests began between June 5 and 7, 2026, after the JKJAAC was banned under anti-terrorism laws and the Supreme Court reserved 12 out



Police officers firing tear gas in Muzaffarabad, the capital of PoJK in 2025 AP

of 45 Legislative Assembly seats for refugees from Indian-administered Kashmir and their descendants living in Pakistan. The JAAC, which includes traders, lawyers, activists, and civil society groups, said these reserved seats reduce local representation and political influence for the region's estimated 4 to 5 million residents. Economic issues such as high electricity bills, rising food prices, and unemployment have also fuelled the movement, with earlier protests reported from 2023 to 2025.

Reacting to the developments, the Ministry of External Affairs' Randhir Jaiswal said at his bi-weekly media briefing. He reiterated that the entire Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, including the areas currently under Pakistan's "illegal and forcible occupation", are parts of India.

"India's position on this matter has been clear, consistent, and well known. The entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, including the areas currently under

Pakistan's illegal and forcible occupation, are integral and inalienable parts of India."

"As we have stated earlier, the ongoing mass protests in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir are the direct consequences of Pakistan's economic exploitation, its denial of the people's fundamental rights, and its administrative oppression," he said. Jaiswal also responded to a question about many Pakistani experts discussing a shared Indus Valley civilisation between India and Pakistan in the context of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), and whether it was an attempt at cultural appropriation.

"A country which has been promoting cross-border terrorism, which has been promoting religious fundamentalism and violence for decades, cannot have any claim to any pluralistic cultural legacy," he said.

"Their abysmal track record on the protection of minorities and their cultural rights makes such desperate attempts look even more phoney," he added.

FROM PAGE - 1

Inakur was replying to a query by Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee, who wanted to know whether any serving Union Minister, Member of Parliament, or their immediate family members have received subsidy under schemes of the NHB during the last five years.

The minister further provided details of serving Union Ministers, Members of Parliament and their immediate family members, who have received financial assistance under the Schemes of the NHB during the last five years.

As per the list, Lumba Ram (MP of Sirohi, Rajasthan) in 2025 and Bhagirath Choudhary (Union Minister of State for Agriculture and MP of Ajmer, Rajasthan) in 2026 got the financial assistance.

Paper leak Bill debate opens amid Pradhan...

TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee said the amendment Bill on paper leaks will not wash away the 12 years of the "incompetence and failure" of the BJP-led Government even as he extended TMC's support to the proposed legislation.

NDA allies TDP and Shiv Sena urged the Government in the Lok Sabha to conduct the NEET-UG examination multiple times a year instead of just once, saying it would benefit students who are unable to appear for the exam on a specified date due to personal emergencies. While TDP MP Lavu Sri Krishna Devarayalu said that even if a close family member dies on the day of the examination, a candidate has no choice but to appear for the exam, Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde said that there is a need to change the system of holding this exam on a specified day only.

PM Narendra Modi becomes world's...

Union Minister of State for PMO Jitendra Singh has posted clips on the introduction of the Bill to amend the anti-paper leak law, along with videos appealing to students to remain patient and asserting that the Government remained open to discussions during the protests held at Jantar Mantar. In the case of Jitendra Singh, multiple posts have been made every day in the past one week, as against an average of four to five posts a week earlier.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has also uploaded several videos centred on the Bill and the paper leak issue. His posts include excerpts from his speeches in Parliament urging political parties to debate and support the Bill, describing examination paper leaks as a "serious national issue" rather than a matter of party poli-

tics. While Rijiju has been among the more active ministers on Instagram, his activity has also gone up substantially now to over a dozen posts every day.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has posted a video highlighting the Government's commitment to ensuring justice for the youth and bringing those responsible for examination paper leaks to justice through fast-track courts.

PM Modi on Sunday announced the constitution of a high-powered task force headed by Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani to recommend reforms to make the exam system leakproof. Union Minister Piyush Goyal has similarly posted videos highlighting the Government's efforts to tackle examination paper leaks, including the provision for fast-track courts. Women and Child Development Minister Annpurna Devi has used Instagram to focus on alleged examination and recruitment paper leaks in Jharkhand.

BJP IT department head Amit Malviya has also been among the party's most active voices on Instagram during the anti-paper leak protests.

Delhi drenched, roads drown

The CM began the inspection from Jan Seva Sadan and travelled by bus via Outer Ring Road and Madhuban Chowk to the DDA Sports Complex in Sector 33, Rohini.

"The roads of the capital are not merely a means of transport but are also an integral part of Delhi's identity, making their proper maintenance and safety, essential. I also directed that road widening, repairs of damaged roads, and the filling of potholes be taken up on priority," the CM said.

Accompanied by senior officials, she travelled along various routes to assess the city's on-ground situation during the monsoon and review key works related to civic amenities. During the inspection, the CM reviewed waterlogging-prone areas, the cleanliness of major roads, and the condition of debris and garbage accumulated along roadsides.

Relentless rain through the morning inundated several parts of the city, with waterlogging reported from Connaught Place, Janpath, ITO, several roads in Lutyens' Delhi, Bharat Mandapam Road, Barakhamba Road, Mathura Road near ITO, Kalindi Kunj and other low-lying areas. Traffic congestion due to waterlogging was also reported on NH-8 near Shankar Vihar, Zakir Hussain Road, the Delhi Cantt-Naraina Flyover-Mayapuri stretch, ITO, Old Rohtak Road, the Madhuban Chowk-Netaji Subhash Place stretch, Peeragarhi, NH-48 near AIIMS, the

Delhi-Noida Road, Kalindi Kunj and Vikas Marg, among other arterial roads.

Continuous downpour has led to airlines issuing travel advisories for passengers, warning of potential flight delays at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport.

According to civic bodies, as many as 130 complaints of waterlogging, uprooted trees and power outages across the national capital. The MCD said its central control room received 36 complaints between 2 pm and 6 pm, including reports of 20 waterlogging and 16 fallen tree complaints from several parts of the city. Delhi Government's PWD has received around 60 complaints of waterlogging and 15 of fallen trees, most of which were resolved within an hour. In the NDMC area, the civic body said it received 38 rain-related complaints, comprising 19 cases of waterlogging, six tree falls and 13 power outages

Govt summons Meta after PM Modi video...

In the nearly 3-minute video, the PM had reassured students that the Government viewed paper leaks and examination irregularities with utmost seriousness and would take strict action against the accused.

Over the last few weeks, Meta has faced regulatory scrutiny on a number of issues. The IT ministry issued a notice to WhatsApp earlier, questioning the Meta-owned platform's proposed username feature, as the Government flagged concerns that it could materially increase online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks.

The Government also slapped a stern notice on Meta over Child Sexual Exploitative and Abuse Material (CSEAM) in paid advertisements on Instagram. MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) ordered Instagram to disable all ads and content promoting and facilitating access to CSEAM, and demanded a detailed explanation bound to a deadline.

Just a few weeks back, Meta's announcement of Muse Image, which was then touted as its most powerful AI image generator, drew criticism and user concerns over data privacy, image scraping and consent, and the Indian Government had said, at that point, that it will assess Meta's Muse AI image generator under the existing legal framework. Subsequently, however, the social media platform scrapped the controversial feature, which enabled users globally to create AI images using public Instagram accounts. "We've heard the feedback that this feature missed the mark, so it's no longer available," Meta had said in a global post.

SC bars action against student protestors

The bench issued a slew of interim directions to States where protests were held to preserve CCTV footage, drone recordings, body-camera footage, wireless communication records, PCR logs and other digital evidence pertaining to the protests.

"Although it has already been stated at the bar by the Solicitor General of India, on instructions, we also, as an abundant precaution, direct that all CCTV footage, drone footage, body-worn camera recordings, videography, wireless communication records, and PCR lodge collections related to the students' protest be preserved," it directed. It also ordered the police authorities to ensure that the personal information and digital data of the protestors, collected during the students' protests, are preserved and are not disclosed to the public domain for the time being.

The bench emphasised that the authorities may not publish any public data/details of the protestors, especially students.

The law must take its course once there is violation of "defined protocol", the apex court said, adding that it will disclose details of the composition of the SIT at a later stage.

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)-led march on July 20 in Delhi witnessed clashes between protesters and security personnel, who used lathis and teargas shells to disperse crowds attempting to move towards Parliament. The protests escalated and spread to several other states.

The protesters were demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak issue.

The agitation ended on Saturday with Pradhan's resignation and the Government agreeing to the demand for compensation to the families of those who had ended their lives and no FIRs against the protesters.

RAF fired pellets at July 20 protests, notes Delhi...

The meeting, attended by senior Delhi Police officers, focused on the circumstances surrounding the GD entry recorded on July 22 and the mention of a senior Delhi Police officer's presence in Zone-1 near Jantar Mantar when the force was allegedly used.

Officials said each round of plastic pellets contains four plastic projectiles, which are designed to be less injurious than metal pellets and do not penetrate the body. It was not immediately known whether plastic pellets were fired at any other locations during the protest.

While the Delhi Police has publicly denied these claims, neither the Central Reserve Police Force



NCPI MPs attend NDA Parliamentary party meet



SIR: 1.5 LAKH VOTERS MARKED UNDER ASDD IN MEGHALAYA

Nearly 1.5 lakh of Meghalaya's total 23.49 lakh voters have been marked under the absent, shifted, dead and duplicate (ASDD) category during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, the Chief Electoral Officer BDR Tiwari's office said on Tuesday.

Those placed under the ASDD category account for 6.37 per cent of the State's total electorate. The list includes 74,851 deceased electors, 28,826 absent voters, 37,914 shifted electors, 5,899 duplicate entries and 2,166 cases where enumeration forms were refused, according to an SIR status report issued by the CEO's office.

The election authorities have urged electors to submit their completed enumeration forms to Booth Level Officers or through the online voter service portal. (PTI)



MPPSC CANDIDATES CAN NOW VIEW MAINS ANSWER SHEETS

To promote greater transparency, the Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MPPSC) has announced that candidates will now be able to access their descriptive answer sheets from the State service main exams held between 2019 and 2024.

The exercise will begin with the answer sheets of the State service main examination 2019, and the inspection process for them will commence in November, according to an official release issued on Monday.

Candidates will subsequently be allowed to go through their answer sheets of the State service main examination conducted in 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 in a phased manner. (PTI)

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

For the first time, a group of MPs who left the Trinamool Congress and joined the NCPI attended a meeting of the NDA parliamentary party on Tuesday with the attendance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top Union ministers.

As many as 20 Lok Sabha MPs revolted against their party, TMC, and joined the little-known Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI). While they are sitting separately in Lok Sabha, away from the TMC MPs, Speaker Om Birla is yet to take a call

on giving NCPI recognition. After joining the NCPI, the MPs expressed their allegiance to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. A prominent face of the group, Sudip Bandyopadhyay, recently met the prime minister. The NDA parliamentary party meeting was held at the Parliament House complex.

"I participated in the NDA meeting. It was an enriching and informative meeting in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Today, we had a discussion on FTAs. It was a positive discussion," NCPI MP Sayoni Ghosh said.



MPs Saayoni Ghosh and June Malia after the NDA Parliamentary meeting, at the Parliament House in New Delhi on Tuesday

She also said that everyone should support the anti-paper leak bill, which will come up for discussion this afternoon. Another lawmaker, Kakoli

BJP alleges ₹400 crore veterinary doctor recruitment scam in Karnataka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bengaluru

Alleging a ₹400 crore scam in the veterinary doctors recruitment, BJP's Karnataka unit president BY Vijayendra on Tuesday asked: "How much share has gone to Chief Minister DK Shivakumar?"

The BJP leader also demanded a CBI investigation into the alleged mega scam in the recruitment of Veterinary Officers. Speaking to reporters after participating in a protest by KPSC aspirants at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Tuesday, he said corruption was corruption, irrespective of during which tenure the recruitment took place. Several BJP leaders, including the Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, joined him in the protest.

Questioning why the State Government was reluctant to hand over the case to the CBI, Vijayendra asked, "What share of the alleged Rs 400-crore scam in the Veterinary Officers' recruitment had gone to the Chief Minister and the State



BJP's Karnataka unit president BY Vijayendra

Government? Why is the Congress Government playing with the future of the children?" He urged the Government for reforms in the KPSC to put an end to corruption and demanded a comprehensive discussion on the issue in the Legislature. He said youth from across the State had gathered to protest over the alleged KPSC scam.

"This is a ₹400-crore scam. How can such a major scam be entrusted to an internal committee for investigation? When

the fence starts eating the crop, justice cannot be expected through an internal inquiry," he remarked.

Questioning the examination system adopted by the state, he asked why Karnataka was implementing a recruitment process that was not followed anywhere else in the country. He alleged that the system had been designed to facilitate corruption and generate illegal gains.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge

said on Tuesday that the cases related to the alleged irregularities in recruiting 400 veterinary officers have been handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). The KPSC has been in turmoil following Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot suspending KPSC Chairman Shivashankarappa S Sahukar on July 13 following allegations that he allegedly facilitated the illegal selection of his two daughters as Industrial Extension Officers.

RSS condemns Mohandas' remarks on CJP protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Thiruvananthapuram

The RSS on Tuesday condemned the controversial remarks made by right-wing political observer TG Mohandas on the recent students' agitation in New Delhi, saying they were his "personal thoughts" and deserved to be denounced.

In a statement, senior RSS functionary KB Sreekumar clarified that Mohandas was not an RSS office-bearer at any level.

"TG Mohandas's comments on the recent protest are his personal thoughts. He is not an RSS official at any level. RSS doesn't agree with his views, and they should be condemned in the highest possible manner," Sreekumar said.

The clarification came a day after Mohandas's remarks triggered widespread protests in Kerala and on social media, prompting the pro-CPI student outfit All India Students' Federation (AISF) to lodge a police complaint against him.

Mohandas allegedly said



TG Mohandas

in a YouTube video that the Delhi students' protest over the NEET paper leak "could lead to incidents of gang rape and that there would be no complaints against that since those attending the protest like rape and there are girls who enjoy being raped."

In the same video, he also allegedly said that, if he were in charge, he would impose a curfew, order the crowd to disperse, and then open fire if they refused, claiming that although some people would be killed or permanently injured, the situation would be brought under control within hours and the bodies shifted to hospitals.

Maharashtra Cabinet approves new courts under NDPS, SC-ST Act

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Maharashtra Cabinet on Tuesday approved the establishment of new courts, including a special court in Pune for cases registered under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, and five new courts for Atrocity Act matters.

The decision, taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, followed a recommendation from the Bombay High Court which noted that a large number of NDPS cases were pending in Pune, an official release said.

Further, the cabinet gave its nod for creating a post of district and additional sessions judge and seven support staff for the new NDPS Act court and sanctioned ₹1.26 crore for its establishment and operations.



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

At present, around 30,000 NDPS cases are pending across Maharashtra, including 1,425 in Pune. Courtroom No 22 at the Pune District Court has been allocated for the new Special Court.

The Cabinet also approved the establishment of a Junior Division Civil Court and Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Court at Kurduwadi in Madha taluka of Solapur district. The new court will be provided with one judicial officer and 11 regular sup-

porting staff posts. An expenditure of ₹1.18 crore for setting up the court was approved. With the establishment of the new court, residents of Kurduwadi and surrounding areas will not need to travel long distances for civil and criminal cases, the release said.

A district and additional sessions court was also approved at Karjat in Ahilyanagar district, which will cater to residents of Karjat and Jamkhed talukas.

It will have one judicial officer and 21 supporting staff posts, including personnel for the Government pleader's office.

The Cabinet approved ₹3.30 crore for establishing the court and the Government pleader's office.

Exclusive special courts will be established at Ahilyanagar, Parbhani, Solapur, Nanded and Yavatmal for cases under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Each Exclusive Special Court will be provided with one judge. The Cabinet sanctioned ₹4.51 crore for establishing these courts.

There are currently 17,023 pending cases under the SC-ST Act across Maharashtra. Of these, 1,014 cases are pending in Ahilyanagar, 526 in Parbhani, 516 in Solapur, 735 in Nanded, and 723 in Yavatmal, the release informed.

16 Maoists surrender before Jharkhand Police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ranchi

Sixteen Maoists, with six of them carrying a combined bounty of ₹39 lakh, surrendered before the Jharkhand Police here on Tuesday, a senior officer said.

Santosh Mahto alias Basudev Da alias Dilip, who was wanted in 128 cases and carrying a ₹15 lakh reward on his head, was among those who surrendered, he said.

"Of the 16 Maoists, six were carrying a total bounty of ₹39 lakh on their heads. Five women members were also part of the group. A regional committee member and a zonal committee member are among them," the officer said.

Two sub-zonal committee members and two area committee functionaries were among those who surrendered, he said.

The surrender of Santosh Mahto, a regional commit-



tee member of the banned CPI (Maoist), was one of the big achievements for the Jharkhand Police, the officer said.

"Santosh was wanted in 128 cases registered at various police stations in several districts. He was accused of being involved in an IED blast in a forest under the border police stations of Manoharpur, Chotnagar and Jhariakela on March 1, injuring a jawan of the Cobra battalion," the officer said.

Jharkhand DGP Tadasha

Mishra termed the surrender of Maoists as another "big achievement for the State police".

"We are committed to eliminating extremism and crimes from the State. The Jharkhand Police are working towards their commitment to make the State clean," she said on the occasion.

Proscribed CPI (Maoist) zonal committee member Chandan Lohra, who was wanted in 78 cases and was carrying a bounty of ₹10

lakh, surrendered, he said.

The Maoists laid down six INSAS and two AK-47 rifles besides 38 magazines and 1,562 cartridges, the police added.

Other red rebels who laid down arms include sub-zonal committee members Anil Turi alias Ujjwal and Sukhlal Birjayan alias Akela, both carrying rewards of Rs 5 lakh each.

The proscribed group's area committee members Sudesh Honhaga alias Sonaram Honhaga and Risiv, both carrying bounties of Rs 2 lakh each, and zonal committee member Santosh Manjhi alias Jagabandhu surrendered before the police, the officer said.

As part of an anti-Maoist campaign across Jharkhand, a total of 93 red rebels have been arrested, 45 have surrendered before the police, and as many as 22 were killed in encounters with security forces in 2026, the police claimed.

SIR - 2026 Delhi

विशेष गहन पुनरीक्षण (Special Intensive Revision)

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August 08 2026

Last date 08 August 2026

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India blames Pakistan for SAARC stagnation amid Maldives push

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India on Tuesday underscored its commitment to meaningful regional collaboration in South Asia while pointing to the actions of one member state as the primary barrier to progress within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The comments came in reply to Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's recent appeal for the group's revival.

Speaking at a regular media interaction, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that New Delhi has long supported vigorous regional ties and continues to pursue them. He noted that people across South Asia understand which nation and which patterns of behaviour have obstructed SAARC's effectiveness, adding that genuine cooperation depends on mutual goodwill.

Muizzu raised the issue



External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

during the Maldives' Independence Day address on Sunday. He described SAARC as an important vehicle for regional stability and urged members to settle disagreements through talks. The Maldivian leader also indicated his country's readiness to help restart stalled meetings and, if required, to facilitate dialogue between parties.

SAARC brings together Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Established in 1985, the organisation last held a summit in Kathmandu in 2014. Plans for a 2016 gathering in Islamabad collapsed after India declined to attend in the wake of a major terrorist assault on an army base in Uri that September. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan similarly stayed away, and no summit has convened since.

Over the past several years India has directed greater attention toward BIMSTEC, viewing the Bay of Bengal

grouping as a more practical and productive arena for multi-sectoral cooperation. Officials have indicated that limited movement under SAARC prompted this shift in emphasis.

Bangladesh has voiced comparable interest in reactivating SAARC in recent months, sometimes linking it to complementary work with BIMSTEC. India has consistently maintained that any deeper engagement requires an environment free from cross-border terrorism and built on trust.

The regional body represents roughly two billion people and a combined economy approaching five trillion dollars. While technical exchanges have occurred intermittently, the prolonged absence of leadership-level meetings has left the organisation largely dormant. Jaiswal's remarks reaffirmed India's openness to cooperation provided the necessary atmosphere of goodwill exists.

MHA approves ad hoc promotions to ease officer shortage in Ladakh

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved temporary promotions to address the officer shortage in Ladakh. Eligible officials will fill vacant Group 'B' Gazetted Administrative Service posts. Announced on July 27, 2026, this temporary measure aims to improve governance in the region.

The MHA explained that while a permanent system for regular promotions is being developed, the Union Territory Administration can use temporary appointments to fill current vacancies. This short-term solution should quickly help departments facing staff shortages and give officials who have been waiting for promotions a chance to move forward.

This approval came after Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena personally raised the issue with the Ministry. He pointed out that regular promotions have



been delayed because the necessary Recruitment Rules have not yet been announced. Because of this, many departments have had fewer officers, slowing decision-making and affecting public services.

After the Ministry's approval, LG Saxena said the decision would strengthen governance in Ladakh and support the career goals of deserving officials. "It will help overcome the shortage of Gazetted officers, improve administrative efficiency and ensure uninterrupted delivery of public services," he said. He has asked the Chief Secretary to start the promo-

tion process immediately so the benefits reach people as soon as possible.

Officials say the shortage has been especially noticeable in field administration, where gazetted officers are key to coordination, supervision, and the timely implementation of schemes. By letting eligible candidates take on these roles temporarily, the administration expects smoother operations, faster approvals, and better service for people in Leh, Kargil, and other remote areas.

The MHA has stipulated that all such promotions must strictly adhere to the guidelines. The Ministry has

said that all promotions must follow the rules set out in the Department of Personnel and Training's Office Memorandum dated 3 April 2013, as updated. Candidates must meet the eligibility criteria to ensure a fair and transparent process. Once these temporary promotions are in place, they should bring new talent into important administrative roles, help keep governance running smoothly, speed up decisions, and improve public services in the Union Territory.

The ultimate goal, the present measure offers a practical bridge that balances administrative exigencies with the career progression of officials who have been waiting for years. The step marks a significant intervention by the Centre in response to the ground realities of Ladakh's administrative setup. It reflects the priority being accorded to strengthening institutions in the strategically important Union Territory.

SC slams CBI, Delhi Police over silence in Indiabulls probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday pulled up the CBI and Delhi Police's Economic Offence Wing (EoW) for being silent on allegations of dubious transactions involving Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited (IHFL), terming their conduct "shocking" and saying it appeared to be a "case of quid pro quo".

In July 2024, the tainted company changed its name to Sammaan Capital Limited and changed the shareholding pattern.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana criticised the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for neither taking a final call on registering a regular case despite earlier directions nor filing a status report on the investigation carried out so far.

"Owing to the negligence of CBI and EoW of Delhi Police in not even filing a status report and total failure to apprise this court about steps taken for registration of RC (Regular Case) for investigation, we would have summoned the heads of these agencies but for the persuasion of ASG SV Raju, who assures that needful will be

done and status report will be filed within two weeks," the bench said in its order.

The bench had initially directed the presence of the CBI director and Delhi Police commissioner in the court but deferred the move after Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Raju assured the court that a comprehensive affidavit and a status report would be filed within two weeks.

"This is a case which is very shocking to us. Investigating agencies are keeping silent on the status of investigation in the case. Definitely this is a case of quid pro quo. They are completely silent... file a status report," CJ Kant said.

Appearing for petitioner NGO Citizens Whistle Blowers Forum, advocate Prashant Bhushan said the last affidavit filed by CBI in January had referred to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) finding instances of siphoning of funds.

He pointed out that the EoW had registered certain FIRs and the CBI was considering clubbing five cases flagged by the ED with the Yes Bank investigation.

Bhushan also informed the court that former Indiabulls promoter Sameer Gehlaut had moved to London and



argued that the matter warranted the constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT).

The bench noted that no affidavit had been filed by the investigating agencies since January and asked the ASG what the probe agencies were doing in the case.

Raju said the investigation was continuing and that the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) had taken up one case while the EoW was investigating four cases.

"Please give me two weeks to file a comprehensive affidavit in the matter along with a status report," the ASG said, adding that it has been found that all loans extended by Sammaan Capital have been repaid in full, with interest.

The CJ said, "What has

the CBI been doing from January to July? We don't want to hold an investigation against innocent persons. Let them have the courage to say that because money was returned, no offence was made out. What was EoW doing? Does it not have the guts to file a status report in the case? In this case, the conduct of CBI and EoW was highly questionable."

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Sammaan Capital, said Gehlaut has no shareholding in the company and has nothing to do with it. Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Nalin Kohli, appearing along with Singhvi, also denied any wrongdoing.

On December 17 last year, the top court directed the CBI Director to take a final call

within a week on the registration of regular cases and file a fresh compliance affidavit on the date fixed.

Earlier, on November 19, the court had questioned the "reluctance" of the CBI and SEBI to probe the allegations of "dubious transactions" against IHFL. It ordered the agency director to hold a meeting with SEBI, the SFIO and the ED to look into the matter.

It had also pulled up the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for the compounding of multiple offences committed by IHFL, and came down heavily on SEBI over the "double standards" adopted by the market regulator in different cases over its jurisdiction to probe into illegalities.

The NGO has alleged large-scale irregularities in the affairs of IHFL, claiming that the company and its erstwhile promoters advanced dubious loans to entities owned by large corporate groups, which then allegedly routed the funds back into the accounts of companies owned by the promoters to increase their personal wealth.

The NGO has challenged the February 2, 2024, order of the High Court refusing to order an investigation into the matter.

President Murmu's 300 gifts to be e-auctioned beginning from August 5

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

As many as 300 gifts, including a memento in honour of Operation Sindoor, received by President Droupadi Murmu will be e-auctioned from August 5.

Launched on Tuesday to mark the occasion of the successful completion of four years of Murmu's presidency, this initiative reflects the enduring spirit of public service, inclusivity, and shared national responsibility, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. Murmu (68) was sworn in as the 15th President on July 25, 2022, making her the country's first tribal head of state.

"On completion of four years of her Presidency, President Droupadi Murmu launched the third edition of e-Upahar, featuring 300 curated presidential gifts for public auction. The auction will be open from 5 August to 5 September 2026. All proceeds from the auction will be used to support social causes," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on social media on Tuesday.

These are far more than ceremonial gifts and they are expressions of affection, respect, and goodwill, reflecting India's extraordinary cultural diversity, artistic excellence, and the collective aspirations of its people, read a booklet on the e-auction of the presidential gift collection.

"Every artefact carries a unique story of a place, a tradition, a community, or a memorable moment in the nation's journey," it said.

One of the items on the auction is a "memento in honouring Operation Sindoor".



"This golden, hued memento symbolises national strength, pride, and unwavering resolve," it said.

It stands as a living tribute to the Indian Air Force's valour and commitment to national defence, inspiring future generations with ideals of bravery, honour, and patriotism, the description reads.

Another item on auction is "I03 LVM3 (formerly GSLV MK III) launch vehicle replica", symbolising India's space achievements, technological excellence and self-reliance.

The Launch Vehicle Mark 3 (LVM3), earlier known as the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III), is ISRO's most powerful heavy lift space launch vehicle.

It can carry up to 4,000 kilograms into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit and up to 8,000 kilograms into low earth orbit.

A painting of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath Ji, replica of Shri Tripureshwari Devi temple (in Tripura), Rajasthani miniature painting and a framed painting of Gautam Buddha are also among the selected gifts to be made available on auction.

West Bengal launches anti-corruption helplines

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari formally walked the talk against corruption, formally inaugurating on Tuesday an Artificial Intelligence-powered control room at State secretariat Nabanna with four dedicated toll-free numbers. This, in addition to his Government formally rolling out ₹5-lakh Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme for those who would fall short of eligibility for the centrally sponsored Ayushman Bharat insurance scheme.

The helpline numbers would operate between 9 am and 6 pm from Monday to Saturday. The newly inaugurated helpline numbers — 155334 for cut money, 155335 for syndicate rai, 155337 for illegal road taxes, 155339 for illegal distilleries — would allow people to register complaints regarding any kind of corrupt acts, including extortion, and deficiency in service, from delay in imple-



West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari during a felicitation ceremony for 100 NEET toppers from the State in Howrah

menting infrastructural projects to denial of Government services.

"From now on, all the complaints will directly reach me regarding cut money, syndicate rai, illegal tolls or illegal distilleries that often cause hooch tragedies," the Chief Minister, whose Home Department on Tuesday effected a massive reshuffling in the subaltern section of the police and executive administration, said.

About 99 Block Development Officers, 31 Police Inspectors and 8 inspectors of women's police

stations were on Tuesday shuffled out, sources said.

The helpline numbers are comparable to a similar initiative by the previous Mamata Banerjee Government, which had launched a Didi ke Bolo (tell it to Didi — as Banerjee was called) campaign in 2021 but arguably failed to achieve its desired ends.

Apart from starting the helpline the Adhikari Government on Tuesday formally rolled out the Mukhyamantri Swasthya Bima Yojana (MMSBY) (Chief Minsiter's Health Insurance

Scheme), enabling the citizens to avail of a cashless health insurance package of up to ₹5 lakh — "but not those who qualify for Ayushman Bharat or have already enrolled in the previous Swasthya Saathi scheme," sources said.

The package will be available to all members of the family that has less than a household income of Rs 8 lakh per annum, the Chief Minister said. The scheme would be valid throughout the country, Government sources said.

However, those who were already enrolled in CGHS or ESI schemes would not be eligible for the MMSBY, sources said. Other people who have been excluded from the scheme are State or Central Government employees, pensioners under Government health frameworks, and 70-plus senior citizens covered directly under Ayushman Bharat. The scheme would require Aadhaar-based verification, sources said.

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday 'literally' took a masterclass to explain the difference between regret and forgiveness.

The tutorial was delivered promptly by Omar shortly after the former Chief Minister and People's Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti, expressed regret over her recent remarks at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, which had triggered a political controversy.

Responding to the controversy, Mehbooba Mufti said she had attended the protest at the request of Kashmiri students studying outside Jammu and Kashmir. During an interaction with journalists at Jantar Mantar, Mufti used the word "bahana" (excuse) to refer to militancy, a remark that drew criticism.

"I said that militancy becomes a bahana (an excuse). I did not use that word accidentally or in haste. I thought about it before saying it."

However, she said the remark had subsequently been interpreted differently from what she intended.

"That single word was blown completely out of proportion."

Speaking to media persons on the sidelines of the Mega Job Fair 2026 at Amar Singh College, Srinagar, Omar Abdullah said there is a clear difference between expressing regret and seeking forgiveness.



She (Mehbooba Mufti) had not issued an unconditional apology over her controversial remarks, asserting that expressing regret with the word "if" cannot be termed a genuine apology.

"When someone says 'if anyone was hurt,' it is not an apology. There is a difference between regret and forgiveness," Omar said.

Omar also criticised PDP MLA Waheed Parra over his claim that the controversial video was AI-generated, saying the PDP chief herself had now admitted that the video was genuine.

"For five days people were told it was AI. Today their own party president admitted she herself made those remarks. Those who misled the people should answer for it," he said.

On the PDP's proposed August 5 protest seeking restoration of Article 370, Omar said the party itself was responsible for the present political situation.

"If they had not brought the BJP to power in Jammu and Kashmir, we would not have reached this stage. If they now realise their mistake and want to rectify it, that is their decision," Omar Abdullah said.

Addressing a press conference in Srinagar during the day, Mehbooba also clarified she never claimed that the video was fake or AI-generated and made it clear that her statement had been misconstrued because of an incomplete expression made in haste while speaking to several journalists.

She said she has dedicated nearly three decades of her life to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and has never sought personal gain through politics, adding that whatever she has earned is the trust and affection of the people.

"If my words have hurt the sentiments of the people of

Jammu and Kashmir, I sincerely apologise. The people here consider me their own, and if they have been pained because of my remarks, I express my regret," she said.

Mehbooba accused political opponents of attempting to exploit the controversy for political gains and alleged that her remarks were deliberately projected out of context to damage her credibility.

She further said despite facing political and personal pressures over the years, including actions against members of her family after 2019, she has continued to raise issues concerning the rights and dignity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Reiterating her stand, the PDP president said her political struggle has always remained focused on safeguarding the interests of Jammu and Kashmir and serving its people.

Mobile disaster alerts reach all networks, remote areas: Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

From avalanches in the Himalayas to industrial and man-made disasters in urban centres, India's mobile-based disaster alert system issues geo-targeted warnings in regional languages that reach users across all mobile networks, including those in remote and vulnerable areas, the Government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

In a written response, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said that the



Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai

Cell Broadcast Alert System is used to provide timely warnings for disasters with very short lead time, including cyclones, tsunamis, heavy rainfall, light-

ning, flash floods, thunderstorms, hailstorms, avalanches, cloudbursts and industrial or man-made disasters, besides other events requiring immediate public alerting.

Warning-generating agencies provide geo-targeted warnings, which are then disseminated to people in the affected areas.

Rai said the system operates through the Integrated Alert System based on the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), implemented by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Rajnath unveils policy reforms for ICG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday here unveiled two significant policy reforms for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) aimed at promoting gender parity in the induction and service conditions of officers, and streamlining the administrative procedures for granting ex gratia to the families of personnel reported missing at sea while on duty.

The first policy directive establishes a comprehensive, women-centric approach by ushering in a gender-neutral framework for the induction of officers into the ICG.

The highlights of the policy include induction of women candidates into both Short Service Appointments (SSA)



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during the unveiling of two policy reforms for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in New Delhi

and Permanent Appointments (PA) at par with their male counterparts. SSA has also been opened for male candidates.

The policy ensures equal opportunities for career progression, commencing right from the ab-initio training

phase. The existing PA women officers shall also be considered for promotion to higher positions subject to fulfilment of eligibility conditions. The existing serving women officers on SSA will also be provided an option to convert their service to a PA,

subject to the fulfilment of stipulated conditions. This progressive step reflects the Government's commitment to Nari Shakti and equal opportunity in the nation's maritime security apparatus.

The second policy reform brings relief and administrative ease to the Next of Kin (NoK) of the personnel who unfortunately go missing at sea in the line of duty. The key highlights of the policy include the authority to declare an ICG personnel missing at sea while on duty as 'presumed dead' for the purpose of ex-gratia.

The reform significantly eases and accelerates the process for the grant of ex-gratia compensation and terminal benefits to the NoK.

This measure ensures that the families of brave person-

nel are not subjected to prolonged administrative delays during times of mental trauma.

Lauding the ICG for its exemplary service over the past five decades, Rajnath Singh exuded confidence that these forward-looking policies will further strengthen the morale and operational efficacy of the force as it marches toward its Swarnim Jayanti (Golden Jubilee) in 2027.

He reaffirmed Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government's resolve to strengthen the ICG as a modern, capable and future-ready maritime force. Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, DG ICG Director General Paramesh Sivamani and other senior officials attended the event.

Change *dil ka angle*, not camera angle: Priyanka

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi needs to change his "*dil ka angle*" instead of camera angles if he wants to win over the Gen Z, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi told Parliament Tuesday in a sharp barb over his Instagram outreach to student protesters last week.

Priyanka Gandhi also launched a stinging attack on the Government over the lathi-charge on students, saying every 'lathi' blow on any boy or girl, hurt the Government's prestige more than the backs of the students. "Why was it necessary to fire tear gas shells at students, to rain lathis on them? Why was it necessary — to humiliate young girls by tearing their clothes, to have them beaten mercilessly? Why was it necessary to fire pellet guns and AK-47s at the country's youth? Are they terrorists," the Congress general secretary asked, participating in a discussion in Lok Sabha on 'The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill 2026'.

"Today, these questions are being asked not just by the Congress party, but by the entire nation, and the responsibility to answer them lies with the Government. Why does this Government fear the country's youth? Who gave it the right to suppress their voices," she said. Priyanka Gandhi also dismissed the Government's announcement of setting up fast-track courts to deal with paper leaks, saying fast track courts already have a very poor record. "Blaming



the opposition in Parliament, playing hollow political games won't work. If the prime minister wants to win over the Gen Z, then making videos with different camera angles will not help. The prime minister needs to change his '*dil ka angle*,' not the angle of cameras," she said. "This new generation is aware and has an immense capacity to recognize lies. To win their hearts, PM Modi will have to step onto the path of truth," Priyanka Gandhi said.

Under Modi's governance, grave 'injustice and barbarity' has been done to the youth, she alleged.

"Accept this truth, take responsibility, take concrete steps, and consult experts and take all stakeholders along to prepare a new education system after deep consultations...PM Modi will have to take steps to create employment. Education and healthcare must expand in the country, so that children can dream of a bright future," she said.

In her 29-minute speech, Priyanka Gandhi also said students can be removed from the streets, but not their questions. "Every 'lathi' blow on any boy or girl,

hurt the Government's prestige more than the backs of the students. The youth of the country are demanding justice?not charity. They had come not to topple the Government, but to redeem their trust," she said.

Home Minister Amit Shah and Modi will have to answer who gave the order to attack the children with pellet guns, she asked and added that the question is being asked by the entire country.

Talking about her visit to RML hospital last week to meet a young woman injured in the protests and the interaction with her mother, Priyanka Gandhi asked Modi and Shah as to what was the need for suppressing an innocent little girl, humiliating girls and tearing their clothes, unleashing tear gas, pellet guns, and AK-47s on students.

Priyanka Gandhi said the demand of the protesting students was that action should be taken against those who leaked exam papers, reform of education system, education minister Dharmendra Pradhan should resign, and action should be taken against those who brutalized students, and an apology be issued.

No paper leak case in Punjab, Opposition lying: Cheema



Harpal Singh Cheema

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chandigarh

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Tuesday rejected the Opposition's charge of a paper leak in the State, claiming that it is trying to spread lies against the AAP Government.

Addressing the media here, Cheema said there has been no paper leak in the past four years of the Bhagwant Mann Government.

Opposition parties have been attacking the Mann Government over the issue of a cheating racket detected recently in a pharmacy officer recruitment exam and are demanding the resignation of Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains and Health Minister Balbir Singh.

On July 19, Punjab Police dismantled a highly sophisticated, interstate cheating racket operating during the pharmacy officer examination. A total of seven key conspirators and 28 candidates were held. Police also recovered 27 battery-operated wireless cheating devices.

Cheema said, "There has not been a single case of paper leak in Punjab. Opposition parties are trying to mislead our youths."

Referring to the pharmacy officer exam, the minister said some youths in the exam were caught cheating using electronic means.

Students must be protected, not arsonists: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday said the Supreme Court's interim order on petitions related to protests over the alleged NEET paper leak draws a clear distinction between genuine student protesters and those involved in violence, stressing that while "dissent is okay, danga (riot) is not".

The remarks came after the Supreme Court directed authorities not to take coercive action against protesters while continuing investigation in FIRs and to release those under 18 years of age, provided they have no criminal records. It also asked authorities to preserve electronic and digital evidence relating to the recent nationwide stir over the NEET paper leak.

"The allegations prima facie warrant consideration of a fair and independent probe, which must also address the concerns of families of over 200 injured police personnel," a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant observed, while hearing a batch of peti-



BJP spokesperson Shehzaad Poonawalla

tions alleging police brutality during the demonstrations. BJP national spokesperson Shehzaad Poonawalla said the Supreme Court has dealt with the matter in a "mature" and "sensitive" manner. "SC has weighed in very maturely and sensitively. It must be welcomed by all," he said in a post on social media.

"Students and arsonists or rioters are different. Students must be protected. Arsonists cannot. The court says this. Dissent is okay, danga (riot) is not. Students, okay; arsonists, not. Protests

are okay; provocation is not," he said. Poonawalla asserted that the Government is already committed to ensuring that no cases are pursued against genuine protesters.

"But cases will continue for arsonists. There can be no blanket suraksha kawach (protection shield) for those who assault, molest, etc with established criminal antecedents," he added.

Citing CJ's observations, Poonawalla also said the court has noted that the allegations "prima facie warrant consideration of a fair and independent probe, which must also address the concerns of families of over 200-250 injured police personnel."

The bench, also including Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana, directed all States where protests were held to preserve CCTV footage, drone recordings, body-camera footage, wireless communication records, PCR logs and other digital evidence pertaining to the protests. It also ordered that any digital data collected on protesters be preserved but not brought into the public domain.

Assam flood situation improves with receding water levels, no fresh deaths

TONY DAS
■ Guwahati

Assam's flood situation improved with no fresh fatalities reported, the number of affected people decreasing to 4.45 lakh and water levels receding in several districts, officials said on Tuesday. A central team visited Sivasagar, one of the worst-hit districts in the current wave of floods, and reviewed the situation in the eastern parts of the state, they said.

The toll is currently at 68 with no fresh deaths recorded and no person was reported missing, an official bulletin said. The officials said Sivasagar, Golaghat, Charaideo, Jorhat, Nagaon and Kamrup (Metropolitan) continued to be impacted by the floods, but the number of people hit by the deluge decreased to 4.45 lakh. Charaideo remained the worst-hit district, where 1.88 lakh people remained affected, followed by Sivasagar (1.44 lakh) and Jorhat (74,458).

Till Sunday, the number of affected people was over 5.24 lakh across five districts. Altogether 90 relief camps remained opera-



Assam CM Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma chaired a review meeting with Ministers, MLAs, District Commissioners and senior officials to review the prevailing flood situation and the ongoing relief and rehabilitation measure

tional, sheltering 28,695 displaced people. Additionally, 94 relief distribution centres were also functional, the bulletin said. The Dhanisiri (S) river was flowing above the danger level at

Numaligarh in Golaghat district. Multiple agencies, including the NDRF, SDRF and civil defence personnel, are carrying out the rescue and relief operations. A total crop area of 37,139.52 hectares was still

submerged, while damage to houses, roads and other infrastructure was reported from various parts of the affected districts, the officials said.

Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his "personal attention" to the Assam flood, which has claimed 68 lives so far while over 4.45 lakh people continue to reel under the deluge. He said the state Government has been able to reach all affected villages and was working on a war footing to provide relief to the flood-hit population.

PM Modi on Tuesday held a meeting with Union Ministers and BJP MPs belonging to Assam at the Parliament House complex to review the state's flood situation and later said on X the Centre was working closely with the Assam Government in providing relief to the affected people. A five-member central team led by MHA Joint Secretary M Ramachandrudu visited Sivasagar on Monday to review Upper Assam's flood situation with state ministers Keshab Mahanta and Bimal Borah, and local officials

accompanying them. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, in a social media post, said power restoration work was going on in a phased manner.

"Since this morning, the number of families without power has declined by another 25 per cent. As floodwaters continue to recede, power supply is being restored across more affected areas. I will continue to share regular updates and keep you posted until power is restored to every affected household," he said in the post late on Monday evening.

Sarma also said that with water receding, disinfection and fogging drives across villages have been started to prevent the outbreak of any disease. Water Resources Minister Susanta Borgohain said steps were being taken to bury livestock and animals killed in the deluge. "The recent floods in Assam have sadly claimed the lives of many livestock. To prevent water contamination and the spread of diseases, the deceased animals are being buried and disposed of scientifically," he said.

21 crore screened, 6 lakh treated for Hepatitis: Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

More than 21 crore people have been screened for viral hepatitis and over six lakh patients have received free treatment under the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme (NVHCP), the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

Marking World Hepatitis Day and eight years of the programme, Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel called for a "Hepatitis-Mukt Bharat" and urged the Centre, states and other stakeholders to intensify efforts to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Patel said India is among the few countries providing free treatment for Hepatitis C and free management of Hepatitis B — a serious liver infection caused by a virus.

She said the cost of medicines has been reduced to less than a dollar and quality diagnostics are being made increasingly accessible to facilitate early diagnosis and timely treatment.

Highlighting the pro-



Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel

gramme's expansion, Patel said screening and treatment services are now available through the country's network of over 1.85 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, taking hepatitis care closer to communities.

She said the Hepatitis B vaccine, introduced under the Universal Immunisation Programme in 2011, has achieved more than 92 per cent birth-dose coverage.

The minister, however, said only around 65 per cent of pregnant women are currently being screened for Hepatitis B and urged states and Union Territories to achieve 100 per cent screening to ensure timely administration of the Hepatitis B birth dose and Hepatitis B

Immunoglobulin (HBIG) for newborns of infected mothers.

Calling Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C "silent killers", Patel stressed the need to vaccinate health care workers, strengthen interventions among high-risk groups and create greater public awareness about free testing and treatment services available at Government health facilities.

Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava said the programme has established 1,153 treatment centres, surpassing the target of one treatment centre in every district, including more than 70 specialised centres providing advanced care.

Mehbooba Mufti announces protests on August 5 for restoration of Article 370

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Srinagar

People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday announced that her party would hold peaceful protests at district headquarters across Jammu and Kashmir on August 5 to press for the restoration of Article 370 and "resolution of the Kashmir issue".

The Centre revoked J&K's special status by abrogating Article 370 of the Constitution on August 5, 2019.

"All our people, who are sitting here, will hold peaceful protests in their districts on August 5 for the restoration of Article 370, 35A, and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue," Mehbooba Mufti said at a press conference at the party headquarters here on the occasion of the PDP's 27th foundation day.

The announcement comes close on the heels of National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, ministers, MLAs and party workers holding a protest in the national capital on July 20, demanding the immediate restoration of statehood to the Union Territory.

Mehbooba Mufti, the former chief minister, said that August 5 was the day "everything was stripped from us". She said the party, on its foundation day, has passed a resolution including on "resolution of Kashmir issue".

"The party hereby resolves to reaf-



firm its belief in 'peace with dignity' as the only sustainable path towards lasting peace, through dialogue, reconciliation, confidence-building and meaningful democratic engagement among all stakeholders," the resolution read.

She said PDP is committed to "peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue", alongside the restoration of Article 370, Article 35A, "our identity, and statehood".

"PDP remains committed to this cause. We will continue our struggle, and God willing, we will achieve it," she said.

Mehbooba Mufti said her father and PDP founder Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's vision cannot move forward

unless Jammu and the Kashmir valley walk together, understand each other's pain and sorrow and work jointly for each other's progress.

"We will endeavour to walk hand-in-hand, just as the people of Kargil and Leh in Ladakh move forward together," she said.

She also called for restoration of trade and connectivity, saying J&K has been constrained like a flower in a pot, even as it can become a vital bridge between Central Asia and South Asia.

"Whether across the Line of Control (LOC) or other regional borders, we will strive to reopen these routes for movement and trade.

"The Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot trade routes opened in 2005 following our efforts were unfortunately closed. We appeal to the Central Government to reopen them for trade, and also to open the Sharda Peeth corridor for our Kashmiri Pandit brothers and sisters," she said.

The PDP president called for the release of political prisoners and undertrials, and withdrawal of the Army from areas where militancy has reduced.

"In areas where militancy has reduced, as the Government of India itself frequently claims, we urge the Central Government to relocate the army back to barracks. This is not a new demand; we have voiced it previously and are reiterating it today," she said.

Parliament panel summons Meta, X, Google over regulation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A Parliamentary panel has summoned representatives of major social media platforms, including Instagram, along with officials of the ministries of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Home Affairs, on August 3 to discuss regulation of social media and digital platforms.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey, who chairs the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology, said the panel has called representatives of Meta (Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp), Google, X (formerly Twitter) and Snapchat on August 3 to explain how they protect the privacy of women, children, farmers, rural residents, labourers and the general public, and ensure public order.

The meeting comes days after social media, particularly Instagram, was extensively used by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) to publicise and mobilise participants for its student protest at Jantar Mantar. The demonstrations, which were held over the NEET-UG paper leak and other issues, drew widespread attention online, with videos, reels and live updates from the protest sites being shared across social media platforms.

According to the notice issued on Tuesday, the agenda includes a "briefing by the representatives of (i) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY); (ii) Ministry of Home Affairs; and (iii) Social and Digital Media Platforms — Snapchat, Google, X (formerly Twitter), Meta (Facebook and Instagram) on the subject 'Social and digital platforms and their regulation'."



BJP MP Nishikant Dubey



Editor's
TAKE

The human firewall against AI exploitation

Across India, thousands of workers are refusing to turn their labour into free training material for AI models. Their fight is about protecting their rights

Artificial intelligence is now omnipresent. In every walk of life, AI has made an intervention. Though it has several advantages, it also has a downside. It may well replace humans in various industries. And the irony is that it needs the help of those very workers it would replace. Every AI model must be trained first, and this has to be done by those who are presently doing that work. Every sophisticated AI model learns from billions of pieces of human-created content and from the painstaking work of countless annotators, translators, coders, writers and reviewers. Without this invisible workforce, AI simply cannot improve. It is therefore significant that many Indian workers are beginning to resist attempts to use their labour to train AI systems that may ultimately replace them. The concern is understandable. A content moderator who labels harmful posts, a language expert who translates documents, or a software engineer who corrects AI-generated code is not merely completing a task. They are transferring valuable expertise to machines. Once an AI system masters that knowledge, the demand for the same human skills may gradually diminish. Workers are effectively helping to build their own competitors. India occupies a unique position in this debate. It has become one of the world's largest suppliers of AI training labour, employing hundreds of thousands in data annotation, linguistic validation, customer support, quality assurance and digital content moderation. Yet most of these workers have little say over how their contributions are used.

Knowledge is a form of intellectual capital. If companies profit enormously from AI systems built upon human expertise, there is a compelling argument that the individuals supplying that expertise deserve transparency, fair compensation and meaningful consent. Otherwise, AI risks becoming another example of technological progress that concentrates wealth while socialising its costs.

Can such practices be legally stopped? The answer is complex. Existing Indian labour laws do not specifically regulate AI training. Copyright law protects original creative works but not necessarily the knowledge or judgement workers apply during routine employment. Contract law generally favours employers where employees have already agreed to broad usage rights. However, India's Digital Personal Data Protection framework and evolving discussions around AI governance could provide opportunities to strengthen worker protections. First, India needs clear legislation requiring companies to disclose when employees' work is being used to train AI models.

Transparency should become a legal obligation rather than a corporate choice. Second, workers should have the right to informed consent wherever feasible, especially when their specialised expertise is being incorporated into commercial AI systems beyond the scope of their original employment. Third, labour laws should be updated to recognise AI-assisted workplaces. Finally, India should establish an independent AI ethics and labour commission to balance innovation with workers' rights. Technological progress should never come at the cost of human dignity.

Balen Shah@100: A new reckoning

The euphoria that swept Balen Shah into office is gradually giving way to the harder realities of governance. With his first 100 days now behind him, the next phase will be crucial in shaping the future of Nepal's democratic experiment



ASHOK K MEHTA

The new British Prime Minister Andy Burnham has two things in common with Nepalese Prime Minister Balen Shah: both have risen from Mayor to PM; and both want a new political and economic model. While Burnham has an experienced and capable team to do so, Shah has neither. Still, Balen has completed his honeymoon period of 100 days with a mixed record, even as his Adidas keds have begun to pinch. While the Balen craze seems to be on the decline, it is not clear who is calling the shots: Party Chairman Rabi Lamichhane, Shah or the PMO. By some reports, it is the PMO led by Balen's political adviser, Kumar Ben, and his team.

Lamichhane is no Nitin Nabin, BJP's titular head of the party. Lamichhane is a former deputy prime minister and home minister but carries the baggage of unresolved court cases which do not allow him to hold any Cabinet office. Though he has the numbers in the party and government, it was the Balen craze that swept the elections. Obviously, there is an unspoken conflict between two young and ambitious politicians, which has spurred internal party strife, registering a decline in the Rashtriya Swatantra Party's popularity. The sound of the bell (party symbol and rallying call) is getting muffled.

Yet, according to one confidential source, Balen consults Rabi frequently and their successful spouses, Sabina and Nikita, are good friends, though Sabina Kafle naturally captures the limelight. Balen realises Rabi has stolen a march due to the tumultuous party convention in Chitwan last month and the red-carpet welcome in India. Balen's focus on domestic affairs and decision not to travel abroad on any foreign visit have lost him mileage, which prompted his confidant Ben to meet NSA Ajit Doval, PM Modi's principal adviser on the neighbourhood, especially Nepal, and discuss a possible Balen visit before he travels to the UNGA in New York in September.

A standing invitation to India for Balen was given by Modi soon after his triumphant victory, but scheduling in September may be a problem due to the BRICS summit fixed for September, unless he is a special invitee. Rabi is due to go to China, where he has sought a meeting with Communist Party Chairman Xi Jinping. At present, Rabi is the unquestioned leader who has managed differences with Balen.

Cracks within other political formations are natural after the Gen Z upheaval last year. GoP Nepali Congress was the first to introspect: after all, it had won a two-thirds majority in 1959, registering Nepal's first short-lived tryst with multi-party democracy. King Mahendra dismissed



NEPAL IS INDIA'S CROWN JEWEL IN SOUTH ASIA, LOCATED AT THE HEAD OF BHARAT MATA. THE BLOOD BONDING WITH NEPAL THROUGH GORKHA RECRUITMENT IS LIKELY TO BE REVIEWED FOLLOWING A BIG RALLY COMMENCING ON JULY 29, FROM THE GORKHA HEARTLAND IN LAMJUNG. THIS STRATEGIC NIRVANA OF BILATERAL RELATIONS

The writer, a retired Major General, served as Commander, IPKF (South), Sri Lanka, and was a founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, now the Integrated Defence Staff

the first elected Prime Minister, BP Koirala, which upset India even as its Army Chief, Gen KS Thimayya, was on a tiger shoot at Chitwan, Nepal, at that very time.

NC has never been fully united - parties within a party, at least three factions - and has split earlier and is on the verge of another split under the same patronage of five-time PM Sher Bahadur Deuba, who is abroad but will return shortly to face charges of corruption. The original NC, led by stalwarts Purna Bahadur Khadka and Shekhar Koirala, has challenged, through a review petition, the decision of the Election Commission and Supreme Court to award the flag and party symbol to rebel youth leader Gagan Thapa, who held a special party convention to be elected as NC party president. From the single-largest party with 87 seats in the last election, it has crumbled to its lowest-ever tally of 38 seats, still the second-largest party thanks to the mixed electoral system. Thapa has decided to break with Left parties in the Provincial Councils, where RSP has no representation.

Surprisingly, four-time PM KP Oli, who was the trigger of the Gen Z revolt last year, is still leader of CPN-UML, his health holding despite multiple kidney transplants, proving power is the biggest aphrodisiac. China, which is again recreating political space, is attempting to bring together all Left parties, including four-time PM Prachanda and former President Bidya Bhandari, spouse of legendary Left leader Madan Bhandari, into a grand Left alliance. It may end up in a surfeit of former PMs with few stormtroopers. Prachanda and Oli have allied to form governments in five of seven provinces.

Once kingmakers, the Terai-based parties and monarchists have been decimated by the RSP tsunami, but former Raja Gyanendra still

hopes the monarchy, which is on the rise on social media, will return. Home Minister Sudan Gurung has announced a review of the 2000 Palace Massacre enquiry, when present President Ramchandra Poudel was Home Minister and Prince Gyanendra was in Pokhara. Former Indian ambassador KV Rajan and Atul K Thakur's book, Kathmandu Chronicles, has covered the horrendous event in stark detail.

India enjoyed a fleeting sweet spot in Nepal with back-to-back visits by Lamichhane and Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal, who said his visit to India could be termed 'special', probably referring to India's claim of "special and unique bilateral relations". For 250 years now, Nepal has followed 'balanced diplomatic relations' between India and China in pursuit of the dictum enunciated by the founder of modern Nepal, King Prithvi Narayan Shah. In reality, this balance was always tilted towards India due to strategic geography and religious and cultural factors.

Advantage India has been diminished by the entry of a third power, the US, which two decades ago said it would follow India's lead in South Asia. That is no longer the case. US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, Samir Paul Kapoor, made a stand-alone visit to Nepal in April 2026, notably not meeting Balen Shah. He warned against Chinese 'debt-trap diplomacy' and asserted that no single power should dominate South Asia — a clear setback for India.

Nepal is India's crown jewel in South Asia, located at the head of Bharat Mata. The blood bonding with Nepal through Gorkha recruitment is likely to be reviewed following a big rally commencing on July 29, from the Gorkha heartland in Lamjung. This strategic nirvana of bilateral relations

PIC TALK



Workers carry harvested jute stalks for retting by submerging them in water to facilitate fibre extraction in Nadia district, West Bengal. PHOTO: PTI



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

2ND OPINION

There is a logical reason for it. We, souls, are parts of God (The Bhagavad-Gita 15.7). Then, it stands to reason that we can be satisfied only when God is in the loop. A simile of a toddler and his mother will shed light on this matter. Nothing pacifies the child until he is united with his mother. Similarly, God must always be involved in our life in order for us to feel satisfied; otherwise, it is not possible.

Let us examine the veracity of this statement. We have been given gross senses and subtle faculties, which are the mind, intelligence and 'ahankar' (fake ego). Starting with the senses, they always seek sense objects. The tongue seeks tasty food. Does it ever get satisfied? It does not. One must follow God's instructions in this regard. What has God instructed? One should eat what is right



for us, and neither too much nor too little (6.16 and 17). How about seeing? Where do we go wrong in this regard while seeking satisfaction? We see wrong content, strictly prohibited by God, because it goes against 'dharma' (highest principles). Thus, we become our own enemy (6.5 & 6).

Similar pleasures are sensuous. They never satisfy. Otherwise, why would anyone indulge in illicit relationships, with big punishments waiting? God has given a safe option, which is to enjoy within dharma, as permitted by the social norm of marriage (7.11). Similar restraint is required in choices made by us in talking, hearing, etc.

Now turning to the mind, does it not hurt us time and again by being uncontrolled? It does, in the form of

Why true satisfaction begins with God

depression, etc., and must be controlled to enable us to feel satisfied. Lord Krishna has instructed us to practise mind control by being detached (6.35). And this is possible only with God's active help, as is our experience also. Let us take objects of the mind. We all want lots of wealth, don't we? Does money by itself ensure proper maintenance? God has to ensure it, and He does for His devotees. How else do sannyasis exist, and quite well too! The only real power is that of empowerment by God; all others are temporary and are taken away sooner rather than later. The same is the fate of fame; it lasts as long as good, pious acts last.

Intelligence of the material kind can only help one earn a living. Real intelligence lies in being wise. For this, one must be connected to God — the Omniscient. He guides, and one succeeds 100 per cent (10.11). The remaining faculty of 'ahankar' is entirely harmful unless one gives it up and takes active shelter of God, as Arjuna did (18.73). Contrarily, what happened to Ravana and his over-bloated ahankara?

Therefore, if we are really keen on having satisfaction, we have to take shelter of God and remain there. The senses will be satisfied, the mind will be peaceful, intelligence will become wisdom and ahankara a dear friend. Ask me, who is enjoying a very satisfactory life in the shelter of my Lord.

The writer is a spiritual teacher

RESTORING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY IN INDIA'S EXAMINATION SYSTEM

Apropos of 'A Digital Fix for a Crisis of Trust', published on 28 July. For years, exam paper leaks have been a huge blot on a system that needs structural reforms. Question papers have found their way into a few hands, and the advent of the digital age has made this easier. One paper or even one mark can make or break a student's future.

There have been other committees, but with UIDAI founder-chairman Nandan Nilekani at the helm, this one brings credibility. It will have to introduce safeguards at every stage of the examination process — setting question papers, checking and finally declaring results.

In almost a decade of existence, the NTA has not covered itself in glory; there have been too many failures. It should not work merely as a contracting agency

but have permanent professionals with expertise in question design, psychometrics, cybersecurity and logistics. Nor should the NTA conduct every specialised examination. A hybrid approach could allow the NTA to conduct examinations for certain all-India seats, while states conduct their own examinations, ensuring that one leak does not affect all seats.

Technology should be used at every stage. Questions should be set by distributed teams, independently reviewed, calibrated and stored in encrypted modules. No individual should have access to the complete paper.

The ultimate goal should be that every candidate leaves the examination centre confident that merit and effort, not manipulation, will decide their future.

BAL GOVIND | NOIDA

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

Can Parliament become 'Mangal Milan'?

The NDA's choice to call its gathering *Mangal Milan* — an auspicious union — raises a deeper question: why can't Parliament itself embody that spirit? Today's scenario is marked by adjournments, walkouts and partisan shouting, reducing debate to spectacle rather than dialogue. A *Mangal Milan* Parliament would mean sessions where diverse voices meet in harmony, guided by respect and accountability. Instead of obstruction, the Opposition could offer constructive criticism; instead of grandstanding, the ruling benches could prioritise problem-solving.

To achieve this, all stakeholders must act responsibly. Government benches should lead with transparency and respect for dissent. Opposition parties must replace disruption with reasoned alternatives, while presiding officers need to enforce rules firmly and curb disorder. Members of Parliament must commit to punctuality, preparedness and civility. The media and civil society should highlight substantive debate rather than sensational chaos, while citizens must demand discipline and encourage cooperative politics. Presently, Parliament resembles a fractured arena. A *Mangal Milan* Parliament, in contrast, would be a crucible of unity, where disagreement sharpens policy rather than divides society, and dialogue becomes the nation's auspicious meeting ground.

O PRASADA RAO | HYDERABAD

Sporting glory deserves the spotlight

These are proud moments for India, with the country winning ten medals, including two gold, five silver and three bronze, so far at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. However, the NEET uproar has grabbed the headlines, pushing our Commonwealth heroes to the back pages. Sports lovers are on cloud nine.

The winning performances of gold medalists Mirabai Chanu (weightlifting) and Sharmila Dhankar (para-athletics); silver medalists Rishikanta Singh (weightlifting), Raja Muthupandi (weightlifting), Sarvesh Kushare (athletics), Valluri Ajaya Babu (weightlifting) and Gyaneshwari Yadav (weightlifting); and bronze medalists Jhandu Kumar (para-powerlifting), Bindyarani Devi (weightlifting) and Shilpa Shyla (para-athletics) have further raised hopes of increasing India's medal tally.

The other victories, including Esha Singh's achievement at the ISSF World Cup and the Indian men's entry into the World Junior Squash team event, are also significant achievements. At a time when sporting excellence is bringing pride to the country, these athletes deserve greater recognition and visibility. Their dedication, discipline and success on the international stage should inspire the nation. Such sporting laurels surely deserve prominent headlines.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A wider vision for education

The Experts Committee chaired by K. Radhakrishnan submitted a report in October 2024 titled Reformation of National Common Entrance Testing, covering over 100 recommendations on improving examination security and restoring the credibility of national entrance examinations.

In essence, the Radhakrishnan report was an operational reform blueprint. It seeks to make examinations secure, transparent and professionally managed. It does not fundamentally revisit India's education philosophy, curriculum, skills agenda or research ecosystem. That broader strategic task is precisely where the Nilekani committee could make a lasting contribution. The Nilekani committee must, therefore, be entrusted with a far wider mandate. India does not merely need leak-proof examinations; it needs an inspirational education policy aligned with the demands of the coming decade. Artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and climate science are rapidly redefining the nature of work. The question today ought to be less about how students should be tested and more about what they should be taught and what capabilities they must acquire. If the Radhakrishnan report secures the credibility of examinations, the Nilekani committee should define the onward purpose of education itself.

R NARAYANAN | NAVI MUMBAI

Why Chhattisgarh is betting on trust-based governance

Ease of doing business is often measured by rankings, but its real test lies in the confidence it gives investors. With the enactment of the Chhattisgarh Ease of Doing Business Act, 2026, the state has gone beyond administrative reforms to make time-bound approvals and government accountability a matter of law



VISHNU DEO SAI
Vidhan Sabha on July 16, Chhattisgarh has chosen to make ease of doing business a legal commitment, not an administrative promise. For investors, entrepreneurs and enterprises, this matters because certainty must be written into systems, timelines and accountability structures.

This Act is built on a simple belief: honest enterprise should not be held back by avoidable approvals, repeated renewals or overlapping permissions. Investors value opportunity, but they value predictability just as much. Entrepreneurs value speed, but they also need a government system that responds with clarity. Our reform gives them both: fewer unnecessary steps and a stronger guarantee that the State will act within a defined framework. We did not design this law for rankings. We designed it for outcomes.

For decades, regulatory systems often treated every industry in the same way, irrespective of scale, activity or risk. A small start-up and a large industrial project could face near-identical scrutiny, even when the nature of what needed to be checked was entirely different. In many cases, businesses had to seek more than one approval for the same activity. Such systems did not make governance stronger. They only spread scrutiny thin, delayed genuine economic activity and reduced the time that government could spend on areas where oversight was genuinely required.

The Chhattisgarh Ease of Doing Business Act replaces this approach with a risk-proportionate system. Low-risk enterprises can proceed through self-certification, without physical inspection. Medium-risk enterprises can obtain certification through empanelled third-party experts. High-risk enterprises will continue to be subjected to thorough technical due diligence because trust-based governance cannot mean ignoring risk.

But even in such cases, scrutiny will operate under a defined clock. If a certificate is not issued within the timeline prescribed under the Chhattisgarh Lok Sewa Guarantee Act, the approval will be deemed to have been granted. Any delay beyond three days will be escalated directly to the Executive Committee. We have chosen to enforce certainty through law, not leave it to discretion.

The principle behind this design is clear. Government oversight should be strongest where risk is highest and lightest where risk is low. This is not deregulation. It is better regulation. If an enterprise carries limited risk, the system should not force it through unnecessary layers of approval. If an enterprise requires technical assessment, the State must retain that scrutiny, but it must also hold itself accountable for doing the work within time. The Act therefore reduces compliance where it is excessive, while preserving transparency and safeguards where they are needed.

We have also created an institutional structure capable of delivering this reform. The Executive Council, chaired by me, will set policy direction, amend the schedule where required and exercise final authority over Executive Committee decisions. The Executive Committee, chaired by the Chief Secretary, will oversee implementation and act as the appellate body for district-level decisions. The District Empowered Committee, chaired by the Collector, will review district-level authorities so that delays are identified early and resolved before they become a barrier for businesses. Reform cannot rest only on intent; it needs institutions that can monitor, correct and enforce.

Trust must also be earned continuously. That is why the Act includes safeguards for both businesses and the public system. It overrides conflicting provisions in other state laws so that a business is not caught between contradictory requirements. It holds officers

When a state gives legal backing to trust-based governance for businesses, it is not merely improving a process. It is changing the relationship between government and enterprise. With the Chhattisgarh Ease of Doing Business Act, 2026, passed by our



THE CHHATTISGARH EASE OF DOING BUSINESS ACT ENVISAGES A PROPORTIONATE SYSTEM. LOW-RISK ENTERPRISES CAN PROCEED THROUGH SELF-CERTIFICATION, WITHOUT PHYSICAL INSPECTION. MEDIUM-RISK ENTERPRISES CAN OBTAIN CERTIFICATION THROUGH EMPANELLED THIRD-PARTY EXPERTS. HIGH-RISK ENTERPRISES WILL CONTINUE TO BE SUBJECTED TO THOROUGH TECHNICAL DUE DILIGENCE BECAUSE TRUST-BASED GOVERNANCE CANNOT MEAN IGNORING RISK

The writer is the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh

accountable for delays through Section 14 and the provisions of the Lok Sewa Guarantee Act. It allows the State to revoke an approval where necessary, but only after a show-cause notice, a hearing and recorded reasons. At the same time, bona fide actions taken in good faith are explicitly protected. This balance is important. We are stepping back from unnecessary gatekeeping, but not from responsibility.

The scale of the reform is significant. The Act consolidates 43 services across nine state Acts and eight departments, covering urban administration, industries, culture, home affairs, water resources and public works. Earlier, reform often meant amending one law or one service at a time. That approach could deliver progress, but only incrementally. Chhattisgarh has now created an omnibus legal architecture that can absorb future reforms without requiring repeated legislative change. This makes the system more adaptable and gives investors greater confidence that reform will not remain trapped in isolated departmental changes.

The biggest beneficiaries will be our more than 15 lakh Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. MSMEs are the backbone of Chhattisgarh's economy. They create livelihoods, support local supply chains and take opportunities beyond large industrial centres. For them, compliance time is not an abstract burden. It is time taken away from production, employment, customers and expansion. Every hour saved from avoidable approval or renewal processes is an hour that can be invested in growth. When government reduces unnecessary friction, small businesses gain the space to focus on building, hiring and serving markets.

This reform also reflects a larger national direction. It responds to the Prime Minister's call for a nationwide deregulation drive, for it is central to India's Viksit Bharat ambition. Chhattisgarh has chosen the more ambitious path: a comprehensive omnibus law, rather than a narrower service-by-service amendment. In doing so, we are aligning state-level governance with the national objective of building a more competitive, more responsive and more enterprise-friendly India.

In every interaction with investors, one message consistently emerges: businesses value certainty as much as opportunity. Capital moves towards governments that are consistent, where approvals are time-bound and institutions are accountable. Incentives matter, but they are not enough.

As India advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047, states will increasingly compete on the quality of governance they offer. A state that can provide clarity, speed and accountability will become a more natural destination for investment and entrepreneurship.

With this Act, Chhattisgarh has set that standard for itself. We have chosen trust over red tape, partnership over procedure and accountability over discretion. Our message to entrepreneurs across India and investors around the world is direct: Chhattisgarh is ready to work with you through a governance system that respects your time, protects public interest and supports growth. Come and experience a state confident in its potential and ready to build the next chapter of India's growth story together.

India's thin state: Too few, too well paid



RUPAK CHATTOPADHYAY

ists the country desperately needs.

This combination has created a chronic deficit in state capacity that increasingly limits India's economic ambitions. India's public sector employs only about 3.3 per cent of the country's workforce, even after including central and state governments, local bodies and public sector undertakings. In absolute numbers, this amounts to around 17-18 million employees, making it the second-largest public workforce in Asia after China. Yet, relative to the country's workforce of more than 550 million people, India has the thinnest state among major Asian economies. The contrast is striking.

Around 23 per cent of China's workforce is employed by the public sector. South Korea employs roughly 10.7 per cent, Indonesia about 8.9 per cent, while both Japan and Vietnam are close to 8 per cent. Contrary to popular perception, the stereotypical "bloated sarkari system" simply does not exist when viewed through an international lens. This shortage becomes most visible at the point where government actually meets the citizen. India has only around 150 police personnel per 100,000 population, well below the United Nations benchmark of 222. The judiciary has barely 21 judges per million people, compared with 50 to well over 100 in most developed countries. Vacancies in government schools, primary health centres and rural development departments remain a persistent feature across states. Policies are ultimately implemented not by cabinet ministers or senior civil servants but by frontline workers. A district collector cannot compensate for an absent nurse, an unfilled teaching post or a missing agricultural extension officer. Administrative excellence at the top cannot substitute for the absence of people on the ground.

India's implementation deficit is as much a staffing problem as a governance problem. Yet this shortage exists alongside another anomaly: India pays its public employees extraordinarily well relative to the rest of the economy. World Bank studies show that public-sector wages exceed those in the formal private sector by 62 to 102 per cent, while the premium over India's informal workforce ranges from 164 to 259 per cent. Development economist Karthik Muralidharan estimates that nearly 95 per cent of government jobs pay around five times the median Indian wage.

India spends roughly 8 per cent of GDP on public-sector wages, comparable to many OECD countries. But while advanced economies use similar expenditure to support a much larger workforce, India spends it on far fewer employees. The result is fewer teachers, doctors, police personnel and technical experts. East Asia offers a contrast. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and China built capable states that coordinated investment, developed infrastructure, nurtured human capital and supported strategic industries. India's post-1991 reforms dismantled many controls associated with the licence-permit raj but did not build an equally capable developmental state.

China has a deeply layered administrative system supported by specialised planning agencies and technical institutions. India increasingly relies on contracting out services while maintaining a relatively thin administrative backbone. The weakness extends to foreign policy. India's diplomatic cadre comprises only around 950 Indian Foreign Service officers across nearly 200 missions worldwide, while China employs several thousand career diplomats. For a country seeking global leadership and a larger strategic role, such limited capacity creates unavoidable constraints.

The Ministry of External Affairs inevitably concentrates its attention on a handful of relationships - primarily China, Pakistan and the United States - because it simply lacks the manpower to devote sustained attention elsewhere. Training officers in specialised areas such as climate negotiations, technology governance or artificial intelligence often leaves desks understaffed. India's global ambitions are therefore increasingly running ahead of its institutional capacity to support them. Ultimately, this is also an employment issue.

Expanding public-sector recruitment will not solve India's entire jobs challenge, but filling existing shortages in education, healthcare, policing, justice and agricultural extension would create productive employment while significantly improving public service delivery. These are not artificial jobs; they are positions that government norms already recognise as necessary but remain vacant. The long-standing assumption that India's public sector is too large has become increasingly detached from empirical reality.

The country does not need a smaller state. It needs a more capable one. The next phase of India's development will depend as much on strengthening institutions as on expanding markets. Economic growth, industrial policy, infrastructure development and effective governance all require a state with adequate numbers of skilled professionals at every level - from policy specialists in New Delhi to teachers in village schools and nurses in primary health centres.

The lesson from East Asia is therefore straightforward. Prosperity was built not by abandoning the state but by building one that was competent, specialised and capable of working alongside markets. India's challenge today is not to shrink government further, but to expand its capacity intelligently. That means addressing both sides of the equation simultaneously: strengthening expertise at the top while rebuilding the frontline workforce that delivers public services. Without that balance, India risks remaining a country with ambitious policies but insufficient administrative muscle to turn them into reality.



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Beyond policy: Putting mothers at the heart of child care



SUMANTA KAR

that actually brings it to life, is the mother. In our country, we have a long and beautiful tradition where the family is the foundation of everything.

For a child who has lost that foundation, the world becomes a loud and terrifying place. You cannot fix that with a dormitory or a rotating shift of staff. You fix it with a person who stays. In these cases, a foster mother who provides a strong and caring presence is the only thing that can truly make a difference in their lives.

A mother is a representative of stable relationships. She provides a protective setting where a child does not just exist but has a real opportunity for holistic development. It is through her that a child learns to trust again. This is not just about basic caregiving. It is about the security, love, and stability that every

human being needs to survive. One of the most incredible things to witness is how a mother builds resilience in her children through her own inner power. She does not just shield them from the world. She prepares them for it. She plays the role of a teacher, a friend, and a mentor all at once. By building a close and individual relationship with each of her children, she creates a caring family environment where they feel safe enough to take risks.

She is the one who encourages participation and confidence, helping a child find their own voice. She acts as a guide to ensure they have every opportunity to thrive rather than just get by. She is always ready to go the extra mile, often sacrificing her own comfort for the well-being of her children. There is simply no substitute for a mother. For children who have faced the hardship of being alone, the role of motherhood becomes even more crucial. They do not just need a roof. They need a parent who is ready to sit by the bed at three in the morning or celebrate a small victory at school.

What makes this bond so powerful is that she is not just fulfilling a duty. She is enjoying the journey of motherhood herself. This mutual joy is what transforms a house into a home. It is in the quiet moments like shared meals, evening talks, bedtime stories and a steady presence that a child's trauma begins to soften and their potential begins to bloom. Let us recognise that for a vulnerable child, a mother is not just a part of their life.



A mother can transform a childhood memory into a happy memory, transforming children into self-reliant individuals and ensuring they grow up with the strong bonds to become their strongest selves. If we want to raise a generation of healthy and confident citizens, we must ensure that the mother remains the heartbeat of our care systems.

If we cannot provide a child with a hand to hold and a heart to lean on, are we really giving them a future or are we just providing a place to stay?

If we really want to honour mothers and give her the rightful place we should remember that the greatest gift society can offer a vulnerable child is not merely protection but belonging.

Policies, funding and institutions are indispensable, yet they achieve their true purpose only when they create space for loving human relationships. A child who has experienced loss does not simply need food, education and healthcare. They need someone who knows their fears, celebrates their milestones, comforts them after failure and believes in their potential even when they cannot believe in themselves.

That unwavering presence is what a mother, whether biological, adoptive or foster, uniquely provides. The strength of a nation is ultimately measured not by the size of its institutions but by the quality of care it extends to its most vulnerable citizens. By nurturing children with love, stability and emotional security, mothers help shape resilient, compassionate and self-reliant individuals who go on to strengthen society in return.

Investing in motherhood within child care is therefore not an act of charity; it is an investment in the country's future. If we aspire to build a compassionate and confident India, we must place mothers at the centre of every child welfare system, ensuring that every child grows up not merely with a roof overhead, but with a hand to hold, a heart to trust and a family to call their own.

The writer is the Chief Executive Officer of SOS Children's Villages India



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Order Order

**Kolkata court sends 16
NEET protesters to jail**

A city court on Tuesday remanded 16 people arrested in connection with violence during a NEET paper leak protest by the Left students' organisations to judicial custody till July 30.

Several journalists were injured when some people attacked them during the march from Sealdah station to Esplanade in central Kolkata.

Refusing their bail prayers, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court here remanded the 16 accused, against whom provisions of the newly legislated stringent Goonda Act have been applied, until July 30.

Following Friday's unruly scenes during the rally, Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari had stated that those who indulged in violence during the march had no connection to the NEET paper leak protest and were suspected to be anti-national elements. The state Government claimed that at least 70 people identified in connection with the violence were neither students nor members of the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP), and had no direct link with the movement against the alleged NEET paper leak.

The state's counsel, seeking their remand, argued before the court that releasing the accused persons on bail would severely hamper the investigation. (PTI)

Court orders mental health test in Assembly breach case

A Delhi court has directed the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) to constitute a medical board to examine whether Sarabjeet Singh, an accused in the Delhi Assembly security breach case, is of unsound mind and incapable of entering his defence.

The order came after the counsel for the accused submitted that Singh was suffering from bipolar disorder and sought directions for the constitution of a medical board.

Additional Sessions Judge Ankur Jain was hearing the plea filed by the accused under the Mental Healthcare Act and ordered that he be produced before the Director of IBHS whenever required.

Singh, 37, allegedly crashed his car through a gate of the Assembly complex and injured a security guard on duty on April 6, 2026. He was sent to judicial custody after police interrogation on April 5. Allowing his plea, the court, in the order dated July 27, directed the Director of IHBAS to constitute a board comprising specialists as required under the Mental Healthcare Act to examine whether the inmate was of unsound mind and incapable of entering his defence. The court noted that the previous medical documents relied upon by the defence had been verified by the investigating officer. The prosecution also said it had no objection to the constitution of the medical board.

The court directed that a copy of the order be sent to the IHBAS director for compliance and asked the investigating officer to ensure that the medical board was constituted and the accused examined. The matter has been listed for further proceedings on August 11. Singh is believed to be a "follower of the Kisan Andolan (farmers' agitation)". He has shared several posts on social media platforms expressing support for farmer leaders who lost their lives during the 2020-21 agitation. (PTI)



Delhi HC asks ECI to limit SIR burden on teachers

Underscoring the need to balance the students' right to education with the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls, the Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the Election Commission of India (ECI) to be "sensitive" to the condition of Government school teachers requisitioned for the exercise and ensure that they are not overburdened.

A bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said the Special Intensive Revision was undoubtedly "important" but expressed displeasure at the "threatening" tenor of an ECI order to principals not to obstruct election-related work.

The bench also directed the authorities to keep in mind that undue stress is not caused to the teachers who have been called upon to act as booth level officers (BLOs) and enumeration staff after working for long hours in school.

"What we all want from you is to be a bit sensitive to their situation. We are not curtailing your right. We are conscious of the human condition which these teachers are undergoing. Asking any teacher to work for eleven hours. Teaching staff, mostly, it is women. They have children, their families. You have to humanise their conditions. What language you have applied while issuing this order. Are you creating fear or what?" the bench told the ECI. "We do not undermine the exercise being undertaken by the ECI. The issue is how to strike a balance with Section 27 of the Right to Education Act. It appears that you are least bothered about the Right to Education Act. The kind of language that you have used in this. The whole tenor of the letter is threatening," it added. (PTI)



SC urged to set up SIT to fix police liability for attack on protesters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday was vehemently urged to set up an SIT headed by a former judge of the court to fix responsibility up to higher echelons of police departments of various states for alleged excesses on students during the nationwide protests against the NEET paper leak.

Stressing the need for a fair and independent probe, the top court, while issuing a slew of interim directions, restrained states from taking any coercive action against protesters in the recent student-led agitation and directed them to release those under 18 on the condition that none should have any criminal antecedents.

A bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana heard a battery of lawyers including Solicitor General Tushar Mehta for the Centre and the Delhi Police.

Senior advocates Abhishek Singhvi, Gopal Sankaranarayanan, Shyam Divan, Vrinda Grover and Prashant Bhushan appeared



for petitioners who were alleging police brutalities on the protesters.

For a change, it was the CJJ, who started narrating specific cases of alleged police atrocities. "One case is the use of pellet guns which harmed a young boy, then use of electric batons which led to life-threatening injuries, then there is the issue of injuring video persons also.

"Then a police officer was assaulted while he was in civil dress... a woman was slapped also by a police officer and some cases of molestation also at the hands of police," the CJJ said. He said there was no need for elaborate arguments. It was a peaceful protest by students raising

demands, and it is constitutionally protected, he added.

"The ones who want to prevent it indulge in excess use of force. Then some complaints about police officer families. They say that others with an agenda entered the protest and tried to become co-hosts. So, why should there not be an independent probe into all of it," the CJJ said. Sankaranarayanan then proceeded to argue the case and said the matter concerns the protests that have taken place across the country.

"The incidents are not limited to Delhi or Jantar Mantar alone. They include protests and related incidents in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Agra in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and

several other States," he said.

There are multiple incidents arising out of these protests and various petitions raise allegations of police excesses, including lathi-charge, use of pellet guns, brutality against students and other actions by the police, he said.

"Legally, there needs to be an order under Section 144 etc. There was nothing for Jantar Mantar. Such cases came during the Ramila Maidan protest also. Then there were guidelines laid down for how to prevent it," he said.

The court said the allegations raised in the petitions required a "thorough, independent, fair and transparent" inquiry and observed that responsibility must be fixed if any excesses were committed. "There has to be a completely independent probe. Whoever has committed excess, law will take its course. Probe is meaningless if no responsibility is fixed," the CJJ said.

The court described the protests as "peaceful demonstrations" by students and said it is needed to address the kind of force used against the protesters.

Delhi court allows woman to lead defence in cheque bounce case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Underlining that a "single opportunity" does not constitute a "sufficient opportunity" under the law, a Delhi court has set aside a magistrate's order that closed a woman's right to lead defence evidence in a cheque bounce case.

Additional Sessions Judge Shefali Barnala Tandon also said that the Constitution guarantees a fair trial, which includes a reasonable opportunity of defence for the accused.

In an order dated July 22, the court said, "Law is well settled that a fair trial is the foundation of justice and without affording an accused the opportunity to present a defence, the trial is rendered a mere formality rather than a judicial process."

It noted that the revision petition was filed against the magisterial court order of August 2025, closing the opportunity of the accused or revisionist, Manju Devi, to lead defence evidence in a



complaint filed by one Sunita Devi under the Negotiable Instruments (NI) Act provision.

According to the revisionist, the complainant's evidence was closed in March 2025, and the matter was adjourned to July 30 for her to file a list of witnesses and an application to examine herself. On that date, however, the magistrate observed that no steps had been taken by the accused and immediately closed her right to lead defence evidence.

Setting aside the order, the court said it is apparent that the revisionist was denied

her basic right to defend herself. It said, "Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution guarantees a fair trial which includes a reasonable opportunity for the accused to defend himself/herself. A single opportunity does not constitute 'Sufficient Opportunity' under the law."

The court also referred to Section 346 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) corresponding to the erstwhile Section 309 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), dealing with the "power to postpone or adjourn proceedings."

Final report of AAIB in Ahmedabad plane crash to be filed in October, SC told

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday was apprised by the Government that the draft final report of the probe conducted by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) into the June 2025 Air India flight AI-171 crash in Ahmedabad will be filed before it in the first week of October in a sealed cover.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V

Mohana also took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that the Federation of Indian Pilots can provide its inputs to the AAIB which, in turn, can peruse and deal with them if found necessary during the investigation.

During a brief hearing, the solicitor general told the bench that four simulation tests have been conducted as sought in an application by one of the petitioners. The law officer said that the final draft report will be filed before the bench in a sealed



cover. The court was hearing petitions filed by an NGO, a law student and the father of the deceased pilot, seeking an independent, court-monitored investigation into the crash. The bench has now

posted the pleas for further hearing on October 13.

Recently, the AAIB filed an affidavit in the top court saying that the draft final report of the probe into the crash in Ahmedabad, which

Ghost student scam: Court sentences TN school officials



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ranipet

A court here sentenced the correspondent and headmistress of a Government-aided school to four years of rigorous imprisonment for fabricating records to create 187 "ghost" students and siphon off Government funds. An official release from DVAC on Tuesday said those convicted were Karunagara Sanjeev Doss, correspondent, and Alice Thabitha Vijay Kumari, Headmistress of Vitva Ratna Villa Government Aided Primary School. They were also fined ₹35,000 and ₹40,000, respectively.

The scam was unearthed on August 27, 2012, following a joint surprise inspection by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC), Vellore detachment, alongside inspection cell officers.

Investigations revealed that while the school's actual student strength was signif-

icantly lower, official registries were manipulated to reflect an inflated strength of 259 pupils.

By padding the rolls with 187 non-existent students, the duo illegally secured sanction for six excess teaching posts.

They wrongfully drew Government benefits, including ₹4,67,121 toward salaries for the unneeded staff and ₹2,762 meant for noon meal allocations, causing a total financial loss of over ₹4.69 lakh to the state exchequer.

Following a detailed investigation, the DVAC filed a chargesheet before the court in Ranipet.

Delivering the verdict on July 27, 2026, the court held both accused guilty of criminal misconduct and misappropriation of public funds, sentencing them to four years of hard labour to reinforce strict accountability in State-aided educational institutions.

Adults have right to choose their life partners, says Calcutta HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

The Calcutta High Court has directed West Bengal police to provide adequate security and ensure a seamless inter-faith marriage in Howrah on Wednesday, observing that "adult citizens of this country have the right to choose their life partners".

The observation by the court came while hearing a plea by a woman and a man of different faiths who sought police protection to solemnise the marriage, with their counsel claiming they faced opposition from locals over their decision.

The Superintendent of Police of Howrah (Rural) Amit Verma said on Tuesday that adequate steps were being taken in compliance with the high court's order. Acting on the petition, Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya on Monday directed the police to provide adequate protection to the petitioners during their marriage, which



is to be solemnised on Wednesday.

"This court does not find any hindrance even if it is a case of inter-faith marriage since the petitioners are adult citizens of this country and they have the right to choose their life partners," Justice Bhattacharyya observed. The court directed the police to ensure that no untoward incident takes place during the wedding.

Justice Bhattacharyya directed the inspector in-charge of Uluberia police station in Howrah to file a compliance report within seven days after the marriage is solemnised and posted

hearing in the matter on August 10. Representing the petitioners, senior advocate Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya told the court that a furor in the locality over their decision led the man and woman to fear that they may be prevented from solemnising the marriage.

Representing the state, Additional Advocate General Rajdeep Mazumder presented in the court a communication of the inspector in-charge of Uluberia police station, disclosing that certain steps have been taken by the authorities to maintain peace in the locality.

HC dismisses petition in Jauhar University matter after Govt contests maintainability

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Prayagraj

The Allahabad High Court has refused to entertain a petition filed by a businessman on behalf of Mohammad Ali Jauhar University against the demolition of its buildings, observing that the pleader is an outsider and not an official of the institution.

As the matter came up before the court, a preliminary objection was raised by the Additional Advocate General (AAG) Anupam Trivedi on the maintainability of the petition.

"This writ petition is being sworn by a person, namely Mohammad Yusuf, who is by occupation a businessman and is being appointed as a pairakar (pleader) of Mohammad Ali Jauhar University." A university is



always represented through its Registrar or any official working there. A stranger cannot approach on behalf of the university, the AAG argued. Following preliminary objection regarding the maintainability of the petition, Justice Saurabh Shyam Shamsery, in his order passed on Monday, refused to hear the matter.

"After going through the records of writ petition, Court finds merit in the objection

raised by learned Additional Advocate General appearing on behalf of State," the judge said. The court finds that "in the interest of justice, the present writ petition can be disposed of so that proceedings initiated against the petitioner Trust/University be brought to its logical conclusion," the judge said.

Meanwhile, the Moradabad Divisional Commissioner's court had on Monday granted interim relief to the universi-

ty, founded by Samajawadi Party leader Azam Khan, staying the proposed demolition of 38 buildings on its campus until the final hearing in the case.

Divisional Commissioner Anjaneya Kumar Singh told PTI that the interim stay was granted after the university's counsel submitted an application. He said the proceedings cannot be held on Tuesday, the scheduled date for hearing, as a condolence meeting has been planned following the death of an advocate in Moradabad.

"The application moved by the university's counsel has been accepted and demolition of any structure has been stayed till further orders. The stay will remain in force until the final hearing in the matter," Singh said.

HC seeks Maharashtra's stand on PM's clay idol appeal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Bombay High Court has asked the Maharashtra Government to clarify its stand on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent appeal urging devotees to use eco-friendly clay idols during the upcoming Ganesh festival.

A bench of Justices Ajay Gadkari and Kamal Khata questioned the state while hearing a bunch of petitions against the use of Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols, granting Advocate General Milind Sathe time till Wednesday to clarify the Government's stand.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) had prohibited Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols in its 2020 guidelines. The court cited PM



Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' address aired on Sunday, in which he urged people to use eco-friendly clay idols, and asked the Government about its response to the same.

Last year, after the CPCB stated that its guidelines were advisory in nature, the court allowed the immersion of PoP idols over six feet in natural water bodies as per the state Government's 2025 policy.

INTERVIEW / BUILDING ENGINEERS OF TOMORROW

BEYOND PLACEMENTS & CODE

Professor Manna, what is the biggest shift in what industries expect from engineering graduates today?

Engineering fundamentals have remained largely constant, but the tools and skills used to apply them have changed rapidly. From an era without computers or robotics, we have moved to IoT, parallel computing, GPUs and AI, which are reshaping even fundamental sciences. Having worked in industry before joining IIT Kharagpur in 1985, I have seen hiring expectations change too. Employers once recruited graduates for what they knew and trained them further; today, they value how quickly they can learn and adapt. The India Skills Report 2025 places engineering employability at 71.5 per cent, but a transcript alone is rarely enough. Recruiters look for articulation, integrity, adaptability, projects, and internships. Yet fundamentals remain non-negotiable: an engineer must still know the core principles of the discipline.

Why is cross-disciplinary innovation critical for students seeking high-impact careers today?

My own discipline settled this question long ago. Metallurgy became materials science by absorbing physics, chemistry and mechanical engineering, and is now incorporating machine learning for materials discovery and design. As National Coordinator of IMPRINT, I saw India's engineering challenges mapped across ten domains, none of which could be addressed within a single department. IMPRINT-II reinforced this: proposals working at disciplinary interfaces and showing potential for application received backing. An affordable diagnostic device needs biology, electronics and data science; an electric power-train brings together materials, power electronics and software. NEP 2020 now supports this approach through flexible credits and cross-stream learning. A student's major provides depth, but future careers will depend on connecting that expertise across disciplines to create feasible, sustainable solutions.

How does BIT Mesra's investment in advanced AI infrastructure enhance students' global competitiveness and career readiness?

We have committed ₹100 crore from our own resources to establish an NVIDIA-powered Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence, operational by December 2026 with eight NVIDIA DGX B200 systems. It will serve nearly 12,000 students and 660 faculty members, while remaining accessible to researchers,

startups, strategic departments, industry and other collaborators. My international research experience has shown that talent alone cannot produce globally competitive research; access to advanced facilities matters equally. Today, simulation and modelling are as critical as experimentation across fields from drug discovery and VLSI to climate science and manufacturing. Such computing infrastructure remains limited in Jharkhand and eastern India. Aligned with the IndiaAI and India Semiconductor Missions, the Centre forms part of BIT Mesra's wider, sustained investment in research infrastructure and institutional partnerships.

How can academia encourage young engineers to choose research and innovation over immediate high-paying corporate careers?

I chose research in 1985, a career that has given me problems worth solving and the opportunity to mentor more than thirty doctoral scholars. Research and corporate careers appear unequal partly because placements receive greater visibility. Yet a doctorate today can lead to national missions in space, semiconductors and AI, industrial R&D centres and deep-tech startups. The funding environment has also changed: the Anusandhan National Research Foundation has a ₹50,000-crore funding envelope for 2023-28, while the expanded Prime

Minister's Research Fellowship offers up to ₹80,000 monthly and a ₹2-lakh annual research grant. Academia must expose students to research early and celebrate fellowships alongside placements. Money matters, but creating knowledge, solving difficult problems and contributing to society offer rewards that cannot be measured by salary alone.

With the national focus heavily shifting toward self-reliance and innovation, how can technical institutions structurally evolve to train students to become risk-taking 'job providers' rather than just 'job seekers'?

A university built only for placement is a pipeline; one built for enterprise must give ideas the structure and space to survive. The national foundation exists through Startup India, the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell and Atal Innovation Mission, but institutions must build the local ecosystem. BIT has done so for decades, establishing the country's first Science and Technological Entrepreneurs Park on campus. Its student-run Entrepreneurship Development Cell has operated since 2007, while the Institute Innovation Center at STEP supports early ventures. This Foundation Day, distinguished alumnus Madan Mohan Mohanka of Tega Industries, from the 1964 batch, committed ₹5 crore towards a Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Beyond the sum, students see that those who once occupied their classrooms can become job creators themselves.

What irreplaceable human skills must students develop to future-proof their careers in the age of generative AI?

Generative AI has commoditised the middle of intellectual work: drafting, routine

analysis and the first version of almost everything. The two ends remain human-framing the right problem and judging whether an answer works in the real world. A model may propose a new alloy composition in seconds, but determining whether it can and should be made requires fundamentals, judgment and experimentation. The World Economic Forum expects 92 million roles to be displaced and 170 million created by 2030, with analytical thinking, resilience, flexibility and creative thinking among the most valued skills. Problem formulation, verification, ethical reasoning and adaptability will therefore matter greatly. You cannot audit a machine's output without mastering the fundamentals yourself, and I do not foresee AI making human judgment, intervention or leadership redundant.

How should institutions make mental health and emotional resilience a core part of student development?

Behind every statistic on academic pressure is a young person, often away from home for the first time and carrying a family's hopes. Institutions must recognise distress before it becomes a crisis. New UGC guidelines now require dedicated mental health centres, qualified counsellors and systems for early detection, but regulation only sets the floor. Prevention requires manageable academic structures, trained faculty and an environment where seeking help carries no stigma. At BIT, every student has a faculty adviser and meets them regularly to discuss academic progress, careers and well-being. Sports, NSS, NCC and over thirty student clubs, supported by more than ₹1 crore, provide outlets beyond academics. An institution must be accountable not only for how its students perform, but also for how well they are supported.

What advice would you give engineering students to remain relevant, adaptable and resilient in a changing job market?

BIT encourages students to pursue a burgeoning professional career, not merely a job. After four decades of teaching, my advice is simple: master the fundamentals, learn how to learn, build deep competence alongside broad curiosity, and choose problems over titles.

My journey from an alloy factory in Hyderabad to laboratories in Germany, Britain and Singapore was carried forward by problems honestly solved, never designations. Use time wisely to build knowledge and character while protecting your health, friendships and integrity. Stay physically active and prepare to adapt to a changing job market. BIT also enables aspiring entrepreneurs to become job creators rather than job seekers.

“A university built only for placement is a pipeline; one built for enterprise must give ideas the structure and space to survive,” states Prof Indranil Manna, Vice Chancellor of BIT Mesra. Having navigated both industry floors and elite academic corridors, the distinguished academic pioneer outlines a bold vision for India's technical education. In an exclusive conversation with *The Pioneer*, Prof Manna discusses shifting corporate demands, the necessity of cross-disciplinary research, surviving the generative AI wave, and why tomorrow's engineers must prioritise solving fundamental problems over chasing corporate titles.

From preparation to performance in 90 days

PROF ABINASH PANDA

Chairperson - PGDM (HRM), Management Development Institute (MDI) Gurgaon

For every CAT aspirant, the final 90 days before the examination can feel both exciting and overwhelming. By this stage, the syllabus may still seem incomplete, mock scores may not always be encouraging and the pressure to perform starts building. It is easy to believe that success now depends on studying for longer hours or covering every remaining topic. In reality, the last three months are not about doing more; they are about doing the right things consistently. This phase is where preparation shifts from acquiring knowledge to refining strategy, improving execution and building confidence.

The first step is to understand your current level of preparation. Take a full-length mock test and evaluate your performance honestly. A mock test should



not be viewed only as a scorecard; it is a mirror that reflects your strengths, weaknesses and test-taking habits. Ask yourself which section consistently gives you confidence, which topics continue to affect your score and whether you are losing marks because of conceptual gaps, poor time management or avoidable mistakes. Every aspirant starts from a different point, so there is no

single preparation strategy that works for everyone. Focus on building on your strengths while systematically improving weaker areas. During the final 90 days, mock tests should become an integral part of your preparation. Start by taking one mock every week and gradually increase the frequency as the examination approaches. However, simply writing more mock tests will not improve your performance. The real learning begins once the test is over.

Spend time analysing every mock carefully. Understand why you got certain questions wrong, identify the questions you should have attempted and recognise where you lost valuable time. Often, the biggest improvements

come from correcting repeated mistakes rather than learning entirely new concepts. Maintaining a notebook of recurring errors, formulas and short-cuts can also make revision more effective. One of the biggest misconceptions about CAT preparation is that success demands ten or twelve hours of study every day. While dedication is important, consistency is far more valuable than intensity. Create a realistic weekly plan that includes concept revision, sectional practice, mock tests and their analysis.

As the examination draws closer, many candidates sacrifice sleep, exercise and personal time to maximise preparation. This often has the opposite effect. Regular sleep, short breaks and physical activity help improve focus, memory and overall performance.

As CAT approaches, avoid beginning completely new topics. Instead, revise what you already know, strengthen familiar concepts and continue learning from your mock tests. The goal is not to know everything; it is to perform your best with what you have prepared.

The final 90 days before CAT 2026 are not about studying harder; they are about preparing smarter. Ultimately, CAT is a test of discipline, planning, adaptability and execution.

Empowering Generation Z through NEP 2020



PROF (DR) RACHITA RANA

Director, Institute of Information Technology & Management (IITM), Janakpuri

The landscape of the higher education system of India is being impacted by competition, disruption, expectations of stakeholders ie parents, industry, institutions, gen Z themselves. This Generation is digitally native, globally connected, socially conscious. Today's learners seek more than degrees; they seek purpose, flexibility, inclusivity, plus opportunities that prepare them for an uncertain yet exciting future. Responding to these aspirations requires institutions to move beyond conventional models of education towards systems that are equitable, inclusive, future-ready.

The urgency of this transformation is reflected in India's steadily expanding higher education landscape. As highlighted in the Economic Survey 2025-26, based on the latest AISHE 2022-23 data, India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has risen to 29.5 per cent, with total enrolment reaching approximately 4.46 crore students. Expansion alone, however, is not enough. The true measure of success lies in ensuring that every learner, irrespective of socio-economic background, gender, geography, language or physical ability, has equitable access to high-quality, inclusive higher education.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognises this challenge, reimagining higher education as an ecosystem that nurtures human potential rather than merely producing degree holders. As the policy rightly states, "The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings capable of rational thought, action, possessing compassion, empathy, courage, resilience."

In today's rapidly changing world, this vision has become more relevant than ever. Education must not only impart knowledge but also cultivate empathy, ethical leadership, critical thinking, social responsibility. For Generation Z, education extends far beyond the physical classroom. Learning is increasingly digital, collaborative, personalised, global.

The emergence of India's digital education ecosystem represents one of the most significant reforms in recent years. Platforms such as SWAYAM, DIKSHA, the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), APAAR are enabling learners to access quality courses, accumulate academic credits across institutions, experiencing greater flexibility in their educational journeys.

Technology has transformed access to lectures, digital libraries, virtual laboratories, online internships, collaborative research, thereby democratising learning opportunities for millions of students. Yet, technology by itself cannot guarantee inclusion. Digital architecture must be accompanied by digital equity. Reliable internet connectivity, affordable devices, digital literacy, accessible learning platforms remain unevenly distributed across the country. Assessment practices are also witnessing a significant transformation. Traditional memory-based examinations are gradually making way for competency-based evaluation, experiential learning, project-based assessments, continuous feedback mechanisms. Universities must therefore prepare students not merely for their first job but for lifelong employability in a rapidly evolving knowledge economy. Equity plus inclusion must therefore become institutional values rather than policy obligations. Ultimately, higher education is not just about producing graduates; it is about nurturing thoughtful citizens capable of leading societies with wisdom, compassion, integrity. For Generation Z, inclusion is no longer an aspiration; it is an expectation.

How debate shapes future-ready talent

ANJALI TIWARY

Founder and CEO, Indian Debating League

At 9:40 on a Monday morning in Gurugram, a young strategy analyst opens three market-entry reports her AI copilot generated overnight. Forty pages each. Fluent, structured, confident. At least one is subtly wrong. Her job is to work out which, and to defend that judgment before a client by noon.

This is the modern workplace in miniature. Today, generation is nearly free, and the binding constraint has moved up the stack: from access to assimilation, from producing answers to deciding between them. When machines write the first draft, human value concentrates in the skills of the second read which is evaluation, synthesis, and judgment under pressure.

First, assimilation under overload. A debater receives a motion and limited preparation time, and must compress hours of research into a seven-minute case. This is triage, not accumulation: identifying the two or three arguments that decide the round and discarding the rest.

Second, outside-in thinking - the practice of approaching a problem from



another person's perspective rather than your own assumptions. Debaters are routinely assigned the side they did not choose and often do not believe. To win, they must reconstruct the strongest version of the opposing worldview, steel-manning, not caricature.

Third, decision-making when your team includes AI. When your colleague is a system that produces a plausible output without accountability, the human role migrates from generator to a decision maker: allocating burden of proof, testing internal consistency, detecting confidence error. Every rebuttal speech is an exercise in asking, "This sounds persuasive-but does

it survive scrutiny?"

Fourth, "judgment itself", the capacity to decide with incomplete information while being actively challenged. A point of information mid-speech is a live stress test: respond, concede, or refute, in seconds, in public.

The analyst in Gurugram will not be displaced by the machine that wrote her reports. If she is displaced at all, it will be by someone who learned - probably at sixteen, on a school stage, with a stopwatch running - how to decide which report to trust.

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Unit 203 & 204, 2nd Floor, "A" Wing, Navbharat Estate, Zakaria Bunder Road, Sewri (West), Mumbai 400015, Maharashtra. CIN No.: U65922MH2005PLC272501		
Demand Notice Under Section 13(2) of Securitisation Act of 2002		
Whereas, Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd through its head office Mumbai, Notice issued to the following borrowers / guarantors/ mortgagors have defaulted in the repayment of principal and payment of interest of credit facilities obtained by them from the VFHCL and said facilities have turned to be Non Performing Assets. The notices were issued to them under section 13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 on their last known addresses however the same have returned un-served and as such they are hereby informed by way of public notice about the same.		
Name of Borrower, Co-borrower and Loan A/c No.	Date and Amount of Demand Notice Under Sec. 13(2)	Description of Mortgaged property
Umesh Gupta (Applicant), RANJITA Devi (Co Borrower) LP0000000039890	16/7/2026 Rs. 686072/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	Vacant Residential Plot on land area measuring 31 Sq. Yds., i.e., 25.91 Sq. Mtrs., comprised in Khaska No.61 & 64, situated at Village Chotpur, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, District Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. Uttar Pradesh, 201301. North: Road 15 Ft. South: Plot of Ramesh Chauhan, East: Road 15 Ft., West: Plot of Sanjay
MAHENDRA SINGH (Applicant), PRAMOD KUMAR (Co Borrower), Kamlesh (Co Borrower), Vishnu Kumar (Guarantor) MHL000000167131	16/7/2026 Rs. 606019/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing No. Situated Abadi Khasara No 46, Balke Mauza Lohavan Tehsil Mahavan District Mathur, Mathura, Mahavan, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, 281204 Area of Property: 104 Sq.Yard. North: OTHERS PROPERTY, South: RASTA 15 FT., East: PLOT OF MR. RAM BABU, West: PLOT OF MR. PREM SINGH
Baikunthi . (Applicant), Suresh Chandra (Co Borrower), Sunil Kumar (Co Borrower), Pankaj Kumar (Guarantor) MHL000000164403	16/7/2026 Rs. 989684/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing no Gata No 157 Situated At Mauza Ruppur, Tehsil And District Firozabad, Firozabad, Firozabad, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, 283203 admeasuring 437.77 sq.ft bounded by. North: Khet Anand Kumar, South: Plot Shashi Yadav, East: Khet of Sarvesh Kumari, West: Rasta 30 ft
RITIK . (Applicant), PREETI . (Co Borrower), Sahab Singh (Co Borrower) LP0000000181308	16/7/2026 Rs. 509687/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	HOUSE, AREA Measuring East - 16.6 Feet, West - 16.6 Feet, North 20.6 Feet, South - 20.6 Feet Total Area 37.5833. YARDS., I.E. 31.4234 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT Moja Surir Vijau Bangar TEHSIL Mant DISTT., MATHURA, U.P.. 281205. North: House of Tara Chand, South: House of Sudhir Gupta, East: House of Bahadur, West: Rasta 10 Ft. Wide
Sudama Devi(Applicant), Bhagwan Singh (Co Borrower), Kalicharan . (Co Borrower), RAMVEER . (Guarantor) MHL000000176418	16/7/2026 Rs. 555959/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing No. Plot On Khaska No 306 Situated At Nagla Pachhiya Mauza, Himayupur, Tehsil And District Firozabad, Firozabad, Firozabad, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh, 283203. North: Rasta 10 ft, South: Khet Ram Nath, East: House of Sellar, West: Remaining Part of Sellar
Furkan . (Applicant), Shabana . (Co Borrower) LP0000000213573	16/7/2026 Rs. 1074748/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	PROPERTY AREA MEASURING 38.70 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT MOHALLA SHEKHAN, KASBA ACHHNERA, TEHSIL KIRAWALI, DISTT., AGRA, U.P. 283101. North: House of Chunna, South: House of Azam, East: House of Usman, West: Rasta 12ft. Wide
SATYAPAL . (Applicant), KAMLESH DEVI (Co Borrower) MLP0000000205698	16/7/2026 Rs. 491065/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	House AREA MEASURING East-30 Feet, West-30 Feet, North-60, South-60 Feet Total Area 200 SQ. YARDS., I.E. 167.22 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT Khaska no. Part Of 124 Mauja Hasanpur Baru Tahsil Sadabad District Hathras U.P 281307. North: Other Plot, South: Other Plot, East: Rasta 8 ft. wide, West: others House
LAXMAN SINGH (Applicant), HARVIRI DEVI (Co Borrower), HARI SINGH (Co Borrower), Kamlesh Ji (Co Borrower), JITENDRA SINGH (Guarantor) MLP0000000230386	16/7/2026 Rs. 740487/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	HOUSE, AREA MEASURING East-50 Feet 6 inch, North-62 Feet 5 inch, South-62 Feet 5 inch Total area 350.18 SQ YARDS. I.E. 292.78 SQ MTRS. SITUATED AT Khaska no. part of 1476, Moja Nainupatti Andrun, Nagla Khutiya, Tahsil Goverdhan, District Mathura U.P Wer/Mortgagor(s), herein, is the absolute owner with respect to The Borrower/Mortgagor(s), herein, is the absolute owner with respect 350.18 SQ YARDS. I.E. 292.78 SQ MTRS. SITUATED AT Khaska no. part of 1476, Moja Nainupatti Andrun, Nagla Khutiya, Tahsil Goverdhan, District Mathura U.P 281502. North: Rasta 15 Ft. Wide, South: House of Niranjan, East: House of Ram Prakash, West: Plot of Digambar
MAHESH . (Applicant), BHURI DEVI (Co Borrower), PANKAJ KUMAR (Guarantor) MLP0000000224845	16/7/2026 Rs. 662687/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	HOUSE AREA MEASURING 83.70 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT VILLAGE & MAUJA SAIYAN, TEHSIL KHERAGARH, DISTT., AGRA, U.P. 282001. North: House of Girraj, South: Plot of Others, East: Plot of Others, West: Rasta 10 Feet Wide
LAL CHAND (Applicant), Lata Devi (Co Borrower), MAHAVEER (Co Borrower), PAWAN KUMAR (Co Borrower) LP0000000187390	16/7/2026 Rs. 826562/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	PROPERTY AREA MEASURING 191.46 SQ. MTRS., PART OF KHASRA NO. 245/1, SITUATED AT MAUJA PAIGAON, TEHSIL CHHATA, DISTT., MATHURA, U.P. 281401. North: House of Om Prakash Sharma, South: House of Ramesh Chahar, East: Plot of Budhi, West: Rasta 08 Ft. Wide
VEERU . (Applicant), Poonam Devi (Co Borrower), Shila Devi (Co Borrower), DHARMVEER SINGH (Co Borrower), ANIL KUMAR (Guarantor) MHL0000000245781	16/7/2026 Rs. 746854/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing No. Gangchaoli Garhi, Jaini, Hathras, Hathras, Hathras, Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, 204101 Area of Property: 125 Sq.Yard. North: Land of Seller, South: Rasta 10 Feet Wide, East: Plot of Vinod, West: Land of Seller
GULAB . SINGH (Applicant), Meera . (Co Borrower), Shree Chand (Guarantor) MLP0000000242510	16/7/2026 Rs. 456410/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	Property residential House measuring East -64 feet Vide Road 5 feet West: 64 feet Wide Home Gangaram North 11 Feet and 14 feet and 6 inch vide Road 10 feet South: 18 Feet 6 inch wide Road 10 feet Total area 127 or Meater Covered Area 67.02 Sr Mtr Part of Khaska No 312 situated at Ladpur Said Properties" which are more fully and particularly described in the Schedule written hereunder) by virtue of property by Registered Gift Deed Dated Book No.1 Volume no 11712 on pages 275 to 290 Serial no. 2825 Dated 25/01/2025 in the office of SR Chhata District Mathura. Uttar Pradesh 281401. North: Road 10 feet wide, South: Road 10 feet wide, East: Road 5 feet, West: House of Gangaram
RITESH BALI (Applicant), OM PRAKASH (Guarantor) HL0000000266690	16/7/2026 Rs. 1998834/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing No. Property No-25-d, Upper Ground Floor Front Side Without Roof Rights, Out Of Khaska No-65/21, Pratap Enclave, Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi, New Delhi, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi, National Capital Territory Of Delhi, 110059 Area of Property: 64 Sq.Yard. North: Road 15 Ft., South: Gali 5 Ft., East: Other Plot, West: Other Plot
RATAN DEVI (Applicant), VEENIESH KUMAR (Co Borrower), SARVAN SINGH (Guarantor) MLP0000000279262	16/7/2026 Rs. 608184/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	HOUSE AREA MEASURING 100.44 SQ. YARDS., I.E. 83.98 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT Rohai TEHSIL HATHRAS & DISTT., HATHRAS, U.P.; Wer/Mortgagor(s), herein, is the absolute owner with respect to The Borrower/Mortgagor(s), herein, is the absolute owner with respect HOUSE AREA MEASURING 100.44 SQ. YARDS., I.E. 83.98 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT Rohai TEHSIL HATHRAS & DISTT., HATHRAS, U.P. 204101. North: Rasta 8 Feet Wide, South: Plot of Bal Kishan, East: Plot of Lokesh, West: Plot of Pappu
KANHEERAM (Applicant), (Co Borrower), JATIN (Co Borrower), MEVARAM (Guarantor) MLP0000000243293	17/7/2026 Rs. 828334/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	HOUSE, AREA MEASURING 243.40 SQ. YARDS., I.E. 203.52 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT Khaska no. 167 Mauja Kadoona Tehsil Chhata District Mathura.; Wer/Mortgagor(s), herein, is the absolute owner with respect to The Borrower / Mortgagor(s), herein, is the absolute owner with respect HOUSE, AREA MEASURING 243.40 SQ. YARDS., I.E. 203.52 SQ. MTRS., SITUATED AT Khaska no. 167 Mauja Kadoona Tehsil Chhata District Mathura.; VACANT PLOT No. 251 AREA MEASURING 203.52 SQ. METERS, PART OF KHASRA NO. 167, SITUATED AT KADONA, TEHSIL CHHATA & DISTRICT MATHURA UTTAR PRADESH, 281403. North: House of Nitroam, South: Property of Sanju, East: Rasta 6 Meters Wide, West: Property of Rupri
CHHOTE LAL (Applicant), KAJAL . (Co Borrower) MHL0000000247632	17/7/2026 Rs. 818534/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing Plot No 34 Kh No. 29, Village of Jamalpur Pargang Sikandrabad Gautam Budh Nagar Uttar Pradesh 203202 admeasuring 450 sq.ft.bounded by North: Plot no. 35, South: Plot no. 33, East: Rasta 17 feet wide, West: Plot no. 13
YOGESH . (Applicant), RINA KUMARI (Co Borrower) LP0000000166779	22/7/2026 Rs. 934962/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AREA MEASURING 150 SQ. YARDS. OUT OF KHASRA NO. 475K. 476. 485. SITUATED AT MAUJA MAHOLI TEHSIL & DISTT. MATHURA, U.P.Uttar Pradesh, 281004. North: Vacant Property, South: House of Karua, East: House of Banshi, West: Rasta 6 Feet Wide
Dhan Devi (Applicant), Pramod Kumar (Co Borrower), Vinod Kumar (Co Borrower), Dal Chandra (Co Borrower), Dinesh Kumar (Guarantor) MHL000000176299	22/7/2026 Rs. 602733/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	All that part and parcel of property bearing No. Plot On Khaska No. 332 Nai Abadi, Mauza Satta, Tehsil Edmatpur, District Agra, Agra, Edmatpur, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, 283202 admeasuring 1067 .24 sq.ft bounded by. North: Chak Bharat Singh and Sanjay Babu, South: Rasta 14 ft., East: Plot of Chand Bano, West: Chak Satya Prakash Sharma
KRISHNA LAL (Applicant), POOJA DEVI (Co Borrower), HEMRAJ H (Guarantor) MLR0000000210688	22/7/2026 Rs. 181454/- as on 16/7/2026 with further Interest and charges thereon	Plot on Part of Gata No 1757 area 800 sqft Situated at Ganauai Pargana Rudauli Ayodhya Uttar Pradesh FAIZABAD, UTTAR PRADESH, 224116. North: Plot of Kaushilya Devi, South: Plot of Shanti devi other, East: Rasta Kham 17ft, West: Khet of Girdhari other
The steps are being taken for substituted service of notice. The above borrowers, co-borrowers and/or their guarantors (where ever applicable) are advised to make the payments of outstanding within 60 days from the date of the publication of this notice failing which further steps will be taken after the expiry of 60 days of the date of this notice as per the provision of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. Please be informed that the said notice is also under section 13(13) informing the borrowers/guarantors/ mortgagors that the said mortgaged property should not be sold/leased/transferred.		
Date : 29.07.2026		
Authorized Officer,		Authorized Officer,
Place : Mathura, Gautam Budh Nagar, Faizabad, Agra, Hathras,		VASTU HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LTD

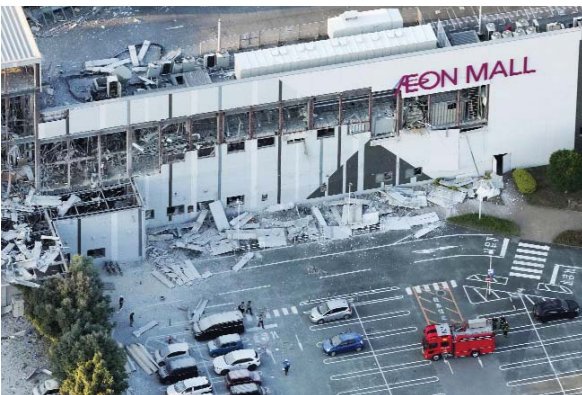
7.1-magnitude earthquake shakes Japan

MARI YAMAGUCHI ■ Tokyo

An earthquake registering a magnitude of 7.1 shook Kumamoto on Japan's southern main island of Kyushu late Tuesday afternoon, causing damage and injuries, officials said.

A tsunami advisory was temporarily issued but was lifted within two hours, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

The agency said the tsunami advisory covered the nearby Ariake and Yatsushiro Seas on the western coasts of Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Fukuoka and Saga prefectures about 900 kilometres southwest of Tokyo. The US Geological Survey initially



Damaged AEON Mall after an earthquake in Kashima, Japan AP

said the earthquake had a magnitude of 7.1, but revised it later to 6.8.

Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, in a message posted on X, said her

Government has set up a task force to gather information, assess possible damage and prepare for rescue operations if needed.

Takaichi later told

reporters that there have been reports of a number of injuries and damages to roads, bridges and buildings, as well as blackouts and fire, though details are still unclear. Takaichi warned people cooking to be careful with fire and with shards of broken glass.

Kyodo News agency said a hospital in Yatsushiro city accepted about 40 people with injuries from the quake. A train was derailed and fell on one side at the Yatsushiro station, and stone walls were damaged at the Kumamoto castle, Kyodo said. Japan's Fire and Disaster Management Agency said there were no reports of damage to major public facilities and infra-

structure, though authorities were still assessing the extent of damage.

Local fire departments received many emergency calls reporting fires and damage to homes. "We are putting people's lives as the top priority," Takaichi said, urging residents in the strongly shaken areas to use caution in light of possible aftershocks.

Shinji Kiyomoto, JMA's Earthquake and Tsunami Countermeasures planning officer, told a news conference that the shallow earthquake was triggering active seismic activity in the area, urging residents to especially be cautious over the next two to three days. (AP)

Misri concludes China visit after talks on bilateral ties

KJM VARMA ■ Beijing

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Tuesday wrapped up his visit to Beijing after two days of extensive discussions with several Chinese officials on the entire spectrum of India-China relations.

The visit by Misri, who was previously India's Ambassador to China, came as the two countries have stepped up bilateral engagement. Earlier in the day, he met Li Wentang, Vice President of the ruling Communist Party's Central Party School in Beijing and discussed opportunities for future cooperation and exchanges. During the



Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri

meeting, Misri was briefed about the school's historical significance, intellectual contributions and academic programmes, according to a social media post by the Indian embassy here.

He concluded his China visit after meeting with Li,

official sources said. On Monday, Misri met other Chinese leaders, including Vice Foreign Minister Hua Chunying, with whom he discussed the entire gamut of the bilateral relations.

The foreign secretary also met Sun Haiyan, Vice

Minister of the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Hong Liang, Deputy Secretary General of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Hong was previously the Director General of the boundary department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. Misri's visit followed the meeting between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of meetings related to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Manila on July 21. (PTI)

48 survivors, 14 missing after Vietnam ship sinks near South China sea

ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL ■ Hanoi

The number of survivors of a cargo ship that sank Saturday off a Chinese-occupied shoal in the South China Sea rose to 48 by Tuesday as search and rescue crews hunted for more people who went down with the vessel.

A multinational search for 14 people who remain missing was still underway Tuesday afternoon involving Vietnamese, Philippine



and Chinese rescuers.

Vietnamese authorities announced that three more of the 62 people onboard had been saved but did not provide details of the rescue.

The Vietnamese cargo vessel Khoi Nguyen 18 sank near Fiery Cross Reef, a Chinese-built island and military outpost in the hotly contested Spratly Islands.

The vessel went down while operating in bad weather in the East Sea, the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry

said, adding that all 48 rescued people had been transferred to Vietnamese authorities, who were providing medical care before taking them back to the mainland.

Khoi Nguyen is a general cargo ship built in 2017, according to vessel tracking platforms. It was last detected in March near Vietnam on its automated identification system, or AIS, according to ship tracking platform MarineTraffic. (PTI)

Trump and Netanyahu meet for the first time since launching Iran war

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Washington

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump met at the White House on Tuesday for the first time since they launched a joint war against Iran, offering a chance for Netanyahu to smooth out strains in their relationship.

The closed-door meeting lasted nearly an hour and a half and was "positive and productive," according to White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt. The White House and prime minister's office did not immediately offer more details.

It comes as both face growing pressures at home. Netanyahu is up for reelection and is embattled in part because of his deteriorating



relationship with Trump. Trump is under pressure to end an unpopular war that has wreaked economic havoc and driven prices higher ahead of midterm elections this November.

Trump revealed some tension with Netanyahu

ahead of their meeting, complaining about reports that the Israeli leader plans to discuss intelligence on Iranian activities at Pickaxe Mountain, a potential nuclear site that the US president has threatened repeatedly to bomb.

Ebola cases in Congo top 3,200

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Bunia

Confirmed cases in Congo's ongoing Ebola outbreak have reached 3,262, its Ministry of Health said in an overnight update, nearly the same as the 2018-2020 outbreak that is the largest ever recorded in the country.

Data from the Congolese health ministry showed that 1,437 patients have died out of the 3,262 cases, in what officials have said is the fastest Ebola outbreak on record, concentrated in the eastern Ituri province.

The 2018-2020 outbreak that was recorded in Congo and neighbouring Uganda lasted roughly two years, with more than 3,400 reported cases, including over 2,200 deaths, according



to the US Centers for Disease Control. Only the 2014-2016 outbreak across West Africa, considered the worst in history, had a higher toll with 28,000 cases and more than 11,000 deaths.

The speed of transmission in the current outbreak comes amid concerns from residents that many communities in the affected provinces are either unreachable or have been abandoned by responders in recent days over safety concerns amid attacks from angry residents and rebels.

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Hindustan Unilever shares dive 7%

Shares of FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) on Tuesday tanked 7 per cent after the firm reported a 3.17 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit for the June quarter of FY27. The stock tumbled 6.97 per cent to settle at ₹2,023.15 on the BSE. During the day, it dived 7.16 per cent to hit the 52-week low of ₹2,019. At the NSE, the stock dropped 6.98 per cent to end at ₹2,022.70. The company's market valuation declined by ₹35,619.79 crore to ₹4,75,357.56 crore. The stock was the biggest laggard among the Sensex and Nifty firms. Hindustan Unilever Ltd on Tuesday reported a 3.17 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit to ₹2,680 crore for the June quarter of FY27, mainly on account of exceptional items and higher taxes. The company had reported a net profit of ₹2,768 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by HUL. (PTI)

Industrial production rises by 7.3% in June: Govt data

Industrial output rose by 7.3 per cent in June compared to 5.1 per cent in the preceding month, mainly on the back of improved manufacturing sector performance and strong growth of the electricity and gas supply sector. This is the third monthly Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data based on the new series. "In June 2026, Index of Industrial Production recorded a 7.3 per cent year-on-year growth, supported by 7.8 per cent growth in Manufacturing sector and strong growth of 10.6 per cent in Electricity & Gas Supply sector," the National Statistics Office said in a release on Tuesday. The IIP growth rate for the month of June 2026 is 7.3 per cent against 5.1 per cent (Quick Estimate released in June) in the month of May 2026, it stated. The revised estimate of IIP for the month of May is 5 per cent. The production of Mining & Quarrying rose by 1 per cent, Manufacturing by 7.8 per cent, Electricity & Gas Supply and Water Supply by 10.6 per cent, and Sewerage & Waste Management by 6.1 per cent in June 2026 compared to the year-ago period. Within the manufacturing sector, 19 out of 23 industry groups have recorded positive growth in June 2026 over June 2025. The top three positive contributors for the month of June 2026 are – manufacture of electrical equipment (34%), manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailers (17.5%), and manufacture of food products (10.8%). (PTI)

Gold drops ₹2,640 per 10g, silver slides ₹5,200

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Gold prices retreated by ₹2,640 to ₹1.47 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, and silver dropped ₹5,200 per kg, tracking weak global trends and a firm rupee.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity depreciated by ₹2,640 to ₹1,47,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) from Monday's closing level of ₹1,49,640 per 10 grams,

according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver also witnessed selling and tumbled ₹5,200 to

Rupee settles at 95.88 against US dollar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The rupee stayed on upward track for the third straight session and ended 11 paise higher at 95.88 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, supported by lower crude oil prices amid signals of easing West Asia crisis. According to forex traders, the sustained outflow of foreign capital amid selling pressure in domestic equity markets, as well as an elevated dollar index ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision, capped gains for the local currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 95.75 and touched the

intraday high of 95.63 before ending the session at 95.88 (provisional) against the greenback, up 11 paise from its previous closing level. On Monday, the rupee

The Pioneer

NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY | JULY 29, 2026

Macroeconomic fundamentals strong: Union minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Macroeconomic fundamentals of the Indian economy remain strong, supported by robust domestic demand, healthy corporate balance sheets and sustained fiscal discipline amid global challenges, Union Minister Pankaj Chaudhary told Parliament on Tuesday.

Further, according to the RBI's Financial Stability Report (June 2026), the domestic financial system remains resilient, underpinned by strong bank and non-bank balance sheets, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha.

"As a major player in global markets, India's economy is also linked with international trends, which impact its exchange rate movements.

Since the start of the West Asia conflict, the Indian Rupee (INR) has depreciated against the US Dollar (USD) by 5.8 per cent in FY27 (from February 27 up to July 22, 2026)," he said.

At present, the macroeconomic fundamentals of the Indian economy remain strong, he said, adding real GDP has consistently grown at over 7 per cent during the last three years.

Economic growth continues to be supported by robust domestic demand, healthy corporate balance sheets and prudent fiscal management, he said.

The high-frequency indicators for the first quarter of 2026-27 also point to sustained momentum in economic activity and domestic demand, indicating the continued resilience of the Indian economy, he said.

The Index of Industrial

MoS Pankaj Chaudhary speaks in the Rajya Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament, in New Delhi

Production (IIP) recorded a growth rate of 4.9 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in April 2026 and 5.1 per cent YoY in May 2026, indicating continued investment-led industrial growth despite heightened global uncertainty, he said.

"The industries reliant on imported inputs may face cost pressures. Thus, to support stability, the Government is easing import-led inflation through duty adjustments, expanding MSME credit, ensuring afford-

Govt sets up India Digital Payment Intelligence Corp to contain cyber frauds

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The government has set up the India Digital Payment Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC) to share real-time fraud intelligence and alerts to the banks and financial institutions in order to contain cyber financial frauds, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

In a reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, she said the new entity has been set up in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to check growing incidents of cyber frauds.

"To contain cyber financial frauds, the government in consultation with the RBI has set up India Digital Payment

Intelligence Corporation (IDPIC) to share real-time fraud intelligence and alerts to the banks and financial institutions by leveraging advanced technologies such

as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Big Data Analytics," she said.

To address the growing cyber threats, she said, the government has been actively engaging with the financial sectoral regulators to strengthen the cybersecurity posture of financial institutions.

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has set up a National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC), which monitors cyberspace at metadata level to detect potential cybersecurity threats and facilitates real-time information sharing with concerned organisations, regulators and other stakeholders, enabling timely preventive and response actions, she said.

Further, she said, a nodal Computer Security Incident Response Team for the Financial Sector (CSIRT-Fin) has been set up under the overall supervision of CERT-In.

CNG now seen as cleaner, practical choice: Maruti Suzuki

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Maruti Suzuki is betting that CNG is no longer just a budget fuel choice. Speaking to *The Pioneer* during the launch of the updated Brezza, Senior Executive Officer, Sales and Marketing, Maruti-Suzuki Partho Banerjee said demand for CNG vehicles is rising because buyers now see them as cleaner, more practical options, not simply cheaper ones.

Maruti is using underbody CNG packaging to keep the SUV usable while offering lower running costs. The idea is to make CNG feel natural in a compact SUV, by not compromising on the luggage space of the vehicle, unlike first-generation CNG vehicles.

Banerjee has also pointed to a broader change in buyer behavior. He said CNG demand is no longer limited to hatchbacks and MPVs, and that SUVs are now becoming a strong part of the story. In Maruti's latest SUV push, that trend is especially visible, with the new

Brezza also featuring underbody CNG.

The company says the response has been strong. Banerjee said more than half of Victorias sales are coming from the underbody CNG variant, and that many of those buyers are switching from diesel. That is a meaningful signal in a market where diesel demand has weakened in several segments, as more manufacturers exit diesel engines due to strict emission norms.

Maruti is also highlighting scale. The company says it holds a 54 percent

share of India's clean and green passenger vehicle market, covering CNG, hybrids and EVs. Banerjee has said Maruti sold over seven lakh CNG vehicles in FY26 and expects about 9 lakh this fiscal year.

The bigger message is clear: CNG is moving from a niche fuel to a mainstream choice. For Maruti, the Brezza is helping show that this demand is now reaching compact SUVs too, where buyers want lower running costs without giving up space, style or everyday usability, Banerjee hinted and said that many CNG customers are not simply buying a 'cheap' car but choosing higher and more premium variants as well.

However, certain issues with CNG supplies still remain, especially with a limited number of gas stations as well as the fact that CNG supplies are almost non-existent in some geographies in India especially in the eastern and north-eastern regions of the country.

Govt orders sugar dealers to limit stocks to 30 days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The government on Tuesday directed that no dealer of sugar should hold stock for more than 30 days and also imposed a stock limit of 4,000 quintals as part of its efforts to keep prices of sweetener under control.

The order would come into force with effect from August 1, 2026, and would remain in force up to November 30, 2026.

In a gazette notification, the Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs imposed this restriction using powers under section 3 of the Essential Commodities

Act, 1955, and the Sugar (Control) Order, 2025.

"...Central Government hereby directs that no dealer of sugar shall hold any stock for a period exceeding thirty days

from the date of receipt of such stock and shall not keep sugar in stock at any time and in any place throughout the country in excess of 4,000 quintals," the notification said.

To keep prices under check amid a forecast of a deficit monsoon, the Centre has already banned sugar exports.

The order would not apply to sugar stocks held on the government account, or by dealers nominated by the State Government or an officer authorised by it to hold stock for distribution through fair price shops under the Public Distribution System.

Stock markets end flat; Sensex dips nearly 70 points

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty ended flat on Tuesday as investors' sentiment turned cautious ahead of key global central bank policy meetings this week and heavy sell-off across Asian markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 69.86 points, or 0.09 per cent, to settle at 76,765.92. During the day, it hit a high of 76,988.48 and a low of 76,672.77, gyrating 315.71 points.

The 50-share NSE Nifty slipped 10.60 points, or 0.04 per cent, to end at 23,985.35.

From the Sensex pack, Hindustan Unilever tanked 6.97 per cent after the FMCG major reported a 3.17 per cent year-on-year decline in consolidated net profit to ₹2,680 crore for the June quarter, mainly on account

of exceptional items and higher taxes. Bharat Electronics, NTPC, ICI Bank, Power Grid, and Reliance Industries were also among the laggards. Tata Consultancy Services, Eternal, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, and Titan were among the major gainers.

"The respite in crude oil prices provided relief to markets by easing concerns over inflation and input cost pressures. However, investor sentiment remained cautious ahead of key central bank policy meetings this week, including those of the Fed, BoE (Bank of England), and BoJ (Bank of Japan)," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, dropped 2.82 per cent to USD 85.87 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors

(FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹1,688.23 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. In Asian markets, South Korea's KOSPI tanked 10.84 per cent, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index also ended lower. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index settled marginally higher.

"Indian equity markets ended largely flat as a broad selloff across Asian markets weighed on investor sentiment," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Markets in Europe were trading in positive territory. US markets ended on a mixed note.

On Monday, the Sensex jumped 776.01 points, or 1.02 per cent, to settle at 76,835.78. The Nifty surged 228.50 points, or 0.96 per cent, to end at 23,995.95.

PROSPECT



Assam Minister Atul Bora along with Asom Gana Parishad MLAs and party functionaries, on Tuesday contributed to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma thanked them for their generous support



Yuva Bharti Trust chairman HN Sharma on Monday welcomed Dr Vinay Sahasrabudhe on being appointed the President of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai

Hudco intends to raise \$1.3b via ECB to fund urban infra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd (Hudco) on Tuesday said it plans to raise \$1.3 billion via external commercial borrowings (ECB) in the next five months to fund urban infra in the country.

Hudco, a techno-financing public sector enterprise in the field of housing and infrastructure development, intends to raise up to \$2 billion through ECB under the RBI concessional swap window available up to December 31, 2026.

"So, far we have raised \$700 million through External Commercial Borrowings this financial year. Remaining \$1.3 billion would be raised in the next five months depending on funding requirement,"



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in June opened a special US Dollar-Rupee forex swap window to give cheap currency hedging support to public sector undertakings (PSUs) raising External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs).

Last year, the financial institution had raised about USD 700 million through the ECB in Japanese Yen. This year, Hudco is planning to raise the ECB in US dollars along with Yen, he said, adding borrowing in dollar terms would be first for the company.

Experts push universal screening to end viral hepatitis by 2030

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

India has the knowledge, vaccines, diagnostics and treatments needed to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat.

The next challenge is ensuring that these lifesaving interventions reach every individual from expectant mothers and newborns to high-risk adults through universal screening, adult immunisation, stronger maternal healthcare, early diagnosis and equitable access to treatment, leading policymakers, hepatologists and public health experts said at the second edition of the Illness to Wellness Foundation's conference on "Prevention, Diagnosis and Treatment for Hepatitis," organised on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day 2026.

Delivering the keynote address, Rajesh Bhushan, former secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, and



chairperson, Governing Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, said, "India has made meaningful progress through the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme, but achieving greater impact will require stronger collaboration across stakeholders. Government, healthcare institutions, the private sector, civil society and development partners must work together to expand the reach of hepatitis services and ensure that quality care is available to every community."

Delivering the welcome address, Anil Rajput, chairperson, Advisory Council, Illness to Wellness Foundation, asserted, "We believe that success demands a whole-of-society approach. Governments, healthcare professionals, researchers, industry, civil society, the media and citizens all have vital roles to play. Public health succeeds not through isolated efforts but through partnerships that place prevention at the heart of national development. The Illness to Wellness Foundation remains committed to advancing this movement through awareness, evidence-based dialogue and collaborative action."

FY26: Private banks collect ₹4,949 cr, PSBs ₹2,138 cr for minimum balance shortfalls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Private sector banks have collected ₹4,948.71 crore from account holders for failing to maintain minimum average balance in their current accounts and savings accounts in FY26, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

During the period under review, public sector banks (PSBs) collected ₹2,137.92 crore for the non-maintenance of minimum average balance (current account & savings account), Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

HDFC Bank collected the highest amount — ₹1,798.14 crore, followed by Axis Bank at ₹1,081.33 crore during FY26, he said quoting Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data.

Both these private-sector lenders collected ₹2,879.47 crore as charges for non-maintenance of minimum average balance. This is 58 per cent of the total collection done by 19 private-sector banks.

No penal charges are levied on Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts, including Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) Accounts, etc, he said.

Replying to another question, Chaudhary said the financial health of PSBs has shown significant improvement with healthy balance sheets, historically high profits and multi-decadal low level of gross



non-performing assets (GNPAs). Further, PSBs have recorded sustained credit growth across different sectors of the economy, he said.

He further said that the government has introduced Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS 5.0) in May 2026, to tide over any short-term liquidity mismatches faced by businesses due to the West Asia Crisis.

The scheme provides guarantee coverage to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) through National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd (NCGTC) for the amount in default under the additional credit facility extended to the eligible borrowers, he said.

The scheme provides 100 per cent guarantee coverage for MSMEs and 90 per cent guarantee coverage for non-MSMEs and the scheduled passenger airline sector, up to a credit flow of ₹2,55,000 crore, which includes ₹5,000 crore specifically earmarked for the scheduled passenger airline sector.

Tata Sons chairman's pay climbs to ₹158.7 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Tata Sons executive chairman N Chandrasekaran received total remuneration of ₹158.66 crore in the year ended March 31, 2026, up from ₹155.81 crore a year earlier, according to the holding company's annual report. The compensation is the highest that Chandrasekaran has received since Tata Sons began disclosing executive remuneration in fiscal 2022. Over the past five years, he has earned a cumulative ₹671.4 crore.

His FY26 remuneration comprised salary and other benefits of ₹17.97 crore, up 18 per cent from ₹15.12 crore in the previous fiscal, and a profit-linked commission of ₹140.69 crore, unchanged from FY25. While his fixed pay has risen over the past five years, the bulk of Chandrasekaran's remuneration has come from commissions, which have increased alongside Tata Sons' profitability.

His commission rose from ₹94 crore in FY22 to ₹100 crore in FY23 and ₹121.5 crore



N Chandrasekaran

in FY24 before increasing to ₹140.69 crore in FY25, where it remained in FY26.

While the commission remains unchanged from the previous year, the salary and other benefits are up from ₹15.12 crore in 2024-25. The 2024-25 salary and other benefits were higher than the ₹13.82 crore earnings of the previous year and ₹13 crore in 2022-23. This was ₹14.61 crore in 2021-22. The remuneration places Chandrasekaran among India's highest-paid corporate executives.

HCLTech Chief Executive C Vijayakumar received ₹176 crore in FY26, while Persistent Systems CEO Sandeep Kalra earned ₹148 crore in FY25.

Assam CM Himanta flags off Purabi Dairy's first ice cream export to Bhutan

TONY DAS ■ Guwahati

In a major boost to the dairy sector of Assam, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday flagged off Purabi Dairy's first export consignment of 5,627 litres of Purabi ice cream to Bhutan, marking the first such export of dairy products from the State. The consignment will make Purabi ice cream available in major markets across Bhutan, including Thimphu, Paro, Phuentsholing and Wangdue.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by Minister for Cooperation Kaushik Rai. Senior Government officials — KC Samrta, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Fishery & Animal Husbandry, Govt of Assam, Aruna Rajoria, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary, Agriculture, Govt of Assam; Virendra Mittal, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary, Finance, Govt of Assam; Anant Lal Gyani, IAS, Secretary, Cooperation, Govt of Assam; Sunita Rai, Deputy General Manager, APEDA; SB Bose, Managing Director, NEDFL —



and representatives of the organisations involved in facilitating the export were also present on the occasion.

Commenting on the export, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "This export marks a proud milestone for Assam and reflects the growing strength of our dairy sector. Purabi ice cream is made from milk produced by farmers across the State, and its entry into the Bhutanese market will create new opportunities for our dairy cooperatives and rural producers."

Commenting on the milestone, Assam Minister for Cooperation & Chairman, NEDFL, Kaushik Rai said, "The export of Purabi ice cream to Bhutan is a significant achievement for Assam's dairy sector

and reflects the strength of the entire Purabi value chain. Every pack in this consignment has been manufactured using milk produced by farmers of Assam, making this milestone particularly meaningful for our dairy farmers."

Sunita Rai, Deputy General Manager, APEDA said, "APEDA has been working to promote exports of agricultural and processed food products from the Northeast and to help organisations in the region meet the requirements of international trade. The export of Purabi ice cream to Bhutan is an important development for Assam, and APEDA is pleased to facilitate NEDFL and Purabi Dairy in completing the required export procedures and formalities."

India's telecom user base hits 134.8cr: TRAI data



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Telecom subscriber base in the country increased marginally to 134.8 crore in June, driven by net addition of subscribers on the networks of Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio, according to data released by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Tuesday.

Bharti Airtel led subscriber growth during the month, adding 31.63 lakh users compared with May. The additions included 29.89 lakh mobile subscribers and 1.73 lakh fixed-line connections.

It was followed by Reliance Jio which reported a net addition of 22.91 lakh subscribers, comprising 21.46 lakh in mobile segment and 1.44 lakh in fixed line segment.

Together, the two private telecom operators accounted for 54.54 lakh, or about 87 per cent, of the total net addition of 62 lakh subscribers in June.

"The number of total telephone subscribers in India increased from 1,343.1 million at the end of May 2026 to 1,348.08 million at the end of June 2026, thereby showing a monthly

growth rate of 0.37 per cent," sector regulator TRAI's monthly data subscriber report for June 2026 said. The total number of wireless connections in June increased to 130 crore from 129.4 crore in May. The total wireless connections comprised 114.7 crore consumer sim, 13.47 crore M2M sim and 1.78 crore fixed wireless access connections.

Vodafone Idea reported net addition of 1.63 lakh wireless subscribers.

State-run BSNL added 94,006 subscribers during the reported month. MTNL lost 11,284 mobile subscribers in June.

The wireline subscriber base declined 1.67 per cent on monthly basis to 4.78 crore in June, from 4.86 crore in May, mainly due to BSNL losing 7.96 lakh fixed line subscribers.

Only Airtel, Reliance Jio and STPL added new subscribers, while rest all the companies including Vodafone Idea, MTNL, APSFL, Tata Teleservices, Quadrant reported decline in fixed line connections.

As per the information filed by 1,580 operators for June 2026, the total number of broadband subscribers increased to 108.75 crore from 108 crore in May.

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 (28.7.26)

6	7	3	1	5	9	4	2	8
8	1	2	7	6	4	3	9	5
5	4	9	8	2	3	6	1	7
7	6	8	5	1	2	9	3	4
1	3	5	9	4	6	8	7	2
9	2	4	3	8	7	5	6	1
4	9	1	2	3	8	7	5	6
2	8	7	6	9	5	1	4	3
3	5	6	4	7	1	2	8	9

DOUBLE CROSSWORD

WEDNESDAY | JULY 29, 2026

ACROSS

3 Fellows seemingly half sane but of great intelligence (5)

8 Letters to Jack from a Gulf state (5)

10 Nice change at the medical centre for old people (5)

11 One way to address a person of class (3)

12 Music group at number ten, possibly (5)

13 Charming women get it at church in various ways (7)

15 One doesn't feel right out of them! (5)

18 Hugh, we're told, is just a "hack" (3)

19 Being in the way, a tree could be removed (6)

21 Garden structure by Olga, cleverly (7)

22 A book can be a good one about modern times (4)

23 Stinky chap embracing his sweetheart (5)

24 Means of printing a penetrative article? (5)

26 Old king possessing E1 and a dog (6)

29 It's a lot to carry to the end of the garden (3)

31 Put to a fitting test (3,2)

32 Cut terribly crude keys (7)

34 Looked desirous of gold, perhaps, out East (5)

35 Has to do without love, being on his own (3)

36 Frustratingly promise central heating with no problem (5)

37 Agrees all but initially to weave cloth (5)

38 Trial outcome? (5)

DOWN

1 He's apt to get into the salad, etc. (5)

2 Walked in a charmed manner? (7)

4 Archer, one of the immortals (4)

5 Rest period for which one can set seats out (6)

6 He'll do something dramatic (5)

7 Join one for a close finish (5)

9 Bird after coal, maybe (3)

12 Old prison's modern entrance (7)

14 That woman from Motherwell (3)

16 A woman with contrary ways about her can be fun (5)

17 To astound the team leader is no ordinary feat (5)

19 Inclined to be biased (7)

20 Booklet concerning a car crashed during a race (5)

21 Friendly injection of money into a new play (5)

23 They shouldn't take long to read (7)

24 Hot vocalist? (6)

25 Spot cash for fish (3)

27 Decree in gold and possibly red (5)

28 Solo arranged by an egghead for free (5)

30 Is it peripheral in the field of betting? (5)

32 Where to end a united state in the United States (4)

33 Gosh, a French horn! (3)

SOLUTION (28.7.26)

ACROSS

1, Arrow

6, Spots

9, Painter

10, F-Loods

11, C-ombs

12, Cut up

13, Je-St-ers

15, Gas

17, Oslo

18, Va-Li-se

19, Swear

20, Eloped

22, See-m

24, Rap

25, Tightly

26, Oiled

27, Photo

28, Si-Eve

29, Tuiton

30, Trios

31, Pen-N.Y

DOWN

2, Re-lies

3, O-port-O

4, Wad

5, Angus

6, Secula-R

7, Prop

8, Tob-l-ls

12, Crowd

13, Joker

14, Sloop-p

15, Gil-E-t

16, Se-Amy

18, V-olid

19, Ser-Ious

21, Lather

22, Shrine

23, Eleven (II)

25, Tents

26, Otto

28, So-p

BRIEFLY

Sajan Prakash, Aryan finish eighth in CWG swimming finals



Two-time Olympian Sajan Prakash and Aryan Nehra finished eighth in the men's 200m butterfly and 800m freestyle finals respectively, while para swimmer Swatik Patil secured fifth place in the men's 100m breaststroke SB9 event at the Commonwealth Games here on Monday.

Prakash, who had qualified as the sixth fastest swimmer overall from the heats, clocked 1:58.05 to finish last in the eight-man 200m butterfly final. The 32-year-old from Kerala had earlier clocked 1:58.59 to finish second in Heat 2 behind Scotland's Duncan Scott (1:58.29) and book his place in the final. New Zealand's Lewis Clareburt claimed the gold medal in 1:55.05, while Australia's Harrison Turner (1:55.38) and Matthew Temple (1:55.45) took silver and bronze respectively. In the men's 800m freestyle final, Nehra also finished eighth after clocking 8:07.26. Australia swept the podium with Sam Short winning gold in 7:39.81, followed by Benjamin Goedemans (7:46.49) and Matthew Gaea (7:47.10). In para swimming, Patil finished fifth in the men's 100m breaststroke SB9 final with a time of 1:15.82. Australia's Beau Matthews won gold in 1:09.41, New Zealand's Joshua Willmer claimed silver in 1:11.44, while Australia's Timothy Hodge bagged bronze in 1:12.74. The SB9 classification includes swimmers with minimal weakness affecting their legs, missing feet, a missing leg below the knee, or hip impairments. (PTI)

Atiqa Mir produces moments of brilliance in Sweden



Indian racing prodigy Atiqa Mir displayed moments of brilliance in qualifying and the opening heat race before an untimely crash spoiled the remainder of her weekend at Champions of the Future Euro Series Round 4 in Kristianstad, Sweden.

Considering it was her debut at the Kristianstad Kart Track, the 11-year-old hardly took any time to get up to speed. Fresh off a pole position in Italy, Atiqa turned heads by qualifying only 0.17 seconds off the fastest time in her Qualifying group for a commendable 10th place and 29th overall out of 86 drivers. Atiqa, the first Indian to be backed by Formula 1 Academy, qualified second overall among the wildcard entries. In the round held as a prelude to the high stakes FIA European Championship here this weekend, Atiqa got much needed track time for an invaluable experience. In the races, her seventh place in heat 1 was her best result of the weekend and came ahead of many established drivers on the grid. After the impressive show in heat 1, Atiqa did not have much going her way. Starting on the outside row was a big disadvantage before a crash and two penalties marred her smooth start to the weekend. (PTI)

Pakistan's Usman Tariq criticises batters questioning his bowling action

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Karachi

Pakistan's mystery spinner Usman Tariq has criticised the growing trend of batters questioning the legality of his bowling action whenever they are dismissed by him.

Tariq, who played in this year's T20 World Cup, had to face a similar situation recently in The Hundred in the UK where Australian batter Tim David gestured for a no-ball after being caught behind during a match between Trent Rockets and Birmingham Phoenix.

"It is not the batters job to do these things. The umpires and match referee is there to



watch everything. If I am allowed to bowl by the umpire it means my bowling action is legal," Usman said in an interview.

Tariq, who is the only other Pakistan player apart from

Sarvesh Kushare wins CWG men's high jump silver

APARAJITA UPADHYAY
■ Glasgow

National record holder Sarvesh Kushare scripted history as he became the first Indian to win a silver medal in the men's high jump event of the Commonwealth Games, losing the gold by the narrowest of margins in an enthralling showdown with Jamaica's Romaine Beckford.

After sailing over 2.25m, both the 31-year-old Kushare and Beckford failed to clear the 2.28m mark. But the Jamaican took the gold as he had one less failed attempt than the Indian on count-back. The bronze went to Jack Kimani (2.20m) of England. The other Indian in the fray, Adarsh Ram,

finished fifth with 2.15m.

Before Monday, Tejaswin Shankar was the lone Indian to have won a high jump medal — a bronze in the 2022 Birmingham Games. But Kushare bettered it with his silver. It was Kushare's first medal in the CWG and that too on debut.

Tejaswin also competed on Monday and retired after failing to clear 2.05m in his first attempt. The move was a precautionary measure for Tejaswin as he is competing in the men's decathlon starting on Thursday.

The 27-year-old, who has a personal best of 2.29m, has not competed in too many individual high jump events in the last two years as he has been



focussing on decathlon.

Son of an onion farmer at Devargaon village in Maharashtra's Nashik district, Kushare used to practice high jump by using makeshift landing pits made of corn husks, cotton, and agricultur-

al waste, prepared by his father and childhood coach.

"It's my first medal, also my first medal at a major event. Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games are the Games that push for the Olympics. I want to win a

Boxers Sachin, Ankush, Sakshi enter CWG quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

The Indian trio of Sachin Siwach, Ankush and Sakshi Chaudhary advanced to the quarterfinals of their respective categories in the boxing competition of the Commonwealth Games here on Monday.

Sumit, however, lost a tight men's 70kg round of 16 bout to Northern Ireland's Jon McConnell by 1-4 split decision. Earlier, former world youth champion Sachin produced a composed performance to beat England's William Hewitt 4-1 in the men's 60kg class, winning four of the five judges' scorecards.

Judges 1, 2, 3 and 5



awarded the 26-year-old Sachin a 29-27 victory, while Judge 4 favoured Hewitt with a 29-27 scoreline.

Sachin dominated the contest with consistent scoring across the three rounds. He won the first two rounds on four judges' cards before securing the overall

verdict despite one judge scoring the bout in Hewitt's favour. The Indian then sealed the win despite a point deduction in the final round. The victory puts Sachin one win away from a CWG medal as he next faces Botswana's Treasure Moremi in the quarters. Moremi

defeated Lesotho's Toka Litabe in another last-16 contest by a 3-2 split decision. Rising youngster Ankush also advanced to the quarterfinals of the men's 80kg competition. He won a one-sided round of 16 bout against Jan Zalaan of Antigua and Barbuda 5-0 in a unanimous decision by the five judges to make it to the last-eight stage. The 20-year-old Haryana boxer is also one win away from a medal in his debut Games. He faces Jade Micock of Seychelles in the quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Sakshi, a former world youth and junior champion, won her 51kg round of 16 bout against Lethabo Modukanele of Botswana in a unanimous 5-0 verdict.

Nirupama Devi fails to finish in CWG weightlifting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

India's Nirupama Devi endured a heartbreaking outing in the women's 63kg weightlifting at the Commonwealth Games on Tuesday after failing all three of her clean and jerk attempts, resulting in a Did Not Finish. Nirupama, who had won a silver medal at last year's Commonwealth Championships in Ahmedabad with a total lift of 217kg (91kg+126kg), opened her campaign in the snatch with a failed attempt at 93kg.

She successfully lifted the same weight in her second attempt before her 95kg attempt failed in her final lift.

Her best lift of 93kg left her fifth at the end of the snatch



round, with four lifters ahead of her. Despite being placed fifth after the snatch, Nirupama remained well in medal contention.

However, the Indian lifter had a disappointing clean and jerk. Attempting 123kg, a weight below the 127kg she

had successfully lifted at the National Championships earlier this year, Nirupama failed on all three attempts, ending her campaign without a total.

Canada's Tokyo Olympic champion Maude Charron once again stamped her

authority on the event, setting Commonwealth Games records in both lifts to clinch her third successive Games gold medal.

Charron dominated the snatch with an effortless 102kg before lifting another Games record of 130kg in the clean and jerk for a winning total of 232kg.

England's Sarah Davies Smales claimed the silver medal with a total of 217kg (95kg+122kg), while 17-year-old Femily-Crystie Nottle of Nauru secured the bronze with 216kg (100kg+116kg).

Weightlifting has been India's most productive discipline at the Games so far with six of the country's 10 medals so far have come from the weightlifting arena, including one in para powerlifting.

Zidane realises his dream as he takes charge of France team

JEROME PUGMIRE
■ Paris

Moments after being announced as France's new coach on Tuesday, Zinedine Zidane clenched his fists and his usually measured voice trembled a little. "I'm excited," he said. "The France team makes you dream. We have extraordinary players, an extraordinary team."

Zidane coached Real Madrid until leaving in 2021. He replaces Didier Deschamps at the helm of France team he led to glory as arguably its greatest ever player. "I've waited five years for this chance, so that's why I'm a bit emotional," said Zidane, adding that it was the happiest day of his career as coach. "I've always

watched this side as a fan and also as a future coach, I won't hide it," Zidane added. "That's why I didn't take a club side. I told myself that the only thing I wanted to do after Madrid was taking the France team." French Football Federation president Philippe Diallo announced Zidane's appointment at the FFF headquarters in Paris on Tuesday, saying he has been given a 4-year contract.

Diallo called the hiring of Zidane "an exceptional moment, exceptional because of the person sat next to me," adding that Zidane "is one of the legends of French soccer."

The 54-year-old Zidane could have gone to another



club after leaving Madrid in 2021. But there was no way he would. "I had some offers during the five years I was away to take charge of a club," he said. "I turned them all down for the France team. It was the only thing I

wanted to do." Zidane called it "an immense joy" taking charge. "I have so many emotions, I am ready for the challenge," he said. "That's what motivates me." Zidane praised Deschamps, who won the 2018 World Cup

and stepped down after the recent edition, where Les Bleus lost in the semifinals to Spain. "Today I have the opportunity to be in charge of this team and I will give everything so that this team can win," Zidane said. "I would also like to congratulate DD (Deschamps) for these remarkable years."

Diallo said he met Zidane for talks in February, 2025 after Deschamps said he would stand down after the 2026 World Cup. Zidane said France would play differently to how it did under Deschamps. "What motivates me is the game, I was a No. 10, I like goals," Zidane said. "I was a leader on the field and now I want to be a leader by experience." (AP)

Batting collapse haunt Pakistan ahead of chase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Karachi

Pakistan will be desperate to avoid yet another batting collapse, a recurring problem over the last 10 months, when they begin their chase in the opening Test against the West Indies at Tarouba on Tuesday.

At stumps on the third day, the West Indies had stretched their overall lead to 155 runs with three wickets in hand after another eventful day dominated by the fast bowlers. All 27 wickets to fall in the match have been claimed by pacers, with West Indies all-rounder Justin Greaves starring with a five-wicket haul after Pakistan were bowled out for 282 in reply to the hosts' first-innings



total of 311. Resuming on 199 for three, Pakistan appeared well-placed at 242 without further loss before suffering a dramatic collapse. They lost their last seven wickets for just 38 runs, including the final

five for 16, as Greaves ripped through the lower order with four wickets in four overs.

The latest meltdown was the sixth major batting collapse for Pakistan in the last 10 months, again exposing the

lack of contributions from the lower order.

Since the start of the current World Test Championship cycle in October last year, Pakistan have endured similar collapses in every Test series. Against South Africa in Lahore, they lost five wickets for 16 runs in the first innings and seven for 48 in the second. In the second Test at Rawalpindi, they lost their last five wickets for 17 runs in the first innings and six for 42 in the second as South Africa levelled the two-match series.

Pakistan's batting woes continued in Bangladesh in May this year, where they lost five wickets for just 11 runs in Dhaka on their way to a 0-2 series defeat.

Arshad ready for CWG qualifiers: Coach Butt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Karachi

Defending Commonwealth Games champion Arshad Nadeem has put behind a difficult build-up caused by inclement weather in Switzerland and is "all keyed up" for the men's javelin throw qualification round, his long-time coach Salman Butt said on Tuesday.

Arshad, Pakistan's brightest medal hope at the Games after the country's athletes endured a medal-less campaign so far, finished ninth at the Lucerne Silver Meet in Switzerland earlier this month but has since adapted to the conditions in Glasgow ahead of the qualifiers on July 30. "Look, the rain didn't



allow Arshad a proper build-up before the competition and he took time to adjust to the wet surface conditions." Butt told PTI over the phone. He said the reigning

Olympic champion struggled to find his rhythm in Switzerland after arriving directly from a training camp in the hot conditions of Lahore. "He couldn't settle into a rhythm in Switzerland but now is adjusting to similar conditions in Glasgow." "He is all keyed up for the qualifiers and wants to do well again in this competition," Butt said.

Arshad managed a best throw of 78.47 metres in Lucerne, well below the standards he has produced over the last few years.

The Pakistani star, who won the Commonwealth Games gold in Birmingham in 2022 in the absence of India's Neeraj Chopra, will be joined by compatriot

Muhammad Yasir in the qualification round. India will field Neeraj Chopra, Rohit Yadav and Yash Vir Singh in the event. Twenty athletes will compete in the qualification round, with the top 12 advancing to the final. The automatic qualification mark has been set at 83 metres.

The event has generated considerable interest because of the much-anticipated rivalry between Arshad and Neeraj.

While Neeraj missed the 2022 Commonwealth Games due to fitness issues, Arshad went on to claim the gold before scripting history by winning the Olympic title in Paris in 2024 with a record throw of 92.97 metres, an Olympic and Asian record.

Ajaya wins CWG silver in 79kg weightlifting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

Fast-rising Indian weightlifter Valluri Ajaya Babu produced a remarkable performance to win the silver medal in the men's 79kg category and continue the country's successful run in the sport at the ongoing Commonwealth Games here.

The 21-year-old from Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram district lifted a Games record 149kg in snatch and 181kg in clean and jerk for a total of 330kg to win the second prize, narrowly missing out on gold to Malaysia's Erry Hidayat Muhammad, who totalled a Games record 331kg (147 + 184)



during a gripping contest on Monday night.

This was India's sixth medal in weightlifting in the current edition of the Games.

England's Chris Murray settled for bronze with a total of 325. First, Hidayat lifted

181kg to smash the Games record, the Indian then bettered it within seconds by lifting 181kg in his final attempt to break the record again for 330kg.

Hidayat did one better, breaking the record again

with a lift of 184kg in his final attempt to win the gold medal. Earlier, after a failed second attempt at 149kg, Ajaya Babu made a fine comeback to lift the weight in his final try and set a new Games record, finishing at the top of the heap at the end of snatch section ahead of England's Chris Murray (148kg) and Malaysia's Erry Hidayat Muhammad (147kg).

He had 145kg listed as his first attempt and nailed it too easily. Entering the clean and jerk section on a high, Ajaya Babu looked confident of winning the top prize but his opponent from Malaysia edged the Indian out eventually.

Seen as one of India's fastest-growing lifters, Ajaya

Babu had in the past won the gold medal in the men's 79kg category at the 2025 Commonwealth Championships in Ahmedabad with a personal-best total lift of 335kg (152kg snatch + 183kg clean & jerk), breaking the championship records. That performance earned him his direct qualification spot for Glasgow 2026. In the 2024 Commonwealth Championships, he secured double gold medals across both the junior and senior divisions in the men's 81kg category in Suva, Fiji.

After that, in the 2025 World Championships, the youngster was placed 16th overall in a highly competitive 39-lifter field in Forde, Norway.

MP off-spinner Saransh Jain gets maiden India Test call-up for Sri Lanka series

KUSHAN SARKAR
■ New Delhi

Veteran Madhya Pradesh off-spinner Saransh Jain earned his maiden Test call-up on Tuesday, capping a decade of consistent domestic performances as the selectors announced India's 15-member squad for the two-match series against Sri Lanka next month.

As reported by PTI on Sunday, the 33-year-old Saransh was in contention due to Washington Sundar's likely unavailability for the opening Test because of his ongoing rehabilitation from a hamstring injury. The short series will be played in Galle



(August 15 to 19) and Colombo (August 23 to 27). India will also play a four-day practice match from August 7 to prepare for the main assignment.

Saransh's inclusion stems from the Shubman Gill-led side's need for a right-arm finger spinner in Washington's absence. A key member of Madhya

Pradesh's Ranji Trophy-winning side under Chandrakant Pandit's coaching, the tall off-spinner enhanced his credentials during the recent India A tour of Sri Lanka, claiming six wickets across the two matches while also scoring a gritty unbeaten 70.

With Ravindra Jadeja and Manav Suthar being the left-arm orthodox spinners and Kuldeep Yadav a left-arm wrist spinner, the selectors opted for variety by drafting in the only specialist right-arm finger spinner in contention. Jadeja had been given a break from the one off home Test against Afghanistan in June. (PTI)

Gonzalez and Gotham FC agree to part ways



ANNE M PETERSON
■ New York

Esther Gonzalez and Gotham FC have agreed to mutually terminate her contract so the Spanish forward can focus on personal matters in Spain. Gonzalez, who won the 2023 Women's World Cup with Spain, was Gotham's leading scorer this season with six goals.

The 33-year-old Gonzalez also has a team-high 30 regular-season goals since joining Gotham in August 2023. During her tenure, Gotham has won a pair of NWSL championships and a CONCACAF W Champions Cup. "This journey has surpassed every expectation I had when I first came to Gotham. Together we achieved everything there is to achieve, and I will forever be proud to say that with this club, I won it all," Gonzalez said in a statement. "But beyond the trophies, Gotham is the place where I

grew in so many ways - as a player, as a professional and, most importantly, as a person. And it is here, in New Jersey, where my family grew, too. I carry so many incredible memories with me, but I know that every time I think of this club, I will do so with a smile on my face."

Before she joined Gotham, Gonzalez played for Real Madrid, scoring 30 goals in 54 appearances. She was also on the Spanish team that was runner-up at the 2025 women's European Championship. "Esther has been a model professional on and off the field, helping us win four major trophies and serving as a respected leader in our team," said Yael Averbuch West, the president of soccer operations for Gotham FC. "We thank her for three great years full of world-class moments of brilliance. We will always support Esther wherever her path leads." (AP)

Sharmila Dhankar clinches India's first ever para-athletics gold in CWG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Glasgow

Sharmila Dhankar, a woman who was impaired by polio at the age of two and survived the trauma of an abusive marriage, became India's first para-athlete to clinch a gold medal in the Commonwealth Games, winning the women's shot put F57 event here.

The 40-year-old produced her season's best throw of 9.81m to end India's 20-year wait for a para-athletics medal in the CWG.

Compatriot Shilpa Shyla, was awarded the bronze medal following an Indian protest amid controversial circumstances. Shyla had produced a personal best effort of 7.26m. "I am very

happy. The feeling has not yet sunk in, may be it will take another two-three days. My mother fought the world to help me fulfil my dreams. My next target is a gold at the Asian Games," Sharmila told PTI. Nigeria's Eucharia Iyiazi was initially placed at the bronze medal position but after a protest and official review, her only valid mark was adjudged a foul.

That led to Shyla being upgraded to bronze from the initial fourth place. However, it is likely that a counter protest may also be launched by Nigeria.

A sobbing Shyla celebrated, along with Sharmila, after the dramatic upgradation to bronze, giving India two medals from the event.

F57 classification is for ath-



letes with lower limb impairments, limb deficiencies, or reduced muscle power.

Sharmila's performance

on Monday night is one for the ages not just for the result it yielded but the resolve that it took for her to

Sonam and Himanshu clinch bronze in 10m air rifle mixed team at ISSF World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Hangzhou

Rifle shooters Sonam Uttam Maskar and Himanshu Dhillon added another medal to India's campaign, clinching the bronze in the 10m air rifle mixed team event at the ISSF World Cup here on Tuesday.

The bronze medal took India's overall tally at the World Cup to four medals, including 1 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze. Both Indian teams delivered strong performances in the qualification round to advance to the final. Sonam Uttam Maskar (317.2) and Himanshu Dhillon (317.4) combined for an aggregate qualification



score of 634.6.

Meanwhile, the pair of Elavenil Valariivan (316.8) and Parth Rakesh Mane (317.4) qualified right behind them with a total score of 634.2. In the final, Sonam and Himanshu produced a composed performance to combine for 441.2 points (220.6 each), securing the

bronze medal behind China 1 and China 2.

Elavenil (190.5) and Parth (188.3) finished fourth with a final score of 378.8.

"It was a tough competition, and the overall experience was very good," said Sonam, the 23-year-old from Maharashtra, in a release. "Winning a medal is

always important because it gives us confidence for the assignments ahead. Experience matters more than anything, and this performance will motivate us as we prepare for the Asian Games and the World Championships later this season." Making his first-ever senior ISSF World Cup final appearance, Himanshu said, "It was a great experience competing in my first senior World Cup final. I believed in myself, trusted my coach's guidance and relied on my strengths. I've competed in many junior finals, but winning my first senior World Cup medal makes this achievement very special."

After triumph, Anahat puts Harvard plans on hold to chase Olympic glory

BHARAT SHARMA ■ New Delhi

Newly-crowned junior squash world champion Anahat Singh has revealed that she placed her academic goals at the prestigious Harvard University on hold this year to give herself the best chance of winning a medal at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Anahat's original plan was to follow in her elder sister Amira's footsteps and pursue higher education at the Harvard. But bolstered by the title triumph in her fifth and final attempt, the 18-year-old now wants to put all her energies into preparing for the upcoming Asian Games and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics in a couple



of years' time.

Anahat has been living out of the suitcase for as far as she can remember, juggling top level squash and school. Having graduated from school only a couple of months ago, Anahat has now chosen to focus on the sport to take her game to the next

level. "I was supposed to go to college this year, but I decided to take a gap year because of the Asian Games coming up. And now I understand that this year is really important for me regarding squash and, the build up to the LA 2028 (Games)," Anahat told PTI in an interview refer-

ring to her plans for squash's Olympic debut.

"So, yeah, I mean, just focusing on this year, outside of school, because I've been doing that for the last 12 years (smiles). I'm just focusing on squash for a year and just making sure that I'm at my peak going in to LA 28," she said.

World title confidence-booster ahead of Asiad

Having got the monkey off her back with a world junior title in her fifth and final appearance, Anahat's next big assignment is the Asian Games in Japan in September-October.

If Anahat is to win gold, she will have to find ways to upstage higher-ranked players like world number

five Sivasangari Subramaniam from Malaysia and sixth-ranked Satomi Watanabe from Japan.

Considering the challenge ahead, the triumph in Canada that included wins over three Egyptians, will give Anahat more confidence against the world's best players. A gold in Japan would secure her automatic qualification to the Olympics. "It (the win at world juniors) definitely adds a lot to my confidence to get into this event.

I mean, if I didn't win, it wouldn't really make much of a difference, but it definitely puts me on a high now," said the youngster, who is supported by JSW Sports. "I've played almost every

single player that will be there in the Asian Games, and I know what to expect. So, just going back home and focusing on that. If I have a shot at getting a chance to be a part of the Olympics in almost two months, I think that will be a dream come true," said Anahat.

Praise from Idol PV Sindhu and PM Modi

Anahat began her journey in racket sports with badminton before settling on squash. No wonder she continues to idolise the great PV Sindhu, who was among the many who took to social media to congratulate on her path-breaking win in Ontario. Prime Minister Narendra Modi too was among them. (PTI)

In tears after his exit, Tejaswin stays to help Kushare

APARAJITA UPADHYAY
■ Glasgow

His own campaign derailed by a recurring knee problem, Tejaswin Shankar fought through tears and discomfort to be there for compatriot Sarvesh Kushare, offering him technical advice that proved crucial in securing his men's high jump silver in the Commonwealth Games here.

Tejaswin had claimed the high jump bronze in the 2022 Birmingham CWG, which was a first ever for India in the

sport. On Monday, the 27-year-old felt a sharp pain in his knee during his warm-up and could not continue in the competition after clearing his first attempt.

Despite his own heartbreak, he stayed back at the venue and switched roles to help Kushare, who eventually fetched a silver medal, bettering Tejaswin's 2022 performance.

Kushare credited Tejaswin's technical advice for helping him regain his rhythm after a shaky start.



"I wanted to clear the height in my first attempt itself, but during 2.25m my

rhythm was affected and my stride became shorter. Then TJ told me to move forward in

my run-up, and that helped," Kushare said.

A visibly emotional Tejaswin struggled to compose himself while speaking to reporters after the event. "I felt a shooting pain in my knee. It happened during my warm-up. It's nothing new; I have always had tendonitis in my knees," he said.

"I don't think there is any high jumper who doesn't have it. That's why it's called jumper's knee. Everyone manages it, and so do I," he said.

Indian shuttlers disappoint in Taipei Open qualifiers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Taipei City (Taiwan)

Indian shuttlers endured a disappointing outing in the qualifiers of the Taipei Open Super 300 tournament, with only Rounak Chouhan progressing to the second round of the men's singles qualifying round here on Tuesday.

Chouhan, seeded second in the qualifiers, defeated Joshua Nguyen of Canada 21-



15, 21-11 to set up qualifying quarterfinal clash against Chinese Taipei's Kuan Lin Kuo. All other Indians in the men's singles qualifiers exited in the opening round. Rithvik Sanjeevi lost 10-21,

11-21 to the top seed Riki Takei of Japan, while Sankar Subramanian was shown the door by USA's Garret Tan 17-21, 10-21.

Tushar Suveer fought hard before losing 19-21, 21-16, 12-21 against Chinese Taipei's Kuan Lin Kuo. The only Indian in the women's singles qualifier, Aakarshi Kashyap, seeded fourth, lost 15-21, 19-21 against Malaysia's Kisona Selvaduray.