

CONTINUED ON >> P4

1,895 MALARIA CASES DETECTED IN TWO WEEKS, SURVEILLANCE INTENSIFIED

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

JAMSHEDPUR : The East Singhbhum district administration has crossed a major milestone in its intensified malaria control campaign, screening more than 1.04 lakh people across the district within just two weeks. Officials said the large-scale surveillance and testing drive is helping identify cases early and preventing serious complications through prompt treatment.

Addressing a press conference, Deputy Commissioner Rajiv Ranjan said the district administration and the Health Department are conducting an aggressive campaign involving surveillance, testing, treatment, Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) and public awareness in malaria-prone areas.

Between June 29 and July 12, a total of 104,459 people underwent malaria screening at Community Health Centres (CHCs), Urban Health Centres and Sadar Hospital.

The testing included 96,478 Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) and 7,981 slide tests. During the period, 1,895 malaria-



positive cases were detected, comprising 1,491 cases of Plasmodium falciparum (PF), 353 cases of Plasmodium vivax (PV) and 51 mixed infections.

Despite the large number of screenings, the district's overall malaria positivity rate stood at 1.96 per cent. Potka Community Health

Centre recorded the highest testing volume with 24,657 people screened, followed by Musabani (15,150), Ghatshila (12,121) and Dumaria (11,060). Potka also reported the highest number of positive cases (667), followed by Dumaria (427), Musabani (344) and Ghatshila (212).

In view of the higher caseload, the administration has intensified surveillance, Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), rapid testing and treatment campaigns in these blocks. The Deputy Commissioner said the district has recorded six malaria-related deaths during the current outbreak.

Of these, four were attributed to cerebral malaria, while two resulted from mixed malaria infections. He informed that every fatality is

undergoing detailed medical review to identify gaps and strengthen future treatment protocols.

He stressed that timely diagnosis and treatment remain the most effective tools for preventing severe illness and fatalities.

Officials noted that Sadar Hospital reported a malaria positivity rate of 14.36 per cent, significantly higher than other health facilities because it primarily receives referred patients and individuals with severe symptoms.

In urban areas, no malaria-positive cases were reported from Urban Mango, while only two cases were detected in Urban Birsanagar during the reporting period.

The Deputy Commissioner appealed to media organisations to support the adminis-

tration's awareness campaign by encouraging people to seek immediate medical testing if they develop fever instead of resorting to self-medication.

He said timely dissemination of accurate information would help increase public awareness and reduce the risk of severe malaria cases.

The administration has urged residents not to ignore fever and to visit the nearest health centre for a malaria test at the earliest.

People have also been advised to prevent water stagnation around their homes, use mosquito nets regularly, cooperate with Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) and health surveys, and actively eliminate mosquito breeding sites to help contain the spread of malaria.

IG (Prisons) Sudarshan Mandal hospitalised after heart attack

SURENDRA SOREN : RANCHI



Senior IPS officer and Jharkhand Inspector General (Prisons) Sudarshan Mandal was admitted to a private hospital in Ranchi on Monday after suffering a suspected heart attack. He was rushed to Samford Hospital in Kokar after complaining of severe chest pain and discomfort.

Hospital sources said doctors confirmed a heart attack during the preliminary examination and immediately shifted the 2006-batch IPS officer to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). He is currently undergoing treatment under the supervision of a team of cardiac specialists, and his condition is reported to be critical.

Doctors are closely monitoring his health and conducting necessary cardiac investigations and treatment. However, neither the hospital administration nor the state police department has issued an official medical bulletin regarding his condition.

Sudarshan Mandal, a 2006-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Jharkhand cadre, is currently serving as the Inspector General (Prisons). During his career, he has held several key and sensitive assignments in the state and is widely regarded as a dedicated, disciplined and professional police officer.

News of his hospitalisation has sparked concern within the police and administrative circles. Several senior government officials, police officers and well-wishers visited Samford Hospital to enquire about his health.

Further updates are awaited from the hospital and the state authorities regarding his medical condition.

XLRI and Dale Carnegie India join hands to shape future-ready leaders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

JAMSHEDPUR : XLRI Leadership Education and Development (XLEAD), the executive education arm of XLRI-Xavier School of Management, has partnered with Dale Carnegie India (WalchandPeopleFirst Limited) to integrate globally recognised behavioural and leadership development into management education and executive learning.

The collaboration, formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), combines XLRI's academic expertise with Dale Carnegie India's century-long experience in developing behavioural competencies. Together, the institutions will design and deliver industry-focused programmes for students, professionals and executives, aimed at strengthening leadership and interpersonal skills essential in today's rapidly evolving workplace.

As businesses adapt to artificial intelligence, digital transformation and changing work environments, the partnership will focus on developing critical human capabilities such as communication, emotional intelligence, executive presence, influence, ethical leadership and trust-building. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between technical knowledge and behavioural excellence.

Under the agreement, the two organisations will jointly offer programmes in business communication, executive presence, business storytelling, presentation skills, public speaking, executive coaching, influencing and persuasion. These programmes will be delivered through classroom, online and blended learning formats, along with industry-recognised certifications.



DMFT TRUST COUNCIL APPROVES KEY INITIATIVES FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

PNS : DEOGHAR

A meeting of the Trust Council of the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) was organized under the chairmanship of DC Saurabh Kumar Bhuvania at the Collectorate Auditorium.

Dumka MP Nalin Soren, Deoghar MLA Suresh Paswan, representatives of ministers and other MLAs, along with concerned Panchayat Mukhiyas, were present in the meeting.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed the updated status of various ongoing schemes in mining-affected areas. He directed officials of the concerned departments to complete all works in a time-bound and quality manner.

The DC and other members were briefed about the schemes selected so far and their current progress. He emphasized that all schemes under the District Mineral Foundation Trust should be selected in a transparent manner according to



the needs of the local environment in mining-affected areas so that proper and meaningful development can take place.

The DC further directed officials to divide DMFT funds into two categories - High Priority and Other Priority areas. High priority sectors include drinking water supply, sanitation, health, education, skill development, women's education, etc. He stressed that scheme selection should be done transparently with the cooperation

of local villagers and public representatives.

In the meeting, approval was accorded for various integrated development schemes in Karon, Sarath, and Palajori blocks. Approval was also given for the establishment of Kangaroo Mother Care Units for newborns in the Community Health Centers of all three blocks.

Additionally, approval was granted for setting up a Center of Excellence to provide training in Cyber Security and AI for children from mining-affected

areas. A decision was also taken to conduct a survey for preparing a list of panchayats and villages falling under mining-affected zones.

Others present in the meeting included Deputy Development Commissioner Piyush Sinha, DFO Abhishek Bhushan, District Planning Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, District Supply Officer, Headquarters DSP, Executive Engineers, Assistant Public Relations Officer, DMFT team members, and other concerned officers and staff.

Training for SIR volunteers held in Deoghar

PNS : DEOGHAR

A review-cum-training meeting for Summary Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter list was organised on July 13, 2026, at Shilpgram, Nandan Pahad. The meeting was chaired by the Electoral

Registration Officer-cum-Sub Divisional Officer, Deoghar Ravi Kumar.

The main objective was to accelerate the SIR process and train volunteers. All SIR volunteers were given detailed training on door-to-door distribution and collec-

tion of materials, and preparing accurate ASDD (Absent, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate) lists.

The SDO instructed volunteers to coordinate closely with Booth Level Officers (BLOs) in their assigned areas and extend full support to

make the voter list error-free and updated so that no eligible voter is left out. Officials also provided practical tips for resolving field issues and emphasised completing the work impartially within the given timeline.

AI Education initiative held in Deoghar

PNS : DEOGHAR

A special programme on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education was organised in Deoghar under the joint aegis of The Destination Class and Astrofiles India, bringing together educators, students, journalists and government officials to promote the safe, ethical and effective use of AI in learning.

Titled "AI in Education - AI and Us," the event focused on enhancing AI literacy and encouraging the responsible adoption of emerging technologies in classrooms. The programme was conducted by Dhananjay Narayan Khawade, who kept the interactive session engaging throughout.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Abhay Parasar, District Information and Science Officer, Government of India, said Artificial Intelligence is poised to become a key pillar of future education. He stressed that while embracing technological advancements, equal importance must be given to ethical AI practices and cyber security. He urged teachers and students to use digital tools responsibly and thoughtfully.

Welcoming the participants, Pranay Narayan Khawade, founder of The Destination Class, said the institute is committed to equipping students with modern technological skills in a safe and guided environ-

ment. He noted that responsible AI adoption would help nurture creativity and innovation among young learners.

Senior journalist Udayesh Ravi highlighted AI's growing applications beyond education, including archaeology, scientific research, history and data analysis, encouraging students to view technology as a tool for knowledge creation.

A major attraction of the programme was a live demonstration of AI tools by Astrofiles India founder Sandeep Poddar. Using platforms such as Google NotebookLM and Google AI Studio, he showcased how AI can simplify complex concepts through visual aids and interactive learning tech-



niques.

The programme concluded with participants pledging to promote AI literacy, responsible technology use

and innovation, with the shared vision of establishing Deoghar as a future-ready hub for technical education and Artificial Intelligence.

Bear attacks leave 5 injured in a week in Palamu Tiger Reserve

PNS : DALTONGANJ

Human-bear conflict has intensified in Jharkhand's Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR), with five people, including a woman, injured in four separate bear attacks over the past seven days. Forest officials say the incidents highlight the growing interface between human activity and wildlife habitats during the fruiting season.

The latest attack occurred

on Sunday under the Mahuadarn Range of the Palamu Tiger Reserve, where 40-year-old farmer Tilku Nagesia was severely mauled by two young bears near his house at Donga Pani in Chiroo village. According to Forester-in-Charge Gurudayal Singh, the attack took place barely 10 metres from the victim's residence.

Nagesia suffered multiple deep wounds on his face, head, back and legs and lost

a significant amount of blood. He was first administered emergency treatment, including anti-tetanus and anti-rabies injections along with high-dose antibiotics, at the Community Health Centre in Mahuadarn before being referred to a higher medical facility in Latehar.

Forest officials said the bears had ventured close to the village because of ripe jackfruits falling from trees in the area.



Garhwa Murder: Wife, Brother-in-Law accused of staging suicide

PNS : GARHWA

A 50-year-old man whose body was found hanging from a tree in a forest in Jharkhand's Garhwa district was allegedly murdered by his wife and younger brother, who later staged the scene to resemble a case of suicide, police said on Monday.

The deceased, identified as Gola Korwa, was found hanging from a tree in the Paththarpania forest under the China police station area on July 11. A towel was tied around his neck, initially leading police to suspect that he had died by suicide. However, the victim's family alleged foul play and demanded a thorough investigation into the incident.

Acting on a written complaint lodged by the deceased's son, Ajay Korwa, China police registered an FIR on July 12 under Sections



103(1), 238 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and launched a detailed probe.

During the investigation, police questioned the victim's younger brother, Narayan Korwa, who allegedly disclosed that he had been involved in an illicit relationship with the victim's wife, Sankalpatiya Devi. According to investigators, Gola Korwa allegedly caught the two together in the forest on the day of the incident.

Police alleged that, fearing

the relationship would be exposed, the accused strangled Gola Korwa to death. They then allegedly hanged his body from a tree using his own towel to make the murder appear to be a case of suicide and to destroy evidence. Sankalpatiya Devi has been arrested and allegedly confessed to her involvement during interrogation, police said. Narayan Korwa has also been taken into custody, and legal proceedings have been initiated against both accused.

Faulty transformers to be replaced on priority in Dumka

KUMAR PRABHAT : RANCHI

Dumka Deputy Commissioner Abhijit Sinha on Monday directed electricity department officials to ensure uninterrupted power supply, expedite rural electrification works, and establish an effective mechanism for disaster response and consumer grievance redressal during a high-level review meeting held at the Collectorate.

Reviewing the district's power infrastructure, the Deputy Commissioner assessed the status of electricity supply, maintenance of existing networks, and progress of electrification in remote and underserved



areas. Stressing the need for prompt action during emergencies, he instructed officials to restore power on a war footing following storms, heavy rainfall, or any other unforeseen disruptions. He

said technical teams should be deployed immediately to affected locations to minimise inconvenience to consumers and ensure that unnecessary delays are avoided. The Deputy

Commissioner also reviewed the condition of faulty transformers across different blocks and directed officials to prioritise their repair or replacement. He asked the Executive Engineer and technical staff to maintain an adequate stock of essential equipment and spare parts while regularly monitoring transformer load capacity to prevent breakdowns and prolonged outages.

Special emphasis was laid on the implementation of the state government's Mukhyamantri Ujjwal Jharkhand Yojana (MUJY). Sinha reviewed the progress of electrification in left-out villages, hamlets and remote habitations and instructed

officials to complete all pending works within the stipulated timeframe without compromising quality. He said the scheme's benefits should reach every eligible rural household to support inclusive development.

The Deputy Commissioner also called for stronger field-level monitoring and a responsive grievance redressal system. He directed officials to conduct regular inspections, address technical issues proactively and ensure timely resolution of consumer complaints. The meeting was attended by the Executive Engineer, assistant engineers and other officials of the electricity department.



CM reviews Higher and Technical Education Department

PUSHES REFORMS TO TRANSFORM JHARKHAND 'FROM MINING TO MINDS'

PNS : RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Monday conducted a high-level review of the Higher and Technical Education Department, outlining an ambitious roadmap to modernise higher education and strengthen skill development across the state. Stressing that the department will play a pivotal role in transforming Jharkhand "from mining to minds", the CM directed officials to accelerate reforms, improve access to quality education and align academic programmes with emerging global standards.

Reviewing the department's progress during the 2025-26 financial year and the action plan for the current fiscal, Soren issued several key directives. He emphasised upgrading higher and technical education institutions, ensuring wider cover-

age of scholarship and student credit schemes, operationalising the Jharkhand University Service Commission within 15 days, and introducing industry-oriented courses in emerging technologies.

The Chief Minister directed officials to expand the reach of the Guruji Student Credit Card (GSCC) Scheme so that no deserving student is deprived of higher education due to financial constraints. Officials informed the meeting that approval has been granted for loans to 2,888 eligible students, while banks have already disbursed educational loans worth Rs 64 crore to 243 students under the scheme. Soren asked the department to coordinate with the Welfare Department and Civil Aviation Department to extend the scheme's benefits, including to students



Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Higher and Technical Education Minister Sudivya Kumar holds a meeting with senior officials at Project building in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

enrolling at the Dumka Flying Institute.

He also instructed the department to ensure faster implementation of scholarship programmes, including

the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Overseas Scholarship Scheme and the Manki Munda Scholarship Scheme, so that eligible students receive financial assis-

stance without delay.

A major decision taken during the meeting was the in-principle approval for establishing Computer-Based Test (CBT) centres in all state

universities through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode, aimed at strengthening digital examination infrastructure.

To improve the quality of higher education, Soren directed officials to operationalise the Jharkhand University Service Commission within the next 15 days. He also asked the department to prepare a roadmap for launching live online classes across state universities from the 2026-27 academic session. Officials informed him that a pilot project is ready to begin at Jharkhand Raksha Shakti University and Binod Bihari Mahto Koyalanchal University (BBMKU), Dhanbad.

In another significant move, the meeting approved the proposal to upgrade BIT Sindri into a Unitary University, with the department directed to prepare the

necessary legislation. Soren also called for a comprehensive digital transformation plan for the institution.

To strengthen technical education across Jharkhand, officials presented a proposal to establish technical education clusters in nine districts-Palamu, Giridih, Ramgarh, Gumla, Ranchi, Jamshepur, Bokaro, Godda and Sahibganj. The Chief Minister asked the department to implement the plan at the earliest.

The Chief Minister also proposed establishing a Council for Institutes of Eminence to govern premier technical institutions on the lines of the IIT system, with dedicated governing councils, regional clusters and industry participation. The meeting also approved the transfer of the Jharkhand Urban Planning and Management Institute (JUPMI) to the Higher and

Technical Education Department. The institute is expected to offer professional programmes such as Bachelor of Planning, Master of Planning and MBA in Infrastructure Management.

Officials also informed the Chief Minister that the state has launched the Jharkhand Robotics Festival for the first time to encourage students in higher and technical institutions to develop skills in artificial intelligence and robotics. Soren directed the department to regularly evaluate such initiatives and ensure they effectively prepare students for future technologies.

Higher and Technical Education Minister Sudivya Kumar, Chief Secretary Avinash Kumar, Principal Secretary Rahul Kumar Purwar and senior departmental officials attended the review meeting.

Ranchi gears up for 135th Durand Cup, Trophy Tour scheduled on July 18

PNS : RANCHI

Preparations for the 135th edition of the Durand Cup have gathered momentum in Ranchi, with the state administration intensifying efforts to ensure the successful hosting of one of Asia's oldest football tournaments. A high-level review meeting was held on Monday at the FFP Building in Dhurwa to finalise arrangements for the tournament, which will be held at Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morabadi, from July 26 to August 16, 2026.

Chairing the meeting, Tourism, Art, Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Secretary Mukesh Kumar directed all concerned departments to ensure flawless execution of the event, stating that there should be no lapses in prepa-



Sports Secretary Mukesh Kumar holds a meeting with senior officials ahead of the 135th edition of the Durand Cup in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

rations. He instructed officials to maintain the highest standards in fire safety, stadium branding, accommodation for players and dignitaries, invitation management, and overall security arrangements. The Secretary also directed the deployment of magistrates in accordance

with the match schedule to maintain law and order throughout the tournament. Ranchi Municipal Corporation was instructed to ensure systematic sanitation and cleanliness in and around the stadium, while police and administrative authorities were asked to strengthen

security measures and traffic management to facilitate smooth movement of spectators and participants.

To build public enthusiasm ahead of the tournament, the Indian Army will organise a Durand Cup Trophy Tour in Ranchi on July 18. During the event, the trophy will be taken through prominent routes across the city to connect residents with the historic football championship and generate excitement among sports enthusiasts. Responsibilities for various aspects of the event have been assigned to the district administration and departments including health, power, tourism, sports, culture and information and public relations, with officials directed to work in close coordination for the

successful conduct of the tournament.

The Durand Cup matches in Ranchi are expected to provide a major boost to the state's sporting ecosystem while encouraging greater interest in football among young players and fans.

The meeting was attended by Ranchi Municipal Commissioner Sushant Gaurav, Sports Director Chhavi Ranjan, Army Nodal Officer Colonel Hem Chandra, Major Anand, Executive Engineer of the Energy Department Jayakant Kumar, Civil Surgeon Dr Prabhat Kumar, City Superintendent of Police Rakesh Singh, officials of the Jharkhand State Sports Authority, and senior officers from various departments and the district administration.

Govt dismisses BJP's allegations, highlights Rs 99,639 crore investment



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

RANCHI : Responding to BJP's allegations State Tourism, Art, Culture, Sports, and Youth Affairs Minister Sudivya Kumar (Sonu) said that the National Stakeholders' Consultation 2026 was a great success and it will show new directions in drawing investment in the state.

Sonu said, "The previous government (BJP regime) investment policy was a big failure as no investment proposals had taken shape. But under the guidance of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, the state will witness investment flow in coming years."

He further said that many potential companies such as



Tata, Jindal Group have shown interest in investment. "Companies have shown interest in mining, tourism, IT and especially AI sectors. Coca Cola has planned to set up a bolting plant in the States. Ambuja Cement is interested in setting up cement factories in the state among others," added Sonu. Beyond its traditional identity as a mineral-rich state, Jharkhand is aggressively pitching itself to stakeholders for eco-tourism, wildlife, adventure, and tribal heritage tourism.

The minister said granting Industry Status to tourism has opened new opportunities for private investment, institutional finance and infrastructure development.

Alongside religious tourism, the state is promoting eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, water sports, mining tourism and community-based tribal tourism to diversify its tourism offerings.

Meanwhile, JPCC General Secretary, Lal Kishore Nath Shahdeo, dismissed BJP spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo's allegations as baseless, misleading, and obstructive to state development. He asserted that the Hemant Soren government is taking historic steps to transform Jharkhand into an industrial hub and generate employment, causing panic within the BJP.

Responding to BJP's "repackaging" claims regarding the recent Delhi meet, Shahdeo explained that investment proposals and Letters of Intent received during the Chief Minister's visits to Davos and the UK were formally institutionalized in Delhi through MoUs and firm investment commitments. He termed BJP's criticism a sign of policy ignorance.

Maoist with Rs 20 lakh reward arrested from Latehar

SURENDRA SOREN : RANCHI

In a major success against Left-Wing Extremism, the Jharkhand Police arrested Ravindra Ganju, a Rs 20 lakh reward-carrying Maoist, during a joint operation in Latehar district. An AK-56 assault rifle, a pistol and a large quantity of live ammunition were recovered from his possession.

According to police officials, Ganju had been hiding in the forests of Latehar. Acting on specific intelligence inputs, a joint team of the Jharkhand Police and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched a search operation, cordoned off the area and apprehended him. Ganju is the prime accused in the 2019 Chandwa Maoist attack in Latehar district, in which four police personnel were killed. The attack occurred during Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Jharkhand. Police investigations had identified Ganju as the mastermind behind the attack, following which he remained absconding and was allegedly active in Maoist-affected areas of Latehar, Lohardaga and Gumla. Senior police officials described the arrest as a significant blow to Maoist networks operating in the region. They said the operation is expected to strengthen security and anti-insurgency efforts across central Jharkhand. Police are interrogating the arrested Maoist to gather information about his associates, the organisational network and any planned extremist activities. Further details of the operation are expected to be shared during an official police press briefing.



DGP reviews Shravani Mela security, focus on tech-driven policing

PNS : RANCHI

Director General of Police (DGP) Tadasa Mishra on Monday reviewed security arrangements for the upcoming Rajkiji Shravani Mela 2026, directing officials to ensure a safe, smooth and technology-driven pilgrimage for the lakhs of devotees expected during the annual event. Chairing a high-level meeting at the Police Headquarters in Ranchi, the DGP reviewed preparations related to crowd management, traffic regulation, law and order, disaster response, emergency medical services and overall pilgrim safety. She instructed officials to deploy adequate police personnel at sensitive locations, including plainclothes officers, and to constitute Quick Response Teams (QRTs) with proper briefing and accommodation for security forces.

Mishra directed authorities to strengthen surveillance by installing CCTV cameras across the mela area, the Baba Baidyanath



DGP Tadasa Mishra holds a high-level review meeting with senior officials in view of the upcoming annual Rath Yatra in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

temple complex, Kanwariya routes and parking zones. She also ordered the use of drone cameras, AI-enabled surveillance systems and a central control room for real-time monitoring. Special emphasis was placed on the safety of women pilgrims through the deployment of women police personnel and the round-the-clock operation of police assistance centres, women help desks, child help desks and lost-and-found centres.

The DGP also called for

effective traffic management with separate routes for heavy and light vehicles, enhanced security at busy railway stations such as Jasidih and Dhanbad, and close coordination with the Fire Department, NDRF, SDRF, health services and other agencies for emergency response.

She directed officials to maintain strict vigil on anti-social elements and ensure that route maps, emergency contact numbers, public announcement systems and essential civic amenities are

CONGRESS RAISES VOTER MAPPING CONCERNS AT JHARKHAND CEO MEETING

PNS : RANCHI

The Jharkhand Congress on Monday raised several concerns regarding the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls during a meeting convened by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) with representatives of recognised political parties. The Congress delegation comprised State General Secretary Suryakant Shukla and State General Secretary-cum-Media Coordinator Lal Kishore Nath Shahdeo. Addressing the media after the meeting, Suryakant Shukla said the party highlighted issues related to the voter mapping exercise in the Hazaribagh Sadar Assembly constituency, particularly in areas falling under the Municipal Corporation. He alleged that Booth Level Officers (BLOs) were not accepting the names of maternal grandparents during the mapping process,



CEO K Ravi Kumar holds meeting with political parties representative at his office in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

claiming they had received no such instructions from the Deputy Commissioner's office.

According to Shukla, the Chief Electoral Officer clarified that voter mapping can indeed be carried out using the names of maternal grandparents wherever applicable. The CEO also sought a list of polling stations where such issues were reported so that necessary directions could be issued directly to the concerned BLOs to resolve the matter.

Lal Kishore Nath Shahdeo said a crucial meeting between government-appointed BLOs and Booth Level Agents (BLA-2) of political parties is scheduled for Tuesday. The discussions will focus on identifying voters falling under the ASDD category, which includes electors with duplicate entries, deceased voters, those who have permanently shifted to another location, persons whose whereabouts are unknown, individuals who

have acquired foreign citizenship, and non-citizens residing in India.

He said that following the deliberations, a final decision on deletion or correction of such entries in the electoral rolls is expected to be taken on July 22.

The Congress leaders also reiterated their demand for extending the timeline of the Special Intensive Revision by 15 days if the exercise cannot be completed within the stipulated period. They argued that the extension is necessary to ensure that no genuine and eligible voter is left out of the electoral rolls due to procedural haste.

Appealing to the public, Shahdeo urged voters who have not yet received their enumeration forms or whose voter mapping has not been completed to visit their respective polling booths on Tuesday and meet the concerned BLOs.

Old investment proposals being repackaged: BJP

PNS : RANCHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday accused the Hemant Soren-led Jharkhand government of repackaging previously announced investment proposals and presenting them as fresh achievements to create a misleading impression of industrial growth.

Addressing the media, BJP State Chief Spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo claimed that the government's recent announcement of investment proposals worth ₹99,639 crore largely repeats projects unveiled after the Chief Minister's Davos and UK visit in February 2026, when the government had claimed to have secured proposals exceeding Rs 1.27 lakh crore.

"The same companies, the same projects and nearly the same investment figures are now being projected as new investments after the Delhi roadshow. This is an attempt to sell old promises in new



State BJP Spokesperson Pratul Shah Deo and others during a press conference at the party office in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

packaging and mislead the people of Jharkhand," Shah Deo alleged.

He said major projects announced in Delhi, including those involving Jindal Steel Limited (Rs 40,000 crore), Jindal Nuclear Power (Rs 30,000 crore), Rungta Sons (Rs 10,000 crore), Rungta Mines (Rs 3,000 crore), Tata Steel Hilsarna (Rs 7,000 crore), Amalgam Steel & Power Rs4,980 crore), Tata Steel Tinplate Expansion (Rs2,600

crore), Ambuja Cement (Rs 1,000 crore) and Jindal Renewables (Rs 650 crore), had already been included in the government's earlier investment announcements.

Shah Deo also questioned the inclusion of the proposed ₹30,000-crore Jindal Nuclear Power Project in the investment total, arguing that nuclear power falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Union Government. He said such a project requires

multiple statutory approvals, including clearances from the Union Government, the Department of Atomic Energy and nuclear regulatory authorities.

He asked whether the state government had secured these mandatory approvals before signing the MoU, alleging that without them, the project remains only a proposal and should not be counted as a confirmed investment.

IN FOCUS



Blue tiger butterflies perch during monsoon in Bhopal

PTI

69 roads closed in Himachal Pradesh after torrential rainfall

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Shimla

Light to moderate rainfall was witnessed in parts of Himachal Pradesh on Monday, with the weather office issuing an alert for heavy rain at isolated places in the State on Saturday and Sunday.

As many as 69 roads — 38 in Kullu, 13 in Mandi, six in Sirmaur, five in Shimla, four in Kangra, two in Una and one in Lahaul-Spiti districts — are closed following torrential rainfall, while 80 water supply projects are disrupted, according to the state emergency operations centre (SEOC).

So far, 25 landslides have been reported in the current monsoon season during the month of July,



Students seeking shelter as they walk amid rain in Kolkata

PTI

which received 125 mm of rain against a normal of 94.5 mm, an excess of 32 per cent. Kasauli in Solan district received 62 mm rainfall in the 24 hours since Sunday evening, followed by Olinda (60 mm), Dharampur (54.6 mm), Nangal Dam (48.2 mm), Brahmani (42.4 mm) and Una (35.4 mm).

Thunderstorms were witnessed in Shimla, Sundernagar, Bhuntar, Kangra, Jot and Murari Devi while gusts with wind speed ranging between 37-50 kmph lashed Bilaspur, Neri, Shimla, Kufri, Hamirpur, Sundemagar and Tabo. Keylong in Lahaul-Spiti was coldest in the state on Monday, recording a low of 8.4 degrees Celsius, while Neri was hottest with a maximum of 35 degrees Celsius.

Rajaji tree felling intensified amid national highway protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Saat Mod

Amidst public agitation against the proposed Rishikesh-Bhanyawala four-lane National Highway project, which passes through a sensitive elephant corridor in Rajaji National Park, the felling of trees was intensified on Monday.

Bina Verma, who has been travelling about 30 km daily from Dehradun to reach Saat Mod over the past few days, said, "Natural heritage cannot be destroyed in the name of development. Lush green trees are being cut down continuously. I fear that in the future, we might have to tell our children that a dense forest once existed here."

Under this widening project, there is a plan to cut around 3,000 trees in the 'Saat Mod' area of the Doon



Valley. For the past several days, environmentalists, social activists, students, and local citizens have been staging protests and sit-ins, demanding the protection of the forests and the wildlife inhabiting them.

As a reminder of the 'Chipko Movement' led by Gaura Devi decades ago, the protesters hugged trees in an effort to save them. However, amidst the intense protest, the police forcibly removed them and took them away from the site.

PM to inaugurate redeveloped Mangalagiri railway station virtually on July 17

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Amaravati

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually dedicate the redeveloped Mangalagiri railway station to the nation on July 17.

Mangalagiri Railway Station, a Non-Suburban Grade category station under Guntur Division, has been redeveloped for Rs 12.5 crore with upgraded passenger amenities and modern infrastructure, a press release said on Monday.

The redevelopment is aimed at improving passenger safety, accessibility and travel experience, it added. "As part of the Government of India's transformative Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, the redeveloped Mangalagiri Railway Station under Guntur Division will be dedicated to the nation by PM Modi through a virtual inaugura-



tion on July 17," it said. The redevelopment works include the comprehensive renovation of the existing station building and the construction of a modern second-entry station building with a booking office, waiting halls and a VIP lounge.

The project will feature an aesthetically enhanced station facade, a spacious

entrance porch, upgraded waiting halls, modern toilets, improved platform surfacing, durable seating, standardised passenger signage and extensive landscaping.

To ensure seamless accessibility for all passengers, the station has been equipped with two lifts and accessible facilities, including tactile pathways, ramps and acces-

sible toilets, the press release said. New platform shelters have been provided on Platforms 1 and 4, while the front and rear circulating areas have been redeveloped with dedicated parking, pedestrian pathways, street lighting, lane markings and landscaping.

Access control measures, including boundary walls and wider entry and exit gates, have been put in place to ensure smooth passenger movement.

The inauguration of the redeveloped station marks another milestone in the modernisation of railway infrastructure under the ABSS, the release said.

It added that the project reflects Indian Railways' commitment to enhancing passenger comfort, accessibility and operational efficiency while preserving the unique identity of railway stations.

Mamata tells EC: No more time for Ritabrata faction

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee has written to the Election Commission, urging it not to give more time to a rival faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee to submit claims on authorised signatories and organisational polls.

An ongoing tussle within the party intensified on July 2 when the rebel faction approached the EC to claim to be the "real" All India Trinamool Congress (AITC).

The faction said it had informed the commission after a special session it held on June 22 and sought recognition of the organisational changes it claimed to have carried out.

Following the claim, the poll body sent letters to both Mamata Banerjee and Ritabrata Banerjee, asking them to submit their responses by 5.30 pm on July 6. While the Mamata Banerjee-led group submitted its response on July 6 before the deadline, the Ritabrata-led faction got an extension till 5.30 pm, July 10, to submit its response.

In her letter to the poll panel dated July 12, Mamata Banerjee, a former West Bengal chief minister, said, "Though it is well past 10th July 2026, and it has



been about 2 days therefrom, there has not been any communication made to the undersigned from the end of Shri Ritabrata Banerjee concerning such reply." She said that they have not received any response from the Ritabrata Banerjee-led faction so far.

According to TMC sources, the EC had asked both sides to keep each other informed about the response.

"Hence, it can be inferred, in the absence or the failure to communicate to the undersigned, despite the precondition imposed by the Election Commission of India, that the Election Commission has also not been provided with the said reply within the extended time period," she said.

The leader said that the "leeway" granted to Ritabrata to file the reply at a later stage was not extended to them, and they were given "virtually two half-working days to reply to the communication dated 2nd July 2026."

"Even after the delay of another 48hrs from 10th July, your good office has maintained a stoic silence, giving further elbow-room to Shri Banerjee, demonstrating your inclination towards the mala fide cause of Shri Ritabrata Banerjee," she said.

"Therefore, it is vehemently asserted that the reply submitted from the end of the undersigned should be considered at the earliest without giving further time to the said Shri Ritabrata Banerjee," Mamata added.

TMC MP Mahua Moitra, meanwhile, accused the poll panel of giving the rebels "special treatment" and questioned its impartiality.

"The Election Commission is expected to function as a neutral constitutional authority and provide a level playing field. Why has this additional time and special treatment been given to the other side after they failed to meet the original deadline, while we complied within time?" she said at a press conference.

Tahir Hussain convicted for Ankit Sharma murder

Ankit Sharma, a central intelligence officer on leave, was attacked and killed by the mob in Khajuri Khas on February 26, 2020.

Tahir Hussain was convicted for his alleged role in supplying arms during the riots. As an elected AAP councillor, he had local influence. The court found that he allegedly used his position to arm those involved in the attacks. This conviction challenges the belief that the 2020 violence was only spontaneous.

Ankit Sharma, an IB staffer on leave, was reportedly attacked and killed by a mob on February 26, 2020, in Khajuri Khas, North East Delhi. His body had multiple injuries typical of mob violence. The incident occurred amid widespread clashes in areas such as Khajuri Khas, Jaffrabad, Maujpur, and nearby neighbourhoods.

The Northeast Delhi riots began in February 2020 after protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The unrest soon escalated into large-scale communal violence between Hindu and Muslim communities.

The violence lasted for several days, leading to more than 50 deaths, hundreds of injuries, and widespread property damage. Delhi Police filed many FIRs, and investigations found both spontaneous and planned violence. Ankit Sharma's murder became a key case for the Delhi Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT). Tahir Hussain was arrested soon after the riots and remains in custody, facing other charges related to murder, rioting, arson, and conspiracy.

Tahir Hussain was a well-known local politician and former AAP councillor from Mustafabad ward. Along with him, Mohd Abid Khan (Fauzi), Parvez Ahmed (Parvez or Babloo), Mohd. Shadab (Shada or Chintu) and Shah Alam (Shahzada or Shada) were tried together for Ankit Sharma's murder.

The trial ended on Friday, with the court convicting the accused after reviewing evidence, including witness statements and documents. The defence argued for an acquittal, but the court found that the prosecution had proved guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. This case is part of the wider legal response to the 2020 riots. The Delhi Police have investigated many cases, resulting in arrests, charge sheets, and ongoing trials. Some accused have been convicted, while others are still on trial or have been acquitted.

Tahir Hussain's conviction is part of his ongoing legal battles in several riot-related cases. The AAP leadership has not yet given a detailed public response to this verdict. Sentencing is scheduled for July 16.

The court's decision is an important outcome in a sensitive case from the 2020 Delhi riots. It shows the justice system's ongoing effort to hold people accountable for the violence that affected Delhi six years ago. This case highlights the complexity of the riots, with communal tensions and claims of targeted conspiracy in some incidents. Prosecuting large-scale mob violence years later remains a challenge. More updates are expected after the sentencing on July 16, 2026.

Suspended BKTC staffer arrested in Badrinath...

The complaint, filed by BKTC in-charge Temple Officer Yudhvir Pushpwan (also referred to as Farswan in some reports), alleged misappropriation and theft of devotees' offerings.

A preliminary internal inquiry by the BKTC had earlier found prima facie evidence of irregularities during the counting of cash offerings at the temple around July 2. Nautiyal was suspended following the inquiry.

CCTV footage from the offering and counting area reportedly shows Nautiyal hiding cash notes, packets of gold and silver coins, Shaligram shilas, and kesar packets. When police searched his home in Dehradun, they found a Shaligram stone and a laptop. No large amount of cash has been found yet. Investigators are now seeking a police remand to trace the money and determine whether others were involved.

Nautiyal approached the Uttarakhand High Court. Nautiyal has gone to the Uttarakhand High Court to challenge his suspension and the FIR. The court has asked the BKTC to respond, and the next hearing is set for July 16. This case is part of a wider investigation into financial irregularities at the Badrinath and Kedarnath temples. Earlier, the Uttarakhand Government ordered a probe into claims of unauthorised advance payments from temple funds for VIP guests at Kedarnath.

A Government inquiry found early signs of irregularities involving several officials. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami had directed a detailed investigation after allegations of donation mishandling surfaced.

Police said Nautiyal will be produced before a court in Gopeshwar after interrogation and medical examination. The investigation is being monitored by senior police officers, with the Special Investigation Team (SIT) also involved. Further arrests cannot be ruled out, sources said. The BKTC manages the affairs of the Badrinath and Kedarnath temples under the Shri Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee Act, 1939.

Mediation bid fails for 3 UP shrine cases

The Gyanvapi issue in Varanasi is an ongoing civil court case involving conflicting claims over the religious status of Gyanvapi mosque, which lies adjacent to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

The Hindu side claims that the mosque was built after Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb destroyed parts of the ancient temple in the 17th century. The Muslim side maintains that the mosque predates Aurangzeb's reign and is a legitimate Waqf property.

In the Sambhal Shahi Jama Masjid-Hari Har temple dispute, mosque committee's counsel Shakeel Ahmad Warsi said the issue involved religious faiths and was too sensitive to be resolved through compromise.

"This is a sensitive matter involving Hindus, Muslims and religious beliefs. Whether it is a temple or a mosque should be decided by the court, not through mutual settlement," Warsi told

FROM PAGE - 1

PTI. He said the Muslim side had informed the court that while anyone could seek to intervene in the proceedings, such attempts should not be driven by mala fide intentions as the matter concerned a religious place.

Hindu side counsel Gopal Sharma said he was not aware of any proposal for mediation in the Sambhal case.

The Sambhal dispute is similar to the Varanasi issue, where there are conflicting claims over the religious character of the site.

Hindu petitioners have alleged that the 16th-century Jama Masjid was built at the site of an ancient Hari Har Mandir, a claim disputed by the Muslim side.

In the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah dispute, mediation proceedings held before the District Legal Services Authority in Mathura earlier this month failed after no representative of the Muslim side attended the meeting, Hindu side's counsel Hareram Tripathi said.

He said both parties had been invited twice to participate in the conciliation process, but the Muslim side did not appear, following which the mediation proceedings were closed.

According to Tripathi, the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust had proposed that if the Muslim side relinquished its claim over the disputed site, the trust could consider facilitating land for construction of a mosque elsewhere.

He said the Muslim side had conveyed that it was not willing to settle the dispute through mediation and preferred adjudication through regular court proceedings.

The Allahabad High Court has fixed July 17 for further proceedings in the matter, while the Supreme Court may take it up during the Special Lok Adalat in August as part of the mediation initiative.

Attempts by PTI to contact Shahi Eidgah Intezamia Committee secretary and Muslim side counsel Tanveer Ahmad for comment did not elicit a response.

Hindu litigant Mahendra Pratap Singh said the Hindu side continued to maintain before the court that the disputed site was the birthplace of Lord Krishna and would pursue the matter through the judicial process.

The Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura arose after the Hindu side filed a petition alleging that the mosque was built in the 17th century on the exact spot where Lord Krishna was born.

India's women conquer Lord's with historic win

Rana bowled a beauty to finally get rid of Ecclestone, triggering on field celebrations and in the Indian dressing room.

Both India and England had endured disappointment in the preceding T20 World Cup and with Lord's hosting a Women's Test 142 years after it conducted the first men's Test, there was a lot at stake for both teams.

The foundation of the win for India was laid by Smriti Mandhana and Yastika Bhatia, who scored a memorable hundred on day three, before Kranti Gaud headlined the bowling performance with a five-wicket haul and her name

on the Lord's Honours Board.

The Indian batters showed a lot more application than their English counterparts on a pitch that offered seam movement and by day three the odd ball was keeping low.

Pacers Gaud and Sayali Satghare outbowled their opponents, using the slope effectively to generate plenty of seam movement. Off-spinner Rana too was able to maintain the pressure created by the seamers.

With the massive win, India also maintained their superior record against England in the longest format. In the 16 Tests both teams have played, India have won four games, England one while the remaining 11 matches were drawn.

India's only defeat to England came way back in 1995. The Indian team had got a pep talk from the great Sachin Tendulkar before the start of day's play. ICC chairman Jay Shah was also watching the action from the stands with Tendulkar, who later shook hands with the players.

It was also a farewell game for England veteran Tammy Beaumont and former captain Heather Knight.

High alert ahead of PM's Punjab-Haryana visit

The email's reference to Diljit Dosanjh is tied to the controversy surrounding the film Satluj, in which he plays Jaswant Singh Khrala. The movie centres on Khrala's investigation into the alleged illegal cremation of thousands of bodies in Punjab between 1984 and 1994 during the height of militancy. Released on ZEE5 on July 3, the film was pulled from the platform in India within 48 hours on security grounds.

A Government committee has recommended keeping the ban in place under the IT Act. Some critics, such as Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, say the film gives a one-sided view and downplays militant violence during the insurgency.

Punjab, Chandigarh and Haryana Police, along with cyber cells and railway security, have launched a full-scale probe. Technical teams are tracing the email's origin while security has been tightened at schools, railway stations, Government buildings and other sensitive sites.

Officials are assessing the threat's credibility even as no corroborating intelligence has surfaced so far. The repeated pattern from the same claimed source has forced a strong precautionary response.

The episode shows how fringe separatist elements continue to weaponise historical grievances and recent cultural controversies through anonymous digital threats. Security agencies are not taking chances ahead of the Prime Minister's high-profile engagements", a well-placed official said on Monday.

Birthday bloodbath: Delhi cop shoots wife

The constable allegedly shot her near LBS Hospital and fled on the scooter.

Priyanka, 34, was a teacher at a private school in Ashok Vihar. The couple had married in 2023. Neighbours told police that arguments between

the couple were frequent. Priyanka's family has alleged that she was subjected to dowry harassment from the time of her marriage and that Manish had been demanding money from her family.

The family said a complaint was filed earlier with the Women's Cell, but the matter was settled following counselling and intervention by relatives. The family's allegation, if substantiated, would bring the case under the provisions covering dowry harassment alongside the murder charge.

Police said the family's allegations are being verified as part of the investigation, and appropriate legal action will be taken based on the evidence collected. A murder case has been registered. Investigators are examining the couple's marital relationship, any past complaints on record, and other possible motives for the killing. The body has been sent for post-mortem. Forensic experts have examined the crime scene.

The case has an additional layer that makes it particularly concerning for the police institution. The accused is a serving Delhi Police constable, which means he had access to a service weapon, and he is alleged to have used that weapon to kill his wife. The same weapon used in his official capacity to prevent crime appears, according to the preliminary evidence, to have been turned on a family member in a domestic dispute that escalated on a public road in the early hours of Monday.

Bhati has been absconding since the shooting, and investigators are working to trace him despite the CCTV footage that provides a clear visual record of the incident. Police have said his arrest and interrogation will be necessary to establish the complete sequence of events and the motive.

US to charge ships for Hormuz passage: Trump

The US and others dispute that, citing international law on freedom of navigation, and the American military has tried to establish an alternative route outside of Iranian control.

Iran and the US are nearly halfway through the 60-day period in which they were supposed to negotiate a permanent end to the war and an agreement on Iran's disputed nuclear program. Instead, a series of attacks over the strait have raised fears of a return to all-out war and further disruption to the global economy.

Oil prices jumped nearly 5 per cent on Monday before falling back. US benchmark crude, which had risen to nearly USD 120 a barrel at the height of the war, was trading at around USD 72.92. Markets were mixed.

Meanwhile, the US military said it struck dozens of sites in the strikes on Monday, including air defence systems, radar sites, missile and drone equipment, and small boats. It said Iran does not control the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump suggested last week that the interim deal in the war was "over." But mediators, including Pakistan, Qatar and Egypt, have continued efforts to reach a final agreement to end the war. (AP)



The Pioneer launches Keralam edition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Thiruvananthapuram

The Pioneer marked a significant milestone in its journey with the launch of its Keralam edition at a function held at the Hycinth Hotel in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday evening, reaffirming the newspaper's commitment to credible, independent and impactful journalism in the State.

The Keralam Edition was formally inaugurated and released by Chief Minister VD Satheesan, who delivered the inaugural address, highlighting the vital role of a free, responsible and people-centric media in strengthening democracy.

"This is a time when we cannot say anything new," he said. "What we say is being twisted. We have to think very seriously about how it will affect society. But if we are convinced that what we do is right, then no matter what controversy comes up, the Government should go ahead and do it courageously. "The beauty of democracy is in discussion. We need to have positive discussions about the state, about the next generation, and about children. The media has a huge role to play in that," Satheesan added.



Keralam Chief Minister VD Satheesan releasing the Keralam edition of *The Pioneer* by handing it over to Deputy Speaker Shanimol Usman in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. CPI State secretary Binoy Viswam, Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala, *The Pioneer* Keralam Editor Bandi Sudhakara Goud, *The Pioneer* group of newspapers and magazines Chairman Prashant Tewari, Gururatnam Jnana Tapasy and Palayalam Imam VP Suhaib Maulavi also graced the occasion

AV MUZAFAR

The inaugural copy of the edition was received by Deputy Speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, Shanimol Usman.

Welcoming the gathering, J Gopikrishnan, Associated Editor of *The Pioneer*, New Delhi, outlined the newspaper's editorial vision and its commitment to delivering

accurate, balanced and public-interest journalism to readers in Kerala.

Presiding over the function, Bandi Sudhakara Goud, Managing Director and Editor of *The Pioneer* Keralam edition, described the launch in the Capital city as an important step in the publication's expansion and

reaffirmed its commitment to journalistic excellence, editorial independence and credible reporting.

Ramesh Chennithala, Minister for Home Affairs, Government of Kerala, attended the programme as the Guest of Honour and addressed the gathering. He appreciated *The Pioneer's*

decision to launch its Keralam edition. He recalled that *The Pioneer* carried out several turbulent stories in the country. He also recalled his decades-long friendship with Sudhakara Goud from the time when both of them were Youth Congress leaders. He wished the Pioneer to be a strong pres-

ence in the Kerala media landscape. He noted that it is only the print media that is willing to correct itself, whereas the visuals don't correct wrong news. Congress Media and Publicity Chairman and Rajya Sabha MP Pawan Khera graced the occasion.

In his felicitation address, Prashant Tewari, Chairman & Managing Director of *The Pioneer* group of newspapers and magazines, New Delhi, congratulated the team on the launch of the Keralam Edition and conveyed his best wishes for its success, expressing confidence that the new edition would uphold *The Pioneer's* legacy of credible, independent and impactful journalism.

The function was also attended by several distinguished personalities, including Binoy Viswam, State Secretary of the CPI; Swami Gururethnam Jnana Thapaswi, General Secretary of Santhigiri Ashram; Dr VP Suhaib Maulavi, Imam of Palayam Juma Masjid; and KP Reji, State President of the Kerala Union of Working Journalists.

The programme commenced with a prayer and concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Saritha S Balan, Deputy Bureau Chief, *The Pioneer*, Thiruvananthapuram.

Nation Focus



FADNAVIS MEETS PAWAN KALYAN IN MUMBAI HOSPITAL

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday visited Andhra Pradesh Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan at Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital where the latter is recovering after undergoing surgery. Fadnavis said he wished Kalyan a speedy and complete recovery. "Visited Andhra Pradesh DCM Pawan Kalyan ji at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai, where he is recovering after a surgery. Wishing him a speedy and complete recovery," Fadnavis said in a post on X. In a statement on Sunday, the hospital said Kalyan was diagnosed with a right shoulder rotator cuff injury, comprising an extensive tear of the supraspinatus and infraspinatus tendon with an associated avulsion fracture of the greater tuberosity bone. He underwent successful arthroscopic repair of the injury at Kokilaben Hospital. (PTI)



MP GOVT PANEL ON UCC SUBMITS REPORT TO CHIEF MINISTER

The committee constituted to draft a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for Madhya Pradesh has recommended exclusion of tribals from its scope in its report submitted to CM Mohan Yadav on Monday, an official statement said. The report of the Government-appointed multi-member panel, which was headed by retired SC Judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, has been forwarded to the Law Department, it said. After revision and process (consideration) of the Senior Secretary Committee, a bill on UCC is likely to be tabled in the Assembly during the upcoming monsoon session after approval by the Cabinet, said the statement. The five-day monsoon session of the State Assembly will be held from July 20. CM Yadav thanked all panel members, including the chairperson, for submitting the report within the stipulated time, said the statement. Committee members Prof Gopal Sharma, Budhpal Singh, Shobha Paithankar, and Member Secretary Ajay Katesaria were present. (PTI)

Centre approves ₹14,300 crore Budget for Puducherry



Puducherry CM Rangasamy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Puducherry

The Union Home Ministry has conveyed the Centre's approval of the Puducherry Government's proposal for a ₹14,300 crore Budget for the fiscal 2026-2027.

In a letter to the Chief Secretary of the Puducherry administration on Monday, the Under Secretary to the Home Department said the proposal was examined in consultation with the Finance Ministry.

He said the President of India had accordingly approved the laying of the annual financial statement for 2026-2027 before the Legislative Assembly of Puducherry.

The AINRC-Bharatiya Janata Party coalition Government was formed in May, in the wake of the Assembly polls on April 9. The Assembly is likely to meet later this month, when the budget for the new fiscal year will be presented by Chief Minister N Rangasamy, official sources said.

Row erupts as Govt plans to shift mosque inside NSI airport

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

There was political controversy after the Government suspended indefinitely the offering of *namaz* at Bakra Mosque (Gouripur Jame Masjid), which is situated inside the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport at Dum Dum in Kolkata.

Rejecting the Government's claim that a running mosque inside an international airport and barely a few hundred

metres from the runway with regular public access was a security concern, senior Trinamool Congress MP Sougato Roy on Monday said that he was always for doing things on the basis of consensus and not arbitrarily. "The fact is that they want to extend the runway... there is no question of security or safety ... If at all a change has to take place, then let it be on the basis of consensus and not by force as this BJP Government is doing it," Roy



said, while there was no statement from the Left.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari had earlier said that it was indeed a

security concern and the mosque should be shifted from the area "because nowhere you will find a public place inside an airport and so near the run way... this is a security sensitive issue... remember we are near international border ... China and Bangladesh are nearby... an international airport which receives top VIPs and dignitaries everyday besides handling scores of flights cannot be kept open like this for common entry... it has to be

shifted from there because national security is supreme... National security and the security of the airport will gain priority over everything else... I cannot say more as a Chief Minister."

Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar too said that he had heard since his childhood that the runway of the airport could not be extended because the mosque came in the way. All this was because of appeasement politics.

3 BJP RS nominees file papers

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

Three BJP nominees, Sukhendu Shekhar Roy, Sushmita Dev and Prakash Chik Baraik, on Monday filed their nominations for the three Rajya Sabha seats from Bengal.

All three candidates were sitting Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha members but resigned their posts and left their party soon after the Bengal Assembly election results last May. The three leaders joined the BJP a couple of days ago.

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari accompanied the BJP nominees to the returning officer's enclosure after they met him in his chamber in the Assembly.

While Roy refused comments regarding his quitting the TMC and joining the BJP,



saying it was not ideal for a candidate to talk when the model code was in effect. Dev, on the other hand, expressed his gratitude to the BJP leadership and offered to work for both Assam and Bengal because "I have connections in both the States." A caste Bengali Dev is from Assam.

On alleged discontent in the BJP rank and file over nominating three leaders

just after they left their party and joined the saffron outfit, Dev said she valued their grievances because "many of them sacrificed a lot for the party during their struggle against the TMC rule" and vowed to assuage their feelings. "I will try to work harder for the party and the people of Bengal... raise more issues so that I can justify my nomination," she said.

TMC accuses ED of targeting Opposition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Monday alleged that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is being used as a "political weapon" against opposition parties and questioned why the agency had not acted on allegations of financial irregularities in the Ram Temple Trust.

Addressing a press conference here, TMC leaders Sagarika Ghose and Mahua Moitra alleged that while the ED froze the bank accounts of Opposition parties, it failed to initiate action over allegations against the Ram Temple Trust.

"If the ED is truly impartial, why has it not acted in cases involving allegations against leaders in BJP-ruled States?...



If serious allegations have emerged against the Ram Temple Trust, why has the ED not initiated action? If such allegations had arisen in an Opposition-ruled State, the ED would have immediately registered a PMLA case," Ghose said.

Moitra reiterated the party's demand for a court-monitored investigation, saying millions of devotees donated to the temple in

good faith. "If the authorities can freeze the bank accounts of Opposition political parties, they should also be prepared to freeze the funds connected with the Ram Temple Trust while the allegations are investigated. There cannot be one standard for the Opposition and another for institutions associated with the ruling establishment," she said.

She alleged that if there had been any misuse of donations, "it is not merely financial wrongdoing — it is a betrayal of the faith of ordinary devotees."

Ghose alleged that constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission and the ED were being used to weaken the Opposition.

"The BJP wants to create a one-party state by eliminating every Opposition party... The ED is no longer functioning as an impartial agency. Since 2014, around 95 per cent of ED cases have been registered against opposition leaders," she claimed.

Speaking on West Bengal politics, Moitra alleged that the BJP Government's implementation of welfare schemes would result in a sharp reduction in beneficiaries under the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme.

Jal Shakti ministry releases 3 key water management documents

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi



Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil

Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, was chaired by Patil in the presence of Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary.

Secretary of the department V L Kantha Rao, senior secretaries from all states and Union Territories, and officials of the Ministry of Jal Shakti attended the conference. Around 200 participants took part in the event.

The conference deliberated on eight priority agenda items, including the status of the Modernisation of Command Area Development and Water Management (M-CADWM) scheme, the special one-month nationwide Catch the Rain campaign, revised draft project appraisal guidelines for irrigation, multipurpose and flood management projects.

Ram Temple trust sets July 18 deadline for first CEO applications

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ayodhya

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has set July 18 as the deadline to submit applications for the position of the first chief executive officer (CEO) of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

According to a post on X, the trust will accept applications until 4 pm on July 18. This appointment is significant as it follows allegations of embezzlement of temple donations, prompting the trust to create the CEO position to strengthen administrative and financial management.

The trust's notification states that the CEO will be appointed on a three-year contract, extendable based on satisfactory performance.

The position is based in Ayodhya. Salary and benefits will be determined through mutual discussion, as detailed by the trust on X.

Applicants must have at least a Bachelor's degree from a recognised university, be between 50 and 70 years old, and possess a minimum of 20 years of managerial experience in a



large public organisation, institution, Government department, or company.

Candidates should have experience overseeing a temple or Hindu religious institution. Retired officers who meet the eligibility criteria may also apply," it added.

The notification further stated that applicants must be

to candidates who have served as Chief Administrative Officer or have experience managing a temple or Hindu religious institution. Retired officers who meet the eligibility criteria may also apply," it added.

The notification further stated that applicants must be

"actively practising Hindus," and that "being a devotee of Lord Ram belonging to the Vaishnava tradition will be considered desirable."

Candidates must have a working knowledge of both Hindi and English.

On Sunday, Ram Temple Construction Committee chairman Nripendra Mishra

stated that the trust will determine the responsibilities and powers of the first CEO, with no Government interference in the trust's or the CEO's operations.

"The primary responsibility of the CEO will be to uphold the faith of devotees in the trust," Mishra had told reporters.

He stated that the CEO will oversee the temple's financial arrangements, ensure necessary facilities for devotees visiting Ayodhya, and serve as an assistant to the trust while remaining accountable to it.

Mishra added that the trust will determine the extent of authority delegated to the CEO, who will be free to appoint necessary staff. At the same time, overall administration will remain under the trust's control.

The notification states that the CEO will report to the trust's general secretary and be responsible for statutory, administrative, and financial affairs.

The CEO will also oversee institutional systems, organisational development, regulatory compliance, transparency in financial transac-

tions, asset management, and implementation of policies approved by the Board of Trustees.

Key responsibilities include ensuring the smooth conduct of religious rituals, festivals, and ceremonies; maintaining security in coordination with local, State, and central authorities; ensuring the safety and convenience of pilgrims; arranging visits for dignitaries and saints; and strengthening the trust's reputation while promoting Sanatan traditions.

Earlier this month, the trust formed a three-member panel consisting of retired justice Pramod Kohli, retired Lieutenant General Vishnukant Chaturvedi, and former NIT Raipur chairperson Suresh Haware to review applications and recommend suitable candidates.

Mishra clarified that he will not be on the panel and will decide whether to attend the trust's July 22 meeting after reviewing the agenda. He stated that committee members associated with the temple's construction are ex officio members of the trust without voting rights.



States Focus ■ BJP slaps ₹100 cr defamation notice on Omar Abdullah



DMK SUBMITS HORSE-TRADING EVIDENCE TO TN GOVERNOR

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

(PTI)



KARNATAKA TO SET UP 10,000 BHARAT JODO YUVA SANGHAS

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

(PTI)

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

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

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

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

Interacting with the media persons at the party head-

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

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

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



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

the BJP and its office-bearers.

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

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

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

1,679 illegal immigrants sent back: Himanta

TONY DAS ■ Guwahati

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Leh

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

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

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



Chief Secretary Ashish Kundra

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

Vietnam boat tragedy: Survivors slam lack of medical aid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Hyderabad/Amaravati

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For many, the tragedy was deeply personal.

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

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

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

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

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

Brewers body calls for Bihar liquor policy reset

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

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

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

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



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

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

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

fered by hospitality, tourism, logistics and ancillary industries.

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kochi

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Karnataka issues SOP for State-run temple donations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Bengaluru

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

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

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



Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar

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

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

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

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

the State have also been observed,” it said.

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

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

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

India, Japan review defence ties at Tokyo policy dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

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

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

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

The two countries held comprehensive discussions



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Varanasi gets reuse action plan for treated wastewater

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

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

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

The plans map out exactly



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

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

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

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

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

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

3 kids die of Chandipura virus in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Gandhinagar

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

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

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



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

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

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

Dry Gujarat logs over 300 alcohol-linked assault calls daily

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

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

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

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



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

VP urges States to strengthen NCC, expand Sainik schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bihar CM launches subsidised heli-tourism service

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Monday launched the subsidised 'Bihar Heli-Tourism and Air Tourism Service Scheme-2026' to provide affordable air services to the public for select tourist destinations in the State.

Bookings under the scheme commenced on Monday, while helicopter services will operate every Saturday and Sunday from July 18.

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

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



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

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

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

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

Datia bypoll: Narottam back BJP candidate Ashutosh Tiwari

GIRISH SHARMA
■ Bhopal

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INS Sudarshini joins Grand Parade of Sails in Boston

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

TN CM visits Perambur, launches grievance app

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chennai

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Editor's
TAKE

India finally arrives in the South Pacific

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

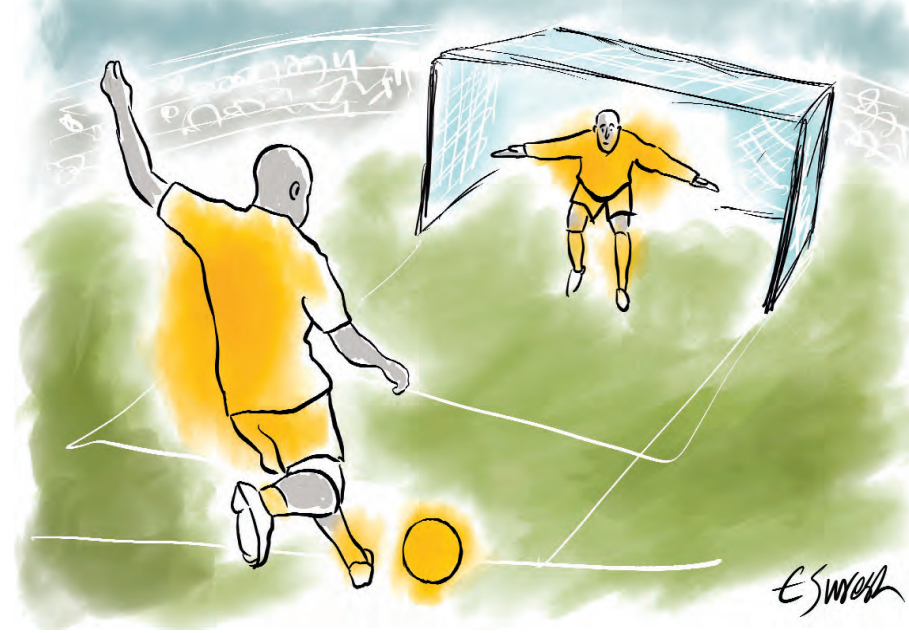
They also set an aspirational target of doubling two-way trade to NZ\$7 billion by 2030. The real test now is follow-through. The FTA still needs ratification and entry into force, and its dairy carve-outs will keep testing New Zealand's patience unless Delhi shows more flexibility over time. And the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

Dual nationality and divided loyalties

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



BHOPINDER SINGH



ESWOK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIC TALK



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

PHOTO: PTI

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

 www.dailypioneer.com

 facebook.com/dailypioneer  [@TheDailyPioneer](https://twitter.com/TheDailyPioneer)

 instagram.com/dailypioneer  linkedin.com/in/ThePioneer

The infrastructure we cannot afford to ignore



SIDDHARTH ROY

2ND OPINION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INDIA'S RISING STRATEGIC INFLUENCE IN A VOLATILE WORLD

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

The reform could also benefit political parties, which currently spend considerable time and resources preparing for successive elections across different states. A common electoral cycle may encourage parties to focus on long-term governance, present more meaningful vision documents and forge stronger alliances where necessary. Smaller parties, too, would have the opportunity to contest elections more strategically instead of engaging in continuous campaign mode.

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

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

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sleep is the foundation of good health

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

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

HARSH PAWARIA | ROHTAK

Strengthening public trust in the police

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

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

RS NARULA | PATIALA

A voice that will echo forever

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

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

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

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

S PADMANABHAN | KOCHI

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

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



EKLAVYA PRASAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is the Managing Trustee of Megh Pyne Abhiyan

The notion India needs to be Viksit Bharat



AMITABH RANJAN

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

Rashtra Pratham is not a slogan. It is a governing philosophy that places the long-term interests of the nation above sectional, political, institutional and personal considerations. Every successful nation in modern history-post-war Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Germany-achieved development only when governments, businesses and citizens aligned around a shared civilisational purpose. India’s ambition requires no less: a national consensus that transcends electoral cycles, ideological divisions and short-term interests.

Beyond economics: The character question

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

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

Three arenas for Nation-First action

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

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

Citizens as nation-builders

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

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

Purpose over potential

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

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



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

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



RAVI POKHARNA

The conversation around Artificial Intelligence (AI) often defaults to a narrative of mass job loss, but emerging evidence suggests a more nuanced shift. McKinsey research (2023, 2025) estimates that around 30 per cent of current work activities in the US, primarily within white-collar sectors, could be automated by 2030. Analysis by Anthropic (2026) and Stanford University (Brynjolfsson, Chandar and Chen; 2025) found that while AI-exposed occupations, such as computer programmers and customer service representatives, have not yet experienced significant rises in unemployment, hiring for younger workers in these roles has slowed measurably. This signals an important shift: firms are not eliminating jobs at scale, but they are reducing hiring at entry level. The layoffs may not come, but the offer letters may come more slowly.

The jobs are safe, the ladder is not

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

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

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

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

Why this matters more for India

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



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

A familiar technological moment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your Trusted Management Advisory

www.transglobeadvisors.in

Order Order

SC dismisses pleas of 360 Bengal madrasa teachers

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

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

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

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

(PTI)

SC junks PIL on viewing pornography at public places

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(PTI)

Patna court grants anticipatory bail to Khan Sir

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

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

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

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



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

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



Airfares: SC asks Centre to place rules before it

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

While hearing the matter in January, the top court

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai



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

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

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

from the errant police officer responsible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SC stays Madras HC order on cow slaughter



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi



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

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

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

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

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

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

appeals against the high court verdict.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 chargesheets filed in 7 ADAG FIRs: CBI tells SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

court said it would not be fair to direct anything and asked Bhushan to go through the chargesheet about the role attributed to Anil Ambani. Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Anil Ambani, submitted that such a comment itself will cause prejudice to his party. "Once a chargesheet is filed, cognisance is yet to be taken. This is not the procedure this court has ever followed," Sibal said.

The top court said it was conscious that nothing should come from the bench which can be prejudicial to the parties. Mehta, appearing for agencies, had earlier told the court that there are a total of nine FIRs, out of which seven are under investigation. "In the seven cases, the total loss caused is ₹27,337 crore," he had said.

PIOTECH

Truecaller row: TRAI seeks power under IT Act to act

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

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

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

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

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

Flipkart says West Bengal to remain key investment hub



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rajnath Singh: AI cannot replace human compassion

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

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

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

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

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

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



NISHANT SAHDEV

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

We taught machines our paperwork - Now they are judging us

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



PRAVIN KAUSHAL

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

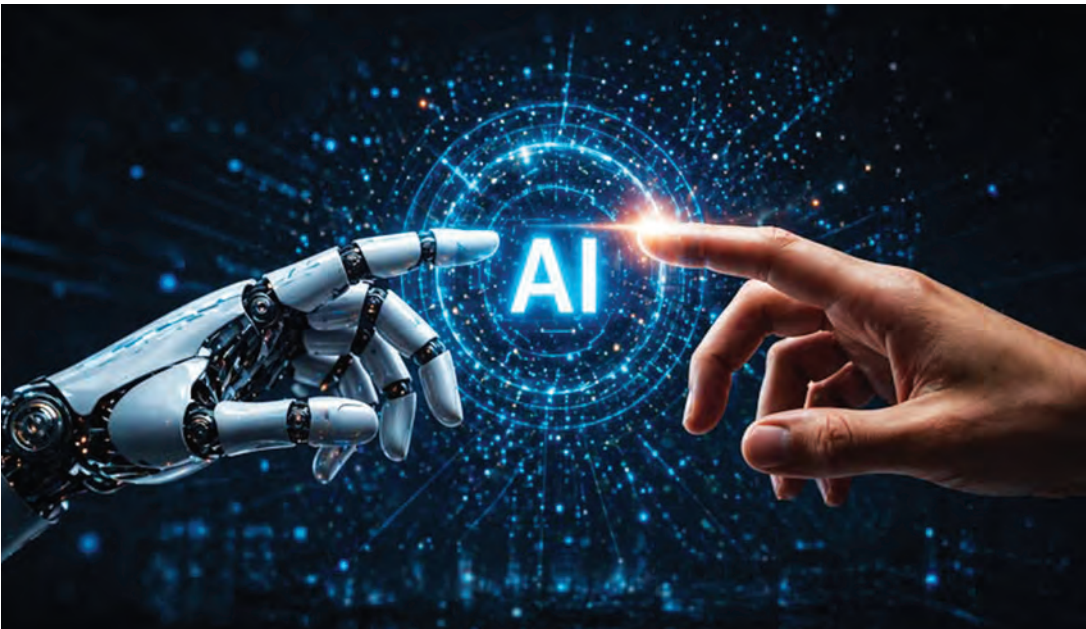
Artificial intelligence is usually discussed as a tool, a faster calculator, a smarter search engine. But a tool does only what it is told. A calculator cannot invent a new branch of mathematics. Today's AI systems learn things their creators never taught them and change in ways their designers did not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

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

We did. It is called bureaucracy.

The actual machinery of human power

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



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

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

This system is powerful



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

Why AI is a native, not a guest

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

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

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

India is the loudest test case

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The question we have not answered

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

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

FROM THE WORLD

NIGERIA

Eight dead in Benue shooting

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

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

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

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

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

PAKISTAN

Hindu doctor killed in Karachi

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

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

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

UK bans Revolutionary Guard over attacks on Jewish sites

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EU targets Russian spies over long-running cyber campaign

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Brussels

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Saudi airstrikes hit Sanaa airport, say Houthis

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Cairo

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

M ZULQERNAIN ■ Lahore

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

AP

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

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Bangkok

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

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

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

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

The building's street-



Police officers inspecting the site of a fire in Bangkok, Thailand

facing windows had been blown out and debris littered the sidewalk, including charred television sets, speakers and an electric guitar.

From outside, the scale of the devastation was visible through the shattered windows, where burned-out tables, some still holding empty beer bottles, stood inside.

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

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

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

Ex-minister murder probe taken over by UK Police



ADITI KHANNA ■ London

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

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

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

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

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

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

आम सूचना

जबकि दिनांक 08 जुलाई 2026 को आयोजित नगर निगम की बोर्ड बैठक में यह सूचना प्राप्त हुई है कि नगर निगम क्षेत्र के विभिन्न प्रमुख एवं संवेदनशील सार्वजनिक स्थलों जैसे पीटीसी चौक, भारत माता चौक, इमली कोर्ट, शिमरा रेस्ट हाउस के सामने, झील के पास तथा अन्य कई स्थानों पर सक्षम प्राधिकार के बिना किसी पूर्व अनुमति, स्वीकृति अथवा निगम में बिना किसी पंजीकरण के अनाधिकृत रूप से बड़े पैमाने पर असुरक्षित ढंग से विज्ञापन होर्डिंग स्ट्रक्चर्स (Hoarding Structure)/यूनिपोल, राडि के अधकार में छिपकर, अधिदातापित किए गए हैं;

और जबकि ऐसी ही एक असुरक्षित एवं अनाधिकृत होर्डिंग संरचना के चपेट में आने से एक व्यक्ति के गंभीर रूप से घायल होने की भी सूचना प्राप्त हुई है, तथा मरिष्ठ्य में ऐसी अभिय एवं जानलेवा दुर्घटना की पुनरावृत्ति अथवा आमजन के जीवन एवं संपत्ति को अप्रणायीय क्षति पहुँचने की आशंका से भी इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है;

और जबकि उक्त अनाधिकृत विधि-विरुद्ध विज्ञापन संरचनाओं के कारण नगर निगम को राजस्व की हानि होने की भी संभावना है;

एतद् द्वारा संबंधित व्यक्ति/ फर्म/ विज्ञापन एजेंसी से अपेक्षा की जाती है कि इस सूचना की प्रकाशन की तिथि से 72 घंटे के भीतर अपने-अपने समस्त अनाधिकृत होर्डिंग्स, यूनिपोल एवं अन्य विज्ञापन संरचनाओं को स्वतः हटाते हुए अधोहस्ताक्षरी के समक्ष अनुपालन प्रतिबद्धन प्रस्तुत करना सुनिश्चित करें या इस आदेश के अनुपालन में आपत्ति हेतु तो उपरोक्त निर्धारित समयवधि के भीतर कारण दिखाए कि क्यों न नगर निगम अपने संरक्षकों का उपयोग कर उक्त अनाधिकृत संरचनाओं को हटाकर, जप्त करते हुए, हटाने की प्रक्रिया में आने वाली, संपूर्ण लागत राशि की वसूली की कार्रवाई जॉयोंपरांत उत्तरदायी पक्ष से करें तथा विधि सम्मत अन्य उपयुक्त कार्रवाई करें।

**सहायक नगर आयुक्त,
नगर निगम, हजारीबाग।**

PR 384865 (Hazaribag) 26-27 (D)



The best books about the Football World Cup

■ By Avnish Anand

Sharing this in the spirit of the world cup. In no particular order, although the first one is my favourite. Most of the great football writers have contributed to this list. Some important World Cups and events have no representation here. Only because I have not found any books about them. They are covered in the books which are comprehensive histories though. Readers can please add in case I have missed any important ones. Have divided them in 4 groups

The Grand Histories — The sweeping, narratives the define our understanding of the game's global history .



Sharing this in the spirit of the world cup. In no particular order, although the first one is my favourite. Most of the great football writers have contributed to this list. Some important World Cups and events have no representation here. Only because I haven't found any books about them. They are covered in the books which are comprehensive histories though. Please add in case I have missed any important ones.

HAVE DIVIDED THEM IN 4 GROUPS

THE GRAND HISTORIES – THE SWEEPING, NARRATIVES THE DEFINE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME'S GLOBAL HISTORY .

Soccer In Sun And Shadow by Eduardo Galeano
Goodreads: 4.20/5 | Amazon: 4.6/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

This might be the greatest football book ever written. Galeano is a massive football fan and a great poet and those two attributes combines to produce the most unique football book. Its a poetry book about football. In short, beautiful vignettes, he traces the World Cup from its origins as joyful street sport to its transformation into a commercialised spectacle, always mourning something pure that has been lost. No book better captures why the game matters to people who will never make money from it.

IDEAL FOR: The football romantic who reads literature, not league tables.

The Power and the Glory by Jonathan Wilson
Goodreads: 4.41/5 | Amazon: 4.7/5

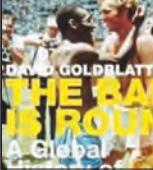


WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

While Goldblatt's book is history of the world football, of which the World Cup is a very important part, this one is purely about the Football World Cup. The best chronological account of the World Cup yet written. Wilson is a master of the history and tactics of football and he moves fluently between geopolitical context and tactical analysis — connecting Mussolini's 1934 propaganda operation to Qatar's sports-washing, explaining how each era's politics shaped the football played on the pitch.

IDEAL FOR: Anyone seeking one authoritative, beautifully written book to cover the entire tournament from beginning to present.

The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football by David Goldblatt
Goodreads: 4.18/5 | Amazon: 4.6/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

This is the most comprehensive single-volume history of global football and unsurprisingly its a 1,000 pages long. Goldblatt is one of football's greatest historians and he maps how the World Cup emerged from scattered local traditions into the planet's largest shared event, treating it as a mirror of industrialisation, empire, and class struggle. Unrivalled in scope and intellectual seriousness.

IDEAL FOR: This is for the reader who wants to know the full history of football including the World Cup and genuinely understand football's place in world history. This one is for someone who is committed.

Mundiales: A South American History of the World Cup by Mark Biram & Tim Vickery
Goodreads: 4.29/5 | Amazon: 4.5/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

Most of the books are written from a European lens. This one is an exception. This is the story of the World Cup told from the other side of the Atlantic. Vickery and Biram mine deep South American archives to argue that the continent didn't just win trophies — it invented the tournament's soul, its drama, and its mythology. An essential counterbalance to a century of Eurocentric football writing.

IDEAL FOR: All fans of South American football who truly believe that Europe has hogged all the headlines in the story of the World Cup and South America's contribution needs a voice.

In the Heat of the Midday Sun by Steven Scragg
Goodreads: 3.88/5 | Amazon: 4.6/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

Mexico in 1986 was Maradona's World Cup. It was also the last World Cup before football became an industry. This book is a memoir about that simpler sporting world. Scragg evokes it with genuine warmth, profiling each eliminated nation in the order they went home.

IDEAL FOR: Anyone who still pines for the simple life of the 1980s and wants to wade through the nostalgia all over again. Great Teams — Intimate Portraits of beloved teams which became legend This category is crying out for a great book about the 1974 Dutch and 1954 Hungarian sides.

My favourite books about the football world cup for every type of fan



1982 Brazil: The Glorious Failure by Stuart Horsfield
Goodreads: 4.38/5 | Amazon: 4.7/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

While the 1970 Brazilian side are the greatest winners, the 1982 team are the sports' most beloved losers. Even more so than the 1974 Dutch side and the 1954 Hungarians. Telé Santana's Brazil played football so beautiful that losing in the second round left a deeper mark on history than most winners' medals ever will. They remain football's greatest what if — how would have teams played football had the great entertainers won. We all know how it changed when they lost. Horsfield's book is requiem to Santana and his beautiful team and bold philosophy.

IDEAL FOR: Anyone like me who is still mourning the day that football died.

The Match: The Story of Italy v Brazil by Piero TrelliniGoodreads: 4.35/5 | Amazon: 4.7/5

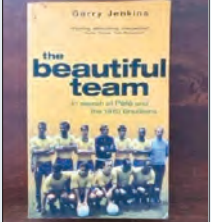


WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

This book is an Italian's passionate counter to the argument that Italy were the devils who were plain lucky in slaying the beautiful team in 1982. And trust me, it makes a great case for it. Piero Trellini spent decades researching that single afternoon — Italy 3, Brazil 2, Spain 1982. The result reads like a thriller — Paolo Rossi's extraordinary redemption arc and a manager's trust in his team and his precise tactical adjustments that ended Brazil's era of futebol-arte.

IDEAL FOR: Anyone like me who is still mourning the day that football died.

The Beautiful Team: In Search of Pelé and the 1970 Brazilians by Garry JenkinsGoodreads: 3.81/5 | Amazon: 4.4/5

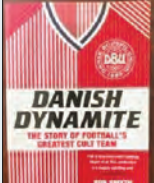


WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

This book is about the 11 members of Brazil's 1970 World Cup winning squad — considered by many to be the greatest World Cup team ever. In this, decades after the 1970 World Cup, Jenkins tracks down the surviving members of Brazil's mythic squad and creates beautifully evocative, human portraits of these ageing legends. Their greatness and youth has been eaten away by age but the legend stays on forever. A masterpiece of sports archaeology that strips away nostalgia to find something more moving underneath.

IDEAL FOR: Readers who prefer intimate human portraits to match statistics. Ideal for anyone captivated by what becomes of sporting greatness over time.

Danish Dynamite: The Story of Football's Greatest Cult Team by Rob Smyth, Lars Eriksen & Mike Gibbons , Goodreads: 3.99/5 | Amazon: 4.5/5



This might look like a complete shocker in this list. But a little context. Somewhere in the early 2000's World Soccer invited a group of experts to select the greatest teams of all time a couple of years ago, three of the top five sides won nothing: Hungary 1953, Holland 1974 and Brazil 1982. Lying 16th on the list — above any side from Argentina, Spain, Germany, Liverpool, Manchester United or Internazionale — was the Danish team of the mid-80s. This is the story of that team.

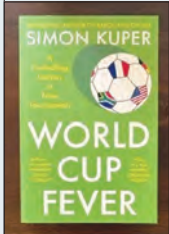
WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

Denmark's 1980s squad — bohemian, undisciplined, and completely thrilling — is the greatest cult team in World Cup history. This book captures their magnificent, doomed run through Mexico '86 with genuine love, making an eloquent case that how you play matters more than whether you win. A celebration of glorious, charismatic failure.

IDEAL FOR: The fan drawn to mavericks, rebels, and teams that played with complete disregard for tactical pragmatism. Perfect for anyone who thinks cult status and a great story can matter more than a trophy ever will.



World Cup Fever: A Footballing Journey in Nine Tournaments by Simon Kuper
Goodreads: 4.01/5 | Amazon: 4.4/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT
Simon Kuper has attended every World Cup since Italia

'90 as a journalist and an anthropologist. This book is a collection of field notes covering these 9 World Cups — wry, sharp, funny, and full of uncomfortable truths about FIFA, host nations, fans and players and the circus that surrounds the football. Funny and disillusioned in equal measure, it is the most honest book about what attending a World Cup actually feels like. If you wanted to read just one book about the World Cup, I will recommend this one.

IDEAL FOR: This is for the fan who wants a first hand account of the World Cup. Of the reality beyond the foot-

The Match: The Story of Italy v Brazil by Piero TrelliniGoodreads: 4.35/5 | Amazon: 4.7/5

WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT



This book is an Italian's passionate counter to the argument that Italy were the devils who were plain lucky in slaying the beautiful team in 1982. And trust me, it makes a great case for it. Piero Trellini spent decades researching that single afternoon — Italy 3, Brazil 2, Spain 1982. The result reads like a thriller — Paolo Rossi's extraordinary redemption arc and a manager's trust in his team and his precise tactical adjustments that ended Brazil's era of futebol-arte.

IDEAL FOR: Anyone like me who is still mourning the day that football died.



Blood on the Crossbar: The Dictatorship's World Cup by Rhys RichardsGoodreads: 4.10/5 | Amazon: 4.4/5

WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

If you thought Qatar or Russia was bad, read about Argentina in 1978. This was a World Cup staged by a military dictatorship as a propaganda exercise, with torture centres operating blocks from the stadium. Richards exposes this in forensic detail — a chilling investigation into sports-washing at its most brutal, and human resilience at its most extraordinary.

IDEAL FOR: Readers of political non-fiction and investigative journalism who want to understand how authoritarian power weaponises sport.

One Night in Turin by Pete Davies
Goodreads: 4.29/5 | Amazon: 4.5/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

While Kuper goes wide and covers 9 World Cups, Davies goes deep with one team (England) at the 1990 World Cup. He had unique access inside the England camp for Italia '90 and used that fly on the wall opportunity to produce a book something the sport had never seen — unfiltered, unglamorous and completely real. A time capsule of the last World Cup before satellite money changed everything, it captures Gazza's tears, the dressing-room dynamics, and a nation briefly united around a game.

IDEAL FOR: Fans who want raw, unvarnished storie about players at a World Cup before the era of media management and PR changed everything. Also essential for anyone wanting to understand how Italia '90 permanently transformed English football and its culture.

Tournament Portraits — Deep dives into specific World Cups that changed football forever.

1970 — The Greatest Show on Earth by Andrew Downie
Goodreads: 4.38/5 | Amazon: 4.6/5

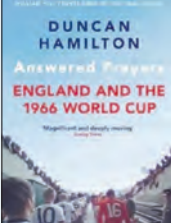


WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

For every football romantic, Mexico 1970 is the greatest World Cup of all time. Andrew Downie's book is sourced almost completely from players' testimonies and is possibly the only such book — an oral account of the World Cup. The players share wonderful stories and the book does justice to this beautiful World Cup. Downie's biography of Socrates is also a must read by the way.

IDEAL FOR: All football romantics who want to hear stories of Mexico 1970 told in the players' own words. For readers who believe the best football writing steps aside and lets the men who were there do the talking.

Answered Prayers: England and the 1966 World Cup by Duncan Hamilton
Goodreads: 4.4/5 | Amazon: 4.5/5



WHY YOU SHOULD READ IT

Duncan Hamilton is possibly my favourite sports writer and you should read all his books. His writing is beautiful and genuinely moving. This is another masterpiece from him about the most important sporting moment in his country's history. He watched England beat West Germany as an eight-year-old boy, then rewatched the final during Covid lockdown and finally understood what Ramsey and his players never did — what came next. The result is a 30-year portrait of English football's greatest achievement and its slow, painful unravelling: the blazered FA, the players taken for granted, the manager shamefully discarded. It reads in 400 pages like a novel; it lands like a tragedy.

IDEAL FOR: Great book to understand what a manager goes through. Before and after the World Cup. There are a bunch of good books about 1966 and this one is the best. So if you want to know about 1966, this is the book for you.

I am Terminator, Abhishek is Terminator 4, Vaibhav is Terminator 6, says Yuvraj Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

Yuvraj Singh has come up with a fitting analogy to describe the evolution of fearless Indian batters, likening himself, Abhishek Sharma and teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi to different versions of the iconic Hollywood franchise 'Terminator', starring Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The former India all-rounder, who has mentored Abhishek over the years, believes the 15-year-old Sooryavanshi represents the next stage in the progression of attacking batting and said he would be delighted to work with the youngster in the future.

Speaking to JioHotstar, Yuvraj said, "I always call myself a Terminator. Now there is Terminator 4, Abhishek Sharma, who is four times better than me. And after him comes Terminator 6, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who has evolved even more.

"I did my part in my time, Abhishek elevated it, and now Vaibhav is setting new standards. This is the third phase of the same journey. It is great to see the sport evolving," said Yuvraj, who watched the Wimbledon



men's singles final alongside Abhishek and Sooryavanshi.

"When I watch (Jannik) Sinner and (Carlos) Alcaraz, I see how tennis is changing. I see the same evolution in Abhishek and Vaibhav. I have spent a lot of time training Abhishek, and I would love to spend time

with Vaibhav as well. He has a great career ahead of him. He is a serious player in the

making, and I believe he will get there."

The batting prodigy, on his part, said the interaction with Yuvraj gave him valuable lessons that extended beyond technique.

"Yuvi Paaji is my idol too. Meeting him for the first time was a special moment. I got to spend time with him and he shared a lot of insights about the game.

"He spoke about the mental side of the game, how to handle pressure, and the importance of believing in yourself. It feels great to have so much to learn from someone like him. I am sure it will help me a lot in my career going forward," Vaibhav Sooryavanshi said.

Abhishek, who has flourished under Yuvraj's mentorship, said he could relate to the teenager's emotions.

"I can feel what Vaibhav is feeling right now because Yuvi Paaji is my idol as well. I remember when I first met him, it was kind of the same feeling that he's feeling right now.

"So obviously, watching my first Wimbledon, and that too the finals, with Yuvi Paaji and Vaibhav, it's a special day for me," Abhishek said.

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

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

India wicketkeeper-batter Yastika Bhatia believes her "best is yet to come" after she became the first woman cricketer to hit a Test century at the iconic Lord's stadium, marking an incredible comeback from a career-threatening knee injury last year.

Bhatia struck 113 off 158 before India declared their second innings at the stroke of tea on day three, setting hosts England a massive 457-run target. "It's unbelievable because six months ago I was in a very different place and if you would have told me that I would have my name in the honours board I wouldn't have believed it," Bhatia said after third day's play.

"The best is yet come, I have always believed that. But so far it's really good and I enjoyed my time in the middle. It's just the beginning, a lot more



to come and I am looking forward to that," he added.

She credited her family, teammates and support staff for helping her recover from the career-threatening torn ACL in her left knee that she sustained in October last year. The injury, which needed a surgery, prevented her from competing in India's ODI World Cup-winning campaign at home. "A lot of people have been working behind the scenes, my family, my father, mother, my sister they have been the biggest backbone, support. My coaches, trainers back home, the support staff and teammates here, they have backed me," she said.

कृषि, पशुपालन एवं सहकारिता विभाग, झारखण्ड (उद्यान प्रभाग)					
कार्यालय – जिला उद्यान पदाधिकारी, कोडरमा, (संयुक्त कृषि भवन, कोडरमा)					
आवेदन आमंत्रण सूचना					
वितीय वर्ष 2026-27 में विभागो राज्योदर संत 27 र्चो दिनांक 22-06-2026 एवं उद्यान निदेशालय, झारखण्ड, र्चो का पत्रको 403 दिनांक 09.07.2026 के द्वारा प्राप्त भौतिक लक्ष्य के आलोक में राज्य उद्यान विकास योजनान्तर्गत उप योजना उद्यान विकास की योजना अन्तर्गत विभिन्न प्रकार के कार्य अवयव का सफल क्रियान्वयन किये जाने के उद्देश्य से कृषक भाईयो को सूचित किया जाता है कि कोडरमा जिला में निम्नांकित रूप से उद्यान विकास की योजना का कार्यान्वयन किया जाना है, जिसके लिए योजनानुसार अवयववार निर्धारित अनुदान पर योजना का लाभ प्रदान किया जाना है। इच्छुक कृषक/स्वयं सहायता समूह/कृषक उत्पादक समूह (FPO)/ सहकारी समिति/सखी मंडल जो योजना अवयव का लाभ लेना चाहते हैं, वे अपना आवेदन मुखिया/जन प्रतिनिधि एवं संबंधित प्रखण्ड के बी.टी.एम./ए.टी.एम./उद्यान मित्र से अनुशंसा कराकर 12-08-2026 तक कार्यालय अवधि में कार्यालय जिला उद्यान कोडरमा में जमा कर सकते हैं। आवेदन करने हेतु विवरणी निम्न प्रकार है:-					
क्रं०	कार्य अवयव का नाम	मौतिक लक्ष्य	कुल मौक्तिक लक्ष्य	अभ्युक्ति	
OSP	SCSP				
1	बगवान/उद्यान मित्र/कृषक को पाँच दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण युवाओं को 25 दिवसीय माली प्रशिक्षण	100 सं०	30 सं०	130 सं०	विभाग द्वारा चयनित कृषकों को 05 दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण निशुल्क दिया जाएगा।
3	मिर्चा की खेती	10 हे०	5 हे०	15 हे०	विभाग द्वारा चयनित कृषकों को 25 दिवसीय माली का प्रशिक्षण निशुल्क दिया जाएगा।
4	ओल की खेती	20 हे०	05 हे०	25 हे०	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा 40 प्रतिशत अनुदान पर बीज उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
5	अदरक की खेती	10 हे०	05 हे०	15 हे०	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा अधिकतम सहायता अनुदान प्रति हेक्टेयर 0.40 लाख का बीज उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
6	कीट रहित सब्जी उत्पादन इकाई	15 इकाई	05 इकाई	20 इकाई	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा 40 प्रतिशत अनुदान पर बीज उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
7	खुले वातावरण में फूलों की खेती (गैर)	05 हे०	05 हे०	10 हे०	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा 50 प्रतिशत अनुदान पर पौध/कंद सामग्री उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
8	दिशुकल्वर केला की खेती	05 हे०	2 हे०	07 हे०	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा अधिकतम सहायता अनुदान प्रति हेक्टेयर 0.60 लाख का बीज उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
9	गृह वाटिका की स्थापना (प्रति इकाई 25 डिसेमिल)	20 इकाई	08 इकाई	28 इकाई	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा पौध एवं INM/IPM निशुल्क उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
10	सब्जी की तकनीकी खेती का प्रत्यक्षण	100 हे०	20 हे०	120 हे०	चयनित कृषकों को विभाग द्वारा 50 प्रतिशत अनुदान प्रति हेक्टेयर 0.10 लाख का बीज उपलब्ध कराया जायेगा।
11	मशरूम कीट वितरण (इकाई में)	3000 सं०	1050 सं०	4050 सं०	इस योजना अंतर्गत अति निम्न वर्गीय SC/ST एवं अन्य मधोमी रेखा BPL से निचे गरीब वसत करने वाले भूमिहीन लोगों को निशुल्क योजना से लाभान्वित किया जाएगा।
12	मशरूम पर 5 दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण	100 सं०	35 सं०	135 सं०	क्रमांक 11 अंतर्गत चयनित लाभुकों को निशुल्क 5 दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण दिया जाएगा।
14	संरक्षित फूलों की खेती	04 हे०	01 हे०	05 सं०	अधिकतम अनुदान 50 प्रतिशत।
15	गुणवत्तायुक्त फूल, फल पौध विचंडा उत्पादन (सैपलिंग नर्सरी)	18 सं०	10 सं०	28 सं०	चयनित लाभुकों को 75 प्रतिशत अनुदान पर सैपलिंग नर्सरी की सामग्री उपलब्ध कराई जाएगी।

नोट:- आवेदन साथ संलग्न कागजात निम्न प्रकार है।
1. आवेदन के साथ पासपोर्ट साइज रंगीन फोटो।
2. आधार कार्ड की छायाप्रति संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा।
3. अद्यतन भू-लगान रसीद संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा।
4. मुखिया द्वारा सत्यापित वंशवली संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा।
5. आवेदन पत्र में मुखिया/जन प्रतिनिधि एवं संबंधित प्रखण्ड के बी.टी.एम./ए.टी.एम./उद्यान मित्र का अनुशंसा अनिवार्य होगा।
6. आवेदन पूर्ण रूप से भरा हुआ होना चाहिए अथवा भरा हुआ आवेदन स्वीकृत नहीं किया जाएगा।
7. लाभुकों के वयन में दोहराकरण नहीं करते हुए नये ग्राम/पंचायतों के कार्यन्वयन हेतु आवेदन स्वीकृत नहीं किया जाएगा।
8. पूर्व के लाभुकों को वर्तमान वितीय वर्ष में योजना के कार्यान्वयन हेतु आवेदन स्वीकृत नहीं किया जाएगा।
9. कीट रहित सब्जी उत्पादन इकाई का लाभ वैसे कृषकों को दिया जाएगा जिसके पास जमीन का कागजात के संदर्भ में भू-स्वातंत्र्य प्रमाण-पत्र अथवा रेल स्लैब अंश कार्यालय द्वारा निर्गत हो।
10. गृह वाटिका का लाभ वैसे कृषकों को दिया जाएगा जिसके घर के समीप न्यूनतम 25 डिसेमील भूमि खाली हो तथा सिंचाई योग्य प्रांत पानी की सुविधा हो।
11. विशेष परिस्थिति में किसी भी आवेदन को स्वीकृत करना या रद्द करने की अधिकारी जिला उद्यान पदाधिकारी, कोडरमा के पास सुरक्षित रहेगा, जिस पर किसी प्रकार का दवा मान्य नहीं होगा।

PR 384800 Agriculture,Animal Husbandry And Co-operative Department(26-27)#D जिला उद्यान पदाधिकारी कोडरमा

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jakarta

Indian boxers remained a strong force at the Asian U-19 and U-23 Championships with eight of them advancing to the finals across men's and women's U-23 categories and seven others securing bronze medals after semifinal finishes in Jakarta. In the U-23 women's category, five Indian boxers progressed to the finals.

Nisha (54kg) defeated Hyeji Lee of Korea, while

Nikita Chand (60kg) registered a win against Sari Kokufu of Japan.

Kajal (65kg) sailed past Gulzina Melsvek of Kyrgyzstan on Sunday. In all the bouts referees had to stop the contest due to Indians' overwhelming domination. In the higher weight categories, Muskan (75kg) won 5:0 against Toirova Oysya of Uzbekistan while Priyanka (+80kg) recorded a dominant 5:0 win over Panar Seitkhankyzy Kazakhstan. In the U-23 men's category,

three Indian boxers advanced to finals. Vishvanath Suresh (50kg) delivered a commanding 5:0 win over his Philippines opponent, while Ganga (55kg) edged past Japan with a 3:2 split decision.



HDFC BANK AUCTION SALE NOTICE					
We understand your world					
The borrowers concerned and the public at large are hereby informed that a public auction of gold jewellery/ornaments pledged as security in the loan accounts listed below is proposed to be conducted. These items were pledged by borrowers who have defaulted in repaying their dues as per the terms of the executed Loan Agreements, despite reminders issued by HDFC Bank Limited ("the Bank") directing them to clear their outstanding amounts.					
The Bank had earlier issued notices granting the borrowers seven (7) days' time to repay the full outstanding dues in their respective loan accounts. As the borrowers have failed to regularize their accounts, the Bank, in exercise of its rights as pledgee under the Loan Agreement and applicable law, has decided to enforce the pledge and proceed with the sale of the pledged gold jewellery/ornaments by way of public auction to recover the dues. The auction will be conducted at the branch(es) mentioned below from 3:30 p.m. onwards. If, for any reason, the auction of any pledged security cannot be conducted or completed on the scheduled date, the Bank reserves the right to continue or reschedule the auction on any subsequent date and time without further notice.					
Sl. No.	LOAN NO.	BORROWER'S NAME	LOAN AMOUNT	Place of Auction (Branch Address)	DATE OF AUCTION
1	74110180	REWAT SINGH	705000	HDFC BANK LTD, 0244-DHANBAD-DHANBAD-PRIME, SRI RAM PLAZA 1ST FLOOR, BANK MORE DHANBAD JHARKHAND 826001	23-07-2026
2	4000969867	NAYAN KUMAR SAHAY	54000		
3	4001003886	NARENDRA KUMAR SINGH	158000	HDFC BANK LTD, 0267-BOKARO-BOKARO-PRIME, NO B9, CITY CENTRE, STEEL CITY BOKARO, JHARKHAND - 827004	23-07-2026
4	4000431887	MD SAMEER RAZA IMAM	230000		
5	4001025140	RAKESH SINGH	60000		
6	4000560056	VIKASH KUMAR	218200	HDFC BANK LTD, 0527-HAZARIBAGH-HAZARIBAGH-PRIME, ANNANDA CHOWK, GURU GOBIND SINGH ROAD, HAZARIBAGH, JHARKHAND 825301	23-07-2026
7	4001305644	SUMIT KUMAR SINHA	700500	HDFC BANK LTD, 0719-RANCHI 2ND-BRANCH, RANCHI CIRCULAR ROAD BRANCH, ROHINI 1ST FLOOR, 56 CIRCULAR ROAD, RANCHI, JHARKHAND - 834001	23-07-2026
8	4000899175	SACHIDANAND KUMAR	31800	HDFC BANK LTD, 0761-RAMGARH-CANTONMENT MAIN ROAD, NH 33, RAMGARH CANTT, RAMGARH, JHARKHAND - 829122	23-07-2026
9	75260981	GARIMA SINGH	346400	HDFC BANK LTD, 2484-ADITYAPUR-PBGL, SHOP NO 1 & 9, SHIV RAJANI COMPLEX, TATA KANDRA MAIN ROAD, NEAR ANAND HOTEL, ADITYAPUR 831013	23-07-2026
10	4000623509	GARIMA SINGH	96200		
11	4000650252	NAMITA HEMBROM	31500	HDFC BANK LTD, 2833-CHAIBASA BRANCH, 1ST FLOOR, A WING, AIKAT MARKET, PO - CHAIBASA, CHAIBASA, JHARKHAND - 833201	23-07-2026
12	4000964508	AKASH KUMAR RAM	33000	HDFC BANK LTD, 5770-SINGH MORE-RANCHI-PBGL, GROUND FLOOR BALAJI APT SOLANKI CHOWK RANCHI JHARKHAND 834003	23-07-2026
13	4001335360	RUKSANA KHATUN	71000	HDFC BANK LTD, 9581-PAKUR-PRIME, MAHARAJA COMPLEX, TIN BANGLA, STATION ROAD, OPPOSITE GURUDWARA ROAD, PAKUR, JHARKHAND 816107	23-07-2026
14	4001355373	REKHA SINGH	104000		18-08-2026
15	4000849590	NEETA DAS	76400		
16	4001037263	SURAJ KUMAR VERMA	44900	HDFC BANK LTD, 10087-JAMSHEDPUR-JAMSHEDPUR-PBGL, MITHILA MOTORS, NEAR RAM MANDIR, MAIN ROAD, BISTUPUR, JAMSHEDPUR, JHARKHAND - 831001	
17	75677987	SONU KUMAR	22000		
18	75647308	SONU KUMAR	16200		
19	74261601	REENA DEVI	68000		
20	75049271	BIPLAV SENGUPTA	135000	HDFC BANK LTD, 0244-DHANBAD-DHANBAD-PRIME, SRI RAM PLAZA 1ST FLOOR, BANK MORE DHANBAD JHARKHAND 826001	18-08-2026
21	75566033	BANTI KUMAR	100600	HDFC BANK LTD, 0527-HAZARIBAGH-HAZARIBAGH-PRIME, ANNANDA CHOWK, GURU GOBIND SINGH ROAD, HAZARIBAGH, JHARKHAND 825301	18-08-2026
22	4001222870	SONA KUMAR SINGH	85400	HDFC BANK LTD, 0719-RANCHI 2ND-BRANCH, RANCHI CIRCULAR ROAD BRANCH, ROHINI 1ST FLOOR, 56 CIRCULAR ROAD, RANCHI, JHARKHAND - 834001	18-08-2026
23	4001367522	INITISH PASWAN	553000		
24	75693660	KAMAL LOCHAN MANDAL	428900	HDFC BANK LTD, 1066-SAKCHI-JAMSHEDPUR-PRIME, 1ST FLOOR, 16 MILLS & GODOWN AREA, SARAL CENTRE, OPPOSITE MANOKAMMA MANDIR, SAKCHI, JAMSHEDPUR 831001	18-08-2026
25	74215078	ABHISHEK SINGH	129800	HDFC BANK LTD, 1279-MANGO-JAMSHEDPUR-PRI, 1ST FLOOR, INDU MANSION, HOLDING NO. 1, MANGO, JAMSHEDPUR, JHARKHAND 831012	18-08-2026
26	75046322	KRISHNA SHARMA	48300		
27	75046322	MD ISRAFIL ANSARI	50400	HDFC BANK LTD, 2483-HAZARIBAGH II-PBGL, VARDHAN COMPLEX MATWARI OPP-GANDHI MAIDAN HAZARIBAGH JHARKHAND-825301	18-08-2026
28	4001306027	GOUTAM DUTTA	101000	HDFC BANK LTD, 2484-ADITYAPUR-PBGL, SHOP NO 1 & 9, SHIV RAJANI COMPLEX, TATA KANDRA MAIN ROAD, NEAR ANAND HOTEL, ADITYAPUR 831013	18-08-2026
29	75472155	MD IMRANULLAH KAMAL	25500	HDFC BANK LTD, 3799-BOOTY MORE-RANCHI-PBGL, GR FL, SAINT TULSI APARTMENT, BARIAT ROAD, NEAR MEDICA HOSPITAL, BOOTY MORE, RANCHI 834009	18-08-2026
30	75822633	AMIT KUMAR SHARMA	30700		
31	75807282	AMIT KUMAR SHARMA	70700	HDFC BANK LTD, 4673-JORAPATHA-DHANBAD-PBGL, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, SHAKTI PLAZA, JORAPATHAK MAIN ROAD (OPPOSITE PUNJAB SWEETS), DHANBAD, JHARKHAND - 826001	18-08-2026
32	76060093	ACHYUTANAND AZAD	116400	HDFC BANK LTD, 5770-SINGH MORE-RANCHI-PBGL, GROUND FLOOR BALAJI APT SOLANKI CHOWK RANCHI JHARKHAND 834003	18-08-2026
33	4000977613	ANITA KUMARI	180000		
34	75799908	SAURABH SINHA	70000		
35	4001003013	MD SAMIR HUSSAIN	84000	HDFC BANK LTD, 6862-JAMTARA-PRIME, HDFC BANK LTD, 1ST FLOOR, GANPATI ENCLAVE, ASANCHUKA, NEAR JAMTARA RAILWAY STATION, JAMTARA, JHARKHAND - 815351	18-08-2026
36	4000889791	SHANKAR YADAV	131800	HDFC BANK LTD, 9581-PAKUR-PRIME, MAHARAJA COMPLEX, TIN BANGLA, STATION ROAD, OPPOSITE GURUDWARA ROAD, PAKUR, JHARKHAND 816107	18-08-2026
Sl. No.	LOAN NO.	Nominee/ Borrower's Name	LOAN AMOUNT	Place of Auction (Branch Address)	DATE OF AUCTION
1	4000526421	SANJIT KUMAR BHAGAT BROTHER OF RAUJEET KUMAR BHAGAT	678000	HDFC BANK LTD, 9581-PAKUR-PRIME, MAHARAJA COMPLEX, TIN BANGLA, STATION ROAD, OPPOSITE GURUDWARA ROAD, PAKUR, JHARKHAND 816107	18-08-2026
The auction shall be carried out strictly on an "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis. The Bank makes no warranty or representation, express or implied, regarding the quality, purity, caratage, weight, or valuation of the pledged gold jewellery/ornaments. Prospective bidders are solely responsible for inspecting and satisfying themselves regarding the condition, purity, caratage, weight, and valuation of the pledged items prior to placing their bids. Inspection will be permitted 45 minutes before the auction, entirely at the bidders' cost, risk, and discretion. By participating in the auction, bidders shall be deemed to have independently inspected the pledged items and to accept all associated risks without any reliance on representations by the Bank. No requests for return, exchange, refund, compensation, or cancellation will be entertained after the sale has been concluded. All bids shall be subject to a minimum reserve price determined by the Bank in accordance with applicable regulatory norms. The auction value will be based on the lower of: (a) the average closing price of gold for the preceding thirty (30) days, or (b) the closing price of gold published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association Ltd. (IBJA) on the immediately preceding day. The Bank retains sole discretion to finalise the reserve price and impose any additional conditions as deemed necessary. Should any borrower repay the entire outstanding dues in accordance with the Loan Agreement before commencement of the auction, the pledged gold jewellery/ornaments for that account may, at the Bank's discretion, be withdrawn from the auction without further notice. The auction and any resulting sale shall remain subject to any further terms and conditions that the Bank, in its sole and absolute discretion, may impose, amend, or prescribe from time to time. Please note that the undersigned Authorized Officer of the Bank reserves the right to postpone, adjourn, modify, suspend, or cancel the auction proceedings without prior notice and without assigning any reason. The Authorized Officer also reserves the right to accept or reject any bid(s), in whole or in part, and any such decision shall be final and binding on all participants. Date : 14.07.2026 Place : JHARKHAND					
Sd/- Authorized Officer				HDFC BANK LTD.	