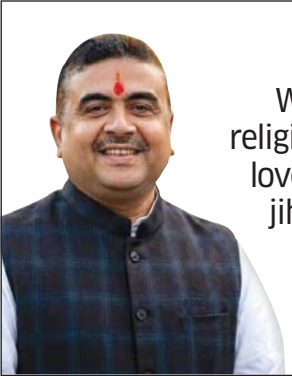


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Samson-Sooryavanshi dilemma resurfaces as India eye 2-0 lead against West Indies



Trump targets Indian IT giants

US suspends Infosys, Tata, Wipro, HCL from green card programme

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

The Trump administration has widened its crackdown on foreign-worker programmes, suspending major Indian IT companies, including Infosys, Tata, Wipro, and HCL, along with Cognizant and Capgemini, from the US programme employers use to sponsor skilled foreign workers for permanent residency.

US labor secretary Keith Sonderling said the Department of Labor was suspending the companies from the Permanent Labor Certification (PERM) programme, citing alleged misuse of the system. The department also suspended Microsoft and Adobe and said it would not process new or pending labour-certification applications from the affected companies.

The action matters for Indian technology professionals because PERM is a key step



THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WAS SUSPENDING THE COMPANIES FROM THE PERMANENT LABOR CERTIFICATION (PERM) PROGRAMME, CITING ALLEGED MISUSE OF THE SYSTEM

—US LABOR SECRETARY KEITH SONDERLING

in the employment-based green-card process. It is separate from the H-1B programme, but many foreign technology workers use H-1B

status for temporary employment before their employers seek permanent residency on their behalf.

Vice President JD Vance,

announcing the action, accused companies of abusing the immigration system and said the administration wanted US employers to prioritise American workers. Sonderling separately named Cognizant, Infosys, Tata, Wipro, HCL and Capgemini among the major IT outsourcing companies being suspended. The allegations have not been established in court.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

GST Council eases norms, scraps arrest powers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council on Thursday recommended several changes to ease compliance, reduce procedural burdens, and simplify the GST regime, while keeping the existing tax rate structure unchanged. Among the key decisions, the Council scrapped the arrest powers of tax officers and raised the threshold for prosecution to ₹5 crore from ₹1 crore.

It also recommended common standards for GST notices and proceedings and decided not to issue notices for monetary amounts of ₹10,000 or below. It will also withdraw pending notices below the threshold. The GST Council will implement the changes from April 1, 2027.

Announcing the decisions taken at the 57th meeting of the GST Council, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said it also decided to bring down the general penalty from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000. "GST Council today has recommended common standards for notices and proceedings and no notices below the prescribed monetary threshold of ₹10,000, including withdrawal of pending notices below the said threshold. We will not be issuing any notices for monetary thresholds of ₹10,000 or below. We will also withdraw pending notices below the said threshold. If it was



Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman during the 57th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council in New Delhi

THE POWER TO ARREST WILL BE REMOVED UNDER GST, AND THE PROSECUTION THRESHOLD WILL BE RAISED FROM ₹1 CRORE TO ₹5 CRORE —FINANCE MINISTER NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

issued, it will be withdrawn," said Sitharaman after the meeting.

Sitharaman said the power to arrest will be removed under GST, and the prosecution threshold will be raised from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore.

The finance minister said the principle of trust drives the GST 2.0 process reform and is part of the

'Reform Express' under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A Committee of Officers, expected to submit its report within 3 months, will examine how the protect a genuine buyer who holds a proper invoice, has received the goods, and has paid his supplier in full.

The Council, comprising Union and state finance ministers, also recommended removing the minimum punishment. The Council also left the punishment, whether a fine, imprisonment, or both, to judicial discretion in each case. The Council also approved a simplified GST registration mechanism for small sellers operating through e-commerce platforms.

CONTINUED ON >> P4



SC seeks stronger security, for women

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Giving top priority to the safety of women, especially after recent incidents of crimes against them in Delhi-NCR, the Supreme Court on Thursday issued a series of directions to the police and State Government to strengthen preventive measures, public transport security and surveillance.

Invoking the "Broken Windows" theory of policing while hearing the suo motu case it initiated over recent incidents of rape in Delhi



NCR, a bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice K Vinod Chandran observed that a broken streetlight, a non-functional CCTV camera or an unattended complaint, though minor in isolation, together convey that public spaces are not being watched. The bench similarly noted that visible and unattended signs of civic neglect signal an absence of authority and create a haven for anti-social elements.

FULL REPORT ON >> P8



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the gathering during the inauguration of the 10th edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2026 in New Delhi

PTI

Digital India plugged welfare leakages: PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Vowing to continue his fight against "wrong practices" for the good of people in need, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said India's digital governance push has helped plug leakages in Government welfare schemes, with nearly ₹5 lakh crore saved from going into "wrong hands," thanks to direct benefit transfers.

Highlighting this achievement, he said nearly ₹50 lakh crore had been transferred directly to beneficiaries' bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), helping ensure that Government

aid reached its intended recipients.

Making these assertions at the inaugural session of the Indian Mobile Congress, the Prime Minister also called for a global framework to tackle cross-border cyber frauds and the growing threat of deep fakes.

He urged Governments, technology companies, telecom operators, and financial institutions to come together to prevent such frauds before they reach the people. He said India has gained considerable experience in tackling cyber frauds and is ready to share its learnings with the world.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Day 3: INDIA bloc takes protest to Rajghat

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA ■ New Delhi

Opposition MPs led by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi held a sit-in at Rajghat on Thursday, the third consecutive day of protests demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Opposition leaders said the agitation would continue until Kumar steps down.

The day began with tight security around the Sansad Marg roundabout in central Delhi, where the MPs had been expected to gather. Delhi Police and central forces cordoned off approaches to the protest sites. The Congress had declared October 8 a "Black Day for Indian Democracy". General Secretary KC Venugopal directed State, district and block units to hold demonstrations. Protests were also reported in Patna, where RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav led an INDIA bloc march, and in Agartala.

Kharge hosted the MPs for lunch at Moets in Connaught Place, a day after a similar meeting at Sagar Ratna on Janpath. The MPs then boarded buses for Rajghat, where



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi about to board a bus towards Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at Rajghat for a peaceful protest in New Delhi

PANKAJ KUMAR

BJP ACCUSES PRIYANKA OF PUNCHING COP

New Delhi: As the Congress intensified its protest, the BJP on Thursday accused Rahul Gandhi of "inappropriately touching" a female constable and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of "punching" a cop during their street protest, and claimed that the Congress leaders' actions were not consistent with their slogan of "smash the patriarchy".

The Congress was also trying to create "Nepal-and Bangladesh-like anarchy" in the country through its protests, as Rahul Gandhi is "desperate" to come to power, BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party spokesperson Sidharth Yadav accused Rahul and Priyanka of attacking police personnel during the protests. Yadav said the visuals being circulated were not of a protest but showed "the anarchy being spread in the national Capital" under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress.

He alleged that Rahul "inappropriately touched" a woman police constable and claimed that Priyanka "punched a female police officer in the stomach".

FULL REPORT ON >> P5

thousands of supporters walked alongside. Among those present were Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Venugopal, Vivek Tankha, Manickam Tagore,

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Musk questions Ambani's clout, Centre hits back

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■ New Delhi

World's richest businessman Elon Musk sharpened a public quarrel over satellite internet on Thursday by asking whether one of India's richest men decides who gets a licence. "Starlink is licenced in over 165 countries and has spent five years complying with every single law and requirement of the Government of India, so why still no licence? Is Ambani the real boss of India?" he wrote on X, replying to a post that accused the Government of protecting crony capitalists.

The line landed while the India Mobile Congress was underway in the Capital and the telecom ministry was still responding to an earlier accusation. On Wednesday, Musk had said Starlink was "being blocked by certain oligarchs to maintain their monopolistic chokehold on the Indian people." He added, "You can guess who they are... This is a crime against the people of India!" He named no firm then. The Thursday post removed the guesswork.

The Ministry of Communications rejected the charge. It said the authorisation framework for telecom and satellite services is "fair and non-discriminatory," and called any suggestion that the rules were being applied selective-



ly "baseless and misconceived." Three companies hold licences: Musk's Starlink, Reliance Jio's satellite venture and Bharti-backed Eutelsat OneWeb. None may sell service until security assessments and spectrum-related approvals are finished. Officials said those assessments are underway for all three licensees, and the companies remain "broadly at the same regulatory stage."

Minister of State for Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani made the same point on the sidelines of the congress. The Department of Telecommunications has already issued licences and provisional spectrum, he said. What remains sits with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). "As soon as it is cleared, they will get it. It has nothing to do with one company."

The dispute is not only about paperwork. Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea dominate India's mobile market.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

From Darr to Dhanda, Nana Patekar's unforgettable screen legacy

RAHUL DATTA ■ New Delhi/Mumbai

"Darr sirf ek veham hai. Jo Darr gaya, samjho mar gaya," in the film *Prahaar* as a no-nonsense Army officer, and "Dhanda mein koi kisi ka Bhai nahin, koi kisi ka beta nahin," portraying ruthless underworld don Anna Seth in the film *Parinda*, Nana Patekar transcended the conventional grammar of Hindi film acting.

Endearing himself to cine-goers with his versatility in several other films, the 75-year-old actor passed away on Thursday morning following a cardiac arrest at

his home in Goa. He was later cremated in Pune with full State honours. Incidentally, Patekar also directed *Prahaar*.

Patekar did not confine himself to the make-believe world. He trained as a rifle shooter in his early 50s and competed at the national level. He also donned the Army uniform and spent more than two months with frontline troops during the Kargil War.

He was also a philanthropist who carried out social work through the NGO Naam Foundation and received acclaim for its work with farmers during a



Veteran actor Nana Patekar passed away on Thursday at the age of 75 at his residence in Dona Paula, Goa

drought in Maharashtra. Away from films, the actor had a very different idea of what a good life looked

like. For years, his Pune farmhouse gave him a break from Mumbai and a chance to do something he gen-

uinely enjoyed: farming. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences and said the actor

gave the audience characters that will be remembered for generations.

Paying tributes, Modi



described Patekar as a *Krantiveer* (revolutionary) and said that through his film with the same name, the actor strongly attacked the evils prevalent in society. Incidentally, Patekar had played the lead role in the hugely successful film named *Krantiveer*.

"Few actors possessed the intensity, individuality and unmistakable presence that Shri Nana Patekar Ji had. He brought remarkable versatility and creativity to every role and gave us characters that will be remembered for generations," Modi said in a post on social media.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Retired officer falls prey to cyber fraud

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Lucknow

A retired officer from the Industrial Development Department in Lucknow fell victim to cyber fraud after scammers siphoned off nearly ₹33 lakh from his bank account while his mobile SIM card remained inactive. The incident came to light on Thursday. The victim came to know of the fraud when he updated his passbook after his SIM was restored, prompting him to file complaints on the national cyber crime portal.

The victim, who is a resident of Nazarbagh, reported to the police that his mobile number's SIM was unexpectedly suspended on September 29 when he was at his

home. When he contacted the telecommunication service provider's online helpline number, he was informed that the SIM would be activated only after three days as he made multiple online attempts to reactivate the SIM. The SIM was eventually restored on October 5 through the service provider's portal.

Sensing a potential security risk upon regaining network access, the victim updated his bank's passbook. It was revealed to him that approximately Rs 33 lakh had been illegally withdrawn through various channels between September 29 and October 4 (the duration during which the SIM card was inactive). In addition, fraudsters also transferred

₹95,424 on October 3 from his savings account at another bank's branch in Kaiserbagh into a bank account holder's savings account at the same bank's branch in Hazratganj.

After discovering the unauthorised transactions, the victim lodged a complaint at the bank's branch in Hazratganj on October 6 and registered multiple complaints on the cyber crime portal on October 5 and October 6. The Cyber Crime police said that a case has been registered based on the victim's complaint, and authorities have successfully frozen ₹6 lakh of the defrauded amount. The police said they were investigating the case and tracing the money trail.

UP all set to become a logistics hub

UPSIDA APPROVES FOUR NEW PROJECTS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Lucknow

Under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) is taking continuous and strategic measures to accelerate industrial development in the state and contribute towards the vision of making UP a 1-trillion dollar economy.

With the objective of positioning Uttar Pradesh as one of the country's leading industrial and logistics hubs, UPSIDA is placing special emphasis on creating a conducive and reliable investment environment, developing modern industrial

infrastructure, and strengthening the state's supply-chain ecosystem.

In this direction, UPSIDA has approved four new warehousing and logistics projects across the State. These include one silo project, two warehousing projects and one logistics park. The projects will be established in Pilibhit, Unnao, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ayodhya districts.

With the approval of these four new projects, UPSIDA has so far approved 75 projects under the Uttar Pradesh Warehousing and Logistics Policy-2022 and Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Policy.

These projects are proposed to be developed over approximately 960 acres of land, with a total proposed investment of around ₹14,600 crore. The implementation of these

projects will significantly expand the state's modern warehousing and logistics infrastructure.

In particular, they will enhance the capacity for safe

and scientific storage of food grains and provide farmers with improved warehousing and logistics facilities. The projects will also accelerate the development of warehousing clusters, modern distribution centres, silos and cold-chain facilities across the state.

This will make the agricultural supply chain more efficient and seamless, while facilitating faster movement of agricultural produce to markets.

The growing investment in the warehousing and logistics sector will not only strengthen the state's infrastructure but will also generate significant direct and indirect employment opportunities.

The development of these projects will stimulate economic activities at the local level in areas such as transportation, warehousing, packaging, distribution and allied services, thereby contributing to inclusive economic growth.

The UP Warehousing and Logistics Policy-2022 aims to

establish UP as a modern, competitive and globally competitive logistics hub.

Under the policy, investors are being provided with various incentives, financial assistance, tax-related benefits and other facilitation measures for establishing warehousing and logistics units in the state. The rapidly expanding expressway network, industrial corridors, rail and air connectivity, further enhances Uttar Pradesh's attractiveness as a preferred destination for investment in the logistics and warehousing sector.

UPSIDA is placing particular emphasis on providing investors with a simple, transparent and time-bound approval process, ensuring that investment proposals are translated into ground-level projects at the earliest and contribute to investment, employment generation and economic activity across the state.

UPSIDA Chief Executive Officer Dr Balkar Singh said, "UPSIDA is continuously working towards establish-

ing Uttar Pradesh as one of the country's leading warehousing and logistics hubs. The approval of 75 projects with a proposed investment of approximately Rs 14,600 crore clearly reflects the growing confidence of

investors in the warehousing and logistics sector in Uttar Pradesh."

He said UPSIDA's endeavour was to ensure that investors were able to access the incentives available under the state government's policies through a simple, transparent and time-bound process.

"UPSIDA's priority is not merely to approve investment proposals, but also to actively facilitate their timely implementation on the ground," he added.

The expansion of modern warehousing, silo, cold-chain and distribution-centre infrastructure will make the state's supply chain more efficient and competitive.

This will directly benefit farmers, industries and consumers while creating new employment opportunities.

The Pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from BADARUZZAMA to BADRUZZAMA S/o Gulam Sarwar R/o H.No 60/58, Gaiju Purwa, Jajimau, Kanpur Nagar, for all future purposes.

NOTICE

It is hereby informed that I have changed my name from Mohd Ahmad to Mohd Ahmad Khan S/o Munshi Khan R/o Lodhanhar, Daroga Baag, Unnao- 209801 for future purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MOHD HABIB KHAN to MOHAMMAD HABEEB KHAN S/o Mohammad Haneef Khan R/o H.No. 131/124, Begum Purwa Kanpur Nagar, for all future purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from FARIDA MOHAMMED JAMEEL to FARIDA PATHAN W/o Mohammed Jameel Mohammed Shareef Khan R/o H.No 536/272 A Opposite Zafar Control New Mehndi Ganj Sitapur Road Lucknow, U.P. , for all future purposes.

NOTICE

The date of birth of my brother Guddu Patel S/O Hareram in the service book record of Army No. 4299387W is written as 01/07/2007 which is wrong whereas as per my Aadhar card the date of birth is correct 25/07/2008 which is mandatory to be recorded. Naman Patel son of Hareram village Sukhdehari Kalan Bhavarkol Mu. Bad Ghazipur.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the two original Gift Deeds (A) Document No. 2977 on 27-07-2022 & (B) Document No. 2978 on 27-07-2022, pertaining to the immovable properties of Jitendra Kumar Kesharwani situate at (A) House No. 85/129-A, situated at Laxmipurwa, Kanpur Nagar & (B) Pvt. Shop No. C-3, on Upper Ground Floor & Dughatti at Premises No. 73/18, 73/18-A & 73/18-B situated at Mohalla Collectorganj, Kanpur Nagar, deposited by way of security against a Facility availed by N D Hosiery have been misplaced from the custody of ICICI Bank Ltd., Halsey Road Branch. Any person's who has/have any claim, right, title and interest in the said document(s) and/or any person/s coming into possession of the aforesaid document (s) is/are having knowledge of its whereabouts are hereby requested to intimate ICICI Bank forthwith about the same at the above address for examination and such further action as may be advised. Any person receiving or dealing with the said document(s) would do so at their own risk and responsibility and ICICI Bank Ltd. will not be liable in any manner whatsoever for any loss incurred on account of any such action. In the event no information is received by ICICI Bank within 14 days from date hereof, the original Gift Deed no. 2977 dated 27.07.2022 & Gift Deed no. 2978 dated 27.07.2022 shall be treated as irrevocably lost and request shall be made Sub-Registrar at Kanpur Nagar for issuing a certified true copy of the document(s) lost, which will be treated as the original one for all intents and purposes thereafter.

NOTICE

It is hereby informed all of you to that I have changed my name from Rajesh to Rajesh Kumar, S/o Deshraj Maurya, for all future purposes. R/o: Lehdari, Khateeb, Kada, Kaushambi.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Gulzar to Mohd. Gulzar Qureshi, hence I should be known and recognised as Mohd. Gulzar Qureshi. Mohd. Gulzar Qureshi S/o Ghulam Rasool R/o 347, Kuresiyan Kasba Khanpur, Distt. Auraiya

NOTICE

In Bank of Baroda, Patel Nagar, Kanpur, A/c No. 243501000869, my name is wrongly recorded as Pramod, whereas my correct name is Pramod Kumar, as per my Aadhaar and other documents. Kindly treat Pramod Kumar as my correct name. Pramod Kumar, S/o Rajjan Lal, 42, Ahirwa, Harjinder Nagar, Kanpur Nagar.

NOTICE

I Hony. Naib Sub Charan Singh, Army No.2664668P, R/o Moh-Chiman Dubey, Jalaun, distt-Jalaun (U.P.) hereby declare that my daughter's name and DOB have been consecutively erroneously mentioned as Kumari Vineta and 14/05/1991. Her correct name is PREETI and correct DOB is 05/06/1992 as per aadhar card and other records. Her correct name and DOB will be used for all purposes.

NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public that in the school records of my daughter, Lavya Tulsyani, Class-9 (A) at Sunbeam School, Varuna, my name has been mistakenly recorded as Reema Tulsyani, which is incorrect. In reality, according to my Aadhaar Card No. 234625601539, my correct and authentic name is Jyoti Tulsyani. Jyoti Tulsyani W/o Shri Kishore Kumar Tulsyani H.No. S.30/20, Shivpur, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that I, Army No. 3998797W L Nk Sonam Angdai (Now JC 523783Y Subedar & Honorary Lieutenant Sonam Angdai), The Dogra Regimental Centre (MTC), Faizabad (U.P.), R/o Village Rangrik, PO Rangrik, Tehsil Spiti, District Lahaul & Spiti (H.P.), am the father of twin daughters, Miss Tanzin Zangmo and Miss Tanzin Nyidon, born to my wife Smt Sonam Chhodon on 02 November 2009. The correct name of my daughter is Tanzin Zangmo, but in the government records her name has been wrongly entered as "Tabzin Zangmo". Henceforth, my daughter's name shall be read and treated as Tanzin Zangmo.

NOTICE

My name has been mistakenly recorded in my Aadhaar Card as Suphiyan, and my date of birth has been recorded as 07-08-2006, which is incorrect. Whereas, in my High School educational records, my correct name is Sofiyan Shah and my correct date of birth is 07-08-2008. Therefore, it is just and appropriate that my name and date of birth in my Aadhaar Card be corrected as per my High School educational records. Sofiyan Shah Son of Shahabuddin Village – Berbhan Post & Police Station– Bahariyabad District– Ghazipur

NOTICE

I, Kapil Kumar Vishwakarma, R/o 4/331, Subhash Nagar, Shuklaganj, Unnao, hereby declare that my wife's name has been incorrectly recorded as Chalna Vishwarkarma in the educational records of my son, Samar Vishwakarma Her correct and official name is Chetna Vishwakarma, which shall be used for all official records and future purposes. Kapil Kumar Vishwakarma, 4/331, Subhash Nagar, Shuklaganj, Unnao.

NOTICE

I Mangla Singh, M/o LNK Ranjeet Singh (Army No. 7431855Y, 4 Rajput), and a resident of Udai Shahpur, Pratapgarh (U.P.). My name is recorded as "MANGALA DEVI" and my D.O.B is 01/01/1951. in my son's military service record, which is incorrect; according to an affidavit sworn before a Notary Public on 07/10/2026, my correct and actual name is "MANGLA SINGH" and D.O.B is 18/08/1953. Lucknow.

NOTICE

Notice
I, Mrs.Zoaina Javed Siddiqui, wife of Javed Bashir Siddiqui (aged approximately 39 years) & R/O Daud Plaza, 195/049 FF 4, Jagat Narayan Road, Wazirganj, Golaganj, Lucknow, wish to state that my daughter, Zainab Fatima (daughter of Javed Bashir Siddiqui) is a student of Class 6-B (Admission No. 118257) at La Martiniere Girls' College, Lucknow. Due to an error, my name has been recorded as "Zoaina siddiqui" instead of "Zoaina Javed Siddiqui" in the school records; my correct name is Zoaina Javed Siddiqui, and this should be the name recognized as valid.

NOTICE

Notice
I, Mrs.Zoaina Javed Siddiqui, wife of Javed Bashir Siddiqui (aged approximately 39 years) & R/O Daud Plaza, 195/049 FF-4, Jagat Narayan Road, Wazirganj, Golaganj, Lucknow, wish to state the following regarding my son, Mohammad Ibrahim Bashir (son of Javed Bashir Siddiqui), who is a student of Class 9-D (Personal No. 22525) at La Martiniere College, Lucknow: My name has been erroneously recorded as "Zoaina Siddiqui" instead of "Zoaina Javed Siddiqui" in the school records; my correct name is "Zoaina Javed Siddiqui," and this should be the name recognized as valid.

The Pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Shiv Charan, S/o Lale Mishri Lal, R/O House No. 203D, Rooma, Kanpur Nagar, have severed all kinds of relations with my son Piyush Gupta and have disowned him from my movable and immovable properties. I and my family shall have no concern whatsoever with any act or transaction carried out by him. He shall be solely responsible for his own acts."

NOTICE

I, Anil Kumar, son of Baliram Singh, resident of C.R. & M.S., Kiran Air Force Station, Tambaram, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu – 600046, hereby inform that my daughter's name was earlier recorded as Ananya in her Aadhaar Card. It has now been corrected to Ananya Singh, daughter of Anil Kumar. Her date of birth is 20 August 2011. Henceforth, Ananya Singh shall be her correct name in all records.

NOTICE

Notice
I, Mrs. Zoaina Javed Siddiqui, wife of Javed Bashir Siddiqui (aged approximately 39 years, resident of Daud Plaza 195/049 FF 4, Jagat Narayan Road, Wazirganj, Golaganj, Lucknow), state that my daughter, Juveriya Fatima (daughter of Javed Bashir Siddiqui), is a student of Class 5 -A (Admission No. 9552) at La Martiniere Girls' College, Lucknow. Due to an error, my name has been recorded as "Zoaina Siddiqui" instead of "Zoaina Javed Siddiqui" in the school records; my correct name is Zoaina Javed Siddiqui, and this should be the name recognized as valid.

Intruder caught

An unidentified youth allegedly entered a house by scaling the rear wall in Purseni village around 3 am on Thursday.

The family of Subedar Mishra woke up after hearing a noise and were shocked to find the intruder inside.

Upon hearing the commotion, nearby villagers gathered at the spot and caught the youth. The enraged villagers gave him a severe thrashing.

Acting on the information, the police arrived, took the man into custody and brought him to the Mohanlalganj police station.

He is currently being interrogated.

The villagers have demanded regular night patrols and the deployment of additional police pickets.

Bootlegger held

The Mahigawan police on Thursday arrested a man for illegally selling country-made liquor.

He was identified Shiv Kumar (50) of Rampurwa village. Acting on a tip-off during routine patrolling near the canal path towards Palakhar village, the police caught the accused with 24 pouches of country liquor totalling 3,600 millilitres. Officials also recovered Rs 230 from him, which he admitted to earning from selling the alcohol at higher prices after authorised shops closed. The accused failed to produce any valid licence or permit for the seized liquor and a case has been registered against him under Section 60 of the Excise Act at the Mahigawan police station.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Kanpur

The Kanpur Development Authority, on the directives of Vice-Chairman Ankur Kaushik, demolished unauthorised plotting on approximately eight bighas land in Sachendi village, Rampur Khas, which were being sold to different individuals.

The drive was led by Special Executive Officer, Enforcement Zone-3, Sat Shukla. These plots were being sold without approved layouts and physical amenities such as sewerage, drainage, electricity, parks, etc. The plots in question were located within

RLD to strengthen organisation at grassroots level in UP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Lucknow

A meeting of Rashtriya Lok Dal workers was held at the party's state headquarters in Lucknow on Thursday.

The meeting was presided over by RLD state president Aishwarya Raj Singh. National general secretary (organisation) Trilok Tyagi attended the meeting as the chief guest.

The discussions focused on expanding party activities, membership and strengthening the organisation at the grassroots level.

Tyagi said party workers

from western Uttar Pradesh to Purvanchal were showing immense enthusiasm, reflecting widespread support for RLD's ideology.

He said prioritising regular communication, understanding local issues and building a robust network up to the booth level were the top priorities of the party.

Singh stressed on taking the party's ideology to the younger generation and connecting with youth, farmers, women and workers.

RLD acting state president Anupam Mishra reiterated the need to expanding coordination and outreach

across all districts.

Party national general secretary and member parliament board, Anil Dubey, said RLD's ideology was always aimed at serving the interests of farmers, workers, youths and people of different sections of society.

During the meeting, a two-minute silence was observed to mourn the death of national general secretary Anil Dubey's mother.

The meeting was attended by state functionaries, district chiefs, cell presidents, and workers from various regions of Uttar Pradesh.

Financial literacy & digital fraud awareness camp held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Kanpur

The Kanpur Regional Office of Central Bank of India organised a financial literacy and digital fraud awareness camp at Government Inter College, Chunniganj, as part of its 'Service is My Contribution' campaign. City MP Ramesh Awasthi was the chief guest at the event.

In his address, chief guest Ramesh Awasthi stated that the rapid expansion of digital banking and digital payment systems in the country has made life simpler and more convenient for ordinary citizens, but it has also increased the need for vigilance against cyber and digital fraud.

He urged students and citizens not to share confidential information such as OTPs, PINs, CVVs, and banking passwords with anyone and to



exercise extreme caution against suspicious links, calls or messages.

On the occasion, bank officials informed students about various types of cyber fraud, including phishing, fake calls, scams masquerading as KYC updates, unknown links, QR code and OTP-based fraud.

They also raised awareness about safe digital banking, financial discipline and the immediate necessary action in case of cyber fraud.

MP Ramesh Awasthi presented shields to the

winners of the Hindi essay writing competition organised by the bank for school students in two categories, junior and senior, under the Hindi Month celebrations.

Principal Sanjay Yadav, District Lead Manager Aditya Chandra, Deputy Regional Head Arvind Kumar, Vigilance Officer and Chief Manager Sanjay Shukla, Head of Civil Lines Branch Shiv Kumar, other bank officials, citizens and bank customers, school teachers and a large number of students were present on the occasion.

The event was conducted by Senior Manager (Official Language) Surendra Singh Yadav. Manager Amit Kumar played a key role in coordinating the event.

Officials from the Central Bank of India and teachers from Government Inter College, Chunniganj, collaborated to make the event a success.

Mishap death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Lucknow

A motorcyclist was killed in a road accident on the Kisan Path overpass in the Mohaddinpur village of Kakori late Wednesday night.

The victim was identified as Ravikan (30) from Jehta village in Dubagga, who was going on a motorcycle with his companion Subhash.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, SARVAT HUSAIN holder of Indian Passport No:B796956 issued at DUBAI on 31/01/2024 and Permanent Resident of HUSAIN VILLA TAWELA ST RD NEAR WATER PUMP MUFTI TOLA MORADABAD PIN 244001 UTTAR PRADESH INDIA and presently residing at DUBAI UAE do hereby change the name of my minor child SAFUHA holding Indian Passport No: Y6729173 issued at BAREILLY on 13/09/2023 from SARVAT to SAFURA (Given Name) SARVAT (Surname) with immediate effect.

Merit now decides recruitment: Yogi

HANDS OVER APPOINTMENT LETTERS TO 470 SPORTSPERSONS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday handed over appointment letters to 470 sportspersons recruited in the Uttar Pradesh Police and Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) at an event held at Lok Bhavan.

The recruits include 43 sub-inspectors and 295 constables in the civil police, along with 132 constables in the PAC. Of the 470 recruits, 303 are men and 167 are women.

Addressing the newly recruited personnel, Yogi Adityanath said their journey from wearing a sports jersey to donning the police uniform marked a new phase of responsibility.

He urged them to carry the discipline, teamwork, dedication and resilience they developed as athletes into their careers in the police force. "Your journey from the jersey to the uniform has begun," the chief minister said, stressing that the government expects the same level of performance



from them in uniform as they demonstrated on the sports field. Yogi Adityanath asked the recruits whether anyone had demanded money during the recruitment process or whether they had needed to seek political recommendations. He told them that their appointments were neither a government favour nor a personal concession, but the result of their hard work and perseverance. The chief minister also attacked the previous governments, alleging that government jobs in Uttar Pradesh were earlier influenced by nepotism and recommendations.

Referring to the Samajwadi Party, he said appointments under the present government were based on merit rather than family connections. Taking a swipe at the opposition, Yogi Adityanath said he sometimes found it amusing when the

Samajwadi Party spoke about youth appointments, comparing such criticism to "a crocodile sitting in water and preaching peace while swimming".

He also urged the recruits to remain cautious of such political rhetoric.

Yogi Adityanath said that when his government came to power in 2017, there was no provision for direct recruitment of sportspersons in the state. He said his government subsequently introduced direct recruitment for athletes and had so far appointed around 1,000 sportspersons through the process.

The chief minister added that preparations were underway to issue appointment letters to another 500 sportspersons.

He said sportspersons should continue practising even after joining the police force and announced that he would ask the director general of police to assign villages to the newly recruited athletes so that they could promote sports activities there at least once a week.

Drawing a parallel with the Mission Shakti initiative, he said the sportspersons could visit villages regularly and encourage young people to take up sports.

"Do you want likes or real life?" Yogi Adityanath asked, urging the recruits not to give up their sporting practice. He said India was waiting for them to create new records.

The chief minister encouraged the athletes to play without fear and focus on achieving new milestones. He assured them that they need not worry about their careers, saying that promotions cannot be indefinitely delayed.

He also said awards in Uttar Pradesh would not be given merely for praising the chief minister from a public platform, but hard work and performance would remain the basis for recognition.

Referring to India's performance at the Asian Games, Yogi Adityanath said Indian athletes had won 107 medals, describing it as a record and calling upon the recruits to contribute to further achievements.

Jobs await medal-winning sportspersons: Maurya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Thursday said government jobs and career advancement opportunities were available to sportspersons who brought medals for the country and the state, as he urged athletes joining the police to continue their sporting careers.

Maurya said the opportunity for sportspersons to join the police would help bring sporting talent into public service. Addressing the newly recruited sportspersons he said, "Your game has not ended; your game is still continuing," he told

He said athletes who win medals and see the national flag being raised make the entire country proud.

Maurya also highlighted the sporting potential in rural areas, saying many talented

athletes in villages could compete with the best in the world if provided with adequate opportunities.

He said the state government was providing nutritional support along with coaching and had introduced a two per cent quota in government recruitment for sportspersons.

Maurya also claimed that Uttar Pradesh's law and order situation had improved significantly since 2017 and said effective law and order was essential for development.

Sports Minister Girish Yadav said sportspersons who had won medals over the past nine years had been provided government jobs as well as cash awards.

He said prize money had been increased by two to three times and that the government was continuing to facilitate direct recruitment of athletes. He also highlighted the Eklavya Sports Fund,

which was established to support athletes who previously struggled to develop their talent due to financial constraints. More than 500 sportspersons have reportedly received assistance through the fund.

Director General of Police Rajeev Krishna said the induction of 470 talented sportspersons into the Uttar Pradesh Police was not merely a recruitment exercise but also recognition of sporting talent and an effort to connect athletes with public service. He said sports and policing shared several common values, including discipline, physical fitness, conduct, regular practice and patience. Krishna told the recruits that their hard work had earned them a new identity and urged them to bring the same dedication they displayed in sports to their responsibilities as police personnel.

Ram Vilas Paswan spent life giving voice to Dalits: Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday paid tributes to former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan on his death anniversary, saying he devoted his entire life to giving a voice to the Dalits.

Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressed a tribute gathering organised in Sushant Golf City on Thursday on the sixth death anniversary of former Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan.

Addressing the event, Yogi said Ram Vilas Paswan was a mass leader known for his fighting spirit. He said through his resolute approach, Ram Vilas Paswan gave a new dimension to social consciousness.



Yogi said 50 years ago, Bihar witnessed the emergence of a young leader who became a strong voice for Dalits and the deprived. "The people of Bihar

accorded great respect to that voice and elected Ram Vilas to Parliament with the most votes. Through Indian politics, he dedicated his life to awakening social consciousness and building an India based on the vision of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar," Yogi said. Recalling his association with Paswan in Parliament, Yogi Adityanath said the veteran leader worked throughout his life to ensure justice, dignity and a rightful place in the mainstream for the deprived sections. He said whether Paswan was serving as a minister, participating in election meetings, or working alongside former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his affectionate and gracious conduct touched

people's hearts. Though Paswan is no longer physically present, his legacy continues through his son Chirag Paswan, Yogi said.

He thanked Chirag Paswan for deciding to hold the programme commemorating his father in Uttar Pradesh, and said the politician deserved the same respect here as he received in Bihar.

He also praised the Bihar government for organising Paswan's death anniversary as a national event.

The chief minister said, "While Ram Vilas Paswan's absence is deeply felt, there is also a sense of satisfaction that Chirag Paswan is working tirelessly to carry forward his mission. Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chirag Paswan, as a Union

Minister, is taking forward his voice on every platform." The CM chief minister offered flowers at Ram Vilas Paswan's portrait and paid his heartfelt tributes. On the occasion, all those present also immersed themselves in a spiritual experience while listening to devotional hymns.

Dialogue, not protests, needed to resolve concerns over EC: Chirag

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Lucknow

Union Minister Chirag Paswan on Thursday said political parties having concerns over the electoral process should engage with the Election Commission and seek answers through dialogue instead of staging daily protests, asserting that solutions could emerge only through discussions.

Taking to reporters on the sidelines of a condolence meeting organised in Lucknow on the sixth death anniversary of his father and

former Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Chirag Paswan said every party had the democratic right to protest peacefully, but questioned whether the opposition wanted a solution to its concerns or was merely interested in "creating a ruckus".

"The Election Commission is an independent constitutional institution. You have complete freedom to approach it, seek time, meet it with a delegation and place your questions before it," he said, adding that "engage with the Election Commission and seek

answers through dialogue instead of staging daily protests". "If you are not satisfied, you can again hold a press conference or protest. But protesting day after day, lying down on Delhi's roads and causing inconvenience to citizens shows that you do not want a solution," the Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief said. Paswan said he too had raised concerns over the electoral process and had urged the EC to ensure that no citizen, particularly in a country as large as India, may harbour doubts about the electoral system.

'Patekar's death irreparable loss'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday offered his condolences on the death of veteran actor Nana Patekar, saying it was an "irreparable loss".

In a post on 'X', the chief minister said Padma Shri Nana Patekar was a renowned actor, an accomplished theatre artiste and a sensitive social worker and his demise was an irreparable loss to the world of art.

The chief minister said that Nana Patekar enriched Indian cinema with his exceptional acting and also expressed his commitment to society through his concern for social issues.

Gomti rising marginally

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

The Gomti river has started stabilising in Lucknow, with water levels rising by only 2-3 cm at various points from Ghaughat to the Gomti barrage on Thursday.

The Irrigation Department officials said the river was now showing an overall downward trend, raising hopes of relief in the flood-affected areas of the city.

Irrigation Department Executive Engineer Mukesh Vaish said the situation was expected to improve on Thursday itself, but light rainfall in Sitapur and Lakhimpur Kheri had affected the discharge into the river. He said the river had stabilised around Itaunja and was expected to start receding further in the next 10-15 hours. Vaish said the water level at Naaimisharanya had risen to 122.02 metres but was now continuously falling and stood at 121.58 metres. He said the downward trend had begun upstream and was now becoming visible downstream towards Lucknow. Meanwhile, waterlogging continued to pose a problem around Ekana Stadium and in front of Palassio Mall till Thursday afternoon.

Rahul has 'anarchist' mindset: Nabin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Lucknow

Bharatiya Janata Party national president Nitin Nabin on Thursday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his protest against the Election Commission, accusing him of having an "anarchist mindset" and trying to spread "poison" in society.

His remarks came after the Congress leader on Wednesday led the INDIA bloc leaders' street protests before being detained again along with many MPs by police.

"I can only say that they are of 'arajaktawadi' (anarchist) mindset and trying to spread poison in society. If he had such objections, elections in Kerala were also conducted by the same Election Commission. The election in Tamil Nadu, where they have come to power, was also conducted by the same Election Commission," Nabin said

"If Rahul Gandhi has the courage, he should first resign. The people are watching the manner in which he

is playing this game," he said.

Nabin also accused the leader of the opposition of protecting infiltrators.

"Those who come to India from different places and deprive the people of their rights are being opposed. I believe that the people of India have the right over the country's resources, wealth and land. We will not allow infiltrators to claim these rights," he said.

The BJP will always oppose attempts to settle people in India with a "foreign mindset", Nabin added.

Earlier, Nabin offered prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple here and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the temple corridor.

"I congratulate Narendra Modi ji and respected Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ji for the corridor. You have given a very grand and distinct form to a centre of faith for crores of Sanatanis," he said.

Asked about the BJP's election preparations, Nabin said

the party's workers function round-the-clock.

Meanwhile, interacting with young people at Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith on the second day of his Varanasi visit, Nabin said politics should not divide the country's youth, asserting that young people should be identified by their ideas, abilities and aspirations rather than categorised as "alpha, beta and gamma".

Nabin said no outsider should be allowed to take away the rights and opportunities of the country's youth.

"People from Bihar should be given priority when it comes to opportunities in Bihar, and those from Uttar Pradesh should be prioritised for opportunities in Uttar Pradesh," he said.

Stating that India is a country of young people and there should be no politics of dividing the youth, Nabin said, "When we were young, nobody used to divide us into alpha, beta and gamma."

He said the identities of India's youth should be defined by their ideas, abilities and aspirations.

इंडियन बैंक

(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)



Indian Bank

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

e-Auction

अलहाबाद

ALLAHABAD

Zonal Office: Tindwari Road Near Saint Mary School Banda (U.P.)-210001

Sale notice for Sale of immovable properties [See proviso Rules 6(2) & 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) & 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on **18.11.2026**. for recovery of Bank's dues from Borrowers and Guarantors due to the Indian Bank Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name of The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Gaurantors/Partners	Bank's Dues Encumbrances On Property	Details of Property (As per Deed)/ID No.	Reserve Price
				Earnest Money Incremental Bid Amount
1.	1. Shree Bala Ji Maharaj Mahavidhyalaya (Borrower) , Office Add:- Gram Post Khatphakala, Pailani, Banda, U.P.-210001 2. Mr. Ashok Kumar Mishra S/O Ram Manohar Mishra (Manager/ Mortgager) , Add:-Mahadev Petrol Pump, Bhanu Bihar Colony, Tindwari Road Banda, U.P.-210001 3. Mrs. Kiran Mishra W/O Mr. Ashok Kumar Mishra (Guarantor) , Add:-Mahadev Petrol Pump Bhanu Bihar Colony, Tindwari Road, Banda, U.P.-210001	Rs. 13,76,124/- as on 05.10.2026 with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon from 06.10.2026 NIL	EM of Land And Building Situated at Arazi No. 2681 Part, Mauja-Khatphina Kala Banger, Gram Post Khatphakala, Tehsil Pailani, Banda, U.P.-210001, in the name of Shree. Bala Ji Maharaj Mahavidhyalaya, Manager Mr. Ashok Kumar Mishra measuring Area-1.0050 Hect., Boundaries:- East: Open Land of Mr. Balendra Singh, West: Part of arazi of Mr. Raja Bhayai, North: Chakroad, South: Khatphina Kala Road Property ID: IDBI30185478299	Rs. 1,18,00,000/- Rs. 11,80,000/- Rs. 1,00,000/-

Branch: Dadinpurwa, Mob.: 9532473838

Date & Time of E-auction: 18.11.2026 from 10.00 AM to 04.00 PM

The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are requested to register with online portal (<https://www.baanknet.com>) using their mobile number and email id. Further, after completing their eKYC, the intending Bidders/ Purchasers have to transfer the EMD amount in their e-Wallet by upto 17.11.2026, 11.59 PM. The registration, eKYC and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction.

Platform (<https://www.baanknet.com>) for e-Auction will be provided by our e Auction service provider **PSB alliance Pvt. Ltd.**, (Contact Phone 8291220220, email ID:- support.baanknet@psballiance.com). The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are required to participate in the e-Auction process at **e-Auction Service Provider's website** <https://www.baanknet.com>.

Corporate Office: Avvai Shanmugam Salai, Royapettah, Chennai-600014

Date: 07.10.2026

Place: Banda

Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

इंडियन बैंक

(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम)



Indian Bank

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)

e-Auction

अलहाबाद

ALLAHABAD

Zonal Office: Tindwari Road Near Saint Mary School Banda (U.P.)-210001

Sale notice for Sale of immovable properties [See proviso Rules 9(1)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank as Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on **28.10.2026**. for recovery of Bank's dues from Borrowers and Guarantors due to the Indian Bank Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No.	Name of The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Gaurantors/Partners	Bank's Dues Encumbrances On Property	Details of Property (As per Deed)/ID No.	Reserve Price
				Earnest Money Incremental Bid Amount
1.	1. Ms. Ankita D/o Mr. Ashok Kumar Mishra , Address: Near Mahadev Petrol Pump, Prem Nagar, Tindwari Road, Banda, U.P. 210001. 2. Mrs. Kiran Mishra W/o Mr. Ashok Kumar Mishra (Mortgager & Guarantor) , Address- Near Mahadev Petrol Pump, Prem Nagar, Tindwari Road, Banda, U.P.-210001. 3. Mr. Ashok Kumar Mishra (Guarantor) , Address- Near Mahadev Petrol Pump, Prem Nagar, Tindwari Road, Banda, U.P.-210001.	Rs. 31,14,072/- as on 05.10.2026 with further interest, costs, other charges and expenses thereon from 06.10.2026 NIL	Equitable Mortgage of property located at Gata No.-1201, Mauza Ladakapurwa ZA, Near St. Mary School, Pargana & Tehsil Banda, Distt. Banda, Uttar Pradesh in the name of Mrs. Kiran Mishra W/o Ashok Kumar Mishra measuring area 167.28 Sq. mts. , Boundaries:- EAST:- Plot of Smt. Santosh, West:- Plot of Jagram Singh, North:- Plot of Laxmi, South:- 18 feet wide road Property ID: IDBI30477520706	Rs. 55,00,000/- Rs. 5,50,000/- Rs. 50,000/-

Branch: Dadinpurwa, Mob.: 9532473838

Date & Time of E-auction: 28.10.2026 from 10.00 AM to 04.00 PM

The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are requested to register with online portal (<https://www.baanknet.com>) using their mobile number and email id. Further, after completing their eKYC, the intending Bidders/ Purchasers have to transfer the EMD amount in their e-Wallet by upto 27.10.2026, 11.59 PM. The registration, eKYC and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before auction.

Platform (<https://www.baanknet.com>) for e-Auction will be provided by our e Auction service provider **PSB alliance Pvt. Ltd.**, (Contact Phone 8291220220, email ID:- support.baanknet@psballiance.com). The intending Bidders/ Purchasers are required to participate in the e-Auction process at **e-Auction Service Provider's website** <https://www.baanknet.com>.

Corporate Office: Avvai Shanmugam Salai, Royapettah, Chennai-600014

Date: 07.10.2026

Place: Banda

Authorised Officer, Indian Bank

IN FOCUS



Indian Air Force (IAF) Sarang Helicopter Display Team perform maneuvers during the Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 at the Air Force Station in Jodhpur on Thursday

PTI

BJP must sack CEC, says Revanth Reddy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Hyderabad

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to capture power through “divisive tactics” and said the BJP should either “sack” CEC Gyanesh Kumar or be “consigned to the dustbin” of political history.

Reddy, who is in Delhi to participate in the protests by Congress and other INDIA bloc parties against SIR, claimed that BJP wanted to take away the voting rights of the poor who have turned against it.

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always wanted to



capture power using divisive tactics taken from the imperialist British playbook,” he said in a statement.

According to him, the BJP has tried to divide Indians on the basis of religion, caste, region and language, and also misused central agencies to threaten the opposition and weaken institutions.

Delhi Govt plans to speed up ₹7,000 cr elevated Ring Road

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

The Delhi Government plans to speed up work on its ambitious ₹7,000-crore elevated Ring Road project after the newly opened Barapullah Phase 3 saw perennial gridlock, officials said on Thursday.

Spanning 55 kilometres, the project includes two new bridges over the Yamuna to improve connectivity between Trans-Yamuna areas and the rest of the city.

“Under long-term measures, our elevated Ring Road project will add two flyovers over the Yamuna River, which will improve traffic management along the area. The detailed project report for the first package is ready and has been approved by the Chief Minister recently,” Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Singh Verma said.

Officials said, as part of the plan to decongest Ring Road,



the government is working on a new bridge near the existing Signature Bridge, and a second flyover will run from Metcalfe House to the Delhi-Noida-Direct (DND) flyway near Ashram.

Officials said the need for additional capacity has become more pressing with the opening of Barapullah Phase 3. The Ring Road

stretch around Sarai Kale Khan, a key link between central Delhi and southeast and east Delhi, has seen rising traffic volumes.

According to the plan, the initial phases, including Azadpur Flyover to Hanuman Temple (ISBT) (9.5 kilometres), Chandgi Ram Akhara to Majnu Ka Tilla (2.5 kilometres) and Hanuman

Temple (ISBT) to DND Flyover (11.5 kilometres), will be taken up initially on priority.

After completion, the elevated road will connect to the Azadpur flyover near Mukarba Chowk and the DND road, which further connects to the Ashram flyover, a critical arterial road in South Delhi, officials said.

Gadkari sets 10-day deadline for Pondy Road proposals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Puducherry

Union Road Transport and Highways Ministry Nitin Gadkari has directed officials of his ministry to examine and approve within 10 days the proposals submitted by Puducherry Chief Minister N Rangasamy, PWD Minister Malladi Krishna Rao said on Thursday.

Rao, who participated in the GST Council meeting in Delhi, said he handed over the letter of the Puducherry CM to Nitin Gadkari seeking sanction of ₹1,500 crore for the extension of the proposed fly over from Puducherry to Mullaodai on Puducherry-Cuddalore route.

Rao held a meeting with the Road Transport and National Highways



Minister. In a release, he said the Centre had already approved the flyover on the Puducherry-Cuddalore route at a cost of ₹650 crores with the initial proposal to cover only 2.5 km.

FROM PAGE - 1

under the SIR aimed to disenfranchise those opposed to the BJP and said the agitation would continue until Kumar resigns. Rathee demanded the CEC’s resignation, saying the commission lacked transparency and accountability. Prakash Raj called for the SIR to be scrapped.

The CJP and student groups have called a “Delhi Chalo” protest at Jantar Mantar on October 10. The Home Ministry has approved 110 additional Central Armed Police Force companies for Delhi from October 8 to 12. The Delhi Excise Department has ordered liquor shops across the capital shut on October 9 and 10 as a precaution. The order covers L6, L6FG, L8, L10, L14 and combined L8 and L14 licences. Opposition leaders are likely to meet at Parliament House on Friday morning to decide the next step.

Digital India plugged welfare leakages: PM

As regards direct benefit transfers using technology, Modi said, “And through this, nearly 5 lakh crore rupees...this is not a small number...5 lakh crore rupees have been saved from going into the wrong hands. Now tell me, those whose ill-gotten income has stopped, will they love Modi? Did I do the right thing? Should it be done or not? Should all these wrong practices be stopped? The Prime Minister stressed, “No matter how much they shout or scream, I am determined to get it done,” he said.

He observed that had the old system prevailed, ₹5 lakh crore of the Government would have gone into leakages, filling the pockets of such people. “Modi has stopped this,” he said, adding that the money now reaches rightful beneficiaries and is used for the right causes.

Under the PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi, the PM said more than ₹4 lakh crore has been deposited into farmers’ bank accounts. The amount is disbursed every four months, and farmers receive the message on their mobile phones, he said.

The prime minister also said India has moved from being a consumer to a creator in the telecom sector and is advancing toward designing products and owning technology and intellectual property in the country.

He said the ‘Reform Express’ was moving rapidly in the telecom sector, modernising decades-old laws and creating a modern regulatory framework through the Telecommunications Act.

On cross-border cyber fraud, Modi warned that such crimes do not respect borders and asserted that technology scales only when it earns trust.

Highlighting the cross-border nature of cyber-crimes, he said a person sitting in one country, with the help of another country, can commit a crime in a third country.

“We are also seeing what a big challenge deep fakes have become,” Modi said, adding that countries need to work together on a global framework to address such emerging threats.

“Therefore, it is necessary that we work on a global framework for this. Governments, technology companies, telecom operators, and financial institutions will all need to connect to this framework. I urge the GSMA and telecom operators across the world: come, let us create a global mechanism that can stop such fraud before it reaches the people,” Modi said.

Industry body GSMA represents mobile

network operators and companies across the global ecosystem.

Modi said strengthening the security framework around telecom and digital technologies was equally crucial for their rapid expansion, with phone and network security becoming priorities. Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Bharti Group Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal, Reliance Jio Infocomm Chairman Akash Ambani and Aditya Birla Group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla were among those present at the inaugural session of IMC 2026.

Organised jointly by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), IMC 2026 centres on the theme ‘Scale Without Boundaries’, highlighting India’s growing mettle in digital innovation, next-generation connectivity and technology-led growth.

The event focuses on next-generation digital infrastructure, technology-led economic growth, and inclusive digital access and secure ecosystems. It brings together global technology leaders, policymakers, industry experts, startups, investors and innovators to discuss emerging opportunities across the digital ecosystem.

Musk questions Ambani’s clout, Centre hits back

Satellite broadband is a newer lane, aimed at villages and terrain where towers are costly or slow to build. A post Musk replied to earlier this week cited more than 11,000 listed villages still without 4G coverage as of May. Musk has argued that Starlink would offer high-speed links to people who cannot afford current prices or who have no connection at all. He has also dismissed claims that Starlink terminals were used by militants in Manipur, writing that beams are switched off over India and therefore could not have been used for any purpose there.

Others in the room were careful. Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal, whose group backs OneWeb, said his satellite venture was awaiting approvals. Jio Platforms managing director Akash Ambani declined to comment, saying he had not seen Musk’s remarks. Neither company joined the argument in public.

SpaceX, for its part, says the hardware is already in place. Lauren Dreyer, vice-president for Starlink business operations, told Congress that the company has built 20 gateway sites in India, installed hundreds of antennas, and set controls to keep Indian user data in the country. Starlink’s case is that five years of compliance, a licence and ground equipment should now produce a commercial green light.

Under government rules, a licensed operator can move forward with spectrum assignment only after completing the security process. Once all three licensees complete this step, those waiting in the satellite queue can start paid service. The ministry says the queue is shared, but Musk has said twice in two days, and again in a personal note, that the wait is not neutral.

For those not in the industry, the situation is as straightforward as the official documents. If all clearances are given at once, satellite broadband will join mobile data as another option, especially in places without fibre cables or masts. If not, Elon Musk’s debate on X will continue: a service licensed in 165 countries is still unavailable in India, and the question of who controls access remains open.

GST reforms to ease refunds, registration for Delhi businesses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday said proposed GST reforms would make tax compliance easier for businesses and taxpayers by simplifying registration and automating the refund process.

The Chief Minister participated in the 57th GST Council meeting at Bharat Mandapam and said the measures discussed by the Council would help create a more transparent, efficient and business-friendly tax system. Senior officials from Delhi’s Finance and Tax Department were also present at the meeting.

The CM said automation of GST refunds would help businesses receive their money on time. She said faster refunds would also improve the competitiveness of exporters by reducing delays in receiving funds.

For businesses shutting down operations, the Chief Minister said the proposed automated cancellation of GST registration would reduce delays and make the exit process easier for taxpayers. She also highlighted proposed changes to the GST registration system, saying the simplified process would particularly benefit small sellers operating through e-commerce platforms. The changes aim to streamline registration and reduce procedural hurdles for smaller businesses.

The Chief Minister said other proposed measures, including removing the power of arrest under GST and rationalising prosecution provisions, would contribute to a more favourable

business environment. The Chief Minister added that the reforms would simplify the GST framework, make it more taxpayer-friendly, and improve the ease of doing business.

The measures are expected to affect businesses and taxpayers at different stages of the GST process, from registration and compliance to refunds and closure of registrations. The Chief Minister said the reforms would make the tax system more responsive to the needs of taxpayers. Welcoming the proposals discussed at the meeting,



she said the reforms aimed to simplify the GST system and make it more convenient for taxpayers.

The Chief Minister also said the changes could boost Delhi’s economic activity by creating a more supportive environment for businesses. She expressed hope that the reforms would add dynamism to the capital’s economy.

The CM said the proposed changes align with the broader objective of developing a transparent, efficient, and responsive tax regime. She also said the reforms would contribute to the national objective of achieving a developed India by 2047.

From Darr to Dhanda, Nana Patekar’s...

The prime minister added that Patekar was also admired for his frank, forthright views and never hesitated to express what he believed.

“Shri Nana Patekar’s contribution to Hindi and Marathi cinema was immense. His passing leaves a deep void-my condolences to his family, friends and countless admirers. Om Shanti,” he said.

Later, Modi paid tributes to the actor while inaugurating the 10th edition of the India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2026 here.

“We received news in the morning that renowned actor Nana Patekar is no longer with us. He was a versatile actor who won people’s hearts through different characters,” he said. Patekar’s life was dedicated to the glory of the tricolour, and he was never confined to any bindings, he said. The actor used to fly like a bird in the world of films. Through films, he strongly attacked the evils prevalent in society, he said. “He was such a revolutionary that he worked against social evils,” Modi said.

Patekar’s powerful dialogues and silence were equally impactful, and he always favoured taking strong action against anti-nationals, the PM said. “I pay my respects to his family, friends and admirers,” he said.

Patekar, known for his versatility and powerful screen presence, played memorable roles in several Hindi and Marathi films.

His notable Hindi movies include “Parinda”, “Prahaar: The Final Act”, “Tiranga”, “Krantiveer” and “Khamoshi: The Musical”. Patekar received three National Film Awards, several Filmfare Awards, the Maharashtra State Film Award, and Filmfare Awards Marathi. He had also received Padma Shri, the country’s fourth-highest civilian honour.

He was born Vishwanath Patekar in Murud-Janjira, Raigad district, as the youngest of three brothers. He broke out in theatre with Vijaya Mehta’s “Hamidabai Chi Kothi”, which led to more acclaimed stage performances.

In interviews, Patekar often credited the late Smita Patil for convincing him to try movies. Patekar said he hesitated because he felt his dark complexion would lead to rejection.

The big screen debut came in 1978 with Muzaffar Ali’s “Gaman”, which had Patil and Farookh Sheikh in lead roles. It led to movies such as “Sinhaasan”, “Sinhaasan”, “Giddh”, “Aaj Ki Awaz”, “Ankush” and “Pratighaat”.

Ten years later, Mira Nair’s 1988 film “Salaam Bombay!” saw him play a local thug and drug dealer. The role in the Oscar-nominated film put him on the map and propelled him into the big league of critically acclaimed actors.

In 1990, Vidhu Vinod Chopra cast him as Anna, the central villain in his acclaimed “Parinda”. The role, still remembered for its quiet menace, won him his first of three National Awards.

He won his second National Film Award, this time as lead actor, for his role in the 1994 hit “Krantiveer” as the wayward son of a freedom fighter who transforms and fights for the rights of people with low incomes.

The roles he played were as varied as possible, be it Prakash Jha’s “Apaharan” and “Rajneeti”, Marathi film “Natsamrat”, the comedic “Welcome” and “Welcome Back”, Tamil hit “Kaala”, Sanjay Leela Bhansali’s debut “Khamoshi: The Musical”, Gulzar’s “Hu Tu Tu” or Ram Gopal Varma’s “Bhoot”.

Security heightened outside CEC house

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

Security outside Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar's residence in New Moti Bagh has been stepped up after fresh threat inputs and a sharp escalation in protests by the INDIA bloc over the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The CEC already enjoys Z-plus cover, the second-highest civilian security category in the country after the Special Protection Group protection extended to the Prime Minister and his immediate family. Officials said the category already involves roughly fifty personnel working in shifts, with layered arrangements for the protectee's residence, movement and cavalcade.

In the latest review, additional police and Central Industrial Security Force personnel have been placed outside the house, at Nirvachan Sadan on Ashoka Road, and with his personal



CEC Gyanesh Kumar's residence in Delhi

security detail. The CISF reinforcement of "additional reserve" strength was ordered on October 7.

Local district police have also been told to increase deployment and coordinate with other agencies to prevent any untoward incident as protests continue in the New Delhi district. A senior police officer said the decision followed a new threat assessment. Protesters

found Kumar's home in New Moti Bagh colony, and some tried to enter the area and approach the house.

Security pickets were set up nearby. In a separate incident, protesters demonstrated outside his family's home in Agra. Security staff in the colony confirmed that more paramilitary personnel were stationed inside the complex because of the protests.

Delhi Police officials said

CEC has had Z-plus security for some time, and the latest move only strengthens this arrangement instead of changing his security category. With this cover, over fifty officers from central armed police forces and Delhi Police are on duty.

He also has personal security officers, watchers, and close-protection teams working around the clock. The extra security comes as

Opposition parties step up their campaign for the CEC's resignation. INDIA bloc leaders, led by Lok Sabha Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi, have accused the Commission of irregularities in the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and of favouring the Government.

Senior Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, along with leaders from the Samajwadi Party and Trinamool Congress, have also called for the CEC's removal. On October 6, Opposition leaders marched to the Election Commission headquarters, but police stopped them and detained several people.

Later, more attempts to reach protest sites, including Jantar Mantar, led to more detentions before the leaders were released. On October 5, authorities deployed about 5,000 security personnel for separate protests in the capital, and over 120 protesters were briefly detained.

The protests have spread

beyond Delhi. Earlier, Youth Congress workers spray-painted slogans on the gate and walls of the family's Agra home, calling the Chief Election Commissioner a "traitor" and a "vote thief."

Student and youth groups have held sit-ins and torchlight marches in several cities, and a larger Opposition protest is planned for October 10. Police and intelligence agencies have been told to monitor the situation closely.

The political dispute over the revision process has continued for weeks. Opposition parties claim there have been large-scale deletions and a lack of transparency.

The Commission says that any differences among Election Commissioners during internal talks do not change the fact that final decisions, including those on the revision, were unanimous. The Supreme Court has sent a notice to the Commission and the Centre about a plea questioning some decisions linked to the CEC.

Kerala BJP chief slams Satheesan over detention

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Thiruvananthapuram



Kerala BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Keralam BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Thursday accused Chief Minister VD Satheesan of trying to distract Keralam people with "fake protests about democracy" while his administration was allegedly violating law and fundamental rights through its actions against Thiruvananthapuram Corporation councillor R Sugathan.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's protests against CEC Gyanesh Kumar as a "fraud drama," the BJP leader alleged.

Chandrasekhar's 'X' post came in the wake of Satheesan's participation in the agitation in Delhi against the CEC and his social media posts criticising the detention of Rahul Gandhi during the protest.

The CM on Wednesday said that the FIR against Gandhi for questioning electoral integrity is an "attack"

on democratic dissent. He also said, "the fight against irregularities in the electoral rolls and for free and fair elections continues. Democracy will not be silenced."

Replying to the CM, Chandrasekhar said, "To CM @vdsatheesan, don't waste your time and try to distract malayalees with your fake protestations about democracy, secularism and the constitution when your administration is covering itself with violations of law, justice and fundamental rights."

New CAPF administration law comes into force amid SC challenge

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday brought the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, 2026 into force, converting a fiercely contested statute into the working law for the leadership of India's largest internal-security formations even as the Supreme Court continues to hear challenges to its validity.

Parliament passed the Act in early April, and the President approved it on April 9, 2026. The law covers Group A general-duty officers

in the CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB. The Government set the enforcement date for October 8. Now, the Centre-drafted rules on recruitment, promotion, deputation, and service conditions are in effect. The law sets aside half of Inspector General posts for Indian Police Service (IPS) officers on deputation, at least 67 per cent of Additional Director General posts for the same group, and all Special Director General and Director General posts for deputation. The Centre also gets rule-making powers that apply even if previous judgments or orders say otherwise,

and the Act takes priority over other laws in case of a conflict. The Government says this system aims to bring consistency and clear roles across the five forces that handle border security, protect key sites, and manage counter-insurgency.

Cadre officers see the law differently. Over 3,000 serving Group A officers, including gallantry award winners and women officers, have petitioned the Supreme Court to strike down important parts of the law as unconstitutional. They say Sections 3 and 4 block their path to top positions, which the court had opened



for them last year. They believe Parliament has undone a court judgment instead of following it.

One of the main petitioners is a CRPF officer who has

received the Shaurya Chakra. The petitioners want the court to declare the disputed sections unconstitutional and to order that higher administrative posts should

go to qualified executive cadre officers from within the forces.

The officers want to restore the Supreme Court's May 23, 2025, decision in Sanjay Prakash versus Union of India. In that ruling, the court said the CAPFs are organised Group A services, ordered a review of the cadre within six months, and told the Centre to reduce IPS deputation up to the Senior Administrative Grade gradually. The Government's review petition was dismissed in October 2025. Contempt proceedings began after the MHA reported that 46 IPS officers were

still deputed to the five forces after the judgment. A special bench was constituted after a contempt petition disappeared from the cause list, prompting the court to seek an explanation from the Registry and note that too much heat can be generated from a listing dispute.

Further hearings have been fixed later this month and into November, with the Centre and the petitioners still exchanging pleadings. The bench will have to read three things together: the 2025 directions, the cadre-review exercise the Ministry says is under way, and a statute that now

writes deputation quotas into law.

For officers who have spent their careers leading companies and battalions, this issue is very real. If a post is reserved for deputation, it cannot be earned through seniority or field service within the force.

The MHA sees these posts as a place where civil-police experience should combine with paramilitary leadership. The notification issued on Wednesday does not resolve this debate. It simply means the debate is now about a law already in effect, awaiting a court decision on whether it will stand.

BJP hits out at Rahul, Priyanka over alleged conduct with cops

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

As the Congress intensified its protest, the BJP on Thursday accused Rahul Gandhi of "inappropriately touching" a female constable and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra of "punching" a cop during their street protest, and claimed that the Congress leaders' actions were not consistent with their slogan of "smash the patriarchy".

The Congress was also trying to create "Nepal-and-Bangladesh-like anarchy" in the country through its protests, as Rahul Gandhi is "desperate" to come to power, BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party spokesperson Sidharth Yadav accused Rahul and Priyanka of attacking police personnel during the protests. Yadav said the visuals being circulated were not of a protest but showed "the anarchy being spread in the national capital" under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi and the Congress.



He alleged that Rahul "inappropriately touched" a woman police constable and claimed that Priyanka "punched" a female police officer in the stomach.

"The conduct of Rahul Gandhi in inappropriately touching a female constable is totally unacceptable," he said. "Priyanka punched a female police officer in the stomach even though she was simply standing there and had not provoked anyone. This is beyond tolerance," he said. The BJP spokesperson also alleged that Congress workers kicked policemen after bringing them to the ground.

Referring to Rahul Gandhi's slogan "smash the patriarchy"

and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's "Ladki Hoon, Lad Sakti Hoon" slogans, Yadav questioned whether the alleged conduct of the Congress leaders was consistent with their stated positions.

"When she was hitting that female police officer, was going the slogan that was going through her mind?" he asked, referring to Priyanka. If that's not the case, "then the truth behind their slogans is now before the country", Yadav said. "Rahul Gandhi has said that there are 47 FIRs against him. But wearing an FIR relating to an alleged crime against a woman as a medal – only Rahul Gandhi can do this in the country," he said.

Will not allow religious conversion, love jihad or land jihad: Suvendu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Malda (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Thursday said religious conversion, "love jihad" and "land jihad" will not be allowed during his tenure. Addressing a relief distribution programme in Muslim-majority Malda, Adhikari said religious conversion had occurred in the district's Kaliachak area in the past, but that should not be repeated.

"If it happens in my tenure, no one will be worse than me. I am telling you that there should not be any more religious conversion anywhere. As long as I am alive, I will not allow Mothabari and Kaliachak (incidents to happen again)," Adhikari added. A case had been filed in 2023 alleging forced conversion of two brothers in Mothabari in the district bordering Bangladesh.

There had been communal riots where Hindus suf-



CM Suvendu Adhikari

fered the most, the chief minister said. "Love jihad and land jihad will be stopped. We have given land to BSF. Not even a fly will be allowed to enter," Adhikari said.

The West Bengal Government has transferred 142.79 acres of land to the BSF in May for barbed-wire fencing and border outposts in several districts including Malda.

On the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Adhikari said applicants would no longer have to approach others for certificates, as the Centre had given the state the power to issue them.

Varanasi set to witness spectacular IAF aerial display on October 25

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Varanasi is all set to witness a spectacular ceremonial aerial display on October 25, marking the IAF's 94th anniversary. The flying display will encapsulate the theme for the celebrations: 'Infallible Impervious and Precise,' it was learnt. Frontline fighter jets, including Rafales, Su-30MKI and Apache helicopters, are likely to enthrall the audience.

Ceremonial fly-pasts showcase the IAF's air assets and also provide a platform to bolster its connect with the masses. The IAF on Thursday held a vibrant parade at the Hindan air base, Ghaziabad to celebrate over nine decades of the force since its inception on October 8, 1932.

The upcoming flying display will encapsulate the theme for the celebrations: 'Infallible Impervious and Precise'. The IAF had put up a spectacular flying display over the majestic Brahmaputra river in Guwahati besides the tradi-



tional parade at the Hindan air base as part of the force's 93rd anniversary celebrations in November 2025.

An array of fighter, transport and helicopter aircraft had flown past the Lachit Ghat, adding to the vibrant hues of Guwahati. The lineup reflected the wide array of aircraft the IAF has in its fleet.

Highlights in last year's fly past included jets such as Tejas, Apache, C-295 and Hawks, symbolising the pathway to national resilience.

Besides, Su-30 MKI and Rafale had enthralled the audience in Assam with breathtaking low-level aerobatics. The performance had

concluded with synchronised manoeuvring by the Suryakiran Aerobatics Team (SKAT) and Sarang helicopter display team, leaving the audience spellbound.

In his address at the Air Force Day celebrations at the Hindan air base, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh said that since its inception in 1932, the IAF has evolved into an exceptional, network-centric and multi-domain force that is alert and ready to meet any challenges.

Besides the ceremonial parade, a static display of some of its prized combat assets such as Rafale and Tejas and a fly past by three Mi-17 helicopters was also hosted.

Nana Patekar leaves behind an unfulfilled dream of settling in Uttarakhand's mountains

ANJALI YADAV ■ Dehradun

Nana Patekar's connection with Uttarakhand's mountains lives on in the memories of people he met during a film shoot in Chamoli, where the said he wanted to build a house and spend his holidays in the mountains. Patekar, one of Indian cinema's acclaimed actors, died aged 75 on Thursday after reportedly suffering a cardiac arrest in Goa.

His Uttarakhand connection dates back to September 2022, when he visited Chamoli the shoot a Marathi film. The unit shot in Lata, Malari and areas around the Niti Valley. During his stay in the areas of the district bordering Nepal and China, Patekar interacted with residents and experienced their food, traditional lifestyle,



weather, and peaceful surroundings. According to locals, He was deeply impressed by the simplicity and beauty of the region and spoke about building a house there.

Patekar stayed with his crew at a homestay in Lata. Homestay owner Narendra Singh Rana recalled that the actor stayed there for seven days and had a separate kitchen where he cooked dishes including chicken and mutton. "He would call every-

one together, sometimes scold them jokingly, and then serve them food," Rana recalled. Rana said Patekar told him he would return and book the homestay for eight days with his friends.

He also said he wanted to buy a small piece of land in Lata and build a small house where he could spend his holidays every year. Rana also remembered Patekar as being warm towards visitors and guests at the homestay, talking to them and

posing for photographs. During the shoot, Patekar also visited Narayan Koti and Devar areas in Rudrapur, where he enjoyed local food, including mandua roti and rai-palak.

He also visited Dehradun and praised Uttarakhand's natural beauty and the hospitality of its people. During the visit, he met the chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama and described the State as an ideal location for film shoots.

Nearly four years later, Patekar's wish to make the mountains his home remained unfulfilled. For the people who met him, however, his brief stay in Uttarakhand remains a cherished memory of an actor who came to the mountains for work but left with a personal dream of returning.

Government plans AI rules on safety, deepfakes within a month: Vaishnaw

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Union IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday said the Centre will bring out a consultation paper on AI regulations in a month, dealing with aspects like AI safety, a human-first approach, and deepfakes. He added that the time for such a framework has come, and that industry must shoulder the bulk of the responsibility.

The move assumes significance as concerns over deepfakes, cyber threats and the psychological effects of AI chatbots are growing, and leading researchers have repeatedly called for stronger safeguards. Across the world, governments and regulators are racing to keep pace with fast-moving AI, with the European Union already



IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

enacting a comprehensive Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act.

While speaking at an event on the release of the World Development Report, Vaishnaw noted that deepfakes are a "nuisance which can cause huge problems in society", and added that their quality is improving every day. The India Launch of the World Development Report 2026: The Promise of Artificial

Intelligence was organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), through the IndiaAI Mission, in collaboration with the World Bank Group.

"People believe them, and it sets a totally wrong precedent. It sets a totally wrong narrative, and people get lured into doing wrong things and believing wrong things," he said, adding the upcoming consultation paper would deal with AI harms and deepfakes as a big area of focus.

"I'll request the department to come out with a regulation-focused consultation paper, which focuses on safety. That's the most important point...safety-related to AI use," Vaishnaw said.

Vaishnaw further said that the upcoming consultation paper will form the basis for AI regulations, and added

that the time has come for India to have such a framework. Other issues that the consultation paper would prioritise are AI harms, including deepfakes, a human-first approach, skilling, as well as a commitment to leave no person behind, the Minister elaborated. "Humanity has to be the most important part of change that has happened," Vaishnaw said.

Vaishnaw made it clear that the industry must shoulder the bulk of the responsibility. "The industry has to take the primary responsibility," he said, listing out issues such as cybersecurity, safety, user harm, psychological disorders and deepfakes. "So we'll come out with that paper in a month's time from now, and based on that we'll go forward with the regulation," Vaishnaw said.



Editor's
TAKE

Gaza demands more than a ceasefire

Three years after the October 7 massacre, the last Israeli hostage is home, but Gaza lies devastated, while the region remains scarred and its future uncertain

Three years ago, on October 7, 2023, when Hamas-led gunmen killed about 1,200 Israelis and took 251 hostages, the massacre changed the politics of the region. That massacre was a crime, and no grievance excuses it. For the first time, no Israeli hostage remains in Gaza on this anniversary. But what followed was not justice. It was the near-annihilation of Gaza and its people.

The numbers are hard to hold in the mind. Roughly 74,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza's health ministry. About 80 per cent of structures are damaged. Most of the enclave's two million-plus residents have been displaced and squeezed into less than half the Strip. A UN commission of inquiry has found that acts of genocide were committed.

Fewer than half of Gaza's health facilities function even partially, and the World Health Organization says none has been restored to full capacity since the ceasefire. That ceasefire, imposed last October under Donald Trump's 20-point plan, has stopped the big offensives, not the dying.

The ministry counts 1,467 deaths since it began. The International Stabilisation Force has yet to deploy. The Palestinian technocratic committee meant to run Gaza has not taken charge. Israel says its troops hold about 64 per cent of the territory, and humanitarian access remains tightly restricted. The war did not stay in Gaza. It has spread to Lebanon, Syria and a wider confrontation with Iran that still grinds on, rattling energy markets and fuelling global anger at Israel.

Meanwhile, world attention has drifted, and with it the pressure that forced the truce. The real test comes after Israel's election, when the ceasefire's next phase will either move or quietly die. Gaza desperately needs help, not just help but a complete plan to reconstruct and rehabilitate the people who have endured a lot in the last three years.

The way forward is not mysterious, only unglamorous. Deploy the stabilisation force. Put Gaza's administration in Palestinian technocratic hands. Open the crossings fully and fund reconstruction at scale, not at leisure. Sequence Hamas's disarmament with Israeli withdrawal. Above all, restore a political horizon: without a credible path to Palestinian statehood, every ceasefire is an intermission. And accountability must cut both ways, for the October 7 atrocities and for Gaza's destruction.

India has real stakes in West Asia: millions of citizens working in the Gulf, its energy supply and the IMEC corridor, which needs a calm region. New Delhi formally backs a two-state solution and welcomed the Trump plan.

But friendship with Israel does not require silence on Gaza. New Delhi has access in Jerusalem that few capitals enjoy. It should use it to press for unhindered aid, an end to strikes and a political track, and offer the reconstruction help it can afford. A civilisational power cannot be seen to grieve for only one side.

The new-age policing: Smarter, faster, more humane

In a fast-changing world, police performance will be judged not by the number of tech-based applications launched, but by the number of crimes that do not take place



AJAY
SINGHAL

In the 1990s, when I first walked into a police station as a trainee IPS officer, policing was largely a race to catch up with crime. The tools were modest: a handwritten 'Rojnamcha', a temperamental black rotary-dial telephone, and the institutional memory of the MHC and beat constable. Success was measured by how quickly the police reached the scene, arrested the accused and restored order.

Three decades later, that paradigm is changing fundamentally. Technology, data and intelligence are enabling the police to move from reacting to crime to anticipating and preventing it. The critical question is no longer merely, "What happened?" but "What is likely to happen - and what can we do before it does?"

This is the essence of new-age policing: using technology not as an end in itself, but as an instrument to prevent crime, accelerate justice, protect the vulnerable and make policing more accessible, accountable and humane. In Haryana, this transformation is already visible - from Dial 112 and women's safety initiatives to cybercrime intervention, AI-assisted investigation, digital evidence and real-time intelligence. Based on more than five million calls each year, the average response time stays below seven minutes, whether in cities or the countryside. Motorbikes can navigate market streets where four-wheelers would get stuck.

When a woman is in danger, she presses one button on the Durga Shakti app, and her current location is sent to the same command centre. A woman who is travelling alone at night can register her journey and be effectively looked after until she gets home. This is not a reactive action; it is accompaniment.

The previous system largely failed to cope with cybercrime because criminals could be based in another country and money could vanish within minutes. The helpline 1930, connected to Dial 112 and manned by bank representatives who work with police officers, gets about 5,000 calls every day and freezes suspicious transfers before mule accounts can drain them.

Haryana leads the nation in preventing fraudulent transfers and has recovered about 40 per cent of funds defrauded within the state. Since June, any complaint (online) involving a loss of more than ₹1 lakh has automatically resulted in an e-Zero FIR. Prevention is now taking steps even further upstream; the 'Abhedya' app enables unknown international extortion calls to be kept from reaching the victim, and the Dual OTP pilot allows a trusted contact of a senior citizen to block



THE ULTIMATE TEST, HOWEVER, IS NOT THE NUMBER OF APPS LAUNCHED OR DATABASES CREATED. IT IS MUCH SIMPLER: HOW MANY CRIMES ARE PREVENTED, HOW MANY VICTIMS ARE PROTECTED, HOW QUICKLY JUSTICE IS DELIVERED, AND HOW MUCH PUBLIC TRUST THE POLICE EARN

The writer is the Director General of Police, Haryana.

a suspicious large transaction, providing a small amount of protection against the 'digital arrest' scam. The basic beat has also been reconsidered. With the Eagle app, an on-duty police officer can immediately compare a detainee's face with a database of offenders, exposing impersonators and avoiding lengthy detentions for law-abiding citizens. The National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) can match a blurred fingerprint recovered at a crime scene with entries in the national records in just a few seconds. Smart E-Beat records patrols using GPS, and the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS) links police stations to courts, jails and forensic facilities. Meanwhile, e-Sakshya ensures that crime-scene evidence is preserved in an unchangeable form.

The reforms go beyond the streets to affect the fundamental machinery of the justice system. When evidence parcels move from the police station to the forensic laboratory, a barcode is assigned to each one, creating a chain of custody that can withstand judicial scrutiny. Instead of making long, risky journeys, prisoners now attend court through secure video links.

Even people with no name are now being given one: an AI-assisted system matches the faces and fingerprints of unidentified bodies with those in the missing persons database, giving closure to families who have been waiting for years. Similarly, internal tools matter; complaint dashboards show where complaints go unaddressed, so accountability does not rely entirely on goodwill.

Crash data is converted into heat maps that show engineers where to redesign a curve, and cashless trauma care helps shorten the important golden hour. On motorways, number-plate recognition cameras continuously monitor the situation and also serve as a record for track-

ing vehicles that escape.

If we discuss only the possible outcomes of this transformation without going further, we would be poor guardians of it. The United States' experience with statistics-based policing - especially its use of dashboards, performance targets and strict enforcement of minor offences — shows that crime statistics can decrease even as community confidence falls.

Facial recognition, currently being developed to identify offenders who have admitted guilt and those who have jumped bail, and lawful interception can result in excessive surveillance unless strict legal safeguards, regular auditing and proper oversight are in place.

That is the reason why the key improvement does not lie in the server room: just as important as any software are training in de-escalation, awareness of bias and courtesy. Digital services matter too, because the 'HARSAMAY' portal lets citizens avoid queuing for a copy of an FIR or a verification certificate, and QR-code feedback at station counters gives each visitor a chance to share their views. By conducting online patrols and maintaining a visible presence on social media platforms, the community extends its area of responsibility into the digital environment.

"New Age Policing": In the fast-changing world, the performance will be judged not by the number of tech-based applications we launch, but by the number of crimes that do not take place, the number of people who are not harmed, and the citizens who do not even need to go into a police station for an FIR (now e-FIR/Zero FIR beyond jurisdiction).

The ultimate test, however, is not the number of apps launched or databases created. It is much simpler: How many crimes are prevented, how many victims are protected, how quickly justice is delivered, and how much public trust the police earn.

Daiv Vani

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

Running in Torn Spikes

Resources can be borrowed or bought, but the belief to keep running has to be built from within.

Gurvindervir Singh, a 25-year-old sprinter from Patial village near Bhogpur in Punjab, won bronze in the 100 metres at the Asian Games in Nagoya. For two to three years he trained in torn spike shoes because his family could not afford new ones. He was told Indians were not suited to the 100 metres, and even his father suggested he change events. He did not. He went on to become the first Indian to run under 10.10 seconds, clocking 10.09 at the Federation Cup in Ranchi. After he shared his struggles on social media, support came from people around the world.

Asked why he never changed his event, he said, "My coaches never told me that it was not possible, then why should I change my event?" The Mahabharata gives us Ekalavya, a young archer turned away from Drona's school, who practised alone before a clay image of the teacher and mastered the art with almost nothing. His story ended unjustly, with his thumb demanded as an offering. Gurvinder's story carries a gentler ending: coaches who believed in him, and a country that finally noticed.

We often postpone our efforts until the right equipment, circumstance or approval arrives, and in waiting we lose years. Today, begin one worthwhile task with exactly what you have, and trust the effort to attract the help it needs.

—DAIV

What patience teaches us about progress



SIDDHARTH
ROY

2ND OPINION

Concrete offers an unfashionable lesson to a civilisation addicted to speed: strength takes time. A freshly poured slab may look complete, but its real transformation has only begun. Cement reacts with water, particles bind, moisture is retained, and strength develops gradually. Engineers therefore do not simply pour concrete and walk away. They cure it, protect it and allow it to mature. What appears to be waiting is, in fact, part of construction.

Modern life has increasingly treated time as an obstacle. We want instant communication, instant delivery, instant profits and instant transformation. Governments announce targets with compressed timelines; businesses chase quarterly results; individuals measure progress through immediate outcomes.

Speed can certainly improve efficiency. But efficiency becomes dangerous when it is confused with haste. Some structures, whether physical or social, cannot be rushed without weakening what they are meant to sustain.

Curing is a useful metaphor for public policy. A bridge cannot be made safe merely by completing its visible structure. Its foundations, joints, materials and load-bearing elements must perform together over time. Similarly, a new law, institution or economic reform requires testing, adjustment and public acceptance. A policy may be announced in a day, but its consequences can take years to reveal themselves. The impatience to demonstrate results can encourage governments to privilege what is measurable immediately over what becomes valuable eventually.

The same principle applies to cities. Roads can be widened quickly, buildings can rise rapidly and new infrastructure can be inaugurated on schedule. Yet urban resilience depends on things less visible: drainage capacity, maintenance systems, open spaces, ecological buffers and institutional coordination. These cannot be improvised after a crisis. They require patient investment before the crisis arrives. The absence of visible progress does not mean the absence of progress.

There is also a personal lesson. Education, expertise, trust and character resemble concrete more than software. They cannot simply be downloaded. A student

needs years of reading and failure; a professional needs experience; trust requires repeated proof. Attempts to accelerate these processes may produce impressive appearances without corresponding depth.

Patience, however, should not become an excuse for inefficiency. Concrete is cured according to scientific requirements, not left indefinitely. Good engineering is not slow for the sake of being slow; it is deliberate where time affects performance. The wisdom lies in knowing what can be accelerated and what cannot.

Perhaps modern society needs this distinction more urgently than ever. We have become remarkably good at reducing waiting, but less skilled at understanding its purpose. Yet some forms of waiting are productive. They allow systems to settle, weaknesses to emerge and strength to develop.

Engineers know that a structure designed only for immediate performance may fail under tomorrow's load. The same is true of societies. Sustainable progress is not always the fastest progress. Sometimes, the most responsible thing we can do is build carefully, protect what is still developing, and give true strength the one resource no technology can manufacture: time, patience, discipline, attention, humility and care.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Higher rates squeeze household budgets

Apologies, "RBI raises rate, loans get costlier", Oct 8. The Reserve Bank of India's decision to raise the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.5 per cent comes as a crushing blow to middle-class households across the nation. While the central bank's intent to curb inflation is understandable, this upward revision will directly translate into higher Equated Monthly Instalments (EMIs) for housing, personal and educational loans, placing an immense burden on retail borrowers. For ordinary citizens, the timing could not be worse. Families are already wrestling with severe financial distress caused by the relentlessly rising prices of essential commodities, daily food items and healthcare services. Coupled with stagnant salaries and negligible income growth in recent years, this additional interest burden will severely squeeze already tight monthly household budgets, leaving virtually no room for savings or discretionary spending.

An increased EMI burden will force vulnerable families to make painful compromises on basic living standards or risk falling into debt traps. The RBI and the government must introduce targeted relief measures or capped loan resets to protect fixed-income borrowers.

N SADHASIVA REDDY | BENGALURU

Detention raises questions over dialogue

Apologies of the first-page story, "Day of detention ends with Rahul, Priyanka release at night" (The Pioneer, October 7), the detention of Opposition leaders raises serious questions about the space for dialogue. Hundreds of MPs staged a protest march to the Election Commission of India office to present their grievances concerning the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Instead of avoiding engagement, the Election Commission should address the questions raised by opposition parties with clarity, logic and constitutional propriety.

Erecting barricades and making elaborate security arrangements against elected representatives, followed by the detention of lawmakers in large numbers, does little to strengthen confidence in democratic institutions. The concerns raised by the Opposition deserve a response rather than silence.

The political situation has changed. There was a time when the ruling establishment set the narrative, while the Opposition reacted. Today, the Opposition is raising issues that demand answers from those in power.

Leadership requires listening, accountability and the ability to address questions. As John C Maxwell observed, "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way."

PK SHARMA | PUNJAB

Peaceful protest deserves space

The proposed protest at Jantar Mantar on October 10 raises important questions about the right to peaceful assembly and democratic participation. While Delhi Police has been informed about the protest, representatives of student organisations and the Cockroach Janata Party have said they will not wait for "permission" and that informing the police should be sufficient for necessary law-and-order and traffic arrangements.

The protesters have stated that the agitation will not be limited to demanding the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar. They are also seeking repeal of the 2023 law governing the appointment of election commissioners and reforms to the electoral system. If the protest remains peaceful, authorities should facilitate the exercise of citizens' constitutional rights while ensuring public safety and traffic management. The stated participation of young people from across the country, including members of the INDIA bloc, makes it important that their concerns are heard through lawful and peaceful means.

Dialogue and accommodation are preferable to confrontation. Democratic institutions are strengthened when citizens can express their concerns and grievances without fear.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI



Indian Air Force (IAF) Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team aircraft perform manoeuvre during the Exercise Tarang Shakti 2026 in Jodhpur

PHOTO: PTI

India's AI opportunity lies beyond the race for bigger models

A child learns to recognise a chair from a handful of examples; today's most advanced AI systems require enormous computing power to achieve comparable generalisation. India should compete in the AI race, but also ask the deeper question: what does the 20-watt human brain know that our machines do not?



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE



SURESH PRABHU

SHOBHIT MATHUR

A child can learn what a chair is from a handful of examples. Give a child a few chairs of different shapes, sizes and colours, and soon the child can recognise a chair they have never seen before. They can distinguish a chair from a table, infer that a stool belongs to the same conceptual family, and apply the idea to objects in unfamiliar settings. Human intelligence generalises from remarkably little data.

Now consider what it takes to reproduce even a fraction of this general-purpose intelligence artificially. OpenAI's latest frontier model, GPT-6 Astra, was developed through the company's largest training run, involving more than 100,000 GPUs at its Stargate facility, according to reporting on its launch. OpenAI describes Astra as its most capable model yet, with state-of-the-art performance across reasoning, computer use, coding, science and professional work.

The contrast is extraordinary. A human brain, weighing roughly 1.3 kilograms, operates on approximately 20 watts of metabolic power. It learns continuously, generalises from sparse experience and adapts to situations it has never encountered. We can now build artificial systems of extraordinary capability, but achieving that capability requires industrial-scale computing infrastructure.

This is not merely a technological curiosity. It may be one of India's most important strategic opportunities. The global AI race is increasingly becoming a race of scale. The largest companies are accumulating GPUs, data, capital and engineering talent at a rate that few countries or institutions can match. India should absolutely participate in this race. We need computing infrastructure, foundational models, chips, data centres and world-class AI researchers. But there is little strategic value in deciding that our ambition is to become the second-best version of something that someone else has already built. There is no enduring national advantage in being second at the same game.

India needs to investigate a different question: why does biological intelligence achieve so much generalisation, abstraction and adaptability with so little energy and so little experience?

We still do not have a satisfactory scientific answer. We understand many components of the brain and have made enormous advances in neuro-

MODERN NEUROSCIENCE HAS DEVELOPED INCREASINGLY POWERFUL INSTRUMENTS FOR OBSERVING THE BRAIN FROM THE OUTSIDE. PERHAPS THE NEXT ADVANCES WILL REQUIRE US TO COMBINE THESE MEASUREMENTS WITH MUCH MORE SYSTEMATIC INVESTIGATION OF SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE FROM WITHIN. IT REQUIRES RECOGNISING THAT A COMPLETE SCIENCE OF COGNITION MAY NEED METHODS CAPABLE OF CONNECTING FIRST-PERSON EXPERIENCE WITH THIRD-PERSON MEASUREMENT

Suresh Prabhu is a former Union Minister and parliamentarian. Shobhit Mathur is the co-founder and Vice-Chancellor of Rishihood University

science, but we do not possess a comprehensive theory of how intelligence emerges from them. We do not fully understand how the brain forms abstractions, transfers knowledge across domains, learns continuously without catastrophic loss of previous knowledge, or constructs useful models of the world from relatively sparse experience.

These are precisely the questions that could produce disproportionate advances in AI. A better understanding of biological intelligence could lead to fundamentally different approaches to learning and computation. A new principle for generalisation could matter more than another generation of larger models. A radically more efficient architecture could matter more than another expansion of computing infrastructure. The largest opportunity may therefore lie not in scaling today's paradigm, but in discovering what today's paradigm is missing.

This is a difficult research programme, and that is precisely why universities should pursue it. Markets and companies naturally favour research with identifiable commercial returns. Fundamental questions about cognition, abstraction and consciousness may take decades to resolve and may produce no immediate product. Yet some of the most consequential technologies in modern history emerged from research whose eventual applications were impossible to predict at the time.

Modern neuroscience has developed increasingly powerful instruments for observing the brain from the outside. Perhaps the next advances will require us to combine these measurements with much more systematic investigation of subjective experience from within. It requires recognising that a complete science of cognition may need methods capable of connecting first-person experience with third-person measurement. This could become a distinctive Indian research programme: neuroscience, cognitive science, AI, mathematics, philosophy and contemplative practice brought together around one fundamental question: what are the computational principles of intelligence?

The objective should not be to build an Indian copy of GPT-6 Astra. By the time we reproduce today's frontier, the frontier will have moved again. The objective should be to understand something that the frontier itself does not yet understand.

India should therefore make two bets. We should invest aggressively in the infrastructure required to compete in today's AI economy. Alongside it, we should create long-horizon research programmes willing to pursue questions where the probability, timing and form of the payoff are unknown.

The second bet may turn out to be far more important. The 20-watt brain is telling us something profound. Intelligence does not necessarily require enormous amounts of computation. We simply do not yet understand how nature achieves it.

India's opportunity is to study that gap. If we spend the next decade trying to catch the leaders, we may become very good at following them. If we spend part of that decade discovering a fundamentally different theory of intelligence, we may have a chance to lead.

EC divide raises questions over autonomy



ANIL ANAND

These are troubled times for the Election Commission of India (ECI). For decades, the body has been the standard-bearer of impartial polling, embracing new technology and earning international acclaim as a guide to other democracies on free and fair elections. That reputation now faces its sternest test.

According to an investigative report in *The Indian Express* on September 23, 2026, two of the three members of the Commission, Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, came close to open revolt against Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar, only to return to the same table and project normalcy. Their grievance was procedural. They recorded objections 14 times in 10 months to decisions and orders taken without their knowledge. The charge against the CEC is that he has sought to centralise the Commission's functioning, a direct affront to the democratic spirit of a collegiate body.

Controversy is not new to Nirvachan Sadan. The biggest turmoil before this came under T N Seshan, when the poll panel was converted from a solo-driven vehicle into a three-member body. Seshan went to court against the government's decision and made his fellow Election Commissioners, G V G Krishnamurthy and Manohar Singh Gill, parties to the case. Later, CEC N Gopalaswami wrote to the government seeking the removal of Election Commissioner Navin Chawla. The government of the day rejected the plea, and Chawla, who had close links with the Gandhi family, ultimately retired as CEC himself.

In nearly two decades of covering the ECI, I have watched professional and personal rivalries between commissioners play out, sometimes in the open. This is different. An Election Commissioner dissenting from the other two, or the reverse, is one thing. Here, the majority of the Commission says it was bypassed by a minority.

The law is clear. Section 18(2) of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, says all business of the Commission shall, as far as possible, be transacted unanimously. Where the CEC and the Election Commissioners differ, the matter "shall be decided according to the opinion of the majority". Even the procedure for transacting and allocating business can be regulated only by unanimous decision. The principle is older than the statute. In *T N Seshan vs Union of India* (1995), the Supreme Court stressed that Article 324 entrusts elections to the Commission, not to an individual.

The two Election Commissioners then wrote to the Cabinet Secretary about happenings in an autonomous constitutional body. The step is puzzling, though it conveys the gravity of the situation, since the proper authority was the President of India. The ECI has since said the letters concerned an officer on deputation and no policy matter.



At the heart of the row is the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls. A storm was already brewing around it. Former CEC S Y Qureshi has described the SIR in its present form as "illegal and unconstitutional". Now it emerges that much of it was done without the knowledge of two of the three commissioners. As reported, Sandhu and Joshi objected repeatedly to procedural flaws and to being kept out of the loop on adding new voters and deleting names. They described the steps on new voters as "unauthorised, illegal", warned against access to the voter database being centralised in Delhi while bypassing state officials, and flagged concerns over the integrity of the voter software. They also objected to IT department heads becoming super-heads on changes to the rolls while senior ECI officials were kept out. The full Commission did not meet between May and August 2026, which points to a deeper malady in the poll panel.

Did Kumar act on his own? Or is he part of a wider net, controlled from above, as Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleges? Gandhi sees the report as vindication of his earlier charge that electoral manipulation helped the ruling dispensation win. At his press conference after the exposé, he tried to link the CEC to the top hierarchy of the Central government. Kumar can hardly feel comfortable after a former Kerala Chief Secretary claimed that Kumar, then a serving officer, had sounded him out about contesting the Lok Sabha election on a BJP ticket. Was he bidding on behalf of the saffron party bosses?

Surprisingly, the ruling BJP seems to have walked willingly into Gandhi's trap. The ECI's own rebuttal was guarded and deadpan, steering clear of the contentious issues. The BJP was more upfront, pressing its spokespersons into service "to defend the ECI". That drew a sharp remark from columnist Tavleen Singh, no one's idea of a critic of the right, in an X post: "Is the BJP not embarrassed that their party spokesmen are speaking on behalf of the Election Commission? Is that not in itself a giveaway?"

In an official statement, the Commission played down the leaks, saying "differing views and observations are a normal part of deliberation". It conceded that members held differing opinions but insisted these did not reflect its official position. On September 26, the three commissioners met together and promised that agendas would be circulated in advance and minutes recorded. That is an indirect admission of what was missing.

The government's role will come under scrutiny because Kumar is the first CEC appointed under the controversial 2023 Selection Act, which gave the executive a clear advantage on the selection panel by removing the Chief Justice of India. The exposé has revived the allegation that a centralised poll panel is being used to the government's advantage. Handled badly, it can have serious repercussions for the government, though it rises above party lines.

An institution whose only real currency is public trust cannot let that trust be settled through press notes and spokespersons. The way back lies in transparency: let the record of who decided what, and when, speak for itself.

The writer is a commentator on socio-political issues



VIRENDRA SACHDEVA

sporting ecosystem that has truly come of age.

For centuries, the image of Arjuna fixing his gaze on the eye of the bird has stood as India's timeless lesson in focus. In Aichi-Nagoya, that lesson came alive. Our archers saw nothing but the target: not the reputation of their opponents, not the weight of history, not the pressure of a watching nation. They saw only the ten, and they found it, time and again.

Our compound archers swept all three team titles, men's, women's and mixed, for the second consecutive Asian Games. The women's compound team equalled the world record in the final, and the mixed compound pair secured India's quota for the LA 2028 Olympics, where compound archery will make its Olympic debut.

Yet the defining story of these Games was written in recurve, a discipline long dominated by Korea. Our women's recurve team

As the curtain falls on the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Indian archery returns home with nine medals: five gold, two silver and two bronze.

Behind every one of those medals lies a story of courage and sacrifice, and of a

ended Korea's run of seven successive Asian Games titles to claim India's first-ever gold in the event. Our mixed recurve pair won India's first medal in that event, and our men's recurve team earned a second consecutive silver. Then, on the final day, a 17-year-old held her nerve in the individual recurve final to win a historic gold and secure an Olympic berth for India. Her composure under pressure is a lesson in how fearless India's young athletes have become.

It is equally heartening that our women led from the front. From recurve to compound, they delivered whenever it mattered most, and they will inspire countless young girls across India to pick up a bow.

These results weren't a day's success, but are the fruit of nearly fifteen years of sustained, collective effort: world-class infrastructure, quality equipment, international coaching expertise, sports science and regular global exposure. There were times when the podium felt within reach yet just beyond our grasp, but the faith of our coaches, support staff and families never wavered. In Nagoya, our athletes also contended with demanding conditions, long commutes, testing winds and heavy rains, yet their poise through it all speaks volumes about their character.



This transformation would be incomplete without acknowledging the visionary leadership of our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. Under his stewardship, sport has moved from the periphery of national priorities to its very centre. Khelo India has unearthed talent from the farthest corners of our nation, while the Target Olympic Podium Scheme has given our

elite athletes the support and dignity they deserve. Above all, the Prime Minister has changed how India regards its sportspersons. He stands beside them in triumph and in disappointment, assuring every young athlete from the smallest town that a billion hopes stand behind them.

Having been with the sports administration

for a while now, I have witnessed many campaigns, but Nagoya was a first even for me. While I was with the team, the Hon'ble Union Sports Minister personally called not once but twice to ask after our athletes, their preparation and their well-being. That is the culture the Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has built, one where the highest offices of the nation stand shoulder to shoulder with our athletes, not only on the podium but at every step of the journey.

When a nation honours its athletes, it begins to believe in them. Where there is belief, champions follow. The medals of Aichi-Nagoya, won by young Indians who refused to be intimidated, are the clearest testament to this new sporting India.

To our archers: you have filled 1.4 billion hearts with pride. To the coaches, support staff and families whose sacrifices so often go unseen: these medals belong equally to you.

I am confident that under the exemplary leadership of our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi ji, India will flourish in every sporting discipline and take its rightful place among the world's great sporting nations. As for our archers, they have shown Asia what they are capable of. They are ready for the Olympics, and the world will soon take note.

Jai Hind!

The writer is the Secretary General, Archery Association of India

A new generation takes aim



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SC’s forgiving nature led to rise in crime: Justice Datta

The Supreme Court on Thursday orally remarked that due to its forgiving nature in commutation of death sentences, the country is witnessing an increase in crime and this has to “come to an end somewhere”.

A bench of justices Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu was hearing a plea seeking premature release of a life convict whose death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in a murder case. Justice Datta orally remarked that earlier murder convictions were based on the ‘rare of rare’ doctrine but times have changed.

“It is because of our forgiving nature, that India is facing these problems. Forgive, forgive, forgive, you have to draw a line somewhere,” he said. Justice Datta recalled that the Supreme Court commuted death sentence in a case where a man raped and murdered his elder daughter.

“The father goes to jail on life imprisonment on the basis of the mother’s testimony. After some years, the father comes out on parole and murders the mother in front of his younger daughter. “On the younger daughter’s testimony, he is given death sentence. And then death sentence is commuted to life sentence by the Supreme Court on the ground that he did not murder the younger child. That is why we say, our forgiving nature has to come to an end somewhere,” he said.

(PTI)



Kerala HC asks TDB for Sabarimala works timeline

As the Sabarimala pilgrimage approaches, the Kerala High Court has asked the Travancore Devaswom Board to give the timeframe within which the preparations for it will be completed.

A bench of justices Raja Vijayaraghavan V and KV Jayakumar directed the Board to place on record a detailed statement regarding each of the works to be completed, the expected date of completion and measures to ensure the quality of the work.

“The statement shall also specify the time frame within which each work is expected to be completed and the mechanism put in place to ensure that the works are completed within the stipulated time and in accordance with the required standards,” the court said.

It also asked the Board to state the manner in which the directions issued by Chief Minister VD Satheesan at the high-level meeting held on September 11 are proposed to be implemented and the steps taken to ensure compliance of the instructions.

The bench issued the directions while hearing a petition initiated by it regarding the various activities undertaken at the Lord Ayyappa temple during the monthly poojas there.

During the proceedings, the court was told by the state Government lawyer that several high-level meetings were convened by the State Devaswom Minister K Muralaeddharan and the CM to review the preparatory activities undertaken by various Government departments and the Board for the Sabarimala pilgrimage 2026-2027 and to issue necessary directions. The lawyer also told the court that the CM had issued a firm direction that all pilgrimage-related preparatory works across all departments shall be completed on or before October 31.

(PTI)



Supreme Court sets aside elections in 50 wards in Punjab, orders fresh polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court has ordered fresh elections in 50 municipal wards in Punjab after a fact-finding commission found “widespread obstruction during the nomination process” in the local body polls.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana set aside elections in 50 wards — 28 in Patiala district and 22 in Moga. The top court passed the order after accepting the findings of a one-member commission headed by former high court judge Nirmaljit Kaur.

The local body elections took place on December 21, 2024. The commission was appointed on March 24, 2025, and it submitted its report on November 18, 2025.

“The principal finding of the Commission is of widespread obstruction during the nomination process, whereby nomination papers were



snatched, torn or destroyed, and candidates were assaulted, detained or threatened. “We accept the recommendations and direct that fresh elections be conducted in the relevant 50 wards. The entire process of re-election shall be completed within six weeks,” the bench said in the September 28 order which was uploaded last night.

The apex court noted the submission of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the Punjab Government, that the state has no objection to the commission’s



SC directs steps to enhance women’s safety

RAJESH KUMAR
■ New Delhi

Giving top priority to the safety of women, especially after recent incidents of crimes against them in Delhi-NCR, the Supreme Court on Thursday issued a series of directions to the police and state government to strengthen preventive measures, public transport security and surveillance.

Invoking the “Broken Windows” theory of policing while hearing the suo motu case it initiated over recent incidents of rape in Delhi NCR, a bench of Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice K Vinod Chandran observed that a broken streetlight, a non-functional CCTV camera or an unattended complaint, though minor in

isolation, together convey that public spaces are not being watched. The bench similarly, noted that visible and unattended signs of civic neglect signal an absence of authority and create a safe haven for anti-social elements.

“A broken or inadequate streetlight, a non-functional CCTV camera, an unmonitored dark stretch, or an unaddressed public complaint may individually appear as minor administrative or infrastructural lapses. However, when such deficiencies remain visible and unattended over a period of time, they collectively convey a perception of neglect and diminished vigilance,” the Court observed.

In a slew of sweeping measures the bench has ordered enhanced patrolling around



educational institutions, stringent verification of drivers and assistants operating public transport and app-based cabs, real time monitoring of police patrolling and CCTV infrastructure through dedicated control room command centres or “war rooms”, removal of

illegally parked heavy vehicles creating blind spots and action against unauthorised liquor outlets and eateries.

The court directed the Delhi government’s chief secretary and the commissioner of police to submit periodic compliance reports. It said both officers would be “personally answerable” if the directions were not implemented seriously.

The bench directed that unauthorised liquor shops and establishments operating without requisite permissions be identified and dealt with in accordance with law. The top court issued notice to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Delhi Transport Department and posted the matter for hearing on November 16. The bench asked

authorities to ensure real-time monitoring of vehicle tracking and SOS systems to strengthen preventive policing and curb sexual offences in the national capital.

In its order, the bench said the manner in which public spaces are maintained, visible police patrolling and surveillance, and the promptness with which reported deficiencies are addressed are equally relevant to crime prevention. It also underscored the importance of effective real-time monitoring of police patrolling and CCTV infrastructure through dedicated control room command centres or “war rooms”.

“Therefore, the Commissioner of Police, Delhi and the Chief Secretary, Government of NCT of Delhi,

are hereby directed to furnish a joint report on (i) whether dedicated control room command centres of this nature currently exist within the NCT of Delhi and, if so, their exact number and the corresponding areas of coverage,” the bench said.

“Hence, the police and the local administration shall consider instituting regular citizen-engagement meetings under the supervision of an officer to be designated for the purpose so that grievances may be received directly and their follow-up monitored efficiently,” it said. The bench said training in preventive policing should form part of the induction of police personnel and be reinforced through periodic training at regular intervals thereafter.

Set up panel to examine unethical pharma marketing practices: SC to Government

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Centre to constitute a committee within two weeks to undertake a holistic and comprehensive examination of issues relating to unethical pharmaceutical marketing practices.

The apex court directed that the committee would endeavour to complete the exercise in a time-bound manner and submit its recommendations to the Centre within two months from the date of its first meeting, after duly undertaking the consultative process and considering the material and suggestions placed before it.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta passed the order on a plea concerning alleged prevalence of unethical marketing and promotional practices by pharmaceutical companies in their dealings with healthcare professionals.

The petitioners claimed that such practices include direct or indirect monetary benefits,



gifts, hospitality, sponsored travel, entertainment and other inducements extended to medical practitioners with a view to influence their drug prescribing practices.

The bench noted that the Centre has proposed to constitute a three-member committee to examine the issue and make recommendations as to the appropriate statutory and regulatory framework for regulating the conduct of pharmaceutical companies.

“In view of the aforesaid discussion, and having regard to the constitutional obligation to protect the right to health as well as the continuing need for an effective and enforceable framework to

regulate pharmaceutical marketing practices, we consider it appropriate to exercise our jurisdiction under Articles 32 and 142 of the Constitution,” the bench said.

It said the directions issued by the court are intended to secure effective implementation of the existing framework and to facilitate the ongoing exercise of the Centre towards evolving an appropriate regulatory mechanism.

“The Union of India shall, if not already constituted, constitute the committee proposed by it within a period of two weeks from the date of this order,” it said.

The bench said the committee would undertake a comprehensive examination of all issues relating to unethical pharmaceutical marketing practices, including the adequacy of existing statutory and regulatory framework, the efficacy of mechanisms presently in place for monitoring, oversight and enforcement, and the measures required to ensure greater transparency, accountability and effective compliance.

Group of ex-judges dub Opposition attack on EC campaign without evidence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A group of 42 retired judges have defended the Election Commission of India (ECI) against the Opposition onslaught and backed the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, describing it as a lawful exercise.

In an open letter to the “people of India”, the former judges of the Supreme Court and former chief justices and judges of various high courts said they hold no brief for any political party but felt compelled to speak as “silence is no longer a neutral choice”.

The signatories include Former Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi High Court BC Patel, Former Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court Subhro Kamal Mukherjee, former

Supreme Court judges Hemant Gupta and Pankaj Mittal. The Opposition INDIA bloc leaders have accused Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar of revising electoral rolls to benefit the BJP and have sought his resignation. Both the BJP and the commission have rejected the allegation.

The former judges claimed that India’s constitutional bodies are under “sustained attack”, with the Election Commission of India at the centre of the assault.

“Even the higher judiciary, which we hold in high esteem, and statutory agencies have not been spared,” the letter pointed out. They said the attacks were not reasoned criticism but appeared to be a “calculated campaign” driven by vested political interests, with little



regard for the potentially devastating consequences of “destabilising the world’s largest democracy”.

The former judges described the attacks on the poll panel and other institutions as a “campaign without evidence”. “Criticism of institutions is a democratic right. Denigration is not. Constitutional authorities are now branded ‘thieves’,

those revisions a conspiracy,” they said. The former judges said the allegations of “vote theft” are made at press conferences, “not before courts”.

“When the commission seeks a sworn declaration, none is filed. Electronic Voting Machines are blamed only after defeat. Victories won on the same machines go unquestioned,” the letter said.

In an apparent reference to the Congress, they said a party that governed the nation for over five decades now claims that the very system which elected it is rigged. “It does not act alone. Activist outfits with a long record of selective litigation lend these claims a veneer of legality,” it said.

They file petition, “one after the other” but seldom give proof. The courtroom becomes a stage, and when

the judgment is delivered, it is criticised whenever it does not serve their interests, the letter said.

“Vitriol is then amplified and disseminated on an industrial scale, with the deliberate aim of eroding public confidence in a well-established and widely trusted judicial system,” they said.

On Tuesday, the INDIA bloc MPs marched from Parliament, and Rahul Gandhi observed an eight-hour sit-in at Akashvani Bhawan. On Wednesday, the scene shifted to nearby Jantar Mantar as Gandhi and other INDIA bloc leaders held a street protest against Kumar before being detained by the police later in the evening.

Thursday marked the third day of continuous protests in the national capital by top Opposition leaders.

SC asks Centre to furnish details of rehab centres for disabled children across India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday sought State-wise details on the regulation, standards and monitoring mechanisms governing rehabilitation centres for children with disabilities across India.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana asked the Centre to collect requisite data from all states and Union territories on the implementation of statutory frameworks, constitution of regulatory bodies, and oversight of such facilities, and place these on record through affidavits.

Appearing in the matter, advocate Rahul Bajaj highlighted glaring gaps in statutory compliance under both the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act) and the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

He submitted that rehabilitation centres for persons with disabilities mandate compulsory state-level registration under the RPwD Act and pointed out the urgent need for collection of data to establish whether the designated statutory authorities have actually been constituted across states and whether they are active-



ly monitoring these institutions.

While referring to the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, Bajaj flagged that only 10 states and Union territories have till now notified the requisite minimum standards for mental health establishments.

He underscored the lack of information concerning periodic audits and inspections conducted by authorities to enforce compliance and safeguard the welfare of institutionalised children.

The bench asked the Centre to coordinate with the states and compile a detailed report about setting up and functioning of statutory authorities under the RPwD Act, the formulation and notification of minimum standards across mental health establishments, and the inspection and monitoring protocols currently in place to supervise rehabilitation facilities.

It listed the matter for further hearing on October 22.



COMFED expands SUDHA's presence in Assam, North-East

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Guwahati

Bihar State Milk Co-operative Federation Ltd (COMFED), which markets dairy products under the SUDHA brand, is strengthening its presence in Assam and the adjoining North-Eastern States through expanded processing capacity and a growing retail network.

As part of the expansion, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated a 20,000 litres per day (LPD) milk processing plant at Kanyaka Dairy, Shantipur, Jamugurihat, Tezpur, Sonitpur, on Thursday. Shirsat Kapil Ashok, IAS, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, COMFED, attended the inauguration.

The new plant is expected to strengthen supplies to Tezpur and adjoining areas and support further expansion of SUDHA's regional distribution network.

SUDHA expands retail network in Assam, North-East

COMFED began marketing SUDHA pouch milk and milk products in Guwahati in November 2018 through a third-party dairy facility at Amingaon. Since then, it has expanded operations to other parts of Assam and neighbouring states, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.

At present, COMFED's Guwahati unit markets a range of SUDHA products, including pouch milk, curd, paneer, lassi, peda and milk cake, through approximately 2,200 retail outlets.

Average milk sales from the unit stand at around 50,500 litres per day. During the financial year 2025-26, the unit recorded a turnover of ₹121.17 crore and a profit of ₹38.06 crore, reflecting the



growing acceptance of the SUDHA brand in the region.

Assam offers significant potential for dairy sector

The North-East, particularly Assam, offers considerable potential for the organised dairy sector.

According to the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Assam's household demand for milk and milk products is projected to increase to 89.87 lakh litres per day by 2030.

The projected increase indicates substantial scope to expand dairy supplies, processing infrastructure, and retail distribution in the State.

Expansion in the North-East requires reliable processing and distribution arrangements to serve markets spread across different locations and terrain. COMFED's approach seeks to bring processing closer to these markets, improve supply reliability and make SUDHA products more widely accessible to consumers.

COMFED plans one lakh LPD dairy facility

COMFED has also begun steps to set up its own dairy processing facility in Assam, with a proposed capacity of one lakh litres per day.

For the proposed project, COMFED has requested the

Government of Assam to allot suitable land. The Assam Industrial Development Corporation (AIDC) has identified potential locations and shown them to COMFED for consideration.

Focus on 'cooperation among cooperatives'

As a dairy cooperative federation, COMFED's expansion also offers scope to advance the principle of "cooperation among cooperatives."

Collaboration in milk sourcing, processing, distribution, and technical support can help cooperative institutions share resources and expertise, strengthen market access, and improve services for producers and consumers.

Such partnerships can connect Bihar's established dairy cooperative network with opportunities in the North-East and support the wider development of cooperative dairying.

COMFED contributes to Assam flood relief

Alongside its business operations, COMFED has also contributed to relief efforts in Assam. During the recent floods, its Guwahati unit donated ₹4 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma appreciated the contribution.

UP to become logistics hub as UPSIDA approves 4 new projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh is moving towards strengthening its position as one of the country's leading industrial and logistics hubs, with the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) approving four new warehousing and logistics projects across the state.

The projects include one silo project, two warehousing projects and one logistics park. These projects will be established in Pilibhit, Unnao, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ayodhya districts.

The initiatives are being undertaken under the leadership and guidance of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to accelerate industrial development in the state and contribute to the vision of making Uttar Pradesh a \$1 trillion economy.



₹14,600 crore Investment Proposed Across 75 Projects

With approval for four new projects, UPSIDA has so far approved 75 projects under the Uttar Pradesh Warehousing & Logistics Policy-2022 and the PIP Policy.

These projects are proposed to be developed over approximately 960 acres of land, with a total proposed investment of around ₹14,600 crore.

Implementing these projects is expected to expand

the state's modern warehousing and logistics infrastructure significantly. In particular, the projects will increase capacity for safe, scientific storage of food grains and provide farmers with better warehousing and logistics facilities.

The projects will also accelerate the development of warehousing clusters, modern distribution centres, silos and cold-chain facilities across the state. This is expected to make the

agricultural supply chain more efficient and seamless while facilitating faster movement of agricultural produce to markets.

New employment opportunities alongside investment

Growing investment in the warehousing and logistics sector is expected to strengthen the state's infrastructure and generate significant direct and indirect employment opportunities.

These projects will stimulate local economic activity in areas such as transportation, warehousing, packaging, distribution, and allied services, contributing to inclusive economic growth.

Policy incentives strengthening investor confidence

The Uttar Pradesh Warehousing & Logistics Policy-2022, introduced by the state Government, aims to establish Uttar Pradesh as a modern, competitive and globally competitive

logistics hub.

Under the policy, the state provides investors with various incentives, financial assistance, tax-related benefits, and other facilitation measures to establish warehousing and logistics units in the State.

The rapidly expanding expressway network, industrial corridors, and rail and air connectivity further enhance Uttar Pradesh's attractiveness as a preferred destination for investment in the logistics and warehousing sector.

UPSIDA is also placing particular emphasis on providing investors with a simple, transparent, and time-bound approval process, ensuring that investment proposals translate into ground-level projects at the earliest and contribute to investment, employment generation, and economic activity across the State.

Ghaziabad Municipal Commissioner hears public grievances

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ghaziabad

Ghaziabad Municipal Commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik heard public grievances under the 'Sambhav' programme and directed concerned officials to take prompt action on all 19 references received during the public hearing.

Of the 19 grievances, eight pertained to the Construction Department, one to the Health Department, one to the Horticulture Department, three to the Street Lighting Department, three to the Property Department, one to the Tax Department, and two to the Jal Kal (Water Works) Department.

The concerned departments of the Ghaziabad



Municipal Corporation immediately took action on the complaints.

The Municipal Commissioner said that under the Sambhav programme, the department aims to address grievances received during the public hearing on the same day.

Several elected councillors also raised issues in their

respective wards and put forward suggestions in residents' interest. Councillors from Ward No. 24 (Maharoli), Ward No. 74 (Vasundhara), Ward No. 89 (Vaishali), Ward No. 18 (Rajapur) and Ward No. 88 (Gandhi Nagar) discussed various civic issues. They offered suggestions for improving facilities in their areas.

Mega drive to remove illegal

encroachments in Vijay Nagar

The hearing also received a specific complaint about illegal encroachment in Vijay Nagar.

Taking the issue seriously, Municipal Commissioner Vikramaditya Singh Malik directed the concerned departments to conduct a joint mega enforcement drive in Vijay Nagar and take strict action against illegal encroachments.

During the public hearing, the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation also initiated action on various complaints received.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Renu Singh, General Manager (Jal Kal) Kamakhya Prasad Anand, In-charge Horticulture Dr Anuj, Municipal Health Officer Dr

Mithilesh, Chief Tax Assessment Officer Anirudh Kumar, along with officials of the Street Lighting Department, were present during the hearing.

Special Street Lighting Campaign Ahead of Festivals

In view of the upcoming festivals, the Municipal Commissioner also directed the Street Lighting Department to undertake a special campaign across all wards to ensure street lights function properly and are properly maintained.

The complainants appreciated the Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation's prompt response and action during the Sambhav public hearing and expressed gratitude for the timely resolution of their grievances.

Bastar Dussehra scripts a tale of tourism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Besieged by Naxal menace for the last three decades, Bastar has now changed tack after the elimination of ultra-Left terror as it pulls tourists who are venturing into the region's forests, waterfalls and tribal culture. Bastar's tourism numbers are now telling a story the region has not been able to witness for a long time.

Post monsoon, Bastar is at its most dramatic: the forests thicken, the waterfalls swell, and the usual trickle of visitors turns into something closer to a rush. Hotel and homestay operators near the region's main attractions say they have already started preparing for the crowds expected around Bastar Dussehra, Navratri and Diwali.

Dussehra itself runs for 75 days this year, and it is being treated as something more



than a religious calendar event. There is no Ravana effigy burnt here, unlike most of the country's Dussehra celebrations. Instead, the festival builds around a massive chariot, local folk tradition and tribal belief systems that have nothing to do with the Ramayana. That difference is part of the draw. President Droupadi Murmu's slated

attendance this year has only added to the attention the festival is getting, and officials expect it to anchor Chhattisgarh's tourism calendar going forward.

Managing Director of the Chhattisgarh Tourism Board, Saumil Ranjan Chaubey puts it simply: the state is not chasing visitor numbers for their own sake. "The bigger goal is to connect tourism to

the local economy directly, through eco-tourism, homestays, adventure tourism and better infrastructure, while bringing in local youth, women, artisans and small entrepreneurs as the people running these businesses rather than watching from outside," he said, adding, the improved security and connectivity in the region has added to the

uptick already visible on the ground.

Dussehra is only part of what is drawing people in. Chitrakote Falls, Tirathgarh and Kanger Valley have become regular stops on itineraries that once began and ended with the festival. Inside Kanger Valley, the Kutumsar and Kailash caves offer a different kind of visit altogether, closer to the region's biodiversity and tribal life than to any festival schedule, and they are increasingly pulling tourism out of the main towns and into villages that rarely saw outside visitors before.

Homestays, local Bastariya food, Mahua-based products and handicrafts are turning into source of livelihood and income for people who had little access earlier. Guides, drivers, small shopkeepers, artisans, and women's self-help groups are among the beneficiaries.

NTPC concludes electron quiz 2026-27; IIT Madras teams take top honours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Noida

NTPC, India's largest integrated power utility, concluded its flagship Electron Quiz 2026-27 on October 8, an initiative aimed at encouraging curiosity, learning and fresh thinking among young minds. Organised from September 5, beginning with the regional round in Lucknow and culminating in the National Finale in Noida on October 8, the quiz was conducted across nine regional locations.

At the Grand Finale, Advik Kabra and Ashish Cherian Thannickal of IIT Madras emerged as the national champions.

Sreeram Madhavan V and Ishaan Joshi of IIT Madras secured the second position, while Waqar Moid and Parth Arya Bhat of IIT Kanpur finished third.

Winners receive cash prizes

At the national level, the winning team was awarded ₹1,00,000, while the second- and third-placed teams received ₹60,000 and ₹40,000, respectively.

Teams securing the fourth, fifth, and sixth positions received ₹16,000 each, while

the remaining 12 teams received ₹8,000 each.

Anil Kumar Jadli, Director (HR), NTPC, was present and congratulated the winners. He also complimented all participants for their enthusiasm and encouraged the students to carry forward the spirit of learning and curiosity in their future endeavours.

Speaking about NTPC's own journey of transformation, Jadli highlighted how the company is evolving beyond its traditional identity into an integrated energy major. He encouraged the youngsters to embrace the same spirit of transformation and adaptability in their own lives and careers.

Over 1,100 teams participate

The regional rounds were held across nine cities-Lucknow, Patna, Ranchi, Raipur, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Noida.

More than 1,100 teams participated in the competition, making this year's edition one of the largest editions of the NTPC Electron Quiz.

At the regional level, the winning teams were awarded ₹60,000, while the



second- and third-placed teams received ₹40,000 and ₹20,000, respectively. Teams that secured fourth, fifth, and sixth positions received ₹8,000 each.

Among others, SN Panigrahi, Executive Director (HR); Premilata, Executive Director (Strategic HRD & Talent Development); senior executives; employees; and students from various institutes were present to encourage the finalists.

Quiz Organised Since 2004 Since 2004, the NTPC

Electron Quiz, themed 'The World of Business & Management', has been a flagship initiative that promotes learning and intellectual growth.

Over the years, the quiz has grown in scale and stature, giving students across the country a chance to learn and compete.

Meanwhile, NTPC Limited, a Maharatna company of the Government of India, is India's largest integrated power utility with an installed capacity of over 91

GW. As the company strengthens its position across the energy value chain, NTPC is expanding beyond conventional power generation into renewable energy and emerging areas, including battery energy storage, nuclear power, carbon capture, and green chemicals.

The company is targeting 60 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2032, as part of its broader commitment to India's evolving energy landscape.

Alok Tiwari entrusted with additional charge of managing director of DFCCIL



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Alok Tiwari, IRSE, Additional Member (Bridge), Railway Board, has been entrusted with the additional charge of Managing Director of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL), in addition to his existing responsibilities.

Tiwari assumed charge of the post on October 5, 2026. He was welcomed at the DFCCIL Corporate Office by Shobhit Bhatnagar, Director/OP&BD; Anurag Sharma, Director/Infrastructure; Pawan K Rai, Director/Project Planning; and B Mugunthan, Director/Finance, along with other senior officials of DFCCIL.

A 1988-batch IRSE officer, Tiwari has over 36 years of experience in Indian Railways, with extensive exposure to railway infrastructure planning, project execution, construction, safety, freight operations and administration.

Throughout his career, he has worked across the full project life cycle and has directly constructed and commissioned more than 1,000 km of railway infrastructure.

Extensive experience in railway infrastructure

Tiwari has held several key positions during his career, including Chief Administrative Officer, South East Central Railway; Principal Chief Safety Officer, South Western Railway; Divisional Railway Manager, Guntakal; and Chief Project Manager-cum-Group General Manager, RVNL.

His experience covers technical planning, major infrastructure projects, safety management, freight opera-

tions and organisational administration.

After assuming charge as Managing Director, Tiwari chaired a review meeting at the DFCCIL Corporate Office to take stock of key activities, ongoing works and operational priorities.

The meeting covered critical aspects of Dedicated Freight Corridor operations, construction, maintenance, asset reliability, safety, project progress and overall organisational performance.

Focus on Technology, Automation and Efficiency

During the review meeting, Tiwari emphasised the need for a coordinated, outcome-oriented, technology-driven approach across all functions, with a clear focus on improving efficiency, reliability, and productivity.

The meeting also discussed aligning the proposed East-West Dedicated Freight Corridor (EWDFC) and the way forward for its planning and development.

The meeting placed particular emphasis on greater mechanisation and automation in maintenance, adopting modern construction methodologies, wider use of precast solutions, and deploying Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies to enhance asset performance and enable data-driven decision-making.

Emphasis on knowledge management

The new Managing Director also stressed the importance of strengthening knowledge management and institutional memory within DFCCIL.

He called for creating a comprehensive digital repository of drawings

and critical project data at the Corporate Office, supported by robust backup and archival arrangements. The initiative aims to ensure systematic preservation and effective utilisation of institutional knowledge.

Tiwari also called on officers to maintain a strong focus on quality, cost-effectiveness, timely execution, and operational excellence while leveraging technology and innovation to enhance DFCCIL's capabilities further.

With extensive experience in railway infrastructure, freight operations, safety, and project management, Tiwari takes charge at a key stage in the evolution of India's Dedicated Freight Corridor network.

His leadership is expected to strengthen further DFCCIL's focus on operational efficiency, asset reliability, technological innovation, and infrastructure excellence.

DFCCIL is entrusted with developing and operating the Dedicated Freight Corridors to enhance freight transportation capacity, improve logistics efficiency, and facilitate faster, safer, and more efficient movement of goods across the country.

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
No.CE/PHD/ACCTS/07/26/328
Dtd.05.10.2026
Name of the Work: "Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of 2.50 MLD STP-II at Brundaban Colony for two years (2027-29)". Estimated cost: Rs.1,58,00,972.10. Last Date & time of submission : 26.10.2026 up to 18:00 Hrs. Refer our website for details: eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, PHD, PPA
PPA/PR/30/2026-27 dtd. 07.10.2026

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BUSINESS10

Rupee falls 13 paise to close at 96.88 against US dollar

The rupee depreciated by 13 paise to close at 96.88 against the US dollar on Thursday, on risk aversion in global markets amid escalation of geopolitical tensions.

Forex traders said the rupee is under pressure amid persistent headwinds, including global dollar strength (DXY trading near multi-month highs) and elevated Brent crude prices hovering near \$104 per barrel.

However, suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank of India supported the domestic unit at lower levels.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 96.71 and touched a high of 96.65 against the greenback during intraday. At the end of the trading session on Thursday, the rupee closed at 96.88, down 13 paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee closed at 96.75 against the American currency. "We expect the rupee to trade with a negative bias on risk aversion in global markets amid escalation of geopolitical tensions. A strong dollar and surge in crude oil prices may also pressurise the rupee." However, declining odds of a rate hike by the US Fed in October and any intervention by the RBI may support the rupee at lower levels. Traders may also take cues from weekly unemployment claims data out of the US," said Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae AssetSharekhan. Forex traders said investors will wait for the RBI to take action against speculation on the USD/INR pair, with the Governor Sanjay Malhotra assuring to help in finding rupee to its true value, which is undervalued presently.

(PNS)

CIABC questions Karnataka's AIB tax model

CIABC, the industry association representing domestic Indian-made liquor companies, on Thursday questioned the effectiveness of Karnataka's Alcohol-in-Beverage (AIB) taxation regime and the preferential treatment given to the 'beer' category.

The Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) countered claims made by the Brewers Association of India (BAI) that the new tax structure has boosted state revenues and encouraged consumption of milder alcoholic beverages.

Citing State Government data for July-September 2026, CIABC said there is a "clear divergence" between volume growth and revenue contribution across Indian-made liquor (IML) and beer. IML sales rose marginally to 171.69 lakh cases (9 litres each) from 169.12 lakh cases a year ago, a volume growth of 1.52 per cent. Despite this near-flat volume performance, IMFL revenue rose 13.36 per cent, or ₹1,064.52 crore, to ₹9,033.21 crore from ₹7,968.69 crore.

Beer sales jumped 49.69 per cent to 126.68 lakh cases from 84.63 lakh cases. Beer revenue rose ₹228.57 crore, or 18.52 per cent, to ₹1,463.07 crore from ₹1,234.50 crore. "The contrast becomes even clearer when the incremental revenue is examined," said CIABC as Karnataka revenue growth continues to be driven by IML. Though beer volumes surged sharply after the implementation of the AIB framework, the bulk of incremental excise revenue continued to come from IFL, the association said, raising concerns over the efficiency and long-term sustainability of the new tax regime. "Total excise revenue during Q2 increased by ₹1,291.94 crore. Of this increase, approximately ₹1,064.52 crore or 82 per cent came from IMFL," said CIABC.

(PNS)

The ePlane Company inks pact with Noida International Airport for air taxi infra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Ubify Technologies Pvt Ltd, which operates as The ePlane Company, on Thursday said it has signed an initial pact with Noida International Airport to develop infrastructure for air taxi operations.

The agreement sets up a comprehensive framework to co-develop the regulatory SOPs, vertiport management systems, and operational ecosystem specifically required to deploy ePlane's flagship e200X aircraft, it said.

This infrastructure partnership complements key engineering progress following the recent public unveiling of the full-scale electric air taxi e200X PT-01 prototype, the company said. This collaboration paves the way for e200X-powered airport-to-airport transit, intra-city commutes,

and emergency air ambulance services across the region, The ePlane company said.

With ground testing (for the prototype air taxi) currently underway, the Memorandum of Understanding ensures that the physical development of the aircraft is met with parallel advancements in ground operations and airspace integration, it said. "Deploying electric air taxis requires more

than just building the aircraft; it demands the parallel development of ground infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and operational procedures," said Satyanarayanan Chakravarthi, Founder and Director of Ubify Technologies (The ePlane Company).

"This MoU with Noida International Airport allows us to systematically validate our operational models using drone trials before transitioning to piloted e200X flights," he said.

It is a pragmatic, step-by-step approach to ensuring that when aircraft are certified, the airport ecosystem is fully equipped to deliver on our core promise: bypassing urban gridlock and compressing hours of road travel into minutes of safe, emission-free transit for both passengers and critical medical care, he added.

BSE SENSEX OCTOBER 8, 2026

CHANGE: -1045.46 (-1.44%)

Previous Close: 72,638.70 | Today's Closing: 71,593.24

Stock	Change (%)
TECH MAHINDRA	+0.44%
AXIS BANK	+0.25%
INFOSYS	+0.21%

TOP GAINERS

Stock	Change (%)
ITC	-4.24%
INDIGO	-3.86%
POWER GRID	-3.36%
BEL	-3.30%
ADANI PORTS	-2.69%

Adani Ports by 2.59 per cent and NTPC by 2.43 per cent.

Tech Mahindra, Axis Bank and Infosys were the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 4.25 per cent to \$104.5 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹6,121.37 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

The Reserve Bank of India raised its benchmark repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.50 per cent on Wednesday, its first hike in nearly four years, while signalling that rate cuts are off the table in the near term and that further hikes could follow amid rising inflation, a weak rupee

and high crude oil prices. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the RBI voted unanimously to raise the repo rate, and sprang a surprise with a shift in policy stance to "calibrated tightening" from "neutral".

"The domestic market continued in its sharp sell-off mode as the ripple effects of hawkish RBI policy weighed on rate-sensitive sectors, effectively resetting near-term valuation multiples.

This headwind was further amplified by persistent FII outflows, harder bond yields, and a depreciating INR," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Moreover, volatile crude oil prices hov-

ering stubbornly above the \$100 mark continue to be a hurdle for the national economy, he added.

The BSE SmallCap Select index dived 2.58 per cent and MidCap Select index tumbled 2.53 per cent. All BSE sectoral indices ended lower. Power slumped 3.51 per cent, Metal 3.34 per cent, Utilities 3.38 per cent, Realty 3.07 per cent, Capital Goods 3.02 per cent, Industrials 2.93 per cent, Services 2.76 per cent and Commodities 2.71 per cent. A total of 3,426 stocks declined, while 1,003 advanced and 225 remained unchanged on the BSE.

"Indian equity benchmarks ended sharply lower on Thursday as risk aversion intensified across the market. Crude oil remained the key source of pressure, with rising energy prices reviving concerns over a more persistent inflationary backdrop just a day after the RBI shifted its policy stance toward calibrated tightening.

"Elevated US Treasury yields and continued FII selling added to the pressure, while mixed global cues provided little support to domestic equities," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Govt to cap trade margins at 30% of MRP for anti-cancer drugs, say sources

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

(TMR) is to prevent mis-selling malpractices. There is a tendency to sell drugs having a bigger margin, and since anti-cancer drugs are more expensive than the rest, we wanted to cap the trade margins on them," the sources said.

The move will lead to an estimated annual savings of ₹2,500 crore of cancer patients, they said.

The Supreme Court had on September 29 voiced its concern on the issue of

highly-inflated price of anti-cancer drugs. Batting for a uniform 16 per cent margin on all medicines, a bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the Centre, "This is carnage. Plain and simple. The cancer drug is priced at an MRP of ₹27,000 despite being supplied to retailers for ₹2,700."

The Government sources, however, said the decision to cap the margins on the drugs was not related to the ongoing case but has been in the works since 2019.

The health department has constituted a committee to finalise the list of drugs, the sources said, adding that the issue of pricing of other medicines needs a calibrated approach.

Gold rebounds ₹3,600 to ₹1.52 lakh per 10 gram ahead of festive season

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Gold prices jumped ₹3,600 to ₹1.52 lakh per 10 grams in the National Capital on Thursday, rebounding from a two-session slide, as buying interest from jewellers and retailers improved ahead of the festive season.

The 99.9 per cent purity metal climbed ₹3,600 to ₹1,52,500 per 10 grams, inclusive of all taxes, according to the All India Sarafa Association. It had settled at ₹1,48,900 per 10 grams on Wednesday.

Traders said jewellers typically increase gold purchases in the form of raw material ahead of the festive season, when demand for jewellery tends to rise. Gold found some support on

Thursday after recovering from the two-month low; however, a strong dollar and elevated crude oil prices capped the upside, said Gaurav Garg, Head of Research at brokerage platform Lemonn.

However, silver moved in the opposite direction.

The white metal had resumed its downward march after three sessions of

trading flat, falling by ₹3,000 to ₹2.24 lakh per kilogram from ₹2.27 lakh per kg in the preceding session.

The metal hit its lowest level in more than three months, having last traded around this level on June 29.

Globally, spot gold was marginally higher at \$4,111.94 per ounce, while silver fell over 2 per cent to \$58.50 an ounce. "Gold is steady on Thursday at \$4,120 an ounce in global trade after touching a nine-week low in the previous session," said Vedika Narvekar, Research Analyst- Commodities & Currencies, Anand Rathii Share and Stock Brokers Ltd.

The recovery remained constrained as renewed tensions in West Asia pushed crude oil prices to \$105 per barrel, she said.

GTRI urges Govt to scrap proposed October 15 UPI charges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government should withdraw the proposed UPI charges, scheduled to take effect on October 15, and keep the digital payment system free for merchants and consumers, economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Thursday. It said that charging merchants could raise prices, squeeze small business earnings and weaken household demand.

The charges would also reduce UPI's price advantage over cards, benefiting US card networks and payment plat-

forms, the GTRI said, adding that an independent audit should establish and publish UPI's actual running costs.

"The Government should withdraw the proposed UPI charges scheduled to take effect on October 15 and keep UPI free for merchants and consumers," said GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava.

Ending nearly six years of fully free UPI payments, the Government has introduced a 0.4 per cent fee on transfers worth more than ₹2,000 made to merchants through the platform from October 15, while explicitly ring-fencing everyday person-to-person transactions as well as small

payments from any charge.

Srivastava said that banks save on handling cash and operating ATMs and branches when customers use UPI, and payment apps gain customers' spending data and

opportunities to sell loans, insurance and mutual funds in a market serving more than 55 crore Indians. The Government, he said, benefits from wider digital payments and greater visibility of eco-

nomics transactions. "These benefits support the case for sharing UPI's running costs. If these institutions fund the system, UPI can remain free and preserve its advantage over cards. Charging merchants reduces that advantage and creates commercial opportunities for competing payment networks," he said.

He added that PhonePe and Google Pay, which together handle more than 80 per cent of UPI transactions, could earn a share of merchant fees if the fee-sharing arrangement provides for it. "Their market dominance would give them a large potential base for such earnings,"

Srivastava said, adding, "Visa and Mastercard could benefit when UPI loses part of its price advantage. Free UPI allows merchants to receive the full payment. An MDR reduces that benefit and could make cards more competitive. The card networks also seek access to UPI comparable to that enjoyed by RuPay credit cards."

India should resist US pressure to weaken UPI, drawing on Brazil's defence of Pix, its domestic digital-payment system, he said, adding that UPI's affordability and widespread acceptance are economic strengths that India should preserve.

Nasscom welcomes GST council move on services exports

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

IT industry body Nasscom on Thursday said that the recommendations of the 57th GST Council meeting on overseas branches and R&D services address longstanding concerns related to service exports, input tax credit, refunds and compliance.

The Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, recommended removing existing restrictions on services supplied through overseas branches to qualify as exports, Nasscom noted in a statement. Under current regulations, services supplied from an Indian office to its overseas branch don't qualify as exports because both are treated as establishments of the same entity. "Subject to the other export conditions, it should reduce tax uncertainty, litigation and un-

necessary working capital costs," Nasscom said, noting that Indian companies frequently serve international clients through their overseas branch networks.

Ahead of the meeting, the industry body had flagged the Goods and Services Tax (GST) treatment of head office-to-branch office (HO-BO) transactions as a persistent source of litigation,

noting that the disparity between deliveries via overseas branches versus subsidiaries resulted in input tax credit reversals and additional compliance burdens for exporters.

The Council has also recommended amending the 'place-of-supply' rules for research, testing, certification, and engineering services conducted in India on

goods belonging to overseas clients.

Presently, the physical presence of a customer's prototype or sample in India can disqualify such services from being treated as exports. Nasscom said the proposed change will benefit engineering research and development (ER&D) firms, global capability centres (GCCs) and deep-tech startups providing testing services globally, while helping India attract more international mandates.

Among other measures, the industry body also welcomed the Council's decision to allow input tax credit for employee health and life insurance, the extension of inverted-duty refunds to input services, refund eligibility on plant and machinery, and faster refund processing timelines. For the e-commerce

segment, Nasscom noted that the proposed simplified registration mechanism for smaller sellers using platform warehouses in other states will facilitate interstate online trade without requiring dedicated physical premises in every state.

"The Council has addressed longstanding concerns affecting service exports, input tax credit, refunds, and compliance.

Its recommendations on notices, prosecution and arrest powers also signal a more proportionate approach to tax enforcement. "Nasscom has engaged with the Government on several of these issues through consultations and detailed submissions over the years. We appreciate the Council's consideration of industry concerns and the Government's continued openness to dialogue," Nasscom said.

Paytm slips 5% amid reports of deferred UPI merchant fees

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Shares of Paytm, One Mobikwik Systems and other fintech firms ended lower on Thursday amid reports that a proposal to defer the rollout of merchant discount rate (MDR) on UPI to January 1, from October 15, is under consideration.

One 97 Communications, which owns the Paytm brand, tanked 10 per cent to ₹1,560.60 during the day on the BSE. It finally ended at ₹1,640, down 5.42 per cent.

One Mobikwik Systems shares dropped 8.43 per cent to ₹234.40 in intraday deals. The stock later ended 4.57 per cent lower at ₹244.30.

Pine Labs declined 4.95 per cent to ₹168.75 during the day before ending at ₹169.75, down 4.39 per cent. Network People Services Technologies dropped by

3.39 per cent to close at ₹1,791.30. Last month, the Government allowed charging MDR under which transactions above ₹2,000 will attract a fee of 0.4 per cent. Shares of fintech firms jumped when the announcement was made last month amid hopes that this will generate additional revenue.

According to reports, a proposal to defer the rollout of merchant discount rate on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to January 1 from October 15 is under consideration, with a decision expected in the next few days.

Meanwhile, economic think tank GTRI said on Thursday that the Government should withdraw the proposed UPI charges, scheduled to take effect on October 15, and keep the digital payment system free for merchants and consumers.

FROM THE WORLD

UK

Man bailed after arrest

British man arrested on suspicion of plotting a terror attack following a security incident at a US-run military air base in England has been released on bail, authorities said .

The suspect, who was not named, is the seventh man bailed in the investigation of an apparent plot aimed at RAF Fairford air base, which has been used by American bombers to strike Iran. British authorities have linked the incident to Tehran. Police are continuing to investigate the incident that led to scores of residents being evacuated from their homes near the base on September 27 as armed police officers swarmed the rural area.

Police later said they had found a quantity of an accelerant – gasoline – in three vans linked to the initial five suspects, but no explosives. (AP)

US

USS Lincoln returns home

The USS Abraham Lincoln is returning home to San Diego on Thursday after supporting the Iran war during a record-long deployment of 265 uninterrupted days at sea that included reports of deteriorating conditions among its crew.

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth flew out to the carrier on Wednesday to give the crew the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest honour a unit can receive that is typically reserved for significant achievement in combat.

Hegseth pushed back against what he said were efforts to turn the “Lincoln into some sort of a symbol, a symbol of dysfunction or a symbol of low morale or a symbol of a failed mission.” He said that “what makes the US military and the US Navy and all these sailors different is that you adapt and that you’re resilient and you overcome – you finish the mission nonetheless.” (AP)

India advises nationals in Saudi Arabia to stay indoors

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India has issued a fresh advisory to its nationals in Saudi Arabia, urging them to remain “alert and vigilant” and follow instructions from local authorities amid the deteriorating security situation in the Kingdom following a series of Houthi attacks.

In its advisory, the Indian government asked all Indian nationals to remain cautious, stay indoors whenever necessary and closely monitor official communications from Saudi authorities.

“Indian nationals are advised to remain alert and vigilant, stay indoors as necessary, and follow the instructions issued by local authorities through official

channels,” the advisory said. The government has also strongly advised Indian nationals not to circulate or repost videos, photographs or news related to the ongoing events. The move is aimed at preventing the spread of unverified information during the heightened security situation.

The Embassy of India in Riyadh and the Consulate General of India in Jeddah, along with their outsourced services through VFS, continue to function normally, according to the advisory.

The Indian missions said they will continue to monitor developments and issue further updates and advisories whenever necessary. For emergency assistance,



the 24x7 Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendra (PBSK) helpline is available at

8002471234. The Indian community has also been advised to follow the official social

media handles of the Embassy of India for verified information and further

updates. The advisory comes after recent Houthi attacks targeting Abha International Airport and King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. According to Saudi authorities, the attacks killed three people and injured 36 others.

Two people were killed and 28 injured in the attack on Abha airport, while the strike on King Khalid International Airport left one person dead and eight injured.

India has strongly condemned the attacks, calling the targeting of civilian infrastructure “completely unacceptable.” The Ministry of External Affairs also expressed condolences to the families of those killed and wished a speedy recovery to those injured.India

also expressed solidarity with the people and government of Saudi Arabia amid the escalation.

The attacks have also affected commercial aviation in the region. An Air India flight from Delhi to Riyadh turned back mid-air and returned to the national capital amid heightened security concerns.

Air India and Air India Express have suspended flights to and from Riyadh until October 10, as airlines reassess operations amid the evolving security situation.

The latest developments have raised fresh concerns over aviation safety and the security of Indian nationals travelling to or residing in Saudi Arabia.

Air India flight returns to Delhi after Houthi attacks on Saudi airports

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

An Air India flight from Delhi to Riyadh is returning to the national Capital amid heightened security concerns following a series of Houthi attacks targeting airports in Saudi Arabia that have left at least three people dead and 36 injured, according to Saudi authorities.



Air India flight AI2243 departed from Delhi and was flying south over Gujarat before proceeding over the Arabian Sea.

The aircraft subsequently turned around and is now flying back towards Delhi.

The turnaround comes amid growing concerns over aviation safety in Saudi airspace following attacks on airports, including King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. Air India and Air India Express have suspended their operations to and from Riyadh until October 10, 2026. According to Saudi authorities attacks targeting Abha International Airport and King Khalid International Airport on October 6 and 7 killed three people and injured 36 others. Two people were killed and 28 others injured in an attack on Abha International Airport, while one person was killed and eight others injured in the attack on King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh.

The Houthi group has claimed responsibility for the attacks. Its military spokesperson, Yahya Saree, said the group targeted Saudi airports using ballistic missiles and drones. Saree

claimed that a ballistic missile targeting King Khalid International Airport “struck its target with precision” and disrupted airport operations.

India on Thursday condemned the attacks on Abha International Airport and King Khalid International Airport, describing the targeting of civilian infrastructure as “completely unacceptable”.

“India condemns the attacks over the past few days targeting Abha International Airport and King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, which have resulted in civilian deaths and injuries,” the Ministry of External Affairs said.

“The targeting of civilian infrastructure is completely unacceptable. We express our deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their loved ones. We wish speedy recovery for those injured. We express solidarity and stand with the people and Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,” it added. The latest attacks come amid renewed fighting between Saudi-backed government forces and the Iran-aligned Houthi group in Yemen. Saree said the

attacks were carried out in response to what he described as Saudi “aggression” against Yemen. He claimed that Saudi Arabia had conducted “60 airstrikes and missile attacks in the past 24 hours”.

The Houthi group also issued what it called a “last warning” to global airlines operating flights through Saudi airspace, saying the area had become a “theater for our military operations”. Saree urged international airlines to stop operating flights through Saudi airspace, warning of the consequences of continuing to do so.

He said airspace over the “sacred areas” of Mecca and Medina was exempt from the warning. The US Mission in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday also urged American citizens to exercise heightened vigilance amid the Houthi threats. It warned that the situation could lead to flight cancellations, airspace closures and other travel disruptions.

The latest developments have raised fresh concerns over commercial aviation in the region, with airlines reassessing their operations amid the deteriorating security situation.

Tanker attacked off Qatar in Persian Gulf, says UK

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Dubai

The British military said that several projectiles struck a tanker off the coast of Qatar, causing multiple casualties.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations Centre said the attack took place in the Persian Gulf, north of Qatar’s city of Madinat ash Shamal.

The city is on the northern tip of Qatar.

The UK military did not identify the tanker and did not provide any details about the casualties. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack and no comment from Qatar.

Prime Minister Benjamin



Netanyahu’s former military secretary has accused the Israeli leader of altering official transcripts of phone calls from the morning of the October 7, 2023, Hamas-led attacks. The accusations by Maj Gen. Avi Gil came in a

wide-ranging interview with the right-wing Israel *Hayom* newspaper.

In excerpts of the interview published Thursday, Gil accused Netanyahu of attempting to change records of their phone calls

in the first hour of the attack, possibly in an attempt to shift blame for failures that morning from the prime minister to his advisers. Gil said he reported the attempt, allegedly made by Netanyahu’s chief of staff, to the attorney general.

Gil served as military secretary from 2021 to 2024. In the interview, Gil also confirmed that a senior Egyptian intelligence official had visited Israel shortly before the October 7 attack. Asked whether there had been a warning, Gil said he did not know what message was relayed, but added: “Whoever met with someone or received something is still concealing it today.”

Royal Navy sailor appears in court on charges of spying for Russia

DANICA KIRKA ■ London

A Royal Navy sailor appeared in a London court on Thursday to face charges of spying for Russia.

Teddy Young, 24, has been charged with two offences under the National Security Act, including preparing to disclose protected information between November 2024 and May 2025, London’s Metropolitan Police Service said. During the same period, Young allegedly obtained, copied, recorded or retained protected information for the benefit of a foreign power. Young has been in police custody since he was arrested on Tuesday at his home in



Teddy Young

Bedfordshire, north of London. He appeared at Westminster Magistrates’ Court in central London on Thursday.

“The allegation is that while serving as a Royal Navy warfare intelligence rating with high-level security clearance and intelli-

gence-system access, Teddy Stanley Greenidge Young accessed and retained sensitive UK defence and intelligence material and engaged in activity consistent with preparing to pass protected information to a foreign power,” the Crown Prosecution Service said in a written summary of the allegations.

Young allegedly used the dark web to try to contact Russian authorities, drafting a message that “sought to make contact with a potential threat actor.”

Young, who joined the Navy in April 2024, is accused of committing the offences during his first deployment, which began November 4, 2024. (AP)

French student protests escalating outside Paris high school

JADE LE DELEY/LORNE COOK ■ Paris

Dozens of students dragged rubbish bins into position outside a high school in northeastern Paris early on Thursday, erecting fresh barricades before police moved in with tear gas as France’s nationwide protests show few signs of ending.

The Helene Boucher Lycee has been a flashpoint for clashes in the French capital, and is one of hundreds of schools disrupted by protesters Thursday.

At least a dozen demonstrations in support of the high school students’ movement are planned around France later in the day.

Riot police gathered in side streets as students converged on the school. Many protesters wore surgical masks or hoodies, apparently afraid to be recognised.

Police have made more than 6,600 arrests since late September, when students, most of them under 18, started protesting to demand more education funding, according to the Interior Ministry. The Education Ministry said that 375 schools were either fully or partially closed on Thursday. (AP)



Italy’s Parliament gives final approval to Giorgia Meloni’s electoral reform

GIADA ZAMPANO ■ Rome

Italy’s Parliament gave final approval Thursday to a sweeping overhaul of the country’s electoral system, handing Premier Giorgia Meloni a key political victory while setting up a likely constitutional battle over the reform.

The proposal — dubbed by supporters and critics alike the “Stabilicum” or “Melonellum” — is widely viewed as an attempt to strengthen Italy’s political system while improving the electoral prospects of the centre-right coalition led by Meloni, which last month celebrated its record as Italy’s longest-serving Government since WWII.

Supporters say the law is designed to produce clearer election winners and more stable governments in a country known for frequent changes of administration. But the centre-left opposition dubbed it “scam law,” arguing the reform is unconstitutional. It has pledged to challenge it and bring it in front of Italy’s Constitutional Court once it takes effect.

The Chamber of Deputies approved the measure in a secret ballot by 227 votes to 164, giving definitive parliamentary approval to the legislation after months of heated debate. The reform introduces a big majority prize that will award bonus parliamentary seats in both houses of parliament to the winning pre-election alliance,



provided it wins at least 42 per cent of the national vote.

Critics contend that such a “majority prize” distorts voter representation and could conflict with previous court rulings that struck down elements of earlier electoral laws. A successful challenge could force Meloni’s conservative Government to revise the system before the next general election.

The new law abolishes Italy’s current mixed electoral system, in which about one-third of parliamentary seats are elected in first-past-the-post constituencies, and replaces it with a fully proportional system.

Meloni’s coalition says the changes will make it easier for voters to identify a governing coalition before elections and reduce the post-election bargaining that has often produced fragile governments. To qualify for the majority prize, parties will have to agree on a common prime ministerial candidate and political platform before the election. (AP)

South Korea tests first domestic hypersonic missile

KIM TONG-HYUNG ■ Seoul

South Korea flight-tested on Thursday its first domestically developed hypersonic weapon, designed to fly at least five times the speed of sound and evade missile defence systems, bringing Seoul closer to what it says could be game-changing weapons capabilities.

There was no immediate response from North Korea, which last week tested its own hypersonic missile that landed in the waters near Japan. South Korean President Lee Jae Myung attended the test, saying it’s a major step in strengthening the country’s conventional defence capabilities, according to a statement. It did not elaborate on where



the test took place. The statement said the weapon separated from its booster rocket at the planned altitude, then descended and manoeuvred both vertically and horizontally before hitting a test target. It said once developed, the weapon would be able to strike key targets by surprise in the “Korean Peninsula theatre of

operations.” Lee stressed that South Korea “must secure our security through our own strength,” and also inspected the country’s most powerful Hyunmoo-5 ballistic missile on Thursday, his office said. It did not mention any direct comments by Lee on the North. Tensions between the Koreans have increased in recent weeks

after three South Korean soldiers were injured in land mine explosions last month near the heavily armed inter-Korean border.

The South’s military and the US-led United Nations Command concluded the blasts were caused by devices planted by North Korea, which has denied responsibility and ridiculed the South’s demands for an apology. North Korea has also stepped up weapons testing activity as its leader Kim Jong Un expands his military nuclear program while taking an increasingly hard line toward Seoul.

Kim has so far rebuffed US President Donald Trump’s calls to revive their diplomacy that broke down in 2019, with his Government

demanding that Washington abandon its “hostile” policy toward Pyongyang and drop demands for its denuclearisation as a precondition for talks.

The tensions have been a setback for Lee, who favours engagement with North Korea and has tempered his rhetoric toward the North even as public anger grows over the mine blasts.

Lee has also called for strengthening South Korea’s conventional defence capabilities while reducing its reliance on the United States, which unilaterally decided to scale back a major military exercise with the South in August, with Trump citing his “very good relationship” with Kim. (AP)

EU sends envoy to Beijing as rising exports from China raise economic anxiety

SAM MCNEIL/CHAN HO-HIM ■ Brussels

The European Union (EU) is bracing for a confrontation with China as a trade deficit exceeding \$1 billion a day heightens anxiety over potential job losses and pushes the bloc’s political leaders to take a more aggressive approach toward its second-largest trading partner.



The European Commission’s top trade envoy Maros Sefcovic

The European Commission’s top trade envoy, Maros Sefcovic, will be in Beijing on Thursday for a two-day meeting with Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao. The goal is narrowing the EU’s 360

billion euro trade deficit with China. Earlier this year, he gave Beijing a deadline of October to provide meaningful results in doing so. Politicians and economists across the 27-nation bloc

consider China’s massive subsidies and exports a major threat to core industrial sectors from steel foundries to car factories.

China diverted many of its exports to the EU and other

markets after the US raised tariffs.

In a debate Tuesday in European Parliament in Strasbourg, lawmakers overwhelmingly expressed anxiety alongside defiance over trade with China. On Wednesday, they voted 454 to 86 on a resolution to toughen up on China that centred on a call for “economic reciprocity and a proportionate EU response if China does not open its markets.”

Ahead of the vote, Hilde Vautmans, the Belgian lawmaker who led the resolution, said that “Europe has economic power, it’s time we used it.” Despite the

seeming European unity this week, it remains unclear what the EU can or is willing to do. It has already rolled out trade measures against Chinese steel imports and e-commerce small parcels.

France’s High Commission for Strategy and Planning in February called for swift action, like 30 per cent tariffs on many of China’s exports, and a devaluation of the euro against the Chinese currency. Sales of German autos are plummeting in China, but China is also poised to gobble up market share in Europe by undercutting European automakers on price thanks to heavy state subsidies. There have

already been mass layoffs at major manufacturers like Volkswagen.

A letter by France and Germany, a copy of which was seen by *The Associated Press*, called for a sweeping rethink of the EU’s China policy. Among other actions, it proposed making it easier for the European Commission to use the bloc’s so-called “trade bazooka,” the Anti-Coercion Instrument.

This is a never-used-before raft of measures for blocking or restricting trade and investment from countries found to be putting undue pressure on EU member nations or corporations. (AP)



Samson-Sooryavanshi dilemma resurfaces as India eye 2-0 lead against West Indies

TAPAN MOHANTA ■ Ranchi

Sanju Samson's lean run is the lone sore point in an otherwise firing batting line-up and it will prompt the team management to ponder over pairing teen sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi with opener Abhishek Sharma in the second T20I against the West Indies here on Friday.

A win here will power India to a 2-0 lead in the five-match series, but the hosts will certainly want a more productive outing from Samson.

The Kerala batter's last four innings read: 9, 7, 2, 11. Consequently, the partnerships involving Samson in the previous four matches stand at: 7, 12, 2 (both for 2nd wicket with Sooryavanshi coming in as opener), and 29. But the middle-order led by skipper Shreyas Iyer, who has finally found his footing as T20I captain, has covered up those failures in spectacular fashion. Iyer also hammered his maiden T20I century in the 68th match of his career.

So, there will be a temptation to give Sooryavanshi another run. The left-hander has shown that T20 cricket comes naturally to him in the limited opportunities he has received so far.

His wide and unique range of shots, coupled with the ability to produce match-winning knocks have made him a compelling package.

But India have so far backed the established opening combination of



Abhishek and Samson.

The management's support of Samson was evident when he was accommodated at No.3 in the Asian Games in Japan, while giving the opening slot to Sooryavanshi.

However, Samson is yet to respond to that show of faith in him with matching performances.

In that context, the current five-match series against the Caribbeans could become significant for Samson as he cannot hang on to his World Cup performances for an eternity.

But Sooryavanshi, for all his talent, has also discovered that international cricket is a different beast.

He scored 14, 13 and 15 in India's 0-3 defeat in the T20I series against England. In the Asian Games, the Bihar batter made 18 and 35.

They are not bad scores in isolation for a beginner but they also demonstrated the fact that he cannot be rushed into top level cricket simply because of the hype around him.

India's man-

agement will therefore be thinking hard about all the corners before handing another chance to the 15-year-old.

So, that makes Friday's match less about an immediate selection call and more about the Samson-Sooryavanshi question that could grow louder as the series progresses. For Samson, the extension of the current poor run could make his position increasingly difficult to defend.

India will also look at a change in their pace-bowling combination.

Mayank Yadav leaked 16 runs in the opening over of the first T20I at Lucknow and was expensive through the middle and at the death.

He, however, claimed the important wicket of West Indies top-scorer Sherfane Rutherford in the penultimate over. India could be tempted to bring in all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy and trust him with the new ball, although that experiment did not work particularly well during the preceding ODI series. The spin department, on the other hand, looked settled after Kuldeep Yadav joined veteran Axar Patel in the eleven. The pair picked up two wickets apiece and kept West Indies batters under pressure. Rookie all-rounder Naman Dhir was another positive to emerge, finishing with impressive figures of 3/31 with his off-spin. For West Indies, batting has to produce far bigger total than 171 all out they managed in opening game. (PTI)



Experience, form helped Bhuvneshwar's recall: Kotak

TAPAN MOHANTA ■ Ranchi

Bhuvneshwar Kumar's loads of experience, coupled with his strong IPL form over past two seasons has led to his recall in India's T20I squad for New Zealand series, assistant coach Sitanshu Kotak said here on Wednesday.

The 36-year-old veteran pacer, who last played for India in November 2022 New Zealand series, has earned a well-deserved return to the national side after impressive performances for Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the IPL, having played a key role in RCB's back-to-back title triumphs in 2025 and 2026. Bhuvneshwar had taken 45 wickets across two seasons (17 in 2025 and 28 in 2026).

India will face New Zealand in a T20I series after the ongoing five-match engagement against the West Indies, and Kotak suggested that the selectors may have felt the need to add experience to an otherwise young bowling group.

"One thing is obviously with the selectors, but I can give you an answer based



on what I think. In England, I personally felt that with Bumrah not being around and a lot of young bowlers playing, you can't beat experience." Kotak said at the pre-match media interaction ahead of the second T20I against West Indies. "The young bowlers are good, they are performing well and getting selected, but at some stage you also need some experience," he said.

"That might be one reason. Another thing is that Bhuvneshwar has been doing really well in the IPL for the last two seasons. So the selectors must have thought that, for New Zealand conditions and all, obviously he has been doing well and we need some experience," he said.

"They must have picked him. That's what I can think, unless you can think something different," Kotak added. (PTI)

Rampaul urges West Indies batters to counter India's spin threat

TAPAN MOHANTA ■ Ranchi

West Indies bowling coach Ravi Rampaul on Thursday urged his batters to "rotate the strike" and rely on their better players of spin to "counter" India's three-pronged spin-bowling attack as they look to bounce back in the five-match series. West Indies made a promising start in the opening T20I in Lucknow but lost three wickets in powerplay—Kamil Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer and Rovman Powell—before India's spinners tightened the screws in the middle overs to bowl them out for 171 in 19.1 overs.

India then continued their batting dominance, riding on captain Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 102, his maiden T20I hundred, to chase down the target in just 14.4 overs and take a 1-0 lead.

With India expected to retain a strong spin presence in Ranchi, Rampaul believes West Indies need their better players of spin



to bat deeper into the innings. "Definitely, rotation of the strike. Our middle order have Hetty (Hetmyer) and Shai (Hope) as well, and they are very good players of spin. We see that when they bat through the middle, we put up big, challenging scores. So obviously, for our better players of spin, it's about batting longer into the innings," Rampaul said on eve of second T20I at the JSCA Stadium.

Even 500 becoming realistic ODI targets: Dwayne Bravo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Sharjah

ODI totals of even 500 could become realistic targets in the future as batting continues to evolve at a rapid pace, feels former West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, who has called on bowlers to significantly upskill and innovate to stay relevant.

Bravo, who was speaking alongside West Indies great Chris Gayle on the sidelines of the World Championship of Legends here, said the growing dominance of aggressive batting has changed the dynamics of the game and placed greater demands on bowlers.

"The skills of the batters have improved significantly. Now the bowlers have to improve and innovate. They have to significantly upskill to keep pace with the changes in world cricket," Bravo said in an interaction with Cricketaaa. "The game is changing. It is going to an uphill tempo, and that is good. But the bowlers have to improve and innovate," he added.

Bravo, who turned 43 on October 7, also admitted that he was happy to have finished his playing career



before the latest acceleration in batting.

"The way batting is happening across the world, I'm glad my playing days are over," he quipped. Gayle, meanwhile, welcomed the fearless approach of the new generation of batters, saying their willingness to attack from the outset was driving the latest run-scoring boom.

"I am happy that batters are now breaking records rather than bowlers. The reason is simple - youngsters are now playing fearless cricket. They attack from ball one," said Gayle. "The game has changed. Players have changed. The batters are now hungry to score and they play fearless cricket from the very first ball," he added.

Pranavi eyes LET title, Olympic medal after Asian Games gold

AMIT KUMAR DAS ■ New Delhi

Bolstered by her maiden Asian Games gold, India's Pranavi Urs is now targeting an Olympic medal and a Major, saying success in the events leading up to June 2027 will be crucial to make the cut for the Los Angeles Games.

The 23-year-old from Mysuru recently became the first Indian woman golfer to win gold at the Aichi-Nagoya Games in Japan. "Olympics maybe or a Major," Pranavi said when asked what she is chasing next.

"My preparation is not gonna (going to) change, I am going to play in LET, just keep doing what I am doing, the cut off date is June 2028, I will be playing as many event



as possible till and may be get a win from there." The gold has also strengthened her belief that an LET title is within reach after she came close to winning on the European

circuit. "It just shows that my game is there and it's up there and it's just a matter of time," she said. "So I just got to be patient and give it time."

The qualification period for women's golf at the LA28 Olympic Games officially began on June 8 this year and will conclude on June 5, 2028, with the final 60-player field to be determined by the OGR standings at the time of the deadline.

Pranavi achieved the feat after carding a 15-under 265 at the Kasugai Country Club East Course last Saturday. Her fine run also carried the Indian women's team comprising Aditi Ashok, and Diksha Dagar to the podium as it bagged a silver medal. "I think it's slowly sinking in. It hasn't sunk in yet fully. Because, I mean, I'm still getting a lot of these messages and calls and lot of interviews, which is very unusual for me. It's little overwhelming, but yeah, it's great to be first one to do it," she said. (PTI)

From village grounds to national arenas: Badnu's young daughters make their mark in cricket

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Bikaner/Mumbai/Delhi

At a time when Indian women's cricket is inspiring millions, a group of talented girls from Badnu, a small village in Rajasthan, is scripting its own story of courage, determination and achievement. Overcoming social and financial barriers, these young athletes have represented Rajasthan at national-level tournaments, won medals and earned opportunities on prestigious sporting platforms.

This extraordinary feat has been made possible by Avaada Foundation, the social impact arm of Avaada Group, which has been supporting the Rajasthan State-Level Under-17 and Under-19 Girls' Cricket Teams from Badnu for two years and has renewed its partnership for the third consecutive year. Beyond sponsorship, the initiative reflects a sustained commitment to nurturing rural sporting talent and enabling girls to pursue their sporting and educational aspirations.

Capturing their inspiring journey, Avaada has launched "Badnu Ke Champions: Ghoonghat Se Helmet Tak,"

a campaign celebrating the transformation of young girls who are challenging social conventions and redefining possibilities through sport. The journey from the ghoonghat to the cricket helmet is more than a change in appearance; it symbolises a shift in mindset, growing confidence and the freedom to pursue ambitions. The campaign highlights how grassroots sporting initiatives can empower rural girls to dream beyond traditional boundaries.

The Foundation covers key expenses, including travel, accommodation, food and nutrition, sports kits, shoes, cricket equipment, tournament fees and practice facilities. It also supports players with logistics, study materials and educational expenses, ensuring that financial constraints do not impede their progress.

The initiative has already yielded remarkable results. Seven girls from Badnu played a pivotal role in helping the Bikaner team win the district-level tournament and the 69th Rajasthan State-Level Cricket Tournament, securing the Rajasthan state championship title.

Among them, Kanchan went on to represent Rajasthan at the National



Ritu Patwari, Director and CSR Head, Avaada Foundation with State-Level Under-17 and Under-19 girls' cricket teams from Badnu, Rajasthan

Championship in Rohtak, Haryana, where her contribution helped the team secure a Silver Medal.

The Under-19 team has also delivered an impressive performance. Six players from Badnu were instrumental in the team's success at the state-level tourna-

ment in Balotra, Barmer, where it finished as runner-up and qualified for the National Championship in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh.

Sarita emerged as the tournament's Best Bowler for her outstanding performance. She subsequently represented

Rajasthan at the national level. Sangeeta won a Bronze Medal and Kanchan secured a Silver Medal at the national level.

In another significant milestone, five young cricketers from Badnu, were selected to participate in trials for the opportunity to serve as net bowlers for the Delhi Capitals Women's Premier League team. This opportunity marked an important step in their sporting journeys, taking them from their village and school grounds to a professional cricket platform and giving them valuable exposure to a higher level of sport.

Commenting on the initiative, Vineet Mittal, Chairman, Avaada Group, said, "At Avaada, we believe that sport can be a powerful catalyst for inclusion, confidence and social change, particularly for young girls in rural communities. The journey of Badnu's daughters is a powerful reflection of what becomes possible when talent is given the right platform, encouragement and opportunity. Our vision is to help create an environment where girls are free to dream, compete and aspire without the barriers of circumstance defining their potential. Supporting women in sport, there-

fore, is not just about creating champions; it is about nurturing confidence, leadership and a generation of young women who believe they can shape their own future."

Ritu Patwari, Director and CSR Head, Avaada Foundation, said, "My association with the girls of Badnu has been deeply personal. Having seen their journey closely at the grassroots, I have witnessed not only their talent on the cricket field, but also the determination, confidence and courage with which they have overcome social and financial barriers. At Avaada Foundation, we believe that when a young girl is given the opportunity to pursue her passion, the impact extends far beyond sport. Our endeavour has been to stand beside these girls through their journey, encourage their ambitions and help create the environment they need to grow. Seeing the daughters of Badnu progress from village grounds to state and national platforms is immensely fulfilling, and I hope their journey inspires many more girls across rural India to dream without limits."

Youtube Link:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TMq8LHuVca4>