

An illustration of a human heart in the center, with a medical professional in blue scrubs and a mask on the right, holding a probe connected to the heart. On the left, a computer monitor displays a heart diagram and a line graph. In the background, another medical professional is visible, and a globe is shown. A heart rate line is drawn across the heart.

America, and inflict even greater losses and damage on the world," he said in a statement on Friday. He described the move as "a weak decision of strong partners", particularly as Ukrainian and U.S. officials were holding talks in Florida aimed at advancing efforts to end the war. Trump said he has repeatedly urged Zelenskyy to reach an agreement with Moscow and argued that the conflict would never have started had he been US president in 2022. "There was no reason that the war with Ukraine and Russia started," he said. "It started due to incompetence." Trump also accused Zelenskyy of presiding over devastating territorial and human losses, saying the war "should have never started" and that it was time for Ukraine to choose a new president. He separately called for elections, although Ukrainian law prohibits voting during martial law. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybaha defended Zelenskyy, saying the Ukrainian people had the right to decide who leads their country.

GRAPEVINE

PMO orders NCPCR hiring

All does not seem to be well in the Women and Child Development. In an effort to cut costs, the Annapurna Devi-led Ministry lectured the country's child protection arm, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), leading to the curtailment of services for more than ten consultants. Aggrieved by the WCD action, the terminated employees knocked on the doors of Seva Teerth, as most of them were recommended by some of the like-minded think tanks. Grapevine has it that the PMO intervened and took the Ministry to task, seeking all details of the NCPCR's modus operandi. During the intervention, the PMO was surprised to learn that the commission was functioning without a regular Chairman and Members, and immediately directed it to declare vacancies.



Akhilesh ko gussa kyon aaya

Last week, during the INDIA bloc protest at Akashvani Bhawan, Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav left the protest venue abruptly. Grapevine has it that he felt 'bad' over the fact that Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi unanimously decided to enter the Akashvani Bhawan. At the same time, Akhilesh and other SP MPs were being detained. Akhilesh immediately left the protest after getting released from detention, and then he did not turn up for the protest the following days. "SP leadership feels Rahul Gandhi is trying to 'own' the fight against the CEC. So, the SP is planning to launch separate yatras and protests in Uttar Pradesh where assembly elections are scheduled early next year. " In any case, in UP we have an upper hand always compared to Congress," quipped a top SP Parliamentarian.



With you, for you, always

While one section has been attacking the force, Delhi Police deserves recognition for how it handled the proposed mass protest at Jantar Mantar. With effective coordination and timely intervention, officers prevented a potential law-and-order crisis from escalating. Barricades held, crowds dispersed without major incident, and the Capital carried on with its daily rhythm. In a city that never stands still, keeping the peace is no small achievement. The men and women in khaki stood firm, ensuring that dissent did not turn into disorder. For their steady vigilance amid the noise, Delhi Police have sent out messages on social media over the last couple of days, even as they faced brickbats on these platforms since the Jantar Mantar protests brought the city to a screeching halt.



ED seeks fast-track trial in Jagan Reddy PMLA cases

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Hyderabad

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has petitioned the Telangana High Court for a day-to-day trial and the personal appearance of all accused in the long-stalled money-laundering prosecutions against former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and 73 others, arguing that nearly a decade of procedural delays has denied them the right to a speedy trial under Article 21 of the Constitution.

In Writ Petition No 33845/2026, filed on September 23, the agency asked the criminal justice system to speed up the resolution of nine prosecution complaints under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. These complaints were filed between 2016 and 2021 in the Special Court for CBI Cases in Nampally, Hyderabad. The court has acknowledged all



nine cases, but they are still stuck at the discharge-petition stage. Hearings have taken place, but decisions keep getting postponed. According to the ED, this is mostly because of changes in presiding officers and other administrative reasons.

The underlying investigation originated from a CBI FIR registered on the direction of the Andhra Pradesh High

Court under Sections 120-B read with 420 of the Indian Penal Code and Section 13(2) read with 13(1)(c) and (d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

The FIR alleged that large-scale Government favours were extended to corporates and individuals during the chief ministership of the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, in exchange for massive invest-

ments into companies controlled by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and his family members. Investors named in the press release include Aurobindo Pharma Ltd., Hetero Drugs Ltd, Indu Projects Ltd., Indu Techzone Pvt. Ltd., Lepakshi Knowledge Hub Pvt Ltd, VANPIC Projects Pvt Ltd, VANPIC Ports Pvt Ltd, Nimmagadda Prasad, Ramky

Pharma City (India) Ltd, and The India Cements Ltd. These entities, the ED states, subscribed to shares at exorbitant rates in firms such as Bharati Cement Corporation Pvt Ltd, Jagati Publications Pvt Ltd, and Janai Infrastructure Pvt Ltd.

The agency emphasised that even after considerable time has elapsed since cognisance, there has been no significant progress. In support of its plea for expedition, the ED invoked the Supreme Court's observations in Criminal Appeal No. 730 of 2013 (YS Jagan Mohan Reddy vs CBI). The apex court held that economic offences form a class apart and must be viewed differently, particularly when they involve deep-rooted conspiracies and huge losses of public funds that threaten the financial health of the country as a whole.

"The proceedings have remained pending in the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy case for

nearly ten years, and the chronology of the proceedings itself demonstrates the absence of reasonable expedition in the prosecution of the matter," the ED stated. It sought day-to-day hearing of both the prosecution complaints and the pending discharge petitions "in the interest of justice."

The agency added that further investigation is in progress. The petition places the High Court squarely at the centre of a recurring institutional problem: high-profile economic offences that linger for years in special courts, long after the investigative agencies have filed their complaints and courts have taken cognisance. Whether the Telangana High Court will direct continuous hearings and the accused's personal attendance remains to be seen, but the filing signals the ED's determination to break a decade-longlogjam in one of the country's most closely watched PMLA matters.

Kharge, Rahul to meet CJI over alleged irregularities in ECI, curbs on protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bengaluru

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday said he and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi would meet the CJI on October 12 to raise concerns over alleged suppression of democratic rights, police action against protesters and irregularities in the Election Commission of India (ECI).

He accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah of creating a situation akin to an "undeclared Emergency" in the country.

Speaking to reporters, Kharge said he had written a letter to the CJI, as had Gandhi, and they had been given a time slot between 4 pm and 5 pm on Monday for the meeting.

"We cannot demand any-



thing before him (Surya Kant). We will request him with folded hands to keep these issues in mind," Kharge said.

Claiming that Modi is scared of youth who are demanding "save democracy and save our votes", Kharge accused the PM and his Government of "suppressing" citizens' rights, and asserted that the Congress would continue to fight to protect the

Constitution, democracy and people's right to vote.

He alleged that the Government was using the police to prevent people from participating in protests and pursuing their genuine demands, causing hardship to youths who wanted to travel for jobs, appointments, schools and colleges.

Kharge also referred to an unprecedented security clampdown and the deten-

tion of CJP protesters to thwart a planned mass mobilisation at Delhi's Jantar Mantar on Saturday to press for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

"Yesterday, nearly 32,000 police personnel and 7,500 CRPF personnel were deployed. This itself shows how much fear the Government has of the youth agitation. As I have already stated, roads were blocked, communication channels were disrupted, access to the airport was restricted, and mobile networks were shut down. All this demonstrates that he does not want democracy to function peacefully in India," he said, taking a dig at PM Modi. "We will continue our fight to protect democracy and the constitutional rights of the people," he added.

CJP leaders walk free under one-year peace bond as Capital remains on edge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In the early hours of Sunday, three senior figures of the Cockroach Janta Party stepped out of Delhi's executive magistrate court after nearly a full day in preventive detention. Abhijeet Dipke, Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das had been taken from an aircraft at Indira Gandhi International Airport the previous morning, moments after landing from Mumbai. Police acted under Sections 126 and 170 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, citing the need to prevent a breach of peace ahead of the group's planned gathering at Jantar Mantar.

The Special Executive Magistrate at Delhi Cantonment accepted a surety bond of ₹50,000 and ordered their release on the explicit condition that they maintain peace and good behaviour for one year. CJP legal affairs head Ratna Singh confirmed the terms, while advocate Soutik Banerjee noted that the three were free to leave. The party itself framed the



outcome as a "major legal victory" after what it called nearly 24 hours of unlawful preventive detention. On X, it declared, "Finally Delhi police is forced to release Abhijeet Dipke, Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das. Cockroaches never die."

Delhi Police insisted that "all due legal procedures" had been followed and that the leaders were produced before the magistrate within the required timeframe. The detentions occurred against a backdrop of an extraordinary security deployment, more than 30,000 police and paramilitary personnel across the city, that had already led to the detention of over 7,000 people the day before, including former chief ministers Arvind Kejriwal, Mamata Banerjee, Pinarayi Vijayan and Manik Sarkar. The protest itself

never reached the designated site; the capital's streets were effectively sealed.

Hours later, Ranka and Das addressed the media at a press conference. Dipke, whose grandmother had died, returned to his village in Maharashtra for the last rites and left the briefing to his colleagues. At the presser, the two leaders said police seized their phones without a proper seizure memo and held them for the full period of detention. They said the devices might have been cloned or otherwise tampered with. Das said they were picked up "as if we were criminals" and taken to separate locations. Responding to the one-year peace condition, Ranka stated that "Prime Minister Modi and Amit Shah were causing the actual breach of peace."

BJP to select civic poll faces from drop box applicants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

The West Bengal BJP has begun preparations in earnest for this year's municipal elections, likely to be held soon after the Durga Pujas, Union Minister and former State party president Sukanta Majumdar said on Sunday, adding the party would be very circumspect in giving tickets to the prospective candidates.

Indicating that the leadership had no plans to pick and choose candidates arbitrarily, Majumdar said that the interested persons could offer their candidatures by dropping their bio-data in drop boxes kept outside the party offices.

"Those who want to contest the civic elections are required to drop their names along with the bio-data in the drop boxes of the respective party offices... only those candidates who are eligible will be selected ... their winnability will definitely be considered for the purpose," Majumdar said, adding that people from cross-sections of the society would be consid-



Union minister Sukanta Majumdar

ered before deciding on the candidates' list. "Among the qualifications would be the good image of the candidate in the region... if any candidate thinks that he has already been selected then he will have to regret later... You may think that you are good... the question is what the people think of you," Majumdar, who was earlier made the in-charge of the civic elections, said.

Soon after the festive season ending Chhath, the State could announce municipal elections for the Kolkata and Howrah Municipal Corporations. Besides, elections could also be held for Balu and some other municipalities. Subsequently, the State could hold elections in other parts of the State.

New investors meet West Bengal BJP chief, industries minister

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

A steady stream of prospective investors has been making a the beeline for Bengal, State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya said on Sunday after a brief meeting with a group of prospective Navi Mumbai investors.

"The world of investors has been closely watching the developments undertaken by the Suwendu Adhikari Government in Bengal... they seem to be quite confident about the changing atmosphere in the State and have expressed their desire to invest in the State," Bhattacharya, who, along with Industries Minister Tapas Roy, met a small group of businessmen, said.

"We have made it clear that the main object of our Government is to improve the law and order situation, which our Chief Minister has impressively done... we have also said that we will ensure an extortion-free State... we have managed to do it to a great extent though I won't say we have been able to achieve total success... our efforts are on and soon we



West Bengal BJP president Samik Bhattacharya

will ensure a robust law and order situation and free Bengal from extortion which was the characteristics of the previous (Trinamool Congress) Government," Bhattacharya said.

"Minister Tapas Roy and I met the prospective investors, and they have shown keen interest in investing in Bengal... today it was a small meeting in here... after the Durga Pujas they will organise a big programme in Mumbai where we will remain present and meet all of them... and highlight our best points... we are sure Bengal will soon be flush with investors," Bhattacharya, who last

month met industrialist Kumaramangalam Birla, said.

The BJP Government was targeting employment generation, which required developing the MSME sector, he said, adding the Sunday's meeting would go a long way in giving a fillip to that cause.

Sunday's development comes close on the heels of Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari meeting Reliance Group chairman Mukesh Ambani and his son Anant. The Ambanis have also promised massive investment in the information technology and semiconductor sector, he said.

IndiGo Delhi-Chennai flight diverted to Hyderabad as power bank catches fire mid-air

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

A power bank catching fire mid-air. Passengers scrambling to contain the flames. An aircraft forced to divert. An incident that could have ended in tragedy unfolded aboard an IndiGo flight from Delhi to Chennai on Sunday, raising serious questions about compliance with aviation safety rules and the dangers of improperly stored lithium-ion batteries.

Flight 6E 6115 was diverted to Hyderabad after smoke was detected from a passenger's electronic device in the overhead luggage compartment. The cabin crew used a

fire extinguisher to douse the flames, and the aircraft landed safely. IndiGo arranged an alternative aircraft to take passengers to Chennai.

A 36-second video from inside the cabin showed passengers initially attempting to tackle the fire with their bags. The footage, however, does not clearly establish who eventually extinguished it.

In a statement, IndiGo said the crew responded promptly and brought the situation under control.

IndiGo's baggage policy permits power banks and spare lithium batteries only in hand baggage. More

importantly, passengers must keep them within personal reach, such as under the seat, in the seat pocket or on their person.

The airline specifically states that these devices "must not be stowed in overhead compartments or checked baggage".

The restriction is not a technicality. A battery fire inside an overhead bin can be difficult to detect immediately, while smoke and flames in an aircraft cabin can quickly create a dangerous situation. Whether the incident resulted from a passenger's mistake, a defective device or another



Representative image

cause remains unclear.

Under IndiGo's policy, passengers may generally carry up to two spare lithium-ion batteries, including power banks, rated at up to 100 watt-hours (Wh), subject to security clearance. Batteries above 100 Wh and up to 160 Wh are permitted only for portable medical devices, with airline approval.

The airline also requires terminals to be insulated against short circuits. Power banks must not be recharged or used to charge other devices during the flight.

The Directorate General

of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued a Dangerous Goods Advisory Circular in November 2025 prohibiting the use of power banks to charge devices on board, including through aircraft seat power outlets. It also requires power banks and spare batteries to be kept out of overhead compartments.

The latest incident comes months after a similar episode involving an IndiGo flight in Chandigarh on March 5, 2026. A passenger's power bank caught fire in a seat pocket after landing, prompting an evacuation. Two fire extinguishers were

used to control the fire, and all passengers were safely escorted to the terminal. Power banks use lithium-based batteries that can undergo thermal runaway, a dangerous chain reaction in which overheating can trigger smoke, intense heat and fire.

Sunday's incident ended without reported casualties, but the consequences of a battery fire at cruising altitude could be far more severe. With explicit safety rules already in place, strict compliance, vigilant enforcement and passenger awareness are essential to prevent a repeat of such incidents.

Pioneer Hulchul...

The Minister-Secretary Duo

The close working relationship between Chhattisgarh Finance Minister O.P. Choudhary and senior IAS officer Mukesh Bansal has become a subject of discussion in political and administrative circles. Choudhary, who holds key portfolios such as Finance, Housing and Environment, is regarded as one of the influential ministers in the state government, while Bansal, a 2005-batch IAS officer, holds several important administrative responsibilities, including the Public Works Department (PWD). Bansal also serves as Secretary to the Chief Minister and is known for handling multiple assignments. He has been entrusted with the responsibility of addressing the state's dilapidated road network, an area that requires sustained monitoring and coordination between the government and the administrative machinery. The rapport between Choudhary and Bansal is often cited as an example of coordination between the political leadership and the bureaucracy. A photograph of the two at a GST Council meeting has recently attracted attention, adding to the discussion surrounding their pro-

fessional association. Effective coordination between ministers and senior officials can play an important role in translating policy decisions into tangible results. Choudhary's working relationship with the bureaucracy is considered one of the factors behind the smooth handling of his departmental responsibilities. Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of this partnership will be measured by the implementation of policies and the results they deliver for the people of Chhattisgarh.

The Then Chief Minister's Name in the Coal Levy Case?

The high-profile coal levy case in Chhattisgarh has returned to the spotlight following the filing of a supplementary charge sheet by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), which reportedly refers to a WhatsApp conversation between Anil Tuteja and the then Mineral Secretary, Ambalagan P. According to details attributed to the charge sheet, the conversation took place on June 15, 2019, and concerned surprise inspections of coal washeries in Korba. The inspections were reportedly treated as confidential, with information about the action being shared within a limited circle of officials. The alleged exchange assumes significance because Ambalagan is said to have sought details of the matter and suggested that the irregularities be brought to the then Chief Minister's notice through Tuteja. Tuteja reportedly responded that the Chief Minister was already aware of the matter. The reference has raised questions about the extent of the political leadership's knowledge of the alleged irregularities at the time. However, a mention in a conversation cannot, by itself, establish criminal liability. The available account also states that the investigating agency has not found direct evidence implicating the then Chief Minister. The evidentiary value of the conversation, the context in which it took place and its relevance to the allegations will ultimately be examined through the legal process. Until the court evaluates the material, any conclusion about the role of the then Chief Minister would be premature. The case once again highlights the distinction between political awareness of an administrative issue and criminal involvement in alleged wrongdoing. The final determination rests with the court on the basis of the evidence placed before it.



Curbing Wasteful Expenditure?

Finance Minister O.P. Choudhary's reported push to rationalise government expenditure has brought the proposed discontinuation of employee bus services between Raipur and Nava Raipur into focus. The existing contract for the service is due to expire on October 31, and the Nava Raipur Development Authority (NRDA) is reportedly not inclined to renew it or invite fresh tenders. The arrangement covers 98 buses that transport more than 3,000 government employees to Nava Raipur. With the existing fleet reportedly in poor condition and no alternative arrangement announced, the service could come to a halt after the contract expires. The proposal raises a larger question about the meaning of expenditure control. While governments must regularly review spending and eliminate avoidable costs, such decisions also need to account for their impact on employees, administrative efficiency and the functioning of government offices. The issue has drawn comparisons with the removal of the Indian Coffee House from the Mantralaya complex, reportedly over subsidy-related expenditure, and its replacement by another restaurant operating under a contract. The new estab-



lishment has reportedly faced criticism from some officials over service quality, pricing and the standard of food. These developments have fuelled a debate over whether cost-cutting measures are consistently delivering better value for public money. If the objective is to reduce unnecessary expenditure, the government must also examine whether existing contracts provide adequate service at reasonable cost. The proposed withdrawal of employee bus services may save money, but it could also create commuting difficulties for thousands of employees travelling to Nava Raipur every day. A comprehensive assessment of expenditure, utilisation and alternative transport arrangements would therefore be necessary before a final decision is implemented. Fiscal discipline is essential, but its success should be judged not merely by the amount saved. The larger objective must be to ensure that public money is spent efficiently while essential services and administrative functioning remain unaffected.

A Power Crisis in a Power-Surplus State?

Reports of power shortages in Chhattisgarh have raised questions about electricity management in a state traditionally regarded as power-surplus. The reported curtailment of supply to industrial units has added to concerns, particularly at a time when reliable electricity is essential for sustaining industrial activity and attracting fresh investment. One explanation being cited for the situation is the nationwide rise in electricity demand, which has reportedly made it difficult to procure additional power from other states. However, the precise reasons for the shortage need to be established through official data on demand, generation, availability, transmission constraints and power purchases. The reported power cuts, said to have lasted several hours in some industrial units, could affect production schedules and increase operating costs. For industries, uncertainty over electricity supply can be as disruptive as the cost of power itself. The situation also raises an important distinction between installed generation capacity and electricity available to meet demand at a particular time. A state may have substantial generating capacity but still face temporary shortages because of plant outages, fuel constraints, transmission limitations or an unexpected spike in demand. The immediate requirement is therefore a clear assessment of the problem rather than assumptions about its causes. The authorities need to establish whether the shortage is temporary or indicative of a wider supply-management challenge. For a state seeking to expand its industrial base, uninterrupted and dependable electricity is a basic requirement. A transparent explanation of the current situation, accompanied by timely corrective measures, would help address concerns among industries and consumers alike.



Gyanesh Kumar and Chhattisgarh

The reported postponement of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar's proposed visit to Chhattisgarh has drawn attention amid a politically charged atmosphere surrounding demands for his removal by opposition parties. Kumar was reportedly scheduled to undertake a two-day visit to the state, during which he was expected to offer prayers at the Danteshwari temple in Dantewada and visit the Chitrakote waterfalls. A possible visit to Boramdeo was also being discussed. The proposed tour came at a time when protests demanding his removal were being reported in different parts of the country. The prevailing political atmosphere has prompted speculation about whether the controversy contributed to the postponement. However, the precise reason for the change in schedule needs official confirmation. The proposed visit had also brought Chhattisgarh's prominent religious and tourist destinations into focus. The Danteshwari temple, one of the state's important pilgrimage centres, attracts devotees from different regions, while Chitrakote is among Bastar's best-known tourist attractions. The postponement leaves the timing of Kumar's next visit uncertain. Whether the tour is rescheduled will become clear once an official programme is announced. The episode also illustrates how the activities of constitutional functionaries can attract heightened political attention during periods of controversy. Any assessment of the reasons behind the postponement, however, should be based on confirmed information rather than speculation.



once an official programme is announced. The episode also illustrates how the activities of constitutional functionaries can attract heightened political attention during periods of controversy. Any assessment of the reasons behind the postponement, however, should be based on confirmed information rather than speculation.

Collector Transfers May Be Delayed Until December

The proposed transfer of six district Collectors in Chhattisgarh may be delayed until December, according to reports circulating in administrative circles. The possible postponement is being linked to upcoming elections in several urban local bodies, including the Birgaon Municipal Corporation. The government is understood to be weighing the timing of the proposed reshuffle against the need to maintain administrative continuity during the election period. Changes in district leadership close to elections can require adjustments in official responsibilities and coordination, making the timing of transfers an important consideration. However, the reported decision to defer the reshuffle has not been officially confirmed. It also remains unclear whether the proposed delay would apply to all six Collectors or only to districts where elections are scheduled. A selective reshuffle remains a possibility, with transfers in districts not affected by the upcoming polls potentially being considered separately. Such a course would allow the government to address administrative requirements while avoiding changes in districts where continuity may be considered necessary. Collector transfers are a routine part of administration, but their timing often assumes greater significance when elections or major government programmes are approaching. The final position will become clear only after the state government issues an official order. Until then, the proposed December timeline should be treated as speculation rather than a confirmed administrative decision.



editor.pioneerraipur@gmail.com

Pact signed for 240 electric buses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Raipur

Chhattisgarh is set to introduce 240 electric buses in Raipur, Bilaspur, Durg-Bhilai and Korba under the Centre's PM-eBus Sewa scheme, with services scheduled to begin with 20 buses each in Bilaspur and Bhilai in November 2026. A concession agreement was signed on Sunday between the four municipal corporations and the selected operator, Chartered Speed Limited, in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister and Urban Administration Minister Arun Sao. The proposed deployment includes 100 electric buses in Raipur, 50 in Durg-Bhilai, 50 in Bilaspur and 40 in Korba. Addressing the agreement-signing ceremony at his residence office in Nava Raipur, Sao said the initiative would help modernise urban public transport while promoting environmental conservation. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's lead-



ership, the country is developing modern infrastructure and advancing efforts towards a cleaner and greener future, he said, describing the PM-eBus Sewa scheme as an important step towards sustainable urban mobility. Sao said rapid urbanisation had increased challenges such as traffic congestion, air pollution and fuel consumption. Electric buses would improve energy efficiency, reduce dependence on conventional fuels and help curb noise pollution, he added. He stressed the need to develop a public transport system suited to citizens' requirements, with convenient connectivity to educa-

tional institutions, hospitals, tourist destinations and other important locations. The proposed e-bus service is expected to provide additional commuting options and support the modernisation of the four cities. Sao also emphasised effective implementation of the scheme and coordination among the departments concerned. According to officials, each electric bus will be equipped with six cameras to enhance passenger safety. Route information will also be made available through a mobile application. The project will require supporting infrastructure, including

charging stations, depots and maintenance facilities. Its development is expected to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities, officials said. Principal Secretary of the Urban Administration and Development Department Sonmoni Borah outlined the scheme's objectives and the preparations underway for its implementation. He said modernising public transport was essential to meet the growing mobility requirements of urban populations. The timely development of charging facilities, depots, bus stops and maintenance centres, along with coordination among departments, would be crucial to launching operations as scheduled, he added. Director of Urban Administration and Development Nilesh Mahadev Kshirsagar, State Urban Development Agency (SUDA) CEO Sumeeet Agrawal and Chartered Speed Limited Managing Director Pankaj Gandhi were among those present.

PWD Secy orders faster road, bridge construction after monsoon



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Raipur

Chhattisgarh Public Works Department (PWD) Secretary Mukesh Kumar Bansal has directed officials and contractors to accelerate construction of roads, bridges, culverts and government buildings after the monsoon while ensuring quality and timely completion of projects. During a visit to Gariaband district, Bansal inspected ongoing and completed infrastructure projects, assessed their progress and reviewed construction quality. He said project monitoring would be strengthened through regular field visits and surprise inspections to ensure that progress on the ground matched official reports. In the Fingeshwar development block, Bansal inspected the 26.20-km road strengthening and widening project on the Kopra-Pokhra route, which also includes the construction of bridges and culverts. He also reviewed the construction of a 3.50-km four-lane road connecting the new fairground at Chaubebandha with Lakshman Jhula in Rajim. During the inspections, he sought updates from departmental officials and stressed the need to maintain prescribed construction standards and adhere to project deadlines.

Sai govt hikes sugarcane bonus base rate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Raipur

The Chhattisgarh government has increased the base rate for calculating sugarcane bonus from Rs 355 to Rs 425 per quintal, a move that will benefit 31,022 farmers supplying sugarcane to four cooperative sugar mills in the state. The decision, announced ahead of Navratri, will result in the disbursement of around Rs 51.09 crore as a bonus to farmers for the 2025-26 crushing season, officials said. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Cooperation Minister Kedar Kashyap congratulated the sugarcane farmers on the decision. Kashyap said the enhanced bonus would improve farmers' returns, strengthen their financial position and help them meet cultivation expenses and prepare for the next crop cycle. He said

the state government was committed to increasing farmers' income and making agriculture more remunerative. The decision is also expected to encourage sugarcane cultivation and support farmers associated with the cooperative sugar mill network, he added. For the 2025-26 crushing season, the bonus has been calculated on the basis of a Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of Rs 329.05 per quintal. With the revised base rate fixed at Rs 425 per quintal, eligible farmers will receive a bonus of Rs 95.95 per quintal. Of the total amount, 14,961 farmers supplying sugarcane to the Boramdeo Cooperative Sugar Mill in Kawardha will receive around Rs 24.55 crore, while 8,049 farmers associated with the Sardar Patel Cooperative Sugar Mill in Pandariya will get approximately Rs 11.68 crore.

Harleen Deol inspires hockey trainees to dream big

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Raipur

Indian women's cricket team player Harleen Deol interacted with trainees at the Residential Hockey Academy in Raipur, sharing experiences from her sporting career and encouraging the young players to work hard to realise their dream of representing the country. The visit was organised at the initiative of Deputy Chief Minister and Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Arun Sao, with the support of the Chhattisgarh State Cricket Association. During the interaction, Deol urged the players to make full use of the training facilities and coaching available at the academy, maintain discipline and set ambitious goals. "Work hard and pursue your goals with dedication; God will also help you. Believe in



yourself and never stop dreaming of playing for the nation," she told the young athletes. Sharing lessons from her sporting journey, Deol said success required more than talent, emphasising the importance of consistent practice, patience, self-confidence and mental strength. She encouraged the players to identify their weaknesses, work on improving their skills and learn from setbacks. The interaction gave the young hockey players an opportunity to learn from an international cricketer's experiences, par-

ticularly the importance of discipline, fitness, teamwork and performing under pressure. The academy also provides training to talented children from remote tribal areas of Chhattisgarh. Living away from their families to pursue their sporting ambitions, these young athletes are working towards improving their skills and aspiring to represent the state and the country at higher levels. Deol's interaction served as an opportunity to motivate the trainees to remain focused on their goals, regardless of

their backgrounds or initial challenges. She also posed for individual photographs with the players and spent time listening to them and answering their questions. The young athletes welcomed the opportunity to interact with an international sports person. Sports Officer Shivraj Sahu, hockey coach Rashmi Tirkey, softball coach T.N. Reddy and other officials and coaches from the Sports and Youth Welfare Department were present on the occasion. The officials encouraged the players to practise regularly, utilise the academy's facilities effectively and strive for excellence in their sporting careers. Such interactions are aimed at motivating young athletes, building their confidence and encouraging sporting talent in Chhattisgarh through the exchange of experiences across disciplines.

After road woes make headlines, surfacing begins in Kabirdham village

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kabirdham

Surfacing work has begun on the dilapidated road connecting Devdaha hamlet in Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district with essential services, following reports highlighting the problems faced by residents. However, villagers have raised concerns over the quality of the material being used, alleging that the soil-like material is being laid instead of proper murrum. The development has raised hopes of relief among residents, who struggle to commute on the muddy road, particularly during the monsoon. However, they have called for an inspection to ensure that the work meets the required standards. Devdaha, a hamlet under Gorakhpur Kala Gram Panchayat in Sahaspur



Lohara Janpad Panchayat, falls under the Pandariya Assembly constituency. The settlement has around 170 residents belonging to 30 families. The approximately 1.5-km stretch serves as the primary route connecting the hamlet to schools, healthcare facilities and other essential services. Its poor condition causes difficulties for schoolchildren, patients, elderly people and women, with the situation worsening during the rainy season. While the commencement of surfacing

work has brought some relief, residents say its long-term usefulness will depend on the quality of the material used and compliance with prescribed construction standards. They have urged officials of the concerned department to inspect the site and conduct a technical assessment to determine whether the material being used is suitable for improving the road. Residents said their requirement was not limited to temporary relief from mud but extended to reliable all-weather connec-

tivity, enabling children to attend school and patients to reach healthcare facilities without difficulty. They have also called for an assessment of the feasibility of constructing a permanent road to ensure durable connectivity. The quality concerns raised by villagers remain to be verified through a technical inspection. Residents are now awaiting a site visit by the concerned officials and appropriate measures to ensure that the road improvement work provides lasting relief.



Sonam Malik reportedly set for wildcard entry in 'Rise & Fall 2'



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Haryanvi actress Sonam Malik could be the latest addition to the second season of reality show "Rise and Fall", with reports of a possible wildcard entry bringing her into the Hindi entertainment spotlight. Malik, who shot to fame after working with Bhojpuri singer-actor Pawan Singh and making statements in his support, is now preparing to move beyond the Bhojpuri music industry and establish herself in the Hindi entertainment world. The actress collaborated with Singh in the popular Bhojpuri song "Aara Ke Othlali." This song sparked speculation about their professional relationship.



She also made headlines after openly speaking out in support of Singh. There's buzz in the entertainment industry that the Bhojpuri superstar has offered to help Sonam advance her career. However, no official details have been released regarding this matter. After working in the Bhojpuri music industry, Malik also starred in Chaupal Originals' Haryanvi project "Dak Khana." She co-starred with ND Kundu in this project. She is also in the news for her upcoming Hindi film "Mahak." Malik's alleged wild card entry is being seen as the next step in her career. It will be interesting to see how her personality, strategy, and game-play on the reality show appeal to viewers.

Ganesh Acharya's 'Ganesh: Dust to Stardust' trailer out, film to release



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

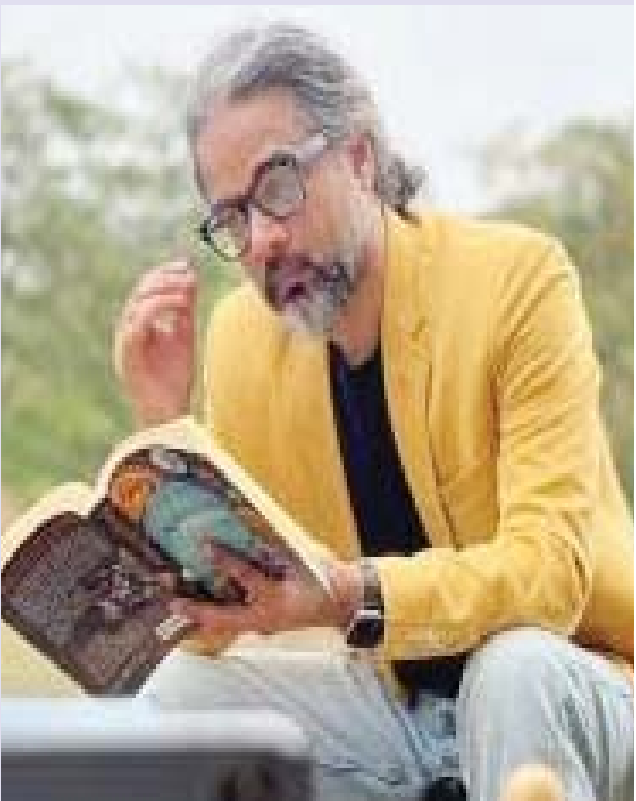
Choreographer-filmmaker Ganesh Acharya has unveiled the trailer of Ganesh: Dust to Stardust, a film about ambition, setbacks and perseverance, which is set to release in theatres on December 11,

2026. The film stars Shivanshu Soni, Alok Shaw, Sukanya Kalan, and Sakshi Pawaskar in lead roles. The trailer depicts ambition, responsibility, sacrifice, and the struggle to achieve one's dreams while battling difficult circumstances. Acharya, known for his dance sequences in Indian cinema, is attempting to weave dance, emotion, and entertainment into a story with this film. The film aims to highlight the struggles and courage of those who strive to achieve their dreams despite adverse circumstances. Speaking about the trailer, the 55-year-old choreographer-director said that everyone has the right to dream, but achieving them requires hard work, sacrifice, and determination. He expressed hope that the film will allow audiences to connect with their own dreams, struggles, and aspirations. Producer Soundarya Acharya said the film is a story about staying true to dreams, even when circumstances sometimes seem impossible. She added that passion, hard work, and emotion were central to the film's production. A V2S Productions & Entertainment presentation, the film is produced by Soundarya Acharya. The story and direction are by Ganesh Acharya, with the screenplay and dialogues written by Digangana Suryavanshi and Acharya. The music and background score are composed by Junaid Kumar. The lyrics are penned by Sameer Anjaan and Acharya. Ajay Pandey is in charge of cinematography, Rakesh Ram has edited the film, and Amrish Yamanappa Patange and Daya Vanniyar of Red Amice have handled production design. Choreography has been led by Acharya and his team.

'Hanuman Ansh' director Vishal Chaturvedi urges youth to shun drugs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Varanasi

Filmmaker and 'Hanuman Ansh' director Dr Vishal Chaturvedi has urged young people to shun substance abuse, stay connected to Indian cultural values and channel their energy towards the country's development. Speaking at the 'Youth for Viksit Bharat: My Bharat Youth Conference' at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Chaturvedi expressed concern over the glorification of smoking and drugs in films and on social media, cautioning young people against blindly imitating lifestyles portrayed on screen. "Not everything that looks attractive on screen is right in real life," he said, urging the youth to make informed choices rather than follow others' lifestyles without considering the consequences. The conference, chaired by union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, brought together young participants from across the country. Sharing his nearly 15 years of experience in the film industry, Chaturvedi said that bringing stories based on Sanatan culture and Indian values to the mainstream is a challenge. Sharing the inspiration behind the making of his film "Hanuman Ansh," he explained that the film is inspired by the life and teachings of Neem Karoli Baba. During the event, he sang a song from the film and also recited the Hanuman Chalisa with the youth. He said that by focusing on their aspirations and embracing Indian values, young people can play a vital role in building a developed India.



Olivia Culpo and Christian McCaffrey welcome second baby boy, reveal his name as Roman Augustus McCaffrey



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Washington

American actress and model Olivia Culpo and her husband, NFL star Christian McCaffrey, welcomed their second child, a baby boy named Roman Augustus McCaffrey on September 29. The couple announced the arrival of their son on Instagram on October 10, sharing intimate black-and-white photographs from the hospital and heartwarming family moments with their newborn and their 14-month-old daughter, Colette. Culpo captioned the post, "Roman Augustus McCaffrey" followed by a white heart emoji, revealing her newborn's name as she gave birth with her NFL star husband, 30, by her side. The photos, shared on the social media, the couple could be seen holding their son at the hospital as their 14-month-old daughter, Colette, looked on. Simultaneously, another picture displayed Culpo standing in a garden as she held Roman, with Colette standing by her side. The actress and model also expressed her joy in a heartfelt message, writing, "Heart is exploding." Culpo along with her husband McCaffrey first announced the news of her second pregnancy on her 34th birthday in May. Culpo, sharing a joint post on her social media, wrote, "Best birthday gift. Baby #2 coming soon." The post included photos of the pair on a picnic with Colette and their dog, Oliver. A strip of sonogram images was displayed on their picnic blanket. They later posted a video showing the moment they found out Culpo was pregnant and how they told their families the happy news. According to People magazine, the couple welcomed their first child, daughter Colette, in July 2025. They made an Instagram post that featured black-and-white photos of themselves with the baby moments after she was born. Culpo also shared colored pictures of her first born from the day.

Barry Manilow cancels Las Vegas shows after bronchitis diagnosis days after returning to stage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

American singer-songwriter Barry Manilow has cancelled his Las Vegas performances after being diagnosed with bronchitis, just days after returning to the stage following a weeks-long break, according to Variety. The 83-year-old singer was scheduled to perform at the International Theatre at Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino on October 10, but his representatives confirmed the cancellation to Variety after he fell ill. Meanwhile, Manilow had to stop his performance after reportedly singing two songs before walking off stage. His band continued to play even though he left the stage until an announcement was made that the show ended. Concertgoers noted on social media that they received emails afterwards from Ticketmaster saying they would be getting a refund, the reports said. In a

Variety, representatives of Manilow and the resort said, "After a triumphant welcome-back concert on Thursday, Barry got his with bronchitis and had to cancel his Friday and Saturday shows." Notably, the development comes months after Manilow revealed that he had been diagnosed with stage 1 lung cancer and had undergone surgery to remove a cancerous section of his lung. On Thursday, October 8, Manilow's concert

the busy schedule has taken a toll on him and that he needed a break until returning to Westgate Las Vegas on October 8, according to Variety. Manilow has made it public that he was diagnosed with stage 1 lung cancer a month earlier in December 2025. He





marked his first return to the stage after taking a break

also stated that he underwent a lobectomy procedure to remove an entire lobe of a lung which the doctors found a cancerous spot while doing an MRI. The singer also mentioned that the doctors ordered the scan after he suffered from bronchitis for six weeks, followed by a relapse of another five weeks. Although he had recovered and returned to performing, his doctor advised him to undergo further tests. Meanwhile, speaking about the diagnosis, Manilow said that finding the cancer early was a matter of luck and credited

from performing. His previous concert at the venue was on August 22. Earlier, the singer also shared that he was taking the time off after completing the summer tour of 29 shows in 68 days. He said that

his doctor for discovering it

soon. On March, the singer, who released his 33rd studio album, What a Time, on June 5, spoke about how his cancer treatment journey has changed his perspective towards life and music. "You just don't even think about [how fragile life is]," he said. Manilow added, "And suddenly, you have lung cancer. But I'm still here. I'm not all here; there's part of me that isn't here - they look out a part of me, and now I've got to figure out, 'What do I do?'" Furthermore, Barry Manilow's representatives have not yet announced his return to the stage.

Viksit Bharat possible through inclusive growth: Vice President

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Deoghar (Jharkhand)

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Saturday said the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' can become a reality only when all states, districts and villages develop together.

He said Jharkhand could emerge as a powerful centre of inclusive and sustainable development with the right investment in education, healthcare, skills, technology and entrepreneurship.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. It can become a reality only when every state, district and small village develops together. Access to quality healthcare and higher education for tribal communities and rural folk lies at the heart of the mission," Radhakrishnan said while addressing the second convocation of AIIMS, Deoghar.

He said it is the fundamental right of every citizen to have the best healthcare.



Vice President CP Radhakrishnan speaks during the 'Sainya Sampark Mela Sadaiv Apke Saath' organised by the Indian Army to support veterans, Veer Naris and their families, in Deoghar. PTI

"Over the last decade, the country witnessed an unprecedented expansion of medical education and healthcare infrastructure. New AIIMS and medical colleges have been set up, there has been a rapid increase in MBBS and post-graduate seats, and flagship missions such as Ayushman Bharat

brought health insurance to the poorest households," he said. Earlier, there was only one AIIMS in the country. Now, the number has increased to 12, and more will come up, the VP said.

"The number of medical colleges has more than doubled from 387 in 2014, when Prime Minister

Narendra Modi took charge, to 846 now," he said.

Radhakrishnan said the number of MBBS seats increased from 5,100 to 1.39 lakh, and the number of post-graduate seats from 31,000 to around 86,000 during the same period.

He urged students to carry their learnings beyond the walls of their institutions to the villages and the most distant corners of the country. The institute conferred degrees upon 50 MBBS, 94 BSC, 12 MSc and eight Doctor of Medicine (MD) and Master of Surgery (MS) students on the occasion.

Later, the VP visited the Sainya Sampark Mela - Sadaiv Apke Saath - in Deoghar, organised by the Indian Army in collaboration with the Deoghar district administration to provide welfare services and grievance redressal facilities to ex-servicemen, 'Veer Naris' and their dependents across the Santhal Pargana region, an official release said.

India-US trade pact to be finalised keeping changed circumstances in mind, says Goyal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The US and India announced in February that they had reached a framework for an interim trade agreement, but circumstances have changed, and the pact will be finalised accordingly, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Saturday.

He also said that trade pact negotiations are on with number of regions including Israel, Chile, GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and Russia-led group Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

"USA (trade pact) February me announce hua. Thodi paristhitiyan badli hain, usko abhi madde nazar rakhte hue final hoga. (It was announced in February. Some circumstances have changed; the final decision will be made keeping that in mind)," Goyal said here while addressing members of industry chamber PHDCCI.



India is seeking lower tariffs for its goods than its competitors in the American markets. The minister did not elaborate about those circumstances, but the changing tariff landscape in the US has led to further negotiations about the first phase of bilateral trade agreement (BTA) between India and the US.

Goyal earlier this month met US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on the sidelines of G20 trade minister meeting in

Milwaukee. Both discussed trade pact-related issues. Further, the minister said that negotiations for a trade pact with Canada are moving at a faster pace and talks for an agreement with South Africa-led SACU group will start soon.

Several countries are keen to negotiate trade agreements with India, he said adding talks with Mexico will be launched next week. Goyal informed that the trade ministers of the UK and Canada will be

visiting India next week. India and the UK implemented a trade agreement in July. The UK minister will be here for the India-UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting.

The Union Minister slams Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his claims and statements after meeting President Droupadi Murmu. "It was an objectionable behaviour ... He has insulted the President ... This is a sense of anarchy," Goyal said, adding that the opposition leaders have misbehaved with security personnel. A delegation of INDIA bloc leaders met President Murmu on Friday evening and handed her a memorandum on the alleged "vote chori".

After the meeting, Gandhi said he was shocked and stunned that the President did not deny the "election theft" charge and "accepted" what the opposition leaders stated.

Tushar Gandhi, actor Imran Khan among 400 people held for protesting in Mumbai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Mumbai

Police on Saturday detained around 400 people, including actor Imran Khan, activist Tushar Gandhi, and CPI (M) workers among others, from various locations in Mumbai for protesting without permission in solidarity with the Cockroach Janata Party's demonstration in New Delhi. The demonstrations were held at the August Kranti Maidan, Hutatma Chowk, and other locations.

At Hutatma Chowk, several workers of the Prakash Ambedkar-led



Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) protested. Hundreds of people, including those belonging to Tushar Gandhi-led 'Hum Bharat Ke Log' organisation, and activists of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) assembled at the August Kranti Maidan

without permission, and around 200 of them were detained for protesting, a police official said. The process of registering an FIR against them was underway, he said. "Overall, around 400 people were detained from various spots," the official said. One of the protesters, Rubaid Bhojani, alleged that the police took the protesters into custody "very brutally". "We voted for the Prime Minister, but he betrayed us. We demand Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar's resignation," Bhojani said.

Coal India chief reviews production targets at SECL's Kusmunda mine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Raipur

Coal India Limited Chairman B. Sairam on Sunday inspected South Eastern Coalfields Limited's (SECL) Kusmunda Mega Project in Chhattisgarh's Korba district and reviewed coal production, over-burden removal and measures to achieve the revised production target. During the visit, Sairam inspected several mining patches, assessed ongoing operations and discussed operational constraints with officials and stakeholders. He first reviewed mining activities from the Kusmunda mine viewpoint before inspecting the departmental mining patch.

He subsequently visited the new contractual mining patch operated



by KNR and took stock of the ongoing operations. At Neelkanth coal face, the Coal India chairman assessed the prevailing

mining conditions, coal face exposure and operational activities. Sairam stressed the need to achieve the production target set for the

Kusmunda project and undertook a detailed review of the constraints affecting output. He discussed measures to address operational challenges and enhance coal production. Following the field inspection, he chaired a meeting with Kusmunda Area officials, representatives of contractual agencies and other stakeholders.

The discussions focused on production targets, coordination among agencies and steps to resolve operational issues. SECL Chairman-cum-Managing Director Harish Duhan joined the meeting through video conferencing. Director (Technical-Operations) Ramesh Chandra Mohapatra, Director (Technical-Planning and Projects) Nripendra Nath and other senior officials were also present.

2,947 bus marshals, 56 special buses for women: CM lists safety measures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Saturday that the Delhi Government has deployed 2,947 bus marshals on Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses and is operating 56 special buses for women as part of its safety measures. Of the 56 special buses, 15 operate during the evening shift, with armed women police personnel deployed on them after 5 pm, she said.

All buses are connected to the Bus Management System (BMS), with panic alarms, live CCTV feeds, and GPS round the clock. Meanwhile, the Public Works Department (PWD) has installed 96,000 street-lights on roads, including 45,000 HPSV lights and 51,000 LED lights. The department has 2,53,983 CCTV cameras in operation. Citizens can also register complaints through the toll-free number 1908 and the PWD Seva Portal.

The Chief Minister said 11 One Stop Centres in Delhi assist women. Women's Helpline 181 has been linked



the Bus Management System (BMS). The control centre monitors panic alarms, live CCTV feeds, and GPS round the clock.

Meanwhile, the Public Works Department (PWD) has installed 96,000 street-lights on roads, including 45,000 HPSV lights and 51,000 LED lights. The department has 2,53,983 CCTV cameras in operation. Citizens can also register complaints through the toll-free number 1908 and the PWD Seva Portal.

The Chief Minister said 11 One Stop Centres in Delhi assist women. Women's Helpline 181 has been linked

with Emergency Helpline 112, One Stop Centres, Child Helpline 1098, Shakti Sadan and protection officers to ensure coordinated assistance when needed.

In Delhi, Child Helpline 1098 is linked to Emergency Helpline 112, child care institutions, and District Child Protection Units. The city has 30 Government-run and 56 non-Governmental child care institutions. In addition, one after-care home for boys and one for girls are available.

She said Child Welfare Committees and Juvenile Justice Boards are functioning

as statutory bodies to protect children's rights. Eleven District Child Protection Units work to connect children in need with assistance, protection, and rehabilitation.

She also said that 15 women's shelter homes are operational in Delhi. Keeping working women's needs in mind, 14 working women's hostels are available, with a combined capacity of 2,427.

Sub-Divisional Magistrates have been designated as Child Marriage Prohibition Officers to prevent child marriage, while schools have around 1.5 lakh CCTV cameras to improve children's safety and confidence, she said.

The chief minister added that 1,397 schools are providing self-defence training under the Rani Lakshmbai Self-Defence Training Programme. She also highlighted the multi-layered safety network, including the Women's Helpline 181, DTC services, and child-protection measures.

BJP ex-MLA's daughter among 7,000 detained

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Yashaswinee Rajee Singh, whose father is former BJP MLA Vikram Singh from Fatehpur Sadar in Uttar Pradesh, was detained by Delhi Police on Saturday during a major crackdown on protests calling for Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar to resign.

Yashaswinee wrote on X that police detained her near Bangla Sahib 'for sitting in a park' and took her to Keshav Puram police station. She later posted a video saying the incident happened around 11 to 11.30 am and claimed police were detaining people at random, even those just sitting on benches.

Her detention was part of increased security across Delhi before a planned protest at Jantar Mantar organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP).

This is not the first time



Yashaswinee has been involved with CJP activities. Earlier this year, she became known during the June and July student protests at Jantar Mantar, which called for Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to resign over alleged exam paper leaks.

As a content creator, she openly supported the CJP campaign and joined related protests.

Reports say she keeps her political views separate from her father's and rarely talks politics with him.

Armed with posters, goggles and raincoats, protest veterans guide first-timers



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

With digital posters, political artwork, and advice on how to protect themselves, many protesters who took part in the July demonstration returned to support those joining the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) latest stir in Delhi on Saturday, hoping to join a protest that unfolded amid heavy security and mass detentions. Some made posters at home, while others created digital artwork focusing on illegal imprisonment and the absence of name tags on police personnel, while also preparing for scenarios such as a lathi charge.

Those who had experienced the earlier demonstration advised newcomers to carry at least two masks, swimming goggles, raincoats, and clothes they would be comfortable getting wet in, anticipating possible police action in response to their posters.

"We had participated in the July protest, so this time we wanted people joining the demonstration to be better prepared. Many of us have also been making political artwork and posters at home for people to carry during the protest," a protester said.

Hardik, who participated in the earlier demonstrations, said he had created digital political artwork ahead of Saturday's protest, focusing on issues such as alleged illegal detentions and police personnel not wearing name tags. He had also prepared for possible scenarios, including a lathi charge.

"As we fight for the freedom we once celebrated in cinema,

we remember the tears our nation shed as our forefathers fought an exploitative regime. Today, we carry the torch of non-violence through the dark alleys of fascism once again," he said.

"Most of my friends are women, and given how unsafe it feels today, I will be fighting for them as well. I am sure this protest will continue for a while. I made posters advising people to carry at least two masks, swimming goggles, raincoats and clothes they would be comfortable getting wet in, keeping in mind the possibility of police action," he added.

Hardik had also participated in the protest demanding the resignation of former Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the July 20 march to Parliament. But Saturday's planned gathering at Jantar Mantar did not take shape on a large scale. Delhi Police denied permission for the demonstration, citing inadequate notice and concerns over compliance with rules during an earlier protest.

For protesters returning after July, even finding one another proved difficult, with updates largely circulating through social media.

Although Jantar Mantar remained largely inaccessible to demonstrators, the posters, artwork and advice brought by returning participants offered a glimpse of how the earlier protest had shaped preparations for the next, with those who had been there before trying to ensure that newcomers did not have to face the uncertainty alone.

Barricades, checks, diversions: Central lanes choke amid protest call

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Amid the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) call for a protest at Jantar Mantar on Saturday, Delhi Police imposed traffic restrictions on most roads leading to Central Delhi, especially Jantar Mantar and Parliament Street, from early morning, with barricades, vehicle checks and diversions slowing movement on several roads.

At every road leading to the protest site, police personnel, along with paramilitary forces, were seen deployed in large numbers to monitor traffic and prevent any gathering in the vicinity. Though the footfall was low in the city, heavy traffic congestion was reported across several parts of central Delhi due to tightened security arrangements.

Apart from curbs, police are also conducting search-

es at various spots and key stretches leading to the protest site, which has caused congestion.

While senior officials maintain they are ensuring no trouble for regular commuters, traffic around Central Delhi is moving very slowly. Forces manned the barricades to closely monitor vehicular movement across the capital. They checked ID cards and other documents before allowing entry to those having offices in central Delhi.

The heightened security came amid traffic curbs, metro restrictions, train cancellations and a mobile internet suspension in central and other parts of the national capital to "maintain law and order" in view of the Cockroach Janta Party's (CJP) call for a protest on Saturday demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

The entry was restricted at



Vehicles crawl in a heavy traffic jam on the Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway near the Sirhaul Toll Plaza along the Delhi-Gurgaon border as police set up barricades for security checking in Gurugram on Saturday PTI

stretches including Connaught Place, Ashoka Road-Jantar Mantar Road roundabout, Tolstoy Marg-Janpath crossing, Jai Singh Road-Sansad Marg crossing, Rail Bhawan roundabout, Patel Chowk, Gol Dak Khana, Windsor Place, Mandi House, the Chelmsford Road-Sansad Marg intersections, the Barakhamba Road intersection and the Minto Road-Deen Dayal Upadhyay

Marg junction.

The restrictions further included Bharian Road-Mahatma Gandhi Marg intersection, Lodhi Road flyover, Neela Gumbad roundabout, Madarsa T-point, Samrat Hotel roundabout, Sardar Patel Marg-Panchsheel Marg crossing, the underpasses beneath the Bhikaji Cama Place and Moti Bagh flyovers, and the Ring Road-San Martin

Gumbad roundabout,

Madarsa T-point, Samrat Hotel roundabout, Sardar Patel Marg-Panchsheel Marg crossing, the underpasses beneath the Bhikaji Cama Place and Moti Bagh flyovers, and the Ring Road-San Martin

Marg intersection. The diversions, which began at 6 am, will be regulated based on the prevailing law-and-order situation. According to the traffic advisory, the affected stretches include the Ashoka Road-Jantar Mantar Road roundabout, Tolstoy Marg-Janpath crossing, Jai Singh Road-Sansad Marg crossing, Rail Bhawan roundabout, Patel Chowk, Gol Dak Khana and Windsor Place.

Traffic movement may also be affected at Mandi House, the Chelmsford Road and Sansad Marg intersections with Connaught Place's outer circle, the Barakhamba Road intersection and the Minto Road-Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg junction. Other locations include the Chelmsford Road-Connaught Place outer circle intersection,

Bharian Road-Mahatma Gandhi Marg intersection, Lodhi Road flyover, Neela

Gumbad roundabout, Madarsa T-point, Samrat Hotel roundabout, Sardar Patel Marg-Panchsheel Marg crossing, the underpasses beneath the Bhikaji Cama Place and Moti Bagh flyovers, and the Ring Road-San Martin Marg intersection.

Visuals showed a heavy police presence around the protest site early in the morning, with personnel stationed along the roads and at barricades across the city. Traffic continued to move smoothly as police kept a close watch on vehicles entering and leaving the area, stopping and checking some cars.

Commuters have been advised to avoid non-essential travel and allow extra time for their journeys. Those travelling to railway stations, inter-state bus terminals or the airport through New Delhi and central Delhi have been asked to plan accordingly.

Editor's
TAKE

The Nobel goes to the law, not the loudest

By honouring Navi Pillay for her defence of human rights and international law, the Nobel Committee has made a pointed statement in an era of eroding global institutions

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has chosen a jurist over a campaigner. On Friday, Oslo honoured Navi Pillay, 85, "for her efforts to promote peace and international law." Within hours, Donald Trump reshared a Truth Social post accusing the committee of demeaning the prize and branding Pillay a hater of America and Israel. The White House announced fresh sanctions on the International Criminal Court the same day. Pillay's record answers her critics. Born to an Indian Tamil family in apartheid Durban, she became a lawyer in a system built to exclude people like her. She later presided over the Rwanda tribunal's Akayesu trial, the first genocide conviction by an international court, which established that rape can constitute genocide.

She served as a judge at the ICC and as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights from 2008 to 2014, the first woman of colour to hold that post. Her work has been the slow, unglamorous kind: building courts, writing judgments, insisting that the powerful answer to the same rules as everyone else. That is precisely what Alfred Nobel's will asked for: fraternity between nations and the advancement of peace conferences in their modern form. The committee's logic is that peace without law is only a pause between wars. In a year when the rules-based order is being dismantled by its own architects, the choice reads less like provocation than reminder. Israel will say Pillay's chairing of the UN inquiry that concluded Israel committed genocide in Gaza disqualifies her. Israel rejects that finding, and Benjamin Netanyahu has accused the committee of losing its moral compass.

They may dispute her conclusions, but a jurist is honoured for four decades of record, not for pleasing any single government. Now Trump. His case is that he ended eight wars, and his defenders point to ceasefires and the Abraham Accords. Yet the Ukraine war he promised to end on day one grinds on, his designs on Greenland have rattled allies, and he has spent the year undermining international institutions, the ICC among them. Pillay spent her life building those institutions. This is also the year he launched the war on Iran. US-Israeli strikes have produced a conflict now seven months old that has upended global energy supplies. India, which imports most of its crude, pays for it at the pump. In March, Trump told the Washington Examiner he was "not interested" in the prize.

Seven months on, he says he deserves it. Awarding the Peace Prize to a leader in the middle of a war he began would invert its purpose. The Nobel exists to restrain war-making, not decorate it. A medal now would read as a certificate of approval for an unfinished war, and for the idea that might comes before law. Maria Corina Machado's gift of her medal changes nothing; a Nobel cannot be transferred. Pillay joked, on hearing the news, that she might share the prize with Trump if the applause continued. It was a good line. The committee's decision was a better answer.

Navi Pillay: A voice for justice in a world at war

From apartheid-era South Africa to the highest institutions of international justice, Navi Pillay has spent her life defending the vulnerable and challenging impunity. The 2026 Nobel Peace Prize recognises her contribution to human rights and international law, and her enduring belief that peace is impossible without dignity, equality and justice for all.



SANTHOSH
MATHEW

"Citizens in Israel, citizens in Gaza, children on both sides have a right to live." These words from Navi Pillay, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, capture the spirit of her lifelong struggle for human dignity.

In a world torn apart by wars and violence, her message is simple: every human life matters, and no one should be denied justice because of their identity or nationality. Navanethem "Navi" Pillay, a South African jurist of Indian origin, has won the 2026 Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts to promote peace and international law. Her recognition brings global attention to a woman who has spent decades fighting racial discrimination, defending political prisoners and helping strengthen international justice.

Her life shows that the fight for peace begins with the protection of human rights. Born in Durban, South Africa, on September 23, 1941, Pillay grew up in a modest family. Her father was a bus driver, while her mother looked after their eight children. Her grandfather had migrated from Tamil Nadu to South Africa as an indentured labourer. The family faced financial difficulties, and the racial discrimination of the apartheid era made life harder for people of Indian origin and Black South Africans.

Pillay refused to let these barriers determine her future. She studied law at the University of Natal and, in 1967, opened her own legal practice. At a time when racial discrimination shaped almost every aspect of life in South Africa, she stood beside those who challenged the system.

She defended anti-apartheid activists and political prisoners and spoke out against the ill-treatment of people in custody. For Pillay, the law was not simply a profession. It was a way to protect people who had little power to defend themselves. Her work taught her an important lesson: justice must be available to everyone, not just the rich and powerful.

She later pursued higher studies at Harvard Law School, earning a master's degree in law and a doctorate in 1988. In 1995, she became a judge of the South African High Court, marking another milestone in her remarkable career. Her contribution to international justice became especially important during her service at the International Criminal



HER LIFE SHOWS THAT THE FIGHT FOR PEACE BEGINS WITH THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. BORN IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA, ON SEPTEMBER 23, 1941, PILLAY GREW UP IN A MODEST FAMILY. HER FATHER WAS A BUS DRIVER, WHILE HER MOTHER LOOKED AFTER THEIR EIGHT CHILDREN. HER GRANDFATHER HAD MIGRATED FROM TAMIL NADU TO SOUTH AFRICA AS AN INDENTURED LABOURE

The writer is Professor at Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies & Social Sciences Pondicherry Central University

Tribunal for Rwanda. She served as its president from 1999 to 2003. The tribunal was established to prosecute those responsible for the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

One of the most important legal developments associated with the tribunal was the recognition that rape and sexual violence could form part of genocide.

The landmark Akayesu judgment helped establish this principle. It was a major step towards recognising the suffering of women during wars and ensuring that sexual violence could not be ignored in the pursuit of justice. Pillay went on to serve as a judge at the International Criminal Court from 2003 to 2008.

She then became the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, holding the position from 2008 to 2014. In this role, she raised concerns about human rights violations in conflict zones and called for greater protection for vulnerable communities.

Her message was clear: governments must respect human rights, and those responsible for serious crimes must be held accountable. Peace cannot last when victims are forgotten and perpetrators escape justice. Pillay also supported women's rights through her association with Equality Now, an international organisation working to end discrimination against women and girls.

She contributed to efforts against the death penalty and took part in international initiatives promoting freedom of information

and democracy.

Her career reminds us that peace is much more than the absence of war. A ceasefire may stop the guns for a while, but lasting peace requires justice, dignity and trust. When innocent people suffer and serious crimes go unpunished, the wounds of conflict remain open. Independent courts and international institutions can help victims seek justice and make it harder for powerful individuals to act without fear of accountability.

Pillay's Indian roots make her story particularly meaningful to readers in India. From a family whose history began in Tamil Nadu to the highest levels of international justice, her journey reflects the power of education, determination and public service. She has shown that a person from a modest background can make a difference far beyond national borders.

The 2026 Nobel Peace Prize recognises not only Pillay's achievements but also the importance of defending human rights in an increasingly troubled world. Her life carries a message that is relevant to every nation: peace cannot be built on fear, discrimination or silence.

As wars continue to displace families and claim innocent lives, the world needs voices that remind leaders of their responsibilities.

Navi Pillay has spent much of her life being such a voice. Her journey offers a simple but powerful lesson: lasting peace begins when every human being is treated with dignity and justice is denied to no one.

Daiv Vani

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

The Best Offering Is the Dearest One

Worship is tested not by what we offer when it is easy, but by what we are willing to offer when it is not.

According to a tradition retold in the Bengali Krittivasi Ramayana, Rama, preparing for the final battle with Ravana, worshipped the Goddess Durga out of season, in autumn, seeking her blessing before he faced a mighty enemy. He resolved to offer one hundred and eight blue lotuses and gathered them with great effort. As the worship neared its end, he found that one lotus was missing. The Goddess, it is said, had hidden it to test him.

Rama did not look for a convenient substitute or quietly shorten his vow. Remembering that his eyes were compared to lotuses, and that he was called Rajivalochana, the lotus-eyed one, he took an arrow and prepared to offer one of his own eyes to complete the number. At that very moment the Goddess appeared, held his hand, and blessed him with victory.

The story does not ask us to harm ourselves. It asks us to look honestly at what we call an offering. Often we give from our surplus, a little leftover time, a little money we will not miss, and then expect full results from half-hearted effort, in prayer, in study, in relationships and in work.

This Navaratri, choose one commitment you have been keeping only halfway, and offer it your best, not your leftover.

-DAIV

The gift that goes beyond giving



NAMRATA
KOHLI

2ND OPINION

What if a gift could keep giving? Could it have a second life, an afterlife, long after the wrapping paper has been discarded?

I found an interesting answer at the PM Mementos E-Auction exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art recently. The gifts and mementos received by Prime Minister Narendra Modi include paintings, sculptures, handicrafts, religious objects and memorabilia from across India. But what interested me was not simply what they were, but what happens to them next.

They are documented, displayed and auctioned. The proceeds go towards Namami Gange. This year, 1,498 mementos have been put up for auction. Previous editions have raised more than ₹50 crore. "Apne uphaaron ka bhi upyog," Culture Minister Gajendra Singh



Shekhawat told me. Even our gifts can be put to use. "The idea is to create value for a very special cause," he said, describing the Ganga as not merely a river but "jeevan ka aadhar", the basis of life for millions.

There is something powerful in that journey. An object begins as a gift, acquires another layer of meaning through its recipient, finds another owner and ultimately creates value for an entirely unrelated cause.

Standing there at the beginning of the festive season, I wondered whether there was a larger lesson here. Diwali gifting has increasingly become an industry of excess. Bigger hampers, elaborate packaging, imported chocolates, candles, crockery and dry fruits move from office to home and often from one home to another.

We spend enormous energy deciding what to give and remarkably little wondering what happens to it after

wards. Why should the life of a gift end with its first recipient? Pass it on. Auction it. Donate it. Repurpose it. If something sitting unopened in my cupboard can bring pleasure or value to somebody else, why should we feel embarrassed about giving it another life?

Better still, think about its consequence before buying it. Buy a handwoven textile and your gift supports a weaving tradition. Choose something made by an artisan and your festive budget becomes somebody's livelihood. Gift a book and it may begin a conversation. Give an experience and there may be no packaging to discard. Donate in someone's name and a person who already has everything doesn't receive yet another thing. A good gift need not be expensive. It should have meaning, utility or consequence.

We talk a great deal about the circular economy in the context of industry. Perhaps we need a circular economy of generosity too.

This Diwali, instead of only asking, "What should I give?", ask another question: "What good can my gift do after I have given it?" Because sometimes the most valuable gift is the one whose value doesn't end when it changes hands.

The writer is an author, podcaster and a Senior Fellow at the Ministry of Culture, Government of India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UN warns its employees of unrest in Delhi

The United Nations Mission in India has issued a confidential advisory to its employees warning of a possible civil unrest situation in the country due to protest called by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) and various student organisations in Delhi. The advisory outlines precautionary measures to be taken during and after a potential civil unrest situation, warning employees of possible rioting, looting and arson.

The advisory comes as the Modi government steps up security arrangements to contain the planned protest, which began as a movement against examination paper leaks and has since broadened to include allegations of electoral malpractice, with protesters raising the issue of 'vote chori (theft)' and demanding the resignation of chief election commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. The CJP and student organisations have appealed to students, young people and members of the public to gather at Jantar Mantar in Delhi for prepare for a prolonged protest.

The Congress-led Opposition has also intensified its campaign against Gyanesh Kumar, staging protests in Delhi for three consecutive days and demanding his resignation over alleged irregularities in the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

CM Vijay's election case

Every election candidate must truthfully and unambiguously declare his assets and liabilities. It is therefore surprising that, during the hearing of an election petition challenging Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay's victory in Perambur, Justice V. Lakshminarayanan questioned whether alleged discrepancies involving assets exceeding ₹600 crore could constitute a corrupt practice.

The judge wondered whether differences of a few crore rupees could influence voters, given Mr. Vijay's superstar status and voluntary disclosure of his wealth. He also questioned whether an election could be invalidated for errors by a Chartered Accountant assisting the candidate.

However, can a candidate escape responsibility for discrepancies in an election affidavit merely because a professional helped prepare it? Should not the ultimate responsibility for truthful disclosure rest with the candidate, particularly if the discrepancies are deliberate rather than clerical? Reportedly, the petitioner's counsel cited a Madras High Court judgment subsequently affirmed by the Supreme Court, prompting the judge to observe that the "texture of the case" had changed considerably.

Ultimately, electoral integrity demands accountability. Voters deserve truthful disclosures, and the law must uphold this democratic right without fear or favour.

THARCUS S. FERNANDO | CHENNAI

Metro closure should not disrupt public life

The Chief Justice's observations on the complete closure of metro station entrances highlight the need to balance security requirements with public convenience. Addressing the Solicitor General, the Chief Justice pointed out that the restrictions affected millions of commuters travelling from Gurugram, Greater Noida, East Delhi and South Delhi to different parts of the capital for their livelihoods. The bench acknowledged the administration's authority to impose security measures but questioned the rationale behind shutting down transport facilities altogether. While authorities are entitled to regulate movement and prevent uncontrolled gatherings, such measures should not leave ordinary citizens without accessible transport. Preventive restrictions may be necessary in sensitive situations, but their implementation must remain proportionate to the threat. Judicial oversight assumes importance when administrative decisions have consequences for fundamental freedoms and everyday life. Courts need not direct operational policing, but they must ensure that executive actions remain subject to meaningful scrutiny. Authorities must explain the necessity and duration of restrictions and explore less disruptive alternatives. Security and public convenience are not mutually exclusive; responsible administration must safeguard both.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

PICTALK



People perform 'Tarpan' and 'Pind Daan' rituals on the banks of Hooghly river near Howrah Bridge, in Kolkata, West Bengal

PHOTO: PTI

Tourism beyond destinations: Why India's next leap must be built on partnership

India's tourism future depends not merely on showcasing its rich heritage but on building partnerships among government, industry, technology and local communities to create memorable experiences, generate livelihoods and ensure that tourism-led prosperity reaches the people who keep its civilisation alive



GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT

India has never suffered from a shortage of destinations. What it has occasionally lacked is the institutional imagination to make the world discover them, reach them, experience them and, most importantly, return to them. Our civilisational inheritance is almost without parallel: ancient cities and living traditions, sacred landscapes and wildlife, architecture and crafts, cuisine and festivals, mountains and coastlines. Yet tourism is not created by heritage alone. A monument does not constitute a destination; a destination is an ecosystem. It is the road that leads to it, the story that precedes the journey, the hospitality that receives the traveller, the artisan who gives it authenticity, the technology that makes it discoverable, and the community whose participation determines whether tourism becomes an economic opportunity or merely an intrusion.

This is why the next chapter of Indian tourism must be written not in terms of destinations alone, but in terms of partnerships. The old architecture of tourism was largely hierarchical. Governments built infrastructure, destinations were promoted, industry transported and accommodated visitors, and communities remained largely at the periphery. The new architecture must be horizontal. Government, industry, technology companies, creators, investors, States, local bodies and communities must become co-creators of the tourism experience. The distinction is more than semantic. It represents a fundamental change in how we understand development.

Tourism today is no longer simply the movement of people from one place to another. It is the movement of ideas, stories, aspirations, capital and cultural influence. The traveller increasingly seeks not merely to see India but to encounter it - to taste its food, understand its traditions, enter its homes, meet its artisans and participate, however briefly, in its living culture. That transformation presents India with an extraordinary opportunity. But opportunity without coordination rarely becomes outcome.

The State therefore has a vital, though changing, role. Its responsibility is not to do everything; it is to make more things possible. Public investment in roads, airports, railways, sanitation, digital infrastructure, heritage conservation and civic amenities provides the foundation upon which private enterprise can innovate and invest. Political will provides continuity and direction. Industry contributes capital, managerial expertise, technology and access to markets. Communities contribute what no government or corporation can manufacture: authenticity. The real challenge is to bring these capacities together.

The Ministry of Tourism's expanding engagement with industry is an attempt in this direction. Eleven strategic MoUs have been entered into, including five exchanged on World Tourism Day 2026. Their importance lies not in the documents themselves but in the capabilities they seek to connect - technology, mobility, hospitality, content, digital outreach and local enterprise.

Consider the changing economics of destination discovery. A generation ago, a traveller might have encountered India through a travel guide or an advertisement. Today, a destination can enter the global imagination through a film, a streaming platform, a creator's narrative or an image encountered on a mobile phone. The collaboration with Netflix demonstrates this new grammar of destination promotion, bringing India's culture, wildlife and mountain landscapes to international audiences. Flavours of India, showcased at ITB Berlin 2026, and promotional campaigns in London and New York illustrate how the geography of tourism is increasingly preceded by the geography of storytelling.

But storytelling must eventually lead to a reason to travel.

This is where the next generation of partnerships becomes significant. Project Varanasi Priceless, developed with Mastercard, moves beyond advertising towards an experience that can actually be discovered



and booked: the Ganga at sunrise, classical music, conversations around literature, Banarasi weaving communities and heritage stays. The significance of such an initiative is that Varanasi is presented not as a monument to be photographed but as a civilisation to be experienced.

This distinction should inform our entire tourism strategy. India must move from selling attractions to curating experiences. Air connectivity is an equally important part of this architecture. Partnerships with Alliance Air, Air India and IndiGo extend Incredible India into the passenger ecosystem itself, bringing destination promotion into flights, digital platforms and international markets. Technology adds another dimension: intelligence.

The future tourism system must increasingly understand who is travelling, what travellers seek, where demand is emerging and how preferences are changing. The collaboration with Google India, including capacity-building and work towards understanding global travel demand and traveller behaviour, points towards a tourism policy that can become progressively more evidence-led.

Yet the most consequential transformation may occur far away from the traditional tourism centres. If tourism is to become genuinely inclusive, the village must become as important to tourism policy as the metropolitan gateway. The homestay can become as important as the hotel. The artisan can become as important as the attraction. The local entrepreneur can become as important as the large operator.

Partnerships involving Airbnb, Soul of India and MakeMyTrip are attempting precisely this democratisation of opportunity - equipping homestay hosts with digital capabilities, giving lesser-known destinations greater visibility and connecting unexplored villages with creators and bookable accommodation. The underlying proposition is profound: when a destination enters the traveller's imagination, the economic opportunity it creates must enter the lives of the people who give that destination its identity.

This is the true test of tourism-led development. Visitor numbers alone cannot be the measure of success. We must ask a more searching question: Who benefits when a destination succeeds?

Does the artisan earn more? Does the young person find an opportunity locally? Does the woman entrepreneur gain a market? Does the community acquire an incentive to preserve its cultural and natural inheritance? Does the traveller leave with a deeper understanding rather than merely a photograph?

If the answer to these questions is affirmative, tourism becomes more than an industry. It becomes

an instrument of cultural confidence and distributed economic development.

India's lesser-known destinations offer an especially significant opportunity in this regard. Technology can bring them to younger audiences; mobility can make them accessible; private investment can create appropriate infrastructure; and community participation can ensure that growth does not come at the cost of identity. Initiatives supporting community-led heritage tourism in the Himalayas, including the documentation of oral traditions, crafts and indigenous knowledge, demonstrate how tourism can become an ally of preservation rather than its adversary.

But partnership must not become another bureaucratic vocabulary for signing agreements. An MoU is only a beginning. The real partnership begins when an agreement produces a product, when a campaign produces a traveller, when a traveller produces local income, and when that income produces greater community ownership of the destination. Industry associations and the travel trade therefore remain indispensable. Their knowledge of markets, travellers, itineraries and distribution can convert aspiration into actual journeys. States and local institutions, meanwhile, determine the quality of the experience on the ground.

The future of Indian tourism will consequently depend upon our ability to dissolve old institutional boundaries - between government and industry, Centre and States, technology and tradition, global platforms and local communities. Varanasi offers a glimpse of this possibility: storytelling, music, heritage, weaving, hospitality and technology converging around a single destination. The larger lesson is unmistakable. India does not need merely more tourists. It needs a stronger tourism society. A society in which the citizen sees tourism not as an industry belonging to someone else, but as an opportunity in which he or she has a stake. A society in which public investment creates the platform, private investment multiplies possibilities and community participation gives development legitimacy.

The tourism destination of the future will therefore not be a place marked on a map. It will be a network of relationships. And India's competitive advantage may ultimately lie not merely in the magnificence of what we possess, but in our capacity to bring together the many people and institutions capable of transforming that inheritance into an experience the world values.

The question before us is no longer whether India has enough to offer the traveller.

It plainly does. The question is whether we can build the partnerships necessary to ensure that every journey into India becomes a journey into its civilisation - and that the prosperity generated by that journey reaches the people who keep that civilisation alive.

The writer is Union Minister for Culture & Tourism, Government of India

tourism becomes more than an industry. It becomes

Building the foundation for a new generation



ARADHITA SINGH

Not so long ago, news of a terror attack in an Indian city barely surprised anyone, because it had happened before and seemed likely to happen again. One year it was Delhi, the next Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad or Mumbai. Television showed the same images: twisted vehicles, crowded hospitals, relatives searching for the missing. For Indians who came of age in the 2000s, this was the background noise of growing up. Terrorism was not a distant border problem. It had reached the markets, trains and streets of ordinary life. For millennials, those years are lived memory. For much of Gen Z, they are a documentary or a story told by parents. That gap matters, because every generation judges its country by what it has experienced. What feels routine to one may be the hard-won result of sacrifice and difficult choices for another.

The early 2000s were hopeful and fragile at once. The economy was opening up and the middle class was dreaming bigger. Yet the 2001 attack on Parliament, the 2006 Mumbai train blasts and the November 2008 Mumbai attacks, which claimed 166 lives, exposed deep gaps in the country's security architecture. The 2008 assault put cross-border terrorism on the global radar and raised hard questions about intelligence coordination and coastal defence.

Reform followed. The National Investigation Agency was set up in 2008, and intelligence sharing and coastal security were strengthened. These steps did not end the danger. The Pune German Bakery blast in 2010, the Mumbai serial explosions of 2011 and the twin blasts in Hyderabad in 2013 showed that terror networks could still strike. The lesson was plain: reacting well after an attack was not enough. India needed to detect plots early, dismantle the networks behind them and treat terrorism as an ecosystem of people, money and infrastructure rather than a string of isolated incidents.

After 2014, the Modi government built its security policy around zero tolerance for terror, with closer intelligence coordination, pre-emptive action, tighter investigations and a crack-down on terror financing. The aim was to neutralise threats before they turned into bloodshed. Its stance on cross-border terrorism also hardened. The 2016 surgical strikes and the 2019 Balakot air strike showed a readiness to respond militarily to major attacks. Counterterrorism became tied more openly to deterrence, and the message was that terror would now carry costs well beyond diplomatic protest.

Set against the 2000s, the change is visible. The serial bombings that repeatedly rocked India's big cities have become far rarer. Terrorism has not vanished, and threats in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere demand constant alertness. Still, the distance from that earlier decade is significant. Gen Z feels this in everyday life. Commuting to college, riding the metro, strolling through a mall, attending a concert or booking a holiday all rest, in part, on a sense that public places are safe. Few people think about the institutions that make this possible. For a generation raised amid widening opportunity, planning a future without bracing for the next big attack can feel normal. But that confidence is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

Security and development are also bound together. Factories need secure supply chains, tourism needs public trust, and digital payments need defences against cyber threats. National security is not separate from development; it is one of the conditions that allows development to continue. The past decade has brought a major expansion of highways, airports, railways and digital public infrastructure. UPI has transformed everyday payments. Their durability depends on the state's ability to protect critical infrastructure and respond to new threats.

That link grows stronger as India aims to become a developed nation by 2047. Building creates opportunity; protecting what has been built allows it to last. India's success will be judged not only by how much it builds, but by how well it safeguards it. India's standing in the world tells a similar story. In the 2000s, major attacks repeatedly put its security weaknesses under the global spotlight. Today its international role spans economic partnerships, technology cooperation and diplomacy, and its 2023 G20 presidency offered a prominent stage for that growing role. Influence abroad draws on economic and technological strength, but credibility rests on a country's ability to protect its people and interests.

For young people raised on digital payments, new infrastructure and widening horizons, all of this can look like progress taking its natural course. It is not. The security environment in which a country grows is neither automatic nor permanent. It depends on policy choices, institutional strength and the unrelenting work of those entrusted with protecting the nation. India's counterterrorism journey has been shaped by reforms and security institutions across successive governments. Since 2014, the Modi government's focus on stronger capabilities, preventive action and a more assertive strategic posture has become a defining feature of it. Holding on to these gains demands sustained vigilance, because terrorist networks keep adapting. As India heads towards 2047, today's young will inherit both the opportunities development has created and the duty to preserve the conditions behind them. For millennials, the fears of the 2000s are lived experience. For many in Gen Z, they are fast becoming history.

Real progress is not a generation that has forgotten fear, but one with the confidence to dream beyond it. For those spared the anxieties of their elders, understanding the journey from vulnerability to resilience is the surest way to value the peace they have inherited.



Aradhita Singh is a Research Fellow at India Foundation, New Delhi, specialising in internal and national security

From media monopoly to nationalist narrative: India's information revolution



MANOJ RAGHUVANSHI

Nationalist media's evolution, at the speed of revolution, has shaken up the Indian information landscape. A quarter of a century ago, we were subjected to the opinions of "liberal", "secular", "progressive" "intellectuals". They crafted interpretation of news. They analysed events, and they even chose the facts which must be brought upfront. Leftist historians had already "educated" the Indian mind to be susceptible to lies and distortion of reality. On August 25, 2003, terrorist blasts at Gateway of India killed 54 innocent people, and injured 244. The most 'liberal', therefore the most respected, channel gave a surreal colour to the developing news. It declared that the stock market had bounced back.

Leftists infested this channel. They were the elite of the media. Naturally, aspiring young journalists looked up to them, and tried to emulate them. Success was succeeding like success. Each time, after a fresh extremist incident, the theme of this channel was that the share market has stabilized. In not so suppressed tones, the message was that those who had invested money in businesses had nothing to worry. They are not the victims.

The victim is the other (man in the street). This nonsense continued until the 26th of November, 2008.

This time, the terrorists crossed the road from Gateway of India, to Hotel Taj. Now it was not possible to convince the investor that he is still safe. The channel's stock market absurdity stopped. The remaining media was not radically different. Newspapers, magazines and television channels were dominated by 'secularists'. Their reportage may have been hurtful to the nationalists. But that lopsided reportage was rewarded by some top guns. Exactly 76 days after the terrorist attack on Indian Parliament, on February 27, 2002, 'kar sevaks' returning from Ayodhya were trapped in Sabarmati Express, which had been halted by chain-pulling just off the Godhra station in Gujarat. Doors were jammed and an extremely violent mob of stone pelters attacked the train from both sides. Inflammable liquid was poured into S-6 coach and the bogey was torched. There was no way to escape.

A total of 58 passengers were burnt alive inside the train, and one died on the way to the hospital. The dead included 27 women and 10 children. The incident happened around eight in the morning. Meaning, there was a full day, until late evening, to write an editorial.

One of the leading newspapers of India, whose name included a synonym of Bharat, wrote its editorial for the next morning. In that editorial, there was not a single word of condem-



When Heritage Finds a New Stage: Gaudiya Nritya and the Creative Economy

Gaudiya Nritya is a reconstructed classical dance tradition of Bengal whose historical evidence can be explored through literature, *Natyasastra*, manuscripts and sculpture. It is thus important to examine how this rich heritage can contribute to Bengal's creative economy and strengthen India's cultural soft power.

The word *Gaudiya* offers an important point to understand the cultural geography of the tradition. This *Nritya* is now associated with Bengal region. *Gaud* region originally represented the region west and south of Padma river and centred around present day Malda and Murshidabad districts. However, on account of conquests by Sena and Pala dynasties this word along with "Vanga/Banga" also reflected the entire region including the area east of Padma river that is now Bangladesh. The term appears in Sanskrit literary traditions, inscriptions and later cultural usage. Bengal's rulers were at different points described by titles such as *Gaudadhipati* and *Gaudeshvara* which reflecting the continuing association of the region with Gauda. The Bengal of earlier centuries, however, cannot be mapped neatly onto the political boundaries of the present. Its cultural landscape extended across areas that now form parts of India and Bangladesh. Rivers, pilgrimage routes, temples, monastic centres, royal courts and settlements connected these regions, allowing Sanskrit, Bengali and other vernacular traditions to develop in constant interaction. This Pan-Bengal character is particularly important when considering the history of *Gaudiya Nritya*. Unlike traditions preserved through a single, continuous textual or institutional lineage, its evidence is dispersed across different kinds of sources. Literary works, Sanskrit treatises on dance and music, architectural remains, sculptures, paintings and living performance traditions each preserve fragments of a larger cultural memory. The reconstruction of *Gaudiya Nritya* therefore, involves reading these sources alongside one another rather than searching for a single definitive manuscript that might explain the tradition in its entirety.

The literary evidence offers some of the earliest clues. The source connects the pre-Pala theatrical tradition described in the *Natyasastra* with regional forms and identifies *Oidramagadhi* as a possible ancient antecedent of *Gaudiya*. Later literary traditions provide a richer portrait of dance as a social and aesthetic practice. The *Caryapada* for example refers to women associated with the *Siddhacharyas* who were accomplished in singing and dancing. Moreover, the Sena period adds another layer when literature, music and the performing arts flourished together. This dance form is deeply rooted in the *Natyashastra's* basics of '*Bhav*', '*Mudra*' and '*Abhinaya*'. Religious underpinning came from



ATANU CHAKRABARTY
FORMER ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS SECRETARY,
MOF, GOI



MANASHI GHOSH
JUNIOR RESEARCH
FELLOW,
BHARAT KI SOCH

Shakta and *Shaiva* traditions.

Subsequently, when Jayadeva composed the *Gitagovinda*, a work that brought poetry and music into close relationship with dance and performance. Jayadeva was known for his *Gitikavya* while Padmavati was associated was a dancer. Chaitanya, through his Bhakti cult took it to Assam and Manipur. Those region also derived their dance forms. Vaishnavite traditions provided form and musical basis. So, we have *Dashavatar*, Raslila of Radha-Krishna of Vaishnav tradition and Mahisasura-Mardini that reflect *Shakta* tradition. This eclectic mix reflects a cultural world in which poetry, music and dance were not separate arts but part of a shared aesthetic tradition. *Padavali Kirtan* and *Khol* (Mridangam) became an integral part of the performance of this dance. Percussion artists playing '*Kartal*' broadened the musical base of this art form.

As, mentioned *earlier*, the four familiar abhinayas are *angika* (bodily expression), *vacika* (speech or musical expression), *aharya* (costume and visual representation) and *sattvika* (inner emotional expression). The textual sources associated with the tradition further elaborate its aesthetic and technical terminology such as the *Sangita Damodara* discusses several fundamental aspects of performance including *bhramari*, *padaveda*, *karana*, *sthanaka* and various *rasa*. The *Sri-Hasta-Muktavali* which is an important theoretical source that offers an extensive treatment of hand gestures or *mudra* and their expressive functions.

There are literary works, such as *Mangalakavya* tradition provides yet another window. In the *Manasamangalakavya*, that suggest that dance was closely intertwined into the religious imagination and social life of Bengal, rather than being restricted merely royal courts or formal performances.

The sculptural record provides another importance. Archaeological sites such as *Paharpur* and *Mahasthanagarh* preserve sculptural representations like various dance postures, gestures and expressive forms. Particularly draws attention to image of *Natesvara*, *Siva* as the Lord of Dance, including a tenth-century image associated with the Pala

period in present day Bangladesh. The principle behind such evidence is beautifully expressed in the *Visnudharmottara Purana*: "*Chitrasutram na janati...*" this sloka help to understand the relationship between the knowledge of dance and the interpretation of painting and iconography, reflecting the close interconnection of the visual and performing arts. In this context *Gaudiya Nritya* is not simply a sequence of movement. It is a cultural grammar assembled from several archives.

Subsequent to conquest of this region by Bakhtiyar Khalji, destruction of temples and literary traditions took place at a large scale. Multiple invasions, and subsequent neglect of this tradition in '*Bhadra-lok*' circle led to decline of this classical dance form.

Yet cultural traditions may become marginalised but their historical traces continue to survive. Social attitudes, impacted by external invasions and subsequent neglect of our traditions as well as partition that caused vivisection of what was known as "Gaud Pradesh or Banga" contributed to the marginalisation of dancers, that displaced dance from mainstream cultural life.

Although the twentieth century witnessed the revival and institutionalisation of several Indian classical dance traditions, Bengal's own classical dance heritage remained comparatively obscured and received limited recognition within the broader national narrative of Indian classical dance. The turning point came through renewed questioning. During an excursion to the Ananta Basudev temple, Prof. Mahua Mukherjee encountered sculptures of dancers and asked a deceptively simple question: if Bengal had no classical dance tradition of its own the why were these dancing figures there? That question led to decades of investigation. Mukherjee drew upon Bengali and Sanskrit literature, classical texts, sculptures, paintings and rural dance practices in an attempt to reconstruct the lost vocabulary. In 1994, following extensive research, the dance form presented as *Gaudiya Nritya*. Its contemporary form is therefore understood neither as an unbroken survival from antiquity nor as a tradition detached from its historical foundations. Rather, it represents a process of reconstruction grounded in textual, visual, and performative evidence, and sustained through continuing research, interpretation and practice.

The priority now must be to move from revival to institutional sustainability like establishing a dedicated ecosystem for *Gaudiya Nritya*, supporting *Guru Shishya* training, youth engagement, digital archiving, research, festivals and cultural tourism. Durga Puja can serve as a national and global platform. Such policy support can create sustainable livelihoods for artists and scholars while strengthening Bengal's tourism economy and India's cultural soft power.

Fable with Moral

The Pot with a Crack



An elderly water bearer had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. The perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection as it was able to accomplish only half of what it was made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day. "I am ashamed of myself and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer.

"I have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot and said with compassion,

"As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." As they went up the hill, the cracked pot observed the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path feeling a bit happy. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load and hence, again apologized to the bearer.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw and I used it to my advantage. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

MORAL: Limitations should not dishearten you from persevering!

Wisdom Word Search

A	G	N	P	A	N	A	M	O	P	K	L	S
N	E	A	L	I	K	O	J	A	A	A	P	C
G	L	I	Q	L	O	I	V	E	N	P	E	H
A	U	A	T	A	O	L	A	I	I	K	R	E
D	P	M	D	H	T	A	A	E	K	P	U	L
I	A	J	S	S	T	Q	N	N	K	O	J	A
M	O	T	V	E	A	G	G	A	K	T	K	V
A	J	M	W	A	L	I	A	S	A	L	U	S
L	K	Q	N	G	R	H	L	K	R	L	Y	E
T	P	O	R	U	L	A	U	O	A	D	N	L
I	W	J	S	H	N	S	V	B	N	U	G	G
S	C	H	A	N	T	A	O	N	O	I	W	X

WORDS TO FIND

Angadi, Chanta, Chelav, Koottal, Panam, Panikkaran, Porul, Perukku, Vaangal, Varav

ANGADI

marketplace, bazaar

CHANTA

market

CHELAV

expenditure, cost

KOOTTAL

addition, accumulation

PANAM

money, cash

PANIKKARAN

worker

PERUKKU

increase, growth

PORUL

wealth, material resource, economic substance

VAANGAL

buying, purchase

VARAV

income, receipts; incoming

THE WISDOM LEXICON

Note: These terms come from Malayalam, one of India's 22 Scheduled Languages.

Marvels of India

HARAPPAN-MESOPOTAMIAN TRADE

Commerce

Sumerian writings from ancient Mesopotamia (the earliest known writing systems) mention the Sindhu-Saraswati, or Harappan civilisation, as *Meluhha*. The first ruler of the Akkadian Empire, Sargon of Akkad, recorded that ships from *Meluhha*, *Magan* and *Dilmun* (all Bronze Age civilisations) docked at his capital. Harappa-type carnelian beads adorned Queen Puabi's cloak (an elaborate garment made of precious and semi-precious stones) found at the Royal Cemetery at Ur (a major city-state of ancient Mesopotamia). Harappan seals and Ivory also reached Central Asian sites such as Altyn Depe and Gonur Depe (two major Bronze Age archaeological sites in Turkmenistan), thereby evidencing a vast commercial exchange.

Economy

Mesopotamian elites prized Harappan carnelian and lapis as prestige goods. Ur's merchants, acting like venture capitalists, imported copper, timber and pearls by sea. A famed American anthropologist, Gregory Possehl, observes that this trade shaped the cultural landscape in the Greater Harappan Valley.

Standardisation

Researchers found stamped seals, some bearing Harappan script, in Bahrain alongside stone weights matching Harappan units. This suggests that merchants relied on shared measurement and authentication. Together, these mark one of the Indian subcontinent's earliest documented international commercial networks.



QUIZ

Economy, Commerce & Finance

Questions	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
1 Which of these is not a GI-tagged product from Odisha?				
2 Which of them was a powerful merchant guild that dominated maritime and overland trade across South India during the early medieval period?	Mahattara	Nigamas	Ayyavole	Pugas
3 Which commodities was ancient Kalinga famous for exporting across the Indian subcontinent?	Pearls & diamonds	Spices & teak wood	Cotton textiles & war elephants	Iron weapons & copperware
4 Which of these historical sites is most renowned for its bangle factory?	Kalibangan	Alamgirpur	Daimabad	Mand

ANSWERS: 1 - B, 2 - C, 3 - C, 4 - A

AESOP'S FABLES

The Fox and the Stork

1



You must come and dine with me today.

One day, the Fox decided to amuse himself by playing a trick on the Stork, whose unusual appearance he often made fun of. The Stork gladly accepted the invitation and arrived with a good appetite. "You must come and dine with me today"

2



For dinner, however, the Fox served soup in a very shallow dish. The Fox had no difficulty eating it. He quickly lapped up the soup with his tongue. But the Stork, with his long, narrow bill, could hardly eat anything at all. He could only wet the tip of his bill while the Fox enjoyed the meal.

3



Did you like the soup?

Thank you, Fox. Please come and dine with me tomorrow.

The Fox mischievously asked whether the Stork liked the soup. The Stork did not become angry.

4



When the Fox arrived, he smelled a delicious fish dinner and eagerly looked forward to eating it. But the Stork had served the food in a tall jar with a very narrow neck.

5



The Stork easily put his long bill inside the jar and ate his fill. The Fox, however, could not reach the food. All he could do was lick around the outside of the jar and smell the delicious meal.

6



The Fox became angry. The Stork calmly reminded him that he was only receiving the same sort of treatment that he himself had given his guest.

You are only receiving the same treatment you gave your guest.

MORAL OF THE STORY: As you treat others, so you will be treated.

The epidemic of Atrial Fibrillation in India: Why endure if we can cure



DR KK TALWAR

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common heart rhythm disorder in the world and the leading cardiac cause of emergency hospitalisations. In India, AF used to be primarily caused by rheumatic heart disease. However, it is now increasingly linked to factors like obesity, hypertension and diabetes, and impacts people across the socioeconomic spectrum.

AF can cause symptoms such as palpitations, breathlessness and chest pain. Even without symptoms, it significantly increases the risk of stroke and heart failure. If untreated, it can shorten life expectancy by 5 to 10 years. It is not a benign condition.

The Role of Catheter Ablation

Historically, AF was treated with medications with even potential toxic side effects in some; it also requires lifelong adherence. Over the past two decades, catheter ablation (thermal ablation) has become the primary treatment for AF in the West.

This procedure, performed by heart rhythm specialists



called electrophysiologists, uses catheters inserted through veins in the leg to cauterise abnormal heart impulses causing AF.

Ablation can cure AF, especially in its early stages. When performed by experienced hands, it is extremely safe and effective.

However, the procedure is technically demanding and requires extensive experience for electrophysiologists. While cardiac electrophysiology has made significant progress, it still trails the West, particularly in AF ablation. Limited investment in training contributes to this disparity.

The Promise of Pulsed Field Ablation (PFA)

Over the past few years, Pulsed Field Ablation (PFA) has emerged as a new ablation modality. This proce-

dure has significantly improved speed and safety, leading to its widespread adoption in the USA and Europe. Just last month, PFA launched in India to great excitement among the Indian cardiology community.

While this is a promising development, the prohibitively high cost of each PFA catheter remains a significant barrier for much of India's population. PFA was recently advertised in a national newspaper as a paid advertorial, and I fear such broad direct-to-consumer marketing can confuse patients.

Experienced physicians have long known that every patient needs a personalised approach, which should also align with our goal of providing affordable population-level care.

Leveraging the Expertise of Indian Medical Professionals Abroad

Numerous studies show that traditional thermal ablation can achieve results comparable to PFA when performed by well-trained electrophysiologists.

To bridge this training gap, it is imperative to involve Indian experts who have excelled globally in cardiac electrophysiology.

Dr (Professor) Dhiraj Gupta, an alumnus of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, exemplifies this potential. Based in the United Kingdom, he has pioneered a cost-effective AF ablation technique utilising a single catheter, delivering results comparable to more expensive options like PFA.

Dr Gupta trains local teams in this low-cost ablation technique through pro bono workshops across hospitals in India. This highlights how collaboration with the Indian medical diaspora can build local expertise.

These initiatives not only improve patient outcomes but also promote the adoption of affordable technologies tailored to India's unique healthcare needs. We must ensure similar initiatives continue to be encouraged and developed to facilitate effective skill transfer.

A Call to Action for India's Healthcare System

While technological advancements like PFA are promising, India must prioritise building local training capacity. Encouraging partnerships between domestic hospitals and Indian experts abroad will foster skill transfer and ensure that cutting-edge treatments are accessible to all.

Major Medical institutions, both public and private, should actively seek support from pioneers within the Indian diaspora, such as Professor Gupta, and promote training programmes focused on cost-effective, high-quality care. As the importance of AF increases, a concerted effort to integrate global expertise with local practice will be pivotal in transforming India's cardiac care landscape.

Conclusion

India stands at a crossroads in its fight against atrial fibrillation. By embracing a personalised approach and tapping into the expertise of Indian medical diaspora, we can offer our population not just treatment, but hope—a future where quality cardiac care is both advanced and affordable.

The writer is the chairman of Heart Institute, PSRI Hospital, New Delhi; former professor and head, department of cardiology and director, PGIMER Chandigarh

Adani Cement creates 70-ft aerial tribute to goddess Durga in Madhya Pradesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi



Adani Cement has created a monumental aerial tribute to Maa Durga at its Kymore plant in Madhya Pradesh, using 15,000 cement bags as part of its Navratri and Durga Puja 2026 campaign, Jahan Vishwas, Wahan Shakti. The installation, spread across a 70 ft × 70 ft canvas, represents 750 tonnes of cement and involved 12,600 person-hours of collective effort.

Adani Cement, part of the Adani Portfolio and the world's ninth-largest cement producer, said it is the first and only cement company to create such a large-scale aerial tribute using packed cement bags. The company captured the installation's creation and aerial reveal in a digital film for its digital and social media platforms.

At ground level, the 15,000 cement bags appeared as individual units arranged with precision. As the aerial camera rose, the arrangement revealed the form of Maa Durga, with her crown, eyes, ten arms and flowing form taking shape through the alignment of thousands of cement bags.

of creating the artwork and its unveiling from above.

The campaign, titled Jahan Vishwas, Wahan Shakti, brings together two key brand ideas associated with Adani Cement's portfolio. Shakti reflects Ambuja Cements' promise of strength, while Vishwas draws on ACC's legacy of trust spanning more than nine decades.

Through the image of Maa Durga, revered as an embodiment of strength and protection, the campaign combines these two ideas in a tribute to faith, tradition and collective endeavour. The initiative uses cement bags, a material associated with building homes and infrastructure, to convey the message that trust and strength together can create something larger than the sum of its parts.

The digital film begins at ground level, showing hands at work, cement bags being moved into position, and

the installation gradually taking shape. As the camera moves upward, the arrangement becomes clearer, eventually revealing the complete image of Maa Durga. The shift in perspective highlights the collective effort behind the installation and reinforces the campaign's central message of Jahan Vishwas, Wahan Shakti.

The campaign also celebrates the people of Kymore, home to ACC's cement plant established in 1923.

The town has a long-standing tradition of Ram Leela celebrations, making it a significant location for an initiative centred on faith, cultural heritage and community participation.

With the installation, Adani Cement has used an unconventional arrangement of cement bags to bring together its brands' core values of trust and strength while marking the festive season of Navratri and Durga Puja 2026.

Adani Defence & Aerospace wins SIDM Champion Award 2026 for excellence in defence export

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Adani Defence & Aerospace has won the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) Champion Award 2026 for Export Performance in Defence and Aerospace at the organisation's eighth annual session in New Delhi on October 9.

The company manufactures small-calibre ammunition for defence and law enforcement customers in international markets. Its manufacturing complex in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, has an annual production capacity of 300 million rounds and produces North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)-standard ammunition, supporting the Government of India's "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiative.

Honourable Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh presented the award in the presence of Defence Secretary Mr Rajesh Kumar Singh and Director General (Acquisition) Mr A. Anbarasu. Fifteen awards recognised achievements in technology development, product innovation, design, import substitution, manufacturing excel-



lence and exports.

Addressing the session, Shri Singh called for greater private sector participation in defence production, increased investment in research and development, and expanded manufacturing capacity to meet the country's defence requirements.

Ashish Rajvanshi, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Adani Defence & Aerospace, said, "We are proud to see our efforts in building India's defence manufacturing capabilities recognised. Our focus is on making high-quality products in India and taking them to customers

across global markets. We will continue to invest in technology and indigenous manufacturing to meet the evolving needs of defence and security customers."

The latest recognition follows a separate SIDM Champion Award presented to Adani Defence & Aerospace's Kanpur Ammunition Complex in 2025 for design, manufacturing and testing excellence.

The Kanpur facility uses automated manufacturing, artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled quality inspection, real-time data analytics and digital monitoring across

the production process. Its digital shopfloor eliminates manual handling of hazardous materials.

The unit also has 100 per cent digital traceability across the manufacturing value chain, supported by digital security systems.

The complex houses a ballistics testing range equipped with an Electronic Pressure, Velocity and Action Time (EPVAT) system. The National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), India's apex accreditation body for testing and calibration laboratories, has accredited the range.

Adani's Kutch Copper plans 115 MW renewable energy integration, targets lower emissions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Adani Enterprises Ltd's Kutch Copper Ltd plans to integrate 115 megawatts of renewable energy into its operations to reduce emissions, conserve water, and improve resource efficiency at its Mundra, Gujarat, copper refinery.

The company currently operates a copper smelter with a capacity of 5,00,000 tonnes per annum. It plans to expand it to 1 million tonnes, which, according to the company, would make it the world's largest single-location custom smelter.

In its maiden sustainability report, Kutch Copper outlined plans to embed environmental, social and governance considerations into its operations as demand for the metal grows on the back of energy transition investments, electric mobility, power transmission and industrial expansion.

"A key element of our sustainability strategy is the planned integration of 115 megawatts of renewable energy, a significant step



towards reducing the carbon footprint of our operations and advancing long-term decarbonisation goals," the company said.

Copper is a key material for clean energy technologies and electrification, placing the metal at the centre of efforts to cut carbon emissions. Kutch Copper said it aims to scale up production while integrating sustainability considerations into business decisions, operations and stakeholder engagement.

The company said it operates on nearly 100 per cent desalinated water and follows a zero-liquid-discharge approach to reduce dependence on freshwater and improve water conservation.

"We are currently treating 99.8 per cent of sulphur emissions, reflecting our commitment to adopting global standards in environmental stewardship and pollution control by leveraging advanced environmental technologies," Kutch Copper said in the report.

Beyond its manufacturing operations, the company said it is investing in community programmes focused on healthcare, education, livelihoods and social development.

The company said the Adani Group has committed USD 1.2 billion to the project. The group sees the domestic copper industry as playing a key role in India's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070, supported by investment in green infrastructure and environmental management.

NTPC invites EoI from commercial, industrial entities to invest in co-generation projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

NTPC Limited, India's largest integrated power utility, has invited Expressions of Interest (EOI) from Commercial and Industrial (C&I) entities interested in taking 26 per cent equity in co-generation projects.

The initiative aims to explore opportunities to develop co-generation facilities to meet industrial requirements for steam and electricity, along with integrated power supply solutions based on coal, renewable energy and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), the power PSU said in a statement.

With industries increasingly focusing on energy security, cost optimisation and sustainability, co-generation offers an opportunity to enhance overall energy efficiency by producing steam and electricity through an integrated system.

The proposed initiative seeks to address the diverse requirements of industries with reliable, economical and sustainable energy solu-



tions through long-term power supply arrangements. It reflects NTPC's commitment to expanding its energy solutions portfolio and strengthening partnerships with industries.

By leveraging its expertise in power generation and exploring innovative energy supply models, NTPC aims to support industrial growth while contributing to energy efficiency, sustainability and energy transition objectives.

NTPC Limited is India's largest integrated power utility with an installed capacity of over 91 GW, with

another 35+ GW under construction. The company has set a target to reach 149 GW of total capacity by 2032, including 60 GW from renewable energy sources. This includes a balanced mix of thermal, hydro, solar, and wind power plants, ensuring the supply of reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity to the country.

Along with power generation, NTPC has ventured into various new business areas, including e-mobility, storage, waste-to-energy, nuclear power, and green hydrogen solutions.

RBI's rupee defence may drain banking liquidity and ease currency pressure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) measures to curb rupee volatility could ease near-term depreciation pressure and help withdraw surplus liquidity from the banking system, according to research reports.

The measures, including a dedicated dollar window for oil marketing companies through designated banks and higher costs for certain foreign exchange hedging transactions, are expected to reduce dollar demand in the spot market and curb speculative positions against the rupee.

"The immediate reaction on INR is expected to be very favourable-likely move of USD/INR towards sub-95 cannot be ruled out. Forward premia is likely to soften as OMCs and other importer hedging gets contained," Kotak Mahindra Bank said in its report, while cautioning that the global environment remains uncertain.

IDFC FIRST Bank said the measures were expected to result in a near-term reduction in USD/INR and lower forward



premiums, but added that global factors and balance-of-payments dynamics would determine the currency's medium-term trajectory.

The RBI, in its October 10 circulars, barred authorised dealers from allowing users to rebook cancelled rupee-linked foreign exchange derivative contracts, while continuing to permit rollovers on maturity subject to existing regulations. It also reduced the threshold for undertaking foreign exchange derivative transactions without establishing an underlying exposure to USD 5 million from USD 100 million, across authorised dealers and recognised stock exchanges.

The central bank also

introduced a Foreign Exchange Risk Reserve (FERR), requiring authorised dealers to maintain with the RBI, in cash, 20 per cent of the rupee equivalent of the notional amount of each rupee-linked foreign exchange derivative contract exceeding USD 2 million, where the transaction is undertaken to hedge current account exposures involving the purchase of foreign currency against the rupee. The RBI said the measures were aimed at strengthening market discipline and ensuring appropriate risk management while maintaining an orderly and transparent foreign exchange market.

Gold, silver range-bound; weak rupee lends support: Analysts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Gold and silver prices are likely to trade in a range with a slightly positive bias next week as rupee weakness cushions domestic bullion against global fluctuations, while inflation data will shape investors' sentiment, analysts said.

Traders will track inflation readings from India, China and the US. Trade data from Beijing and speeches from Federal Reserve officials will provide cues on whether the US central bank will deliver another rate hike in October or defer it to December, they added.

"The outlook remains range-bound with a mildly positive undertone, as rupee weakness provides a cushion against global price fluctuations," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst — Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures for December delivery gained ₹1,109, or nearly 1 per cent, last week to settle at ₹1.51 lakh per 10 grams. Silver, however, ended marginally lower by ₹122 to ₹2.25 lakh per kilogram.



MCX gold's recovery was supported by a softer US dollar, easing bond yields and improved geopolitical sentiment. A decline in crude oil prices on Friday also eased immediate inflation concerns, and weakness in the rupee provided additional support to domestic bullion, Trivedi said.

"A weaker rupee increases the landed cost of imported bullion, helping MCX gold remain supported even when international prices face pressure. This currency impact could continue to cushion domestic prices against any moderate correction in Comex gold," he added.

In overseas markets, Comex gold futures for December delivery gained 54, or 1.3 per cent, last week to close at USD 4,216.3 per ounce, while silver rose over 1 per cent to USD 61.05 per ounce.

World leaders condemn attack on Riyadh airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Washington/Dubai

Leaders and senior officials from across the world have condemned the deadly attack on Saudi Arabia's King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh that killed 12 people and injured more than 300.

US President Donald Trump said on Saturday that Washington was considering joining Saudi strikes against Yemen's Houthi rebels, according to US media reports. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney were among those who denounced the attack, while Pakistan, Qatar, Palestine, Jordan and Malaysia expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia.

Saturday's strike, which Saudi Arabia blamed on the Iran-backed Houthis, was the latest in a series of attacks on the kingdom's infrastructure amid an intensifying conflict in Yemen.

Saudi airports have come under several attacks this month, including strikes on Riyadh and Abha.

The latest violence comes against the backdrop of the wider war involving Iran and its regional adversaries, raising concerns about further instability across the region.

Von der Leyen said the attack marked a "dangerous escalation", expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia and its people, and offered condolences to the victims and their families. She said attacks by Iran's proxies were pushing the region into a spiral of violence and destabilising crucial global transport and energy nodes.

The EU chief described the attacks on civilians as murderous and said they must stop immediately.

Guterres on Sunday said he was "deeply shocked" by the attack and strongly condemned it. "Attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure are a violation of international law. These attacks

must cease immediately," the UN chief said in a post on X. Trump said on Saturday he was considering whether the United States should join Saudi strikes against the Houthis. "We may. We're going to look at it. We just found out about the recent attack. So we'll make a decision. We move very quickly," he told reporters, according to the AP news agency.

Rubio said the US strongly condemned the recent attacks on Saudi Arabia, including the strike on Riyadh's airport that killed an American citizen.

"These reprehensible attacks must stop," he said, adding that Washington stood with Saudi Arabia and extending condolences to the victims and their families.

Carney described the Houthi attacks as "abhorrent", saying there could be no justification for attacks on civilian infrastructure or the deliberate targeting of innocent people.

"Canada condemns these reckless acts of violence in the strongest possible



terms," he said in a social media post, extending condolences to the families of those killed and wishing a full recovery to the injured.

Hans Grundberg, the UN special envoy for Yemen, described strikes on civilian airports in Saudi Arabia as a

"grave escalation", warning that they threatened regional security and complicated efforts to achieve peace.

Malaysia PM Anwar Ibrahim said he unequivocally denounced the attack, which had taken innocent lives and left hundreds

injured. He extended condolences to the families of those killed and wished the injured a swift recovery.

"There can be no justification for attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure," Anwar said, adding that such attacks could deepen the suffering caused by the conflict and spread it to places that should remain beyond its reach.

Malaysia stood in solidarity with Saudi Arabia and hoped diplomacy and reason would prevail before the conflict widened further, he said. Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also strongly condemned the attack, calling it a flagrant violation of international law and a threat to regional peace and stability.

Sharif reaffirmed Islamabad's support for Saudi Arabia's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security, citing the two countries' ties and the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement signed in August. The agreement, signed by Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye on

August 7, stipulates that an armed attack against any one of the three countries shall be regarded as an attack against all three.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry condemned the attack as a grave violation of Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and a direct threat to regional security, civilian safety and air navigation. It expressed solidarity with Riyadh and said Saudi Arabia's security was integral to Qatar's own security and that of the Gulf Cooperation Council states. Palestine's Foreign Ministry condemned the attack and expressed solidarity with Saudi Arabia. It offered condolences to the families of those killed and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

Egypt also condemned the attacks, describing them as a violation of international law and expressing concern over the threat to civilian safety.

India on Sunday also strongly condemned repeated attacks on Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport over the past few days, including Saturday's strike.

CHILDREN AMONG 109 DEAD AFTER BOAT CAPSIZES OFF DJIBOUTI, SAYS IOM



ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Geneva

At least 109 migrants, including 15 children, have died after a boat with 305 on board capsized off the coast of Djibouti in east Africa, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) said on Sunday.

The boat was travelling from Djibouti to Yemen when it capsized on Thursday night or Friday morning, according to the IOM. 52 men, 42 women and 15 children died. More than 80 people survived the accident, while at least 116 others remain missing.

Tens of thousands of migrants from the Horn of Africa travel through Djibouti and across the Bab el-Mandeb Strait towards the Gulf countries, in search of safety and economic opportunities, said the IOM in its statement. That movement has continued despite violence in Yemen.

"This is a devastating loss of life," said Alexandre Coissac, IOM Chief of Mission in Djibouti. "This tragedy is a stark reminder of the dangers faced by migrants along this migration corridor as they seek economic opportunities."

India rejects UN concerns on Delhi protest

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India has rejected concerns raised by the United Nations human rights office over protests in New Delhi, describing the remarks as "misplaced" and reiterating that the Constitution guarantees citizens the right to peaceful assembly, subject to reasonable restrictions to maintain public order. Meanwhile, Bangladesh's National Citizen Party (NCP) has expressed solidarity with demonstrations led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) over alleged irregularities in the revision of electoral rolls.

The controversy centres on protests against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and demands for the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar. Protesters have raised concerns about electoral transparency and the functioning of the Election Commission, prompting heightened security arrangements in the national capital.

In its response to the UN human rights office, the Indian Embassy maintained that peaceful assembly is a constitutional right but noted that reasonable restrictions may be imposed when necessary to protect public order.

The exchange has renewed debate over the balance between civil liberties, democratic accountability and the responsibilities of authorities in managing public demonstrations. Security personnel were deployed around Jantar Mantar Road as



Protestors raise slogans amid continued demonstration calls by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) demanding the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar in Connaught Place area in New Delhi on Sunday

authorities monitored the situation following the protest call. The handling of demonstrations, including reported detentions of protesters, organisers and journalists, has also attracted criticism from political groups and raised questions about restrictions on public assembly and internet access.

Bangladesh's NCP convener Nahid Islam voiced support for the demonstrators in a statement shared on X from Dhaka.

He argued that democratic forces in India deserved transparent answers regarding electoral integrity and institutional independence, warning that detentions and restrictions on public gatherings threatened fundamental freedoms. Islam connected the protests to Bangladesh's July 2024 student-led uprising, which began over government recruitment quotas before expanding into a nationwide movement against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's

15-year rule. Hasina left power in August 2024. Citing a United Nations estimate that up to 1,400 people were killed during the uprising and its suppression, Islam highlighted the consequences of confronting authoritarian rule.

He also acknowledged support from Indian students, writers and independent voices during Bangladesh's protests, drawing parallels with movements such as the Shaheen Bagh demonstrations against the Citizenship Amendment Act and student activism at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jadavpur University. He praised women's participation in demonstrations in both countries.

Calling for equality, social justice and communal harmony, Islam criticised religious supremacy and authoritarianism, arguing that democratic societies must protect minorities and the right to dissent irrespective of religion, caste, gender or social background.

Japan honours Hyderabad-based Ikebanist Nirmala Agarwal for promoting India-Japan friendship

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Hyderabad

The Consulate-General of Japan has honoured Hyderabad-based Ikebanist Nirmala Agarwal with the Consul General's Commendation Award for her contribution to promoting friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and India.

The award was presented by the Consulate-General at a ceremony held at Cyber Garden in Hyderabad on Sunday, October 11, 2026.

A practitioner of Ikebana, the traditional Japanese art of flower arrangement, Agarwal began her journey with the art in 2000. She



holds the Associate First Master degree from Japan's Ohara School of Ikebana and has been associated with the art form for over two decades.

She is currently serving her second term as president of the Hyderabad Chapter of the Ohara School of Ikebana.

national Ikebana conferences and conducted demonstrations and workshops for schools, educational institutions and women's organisations, helping introduce the Japanese art form to wider audiences.

She views Ikebana as more than flower arrangement, describing it as an artistic discipline that expresses emotions and ideas through the thoughtful placement of flowers, foliage and branches. Its emphasis on harmony, balance, proportion, minimalism and simplicity reflects aesthetic values shared by Japanese and Indian cultures.

Agarwal has participated in several regional and inter-

Pakistan Opposition slams emergency in KPK

M ZULQERNAIN ■ Lahore

Pakistan opposition parties and a lawyers' body on Sunday strongly condemned the imposition of emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, calling it a "grave political mistake" which the people will never accept.

The Shehbaz Sharif government on Sunday imposed an emergency and governor's rule in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) following the president's approval.

The Prime Minister's Office said in a statement that the cabinet members reviewed the situation and took note of the "provincial government's deliberate disengagement from the fight against terrorism". President Asif Ali Zardari issued a proclamation under



Police guard near Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday

Articles 232(1) and 234(1) of the Constitution, citing rising terrorist attacks and a breakdown of constitutional machinery in the northwestern province, according to the presidential declaration.

The members proposed, given the "gravity" of the situation, that the PM advise the

president to exercise "his constitutional authority and impose an emergency in the province under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution".

An emergency allows Pakistan's federal government to assume key executive and legislative powers in a province during a security

crisis or breakdown of constitutional governance. Under the proclamation, the chief minister, provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants and advocate general will immediately vacate their offices.

The move comes amid an ongoing protest march led by KPK Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, who is pressing for jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's release and access to medical treatment for him. The march began in Lakki Marwat on October 4 and has passed through several districts of the province.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Barrister Gohar Khan said, "We completely reject this action. The mandate of the people of the KP is their constitutional and

legal right. Peace cannot be established nor stability brought by ignoring this mandate, weakening provincial autonomy and creating conflict between the federation and the province."

He said terrorism can only be combated through national unity and a joint strategy. PTI senior leader and former federal minister Moonis Elahi lambasted the federal government, saying provincial autonomy is no charity; it is a constitutional right.

"The people's mandate is no one's fiefdom to be snatched away at will. There can be no compromise on the supremacy of the Constitution, the people's right to governance, and provincial autonomy," Elahi said. (PTI)

Kyiv rejects Trump's call for new president

SUSIE BLANN/
ELISE MORTON ■ Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday that only Russia was responsible for the war in his country. He said Ukraine would halt strikes on Russian oil refineries if Moscow stopped hitting Ukraine's energy grid, after US President Donald Trump blamed him for high diesel prices and said it was time for Ukraine to get a new leader.

The exchange came as Kyiv pressed its campaign against infrastructure deep inside Russia, with a drone attack on Sunday shutting down a data centre run by Russian technology giant Yandex, the third strike on the company's facilities in four days.

Russia and Ukraine are locked in a long-range aerial war while their armies remain largely deadlocked on the front line, more than 4.5 years since Moscow's full-scale invasion.

"Ukraine will be ready to stop striking Russian oil refineries if Russia stops striking our energy infrastructure," Zelenskyy wrote



on X. "It is possible to stop strikes on energy infrastructure as early as today, but Putin does not want to do so," he said, adding that any de-escalation must be reciprocal and backed by real guarantees.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha pushed back on Trump's comments, writing on X late Saturday that Zelenskyy was leading the country through a war for its independence. "He has the support of the Ukrainian people, and they have the right to decide. Statements from abroad only confirm that he is doing his job well," Sybiha wrote.

Trump said Saturday it was time for Ukraine to get a new president, suggesting

Zelenskyy has not done enough to end the war and blaming him for high diesel prices in the US.

"I suggest they get a new leader who can make a deal because he could have made many deals and for some reason he never does," Trump said.

The US president, who on Friday struck a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin to buy diesel from Russia in an attempt to address high fuel prices ahead of the US midterm elections, has been urging Zelenskyy for weeks to stop strikes on Russian energy infrastructure.

He has sought to blame record US diesel prices on Ukraine rather than the US-

led war in Iran, which has driven up world energy prices. Ukrainian and European officials reacted to the diesel deal with dismay, saying it will help pay for Russia's war effort.

A Ukrainian drone attack shut down a data centre run by Russian technology giant Yandex, the company said Sunday, the third strike on its facilities in four days as Kyiv widens its campaign against infrastructure deep inside Russia.

The attack on the data centre in the city of Vladimir, east of Moscow, caused outages across Yandex's services, leaving users in dozens of Russian cities and in Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia unable to order taxis or access banking services, according to Russian independent news outlet Astra. Russia and Ukraine are locked in a long-range aerial war while their armies remain largely deadlocked on the front line, more than 4.5 years since Moscow's full-scale invasion. Ukraine's strikes on data centres follow Russian attacks on data hubs in Ukraine.

"As a result of the drone attack, the infrastructure of

Yandex's data centre in Vladimir was damaged. Operations at the data centre have been completely halted. There were no injuries," said the Yandex Cloud Telegram channel, which provides operational updates on service availability. On Thursday, a drone attack took a Yandex data centre offline in the Ryazan region, southeast of Moscow. A day later, Ukrainian drones hit the company's major data centre in the Kaluga region, southwest of Moscow, partly putting it out of action, Yandex said.

Yandex, often described as Russia's Google, runs the country's most popular search engine and a wide range of digital services, and is heavily involved in Russia's artificial intelligence development.

Elsewhere, Zelenskyy said search and rescue operations ended in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia after a Russian bombing on Saturday, Ivan Fedorov, the former regional head and co-chair of the regional defence council, said Sunday. (AP)

Trump sticks with tariffs even as US voters turn against them

BERNARD CONDONAP
■ New York

Maybe President Donald Trump really does believe that "tariff" is the most beautiful word in the dictionary.

Despite higher prices, criticism from trade experts and displeasure among voters, Trump holds fast to his belief that imposing the highest import duties on US trading partners since the Great Depression is a winner.

A recent poll suggests that is a big gamble with less than a month before the November 3 midterms. Most US adults disapprove of his trade policies, with more than 64 per cent saying he has gone too far with his latest tariffs, compared with 58 per cent in January. A look at the political, legal and economic challenges to the Republican president's approach to trade. The United States has set taxes on imports from most countries in the low double digits, although the rates have gone up and down because of legal setbacks as well as Trump's habit of changing



US president Donald J Trump

them seemingly on a whim. In the biggest round last year, Trump levied what he called "reciprocal" tariffs and other duties on dozens of countries. He cited a 1977 law that he said allowed him to act without congressional approval in an economic emergency.

After the Supreme Court struck that down in February, Trump turned to an array of other trade laws to accomplish his goals.

The primary one he is using now, Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, allows him to impose tariffs on countries that he believes are engaging in unfair trade practices, such as not adequately enforcing a ban on forced labour. The

new duties range from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent on imports from 60 economies, including big US trading partners such as the European Union, India, Japan, Canada and Mexico.

Trump is taking a sledgehammer to a relatively open global trading system that many mainstream economists think has benefited the US enormously. It has helped boost growth, keep prices low and make US businesses more competitive and often dominant in global industries. The US is the second-largest exporter in the world, after China. It exported USD 3.4 trillion in goods and services last year, far ahead of third place Germany's \$2.3 trillion. (AP)

BRIEFLY

Messi scores twice in first game since Argentina retirement



Lionel Messi scored two goals to give him a league-leading 23 this season, and Inter Miami beat D.C. United 4-0. Luis Suarez also scored twice and German Berterame had two assists for Inter Miami, which snapped a five-match winless skid. Miami had four draws and one loss before Saturday's outburst. Four days after playing his farewell match that ended a 21-year tenure with the Argentine national team, Messi played the entire 90 minutes. The win was Miami's first since a 7-1 rout of CF Montreal on Aug. 29. It was also the first league win for new coach Cristian "Kily" Gonzalez, who took over Sept. 16. D.C. United is winless in its last five matches. Messi scored his first in the 47th minute after Suarez tallied twice in the first half to give Inter Miami a 2-0 lead at the break. Suarez centered a pass near the 6-yard box, where Messi retrieved it and tapped in a shot inside the right post. Inter Miami padded its lead when Messi struck again in the 60th minute. He received Rodrigo De Paul's pass, dribbled inside the large area and eluded two United defenders to beat goalkeeper Sean Johnson with a shot from 12 yards. Inter Miami's first scoring threat resulted in Suarez's goal three minutes into the match. Suarez received Berterame's header and beat Johnson with a shot that landed inside the left post. Suarez made it 2-0 with his second goal in the 39th minute. Johnson deflected Messi's point-blank shot to an open Berterame, who fed Suarez with another header that he retrieved inside the 6-yard box. Suarez then tapped in a shot for his brace. (AP)

New Zealand unveil special jersey for India ODIs



New Zealand will wear a special limited-edition jersey featuring lotus flowers and mandala art during next month's ODI series against India, marking 100 years of sporting ties between the two countries. The 'Kotahitanga' ODI shirt represents two cultures bound together by their love for cricket with a design that celebrates the shared history and respect between New Zealand and India. Artists Ben Thomason, Shiv Narandas and Jai Pancha have collaborated on the shirt design, New Zealand Cricket said. Narandas and Pancha have used three Indian motifs as the unifying elements; the lotus – India's national flower, a repeating ogee pattern drawn from Indian architecture, and the mandala to provide a symmetrical framework aligning naturally with Maori design systems. While Thomason revised traditional Maori abstract painted scroll designs and motifs – kowhaiwhai – over a background of haehae lines to connect the living with those who have passed, honour the people who built the bond between the nations, and celebrate what it means to players, fans and those behind the scenes. NZC Chief Marketing and Commercial Officer Glenn Critchley said "We're absolutely wrapped with the design. The artists have created a beautiful balance between a distinct Maori design and a distinct Indian design that speaks to the bond between our nations." "Sport underpins the unity between New Zealand and India and we hope this shirt will be a collector's item treasured by New Zealand and Indian cricket fans for years to come." Narandas, whose family hails from India, said it was a meaningful project to work on. "This shirt feels like a journey of our life here. hope that everyone can feel the energy that's been put into this project and they can wear the shirt with pride," Narandas said. The India tour of New Zealand gets underway with the five-match T20I series on October 22, which will be followed by five ODIs beginning November 4. (PTI)

Abhishek's fifty pushes India to 223 against WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Indore



India's Abhishek Sharma plays a shot during the third T20I cricket match between India and West Indies in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on Sunday

New Zealand name split ODI squad for India series

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Wellington



New Zealand Captain Mitchell Santner

Finn Allen, Lockie Ferguson, and Tim Seifert will make their return to New Zealand's ODI setup, while Rachin Ravindra returns from a shoulder injury for the upcoming five-match series against India beginning November 4. Due to the Test series that follows the white-ball games, the selectors have named a split squad, withdrawing red-ball specialists after the third match. The New Zealand selectors have split the squad into three groups, with only six players — Mitchell Santner (captain), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Jacob Duffy, Will Young, and Blair Tuckner — named for all five ODIs. Devon Conway, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, and Nathan Smith will feature exclusively in the first three matches starting with game at Eden Park in Auckland. Following the third game, these Test specialists will leave squad to prepare for longer format in Wellington. To fill the vacancies for the final two ODIs, seven additional players — including Finn Allen, Kristian Clarke, Matt Fisher, Lockie Ferguson, Mitch Hay, Nick Kelly, and Seifert — will join the squad. The BLACKCAPS will look to build on their historic 2-1 ODI series triumph over India on Indian soil in January, their first-ever bilateral ODI series victory in the country. Allen and Ferguson last featured in an ODI in 2023, with Ferguson's previous appearance coming in the World Cup semifinal against India in Mumbai. Seifert last played an ODI around 18 months ago during New Zealand's home series against Pakistan. White-ball captain Mitchell Santner will lead the extended squad, which largely retains the core of the team that secured the landmark series win earlier this year. Ravindra, who was ruled out of New Zealand's T20I squad due to a shoulder injury, will return for the opening three ODIs. The squad will undergo a change midway through the series, with several players heading to Wellington after the third match to prepare for the upcoming Test series. Seven additional players will join the ODI squad for the final two games. The five-match series will conclude with the fourth and fifth ODIs. Head coach Rob Walter said the ODI series is very significant considering the 2027 ICC Men's World Cup in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. "First and foremost this is huge series for us, playing in front of our fans in full stadiums against a formidable Indian side," he said. "With ODI World Cup just one year away it's important for us to also view these matches as preparation for that event," he said.

Smriti Mandhana named celebrity advocate by UNICEF India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi



Newly appointed India women's cricket captain Smriti Mandhana has been named a celebrity advocate by UNICEF India, with the organisation seeking to leverage her influence to promote equal opportunities, health and well-being for adolescent girls. The announcement was made on Sunday to mark the International Day of the Girl, which draws attention to girls' rights, safety, leadership and potential, while highlighting the barriers that continue to restrict their choices. In her new role, Mandhana will build on her previous association with initiatives promoting equal rights and opportunities for children and young people, and advocate for an environment in which girls can participate in sports and realise their potential. She will also support UNICEF India's efforts to empower adolescent girls, improve their health and well-being, and help them access opportunities to learn, play and lead. "I am deeply honoured to join UNICEF India as a Celebrity Advocate. Growing up playing cricket taught me that every dream begins with an opportunity. "With hard work, determination, and encouragement, that opportunity can turn into something extraordinary. Every child and young person deserves the chance to dream big and reach their full potential," Mandhana said. The left-handed batter has previously supported UNICEF and International Cricket Council campaigns focusing on gender equality and life skills, besides lending her support to UNICEF's Promise to Children campaign. An Arjuna Award recipient, Mandhana was appointed captain of the Indian women's cricket team earlier this week after Harmanpreet Kaur stepped down from the role.

Kamil Pooran, but the Indian batters thought they had got a boundary. Having met at the middle of the pitch after completing a single, Axar got back into the crease in time before the stumps were broken. But Tilak was still strolling back and was caught well short of the crease when Gudakesh Motie broke the stumps off the throw from the stumper. Shortly after that, Axar (20) himself was run-out after a mix-up with Arshdeep Singh. Earlier in the innings, a few deliveries kept lower than expected, but it all changed the moment Abhishek unleashed himself. In the third over, Roston Chase (2/38) was swatted for a four over cover when the offie looked to angle one into him, and followed it up with two sixes. With those three shots, Abhishek had made it clear that it was his day to drive India's innings forward, and he did it with his 14th half-century which came off 18 balls. Abhishek put on a century alliance with Kishan who played the perfect second fiddle, hammering six fours and a six to make 37 off 18 balls. India were on course for a total in excess of 250 when Abhishek and Kishan were on song, but the momentum completely changed when Chase decided to alter the length

Vaibhav is unreal talent: Ferguson



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Wellington

New Zealand pacer Lockie Ferguson is looking forward to the challenge of bowling to 15-year-old batting sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi in the upcoming T20I series, saying it is "no surprise" the teenager has been pushed into the Indian squad. Sooryavanshi has been named in India's squad for the five-match series against New Zealand, beginning October 22. "I played him in the IPL. He's proper talent. He's unreal talent. It's no surprise that he's been pushed into the Indian squad. I think he's done IPL back-to-back seasons and been exceptional," Ferguson told reporters on Sunday. "So yeah, looking forward to a challenge that comes with New Zealand. Obviously it's his first time here, I imagine. I'm not sure if he's played cricket here before. But yeah, it's going to be an awesome series." New Zealand host India for a multi-format series featuring two Tests, five T20Is and as many ODIs. "India's unreal side, we know that. But hosting them in New Zealand is going to be real awesome," he said. The 35-year-old has been part of the IPL for close to a decade, representing five teams, including former champions Kolkata Knight Riders and Gujarat Titans, and said his experience of playing alongside and against Indian players has helped him understand their approach to the game. "It's been awesome to play against them (Indian players) and with them at the IPL. So learning how they prepare for games and how they go about playing cricket in India, which can be challenging for good or bad. I've got lots of

great mates." "I know Arshdeep's looking forward to bowling in New Zealand where the ball swings and bounces a bit extra." Ferguson is also set to return to New Zealand's ODI set-up after three years, having been named in the squad for the fourth and fifth matches against India. His last appearance in the format was the 2023 World Cup semifinal against India in Mumbai. "Yeah, of course. It's something we've been working towards. I suppose with One-Day Cricket World Cup around the corner, we were playing a lot more One-Day cricket. "T20 was the focus until the World Cup earlier this year, so that's certainly nice to be building up an exciting group for the series. "We've got the T20 series beforehand, but I've been working real hard the last few months to get the body in a good shape to show my skills again for the one day team." On the evolution of bowling in T20 cricket, Ferguson said the format had influenced the game across formats, forcing bowlers to keep developing their skills. "It has evolved a lot. The T20 games pushed all of cricket forward, even through Test cricket now, with the speed that batters bat. But it actually makes it more exciting. But you have to develop your skills. I love learning. I love trying to develop. "Love talking to the younger bowlers, see how they go about it and also try to learn off, you know, the older bowlers and guys who have done it for a long time when I travel the world. So keep trying to push my game forward. It's all you can do. And take opportunities when they come your way." (PTI)

From playing with Gill and Yuvraj to making debut for Australia, Nikhil Chaudhary lives a dream

G UNNIKRISHNAN
■ Bengaluru

Nikhil Chaudhary had his return tickets booked from Australia after a holiday with his uncle's family in Cairns, and was eager to join his Punjab teammates ahead of the 2020-21 domestic season. An IPL contract was in his dreams. But as fate would have it, the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing worldwide lockdown upended his plans, keeping him Down Under. However, that three months of uncertain period opened up fresh opportunities for Chaudhary, culminating in him making international debut for Australia in a T20I match against Bangladesh in June this year. The goosebumps are still there. "It was my life's biggest moment. Six years ago, when I was going to Australia for a holiday, who could have imagined that I would be playing in Australia? Not even my parents would actually have thought of

that," Chaudhary, who is in Puducherry with Australia A to play three 50-over games against India A, told PTI in an interview facilitated by Cricket Australia. "I was in Belgium playing in a T20 league when I got the call from Tony (Dodemaide, former player and one of the Australian selectors). Australia is one of best countries to have played cricket ever. So, it's not easy to get into it. But to be honest, I'm very grateful." "All the opportunities I'm getting are because of my performance, the hard work I've put in from last five, six years in my life. I think it's a matter of time before more opportunities come to my life. I just need to keep working hard and trust the process." Chaudhary had an impactful 2025-26 Big Bash League season for Hobart Hurricanes, scoring 307 runs from 12 matches at a strike rate of 154. It made the Aussie selectors notice him. Chaudhary, who once



played alongside Yuvraj Singh and Shubman Gill for Punjab in 2017, traced the turnaround in his life to that extended stay in Australia in 2020. "I left India, I think on 16th of March, landed in Cairns, Queensland. I got stuck there for almost three months because of Covid, and remember I had my return ticket back to India ready, on 7th of

May after my birthday (May 4). "So, I started playing in Brisbane. I moved from Cairns to Brisbane around June because the season starts early September there. I have some friends there, and through them I joined Northern Suburban District Club." But the moment of truth came soon for him. "I got a phone call from our

Punjab selector that I have made it to the Ranji Trophy team. I had to make a quick decision. Then I had a chat with my coach, Charanjit Singh Pangu in Ludhiana, and with mom and dad. "They were like, nah, you got to come back. You have done all this hard work to be in this stage to play for your state along with India players like

Gill and Yuvraj (in 2017 Vijay Hazare Trophy). You're going to go further from here and hopefully play IPL etc. "But I told them I think I've got my happy place here. That's when I actually made the decision of staying in Brisbane," he said. But was it tough for him to stay away from his family in a culturally different land? "Yeah, obviously, the culture difference is more regarding the aspects of life, which is doing everything by yourself, not having enough help from your family or close ones. Everyone in Australia builds their own life by scratching from the start. "You have to do some odd jobs. Even school students, when they are 15, 16, work at McDonald's. I did for Australia Post. Those things help you when you make a career of yourself." But the 30-year-old had some experience of living on his own during the BCCI age-group camps, which he said, helped him adapt to the Aussie

living. "Obviously, in India, you live with your parents most of your life. And then that comfort zone, you actually don't go out of that because you are too emotionally attached. It's not just about money. "So again, that's where there was a big cultural difference. Being able to stay away from home from under-14, obviously, you play under 14, 16 for your state. There are north, northeast zone camps, everything. So, you stay away from your family. So, I was actually used to it," he explained. This deep-rooted familiarity with cricket from a young age came handy when he transitioned from white ball formats to red-ball first-class cricket in Australia at 29. "See, when I played the Big Bash for the first time, I was almost turning 27. That's a bit late to get a contract. But I knew what impact I can make to the team and to the game. I need the challenge to get the best out of me.

"It's always the white ball which can challenge me the most because I'm always in game. But I had to wait to get qualified to play for Australia, and it actually made me a better person. I was lucky enough to play with players like Tim David, Matthew Wade, Ben McDermott, Nathan Ellis etc." But was it tough to adapt to Shield cricket? "There wasn't a big transition, to be honest, because from under 14, 16 in India, we always play with red ball. So, it wasn't something new. Even in Australia, we play red ball cricket for the club in Premiership. "And then, last year, I got the opportunity for Tasmania to play Shield cricket. And even straight away in first game, I got the fiver and scored an 80-odd to save the game. That's when everyone knew that I am an all-format player," he said. In that context, Chaudhary feels the current trip to India will add more arrows to his quiver. (PTI)



स्वास्थ्य सुविधाओं में प्रगति का नया दौर

प्रदेश के **अंतिम व्यक्ति** तक पहुँच रही गुणवत्तापूर्ण सेवाएँ



दूरस्थ जनजातीय क्षेत्रों तक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं की पहुँच

- PM-JANMAN अभियान के तहत जनजातीय समुदायों तक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं का विस्तार
- **1.95 लाख** से अधिक OPD सेवाएँ प्रदान की गईं
- **2.42 लाख** से अधिक पैथोलॉजी जांच संपन्न
- **8,405** मोबाइल मेडिकल यूनिट शिविरों के माध्यम से स्वास्थ्य सुविधाएँ पहुँचाई गईं



आधुनिक लैब सेवाओं का राज्यव्यापी विस्तार

- राज्य के **1,051** स्वास्थ्य संस्थानों में आधुनिक पैथोलॉजी जांच सेवाएँ उपलब्ध
- जिला अस्पतालों से लेकर प्राथमिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्रों तक Hub & Spoke Model, आधुनिक IT-आधारित रिपोर्टिंग और गुणवत्ता निगरानी प्रणाली लागू



निःशुल्क डायलिसिस सेवाओं का विस्तार

- प्रधानमंत्री राष्ट्रीय डायलिसिस कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत 32 जिला चिकित्सालयों में निःशुल्क डायलिसिस सुविधा
- विगत ढाई वर्षों में **2.39 लाख** से अधिक डायलिसिस सत्र संपन्न



आयुष्मान योजना से स्वास्थ्य सुरक्षा

- प्रदेश में **2.50 करोड़** से अधिक आयुष्मान कार्ड और **5.84 लाख** वय वंदना कार्ड जारी
- **1,672** शासकीय एवं निजी अस्पतालों के नेटवर्क के माध्यम से पात्र हितग्राहियों को कैशलेस उपचार उपलब्ध।



आपातकालीन स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को नई मजबूती

- प्रदेश में **375** नई **108** संजीवनी एक्सप्रेस एम्बुलेंस का संचालन
- जनवरी 2024 से जून 2026 के बीच **6.50 लाख** से अधिक नागरिकों को समयबद्ध आपातकालीन सेवाओं का लाभ मिला



गुणवत्ता आधारित स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं का विस्तार

- प्रदेश की **1,297** स्वास्थ्य संस्थाएँ राष्ट्रीय गुणवत्ता आश्वासन मानक (NQAS) से प्रमाणित
- मातृ एवं नवजात स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं में LaQshya एवं MusQan के माध्यम से राष्ट्रीय गुणवत्ता मानकों का सुदृढ़ीकरण।



श्री विष्णु देव साय
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, छत्तीसगढ़

श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री

samvad-49298/6



QR स्कैन करें

f X @ /ChhattisgarhCMO
f X /DPRChhattisgarh
www.dprcg.gov.in

सुशासन से समृद्धि की ओर