



Aspirant dies during physical test at Delhi Police Academy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A 23-year-old candidate taking part in the Physical Endurance and Measurement Test (PEMT) at the Delhi Police Academy in Wazirabad died on Monday after collapsing during the race, according to officials. Officials identified him as Saurav Kumar, son of Lachhi Singh, of Neta Nagar village in Salamatpur, Anupshahr tehsil, Bulandshahr district, Uttar Pradesh.

Kumar arrived at the academy to participate in the ongoing PEMT, which is a required part of the recruitment process for Constable (Executive) in Delhi Police. At DPA Wazirabad, candidates first run the race. If they qualify, they move on to other endurance and measurement tests.

Officials said the incident happened during the morning race. Around 9:09 am, Kumar finished the first three rounds. After the third round, he started feeling unwell. He went to the side of the track, where other candidates were sitting, and soon lost consciousness.

Ground staff saw his condition and quickly called the medical team. An ambulance was already on site as part of the test setup and reached him right away. Paramedics gave



Representational image (inside) Deceased Saurav Kumar

him CPR and then took him to the nearest hospital. At 11:11 am, Sonia Vihar police station was informed by Jag Pravesh Chandra Hospital that a man had been brought to the emergency room by a PCR van from the Delhi Police Academy. Doctors tried to help him but declared him dead.

Later, he was described as having been brought dead. The body was sent to Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital for a post-mortem to find out the exact cause of death. His family has been informed. Local police are now handling the investigation. Sonia Vihar police station has started proceedings under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita.

Further investigation is under way. The investigation is ongoing. Officials said the medical team responded quickly. Because an ambulance was already at the venue, paramedics could start resuscitation right away and take the candidate to the hospital without delay.

The PEMT is a physically demanding stage of police recruitment. Male candidates in the relevant age group must complete a timed race before moving on to long jump, high jump, and measurement tests. Large numbers of aspirants from Delhi and neighbouring states, including Uttar Pradesh, appear at centres such as DPA Wazirabad each day during the scheduled window.

Authorities have not yet released the post-mortem findings. Until the results are available, the exact medical cause of the collapse remains unknown. Police said the investigation will look at what happened on the track, the first aid given, and the treatment at the hospital.

The academy continued the recruitment process under official supervision after the incident.

Officials said that medical teams and ambulances are always on standby at PEMT venues. Saurav Kumar's family has been updated, and local police are handling the formalities, including the post-mortem and returning the body after legal steps are finished. The investigation into the death is still ongoing.

Delhi to honour anganwadi workers, eyes pay hike

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Government will organise a special programme, "Aangan Ka Milan," to honour Anganwadi workers as part of the "Seva Sankalp Abhiyan," Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced, with the government also considering an increase in their honorarium.

The Seva Sankalp Abhiyan was launched to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birth anniversary. The Chief Minister said Anganwadi workers play a crucial role at the grassroots level in taking government services to children, women and families, and that honouring their dedication and contribution was the Government's responsibility.

The Chief Minister said felicitation programmes for Anganwadi workers will be held across all 70 Assembly constituencies of Delhi start-



ing September 23. Anganwadi workers, beneficiaries, children, women, parents and members of the local community will participate in these programmes, with around 25,000 invitations being sent out.

Around 500 people are proposed to participate in each Assembly constituency, including MLAs and other public representatives, beneficiaries, children, pregnant and lactating women, parents,

Anganwadi workers and helpers, creche workers and helpers, and community representatives. Participants will also take a nutrition pledge during the programme.

The Chief Minister said a special felicitation kit worth ₹2,500 has been prepared to honour Anganwadi workers, comprising a bag, uniform, insulated water bottle, cap, first-aid pouch and umbrella. During the Assembly-level programmes, the chief guest

will present these kits to frontline workers associated with Anganwadi services, symbolising recognition of their contribution toward taking Anganwadi services to people and strengthening community engagement.

The Chief Minister said the programmes have also been linked with the 9th National Nutrition Month 2026. The Department of Women and Child Development is observing National Nutrition Month from September 17 to October 17, 2026, under the central Government-sponsored "Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan" scheme, with this year's theme being "Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Zimmedari."

The Chief Minister said both the honouring of Anganwadi workers and public awareness on nutrition under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan are aimed at connecting people with a sense of service and responsibility.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's teachings continue to inspire: LG

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Monday said the teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur continue to inspire people to stand with truth, uphold human dignity and raise their voice for the rights of others.

Addressing a national seminar on 'The Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji' at Delhi University's Hansraj College, Sandhu said the Guru's message of freedom from fear, compassion and enlightenment remains relevant in contemporary times.

The seminar was organised jointly by the Ministry of Culture, Sahitya Akademi and Hansraj College to mark the 350th martyrdom



Delhi Lt Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu offers tribute on Guru Tegh Bahadur's Prakash Purab at Gurudwara Rakabganj Sahib in New Delhi

anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Sandhu urged the youth to imbibe his teachings in their daily lives. He emphasised the values of equality and respect for all individuals,

irrespective of caste and social distinctions, and called upon the youth to contribute to nation-building and the service of society. Professor Rama, principal of Hansraj College, said Guru Tegh

Bahadur's life should be read not merely as history but as a contemporary way of life, highlighting the importance of truth, independent thought and human dignity. Sahitya Akademi president Madhav Kaushik said Guru Tegh Bahadur dedicated his life to the larger good of the country, religion and humanity. He highlighted the principles of human rights and *Sarbat Da Bhala* (welfare of all).

The event was attended by scholars and representatives from academic and literary institutions, including professor Jagbir Singh, vice-chancellor of the Central University of Punjab, and Kuldeep Singh Agnihotri, vice-president of the Haryana Sahitya and Sanskrit Akademi.

The Pioneer Classified

LOST & FOUND

I, Asif S/o Masoom Ali
R/o J-3/27A, Khirki Extension, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017, I have lost my original previous chain papers of my property at T-71, Back Side Ground floor, Khirki Extension, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017. Finder Contact: **9289730586**

CHANGE OF NAME

It is for general information that I ARVIND HAJARI S/O SATTO HAJARI R/O A-1. HOUSE NO. 265, GALI NO-8. HARSH VIHAR, MANDOLI, PO: NAND NAGARI. DIST: NORTH EAST DELHI, DELHI-110093. declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as ARVIND SINGH in my minor daughter namely SONI aged 15 years in her 10th Class educational documents and Birth Certificate No. MCDOLIR-0110-004515339. The actual name of mine is ARVIND HAJARI which may be amended accordingly.

It is for general information that ARVIND HAJARI S/O SATTO HAJARI R/O A-1, HOUSE NO. 265, GALI NO-8, HARSH VIHAR, MANDOLI, PO NAND NAGARI, DIST: NORTH EAST DELHI, DELHI 110093, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as ARVIND SINGH in my minor daughter namely LAXMI aged 17 years in her 10th and 12th educational documents and Birth Certificate No MCDOLR08339246. The actual name of mine is ARVIND HAJARI which may be amended accordingly.

I, Shubhika D/O Ved Prakash, Flat Number 1 - A, Surya Appartment Sector - 13, Rohini, Delhi - 110085 , have changed my name to Shubhika Garg (Passport Number - P - 3470330)

I, Krishna Devi W/O Ved Prakash, Flat Number - 1 - A, Surya Appartment, Sector 13, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Krishna Garg (Passport Number - P - 3470330)

I, Babulal Father of No. 2613488K Hav Areefahmad Makandar, R/o- Vill & PO- Khanagaon, Teh- Gokak, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 591344, have changed my name from Babulal to Babulal Makandar vide affidavit dated 21/09/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Jabira Mother of No. 2613488K Hav Areefahmad Makandar, R/o- Vill & PO- Khanagaon, Teh- Gokak, Dist- Belagavi, Karnataka- 591344, have changed my name from Jabira to Javera Makandar vide affidavit dated 21/09/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Banwari Lal Dhiwa father of No.17017634L Hav Clik Dilawar Singh, R/o- Vill/PO- Todpura, Teh- Nawalgarh, Dist- Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan - 333303, have changed my name from Banwari Lal Dhiwa to Banwari Lal vide affidavit dated 21/09/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Chanda Devi Mother of No.17017634L Hav Clik Dilawar Singh, R/o- Vill/PO- Todpura, Teh- Nawalgarh, Dist- Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan - 333303, have changed my name from Chanda Devi to Chanda vide affidavit dated 21/09/2026 before Notary Public Delhi.

I, Smt. Ph Ibemtombi Sharma W/o No.436050P Ex-Nk Late Kuber Sharma resident of Vill-Purandarpur, P.O- Borkhola, PS- Borkhola, Dist- Cachar, State- Assam, PIN- 788110 have changed my name and date of birth from PH Ibemtombi Sharma, DOB 21 Aug 1975 to Ibemtombi Sharma, DOB 31 May 1968 vide affidavit dated 18/09/2026 before 1st Class Magistrate, Silchar, Cachar, Assam.

Public Notice

This is to inform the general public that Mrs. Veena Kaushik is the owner of House No. 67 area measuring 258.70 sq. mtrs., Block-A, Sector- PH01 (p-3), situated in Greater Noida, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. through Transfer deed dated 14.12.2021 as doc. no. 23650 executed by Mr. Anuj Sangal in favour of Mrs. Veena Kaushik in respect of said House. The owner had misplaced the documents are Original Allotment letter, Allocation Letter, Possession Certificate, Transfer Memorandum, Site Plan, and Completion Certificate authorized approved by Authority in respect of said House for which complaint is regd. vide Application No- 36, registered at P.S. Noida Sector-49 on 11.08.2021. Anyone who finds the above mentioned documents is requested to hand over the same to the Manager of HDFC Bank Limited, Plot No. 31, Najafgarh Road, Moti Nagar, Delhi. Mrs. Veena Kaushik is in the process of mortgaging the said floor with HDFC Bank Ltd. Any objections or concerns regarding this transaction should be raised within a period of 7 days from the date of this public notice. Any objections submitted after the completion of this 7-days period will not be considered binding with respect to the said property or the interests of our client. If anyone wishes to raise an objection, please do so within the stipulated 7-days period by contacting Law Veritas, New (Advocates & Legal Consultants) at Office No. 11, 1st floor, Building No. A-44/A, Sector-16, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301. Landmark: 91012-04499711, e-mail: accounts@lvnorthin

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the general public at large that Mrs. Seema Devi W/o Mr. Rajesh Mahto is the owner of Residential Plot No. 51, admeasuring 50 Sq. Yards, equivalent to 41.8 Sq. Meters (450 Sq. Feet), out of Kharsa No. 134, situated in the area of Village Chhapraula, Pargana & Tehsil Dadri, District Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh - 201009, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 19.03.2018, registered as Document No. 5176 with the Sub-Registrar, Dadri. It is further informed that the original Sale Deed dated 04.08.2011, pertaining to the aforesaid property, is not available with the Borrower. The aforesaid property is proposed to be mortgaged in favour of Hinduja Housing Finance Limited as security for the loan facility. Any person having any claim or objection must notify the undersigned in writing within 7 days, failing which it will be presumed there are no objections. **NCR LAW ASSOCIATES, Advocate & Consultants, A-98, Sector-09, New Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201009, Mob. Nos. 9999721152 / 9999826427**

Public Notice

Whereas the borrowers/co-borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors mentioned herein had availed the financial assistance from Axis Bank Ltd. We state that despite having availed the financial assistance, the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors have committed various defaults in payment of interest and principal amounts as per due dates. The account has been classified as Non Performing Asset on the respective dates mentioned hereunder in accordance with the directives/guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India, consequent to the Authorized Officer of Axis Bank Ltd. under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 & in pursuance of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued under. Notices on respective dates mentioned herein under Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 calling upon the following borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors to repay the amount mentioned in the notices together with further interest at the contractual rate on the amount mentioned in the notices and incidental expenses, cost, charges etc until the date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of notices. The notices issued to them on their last known addresses and they are also hereby informed by way of public notice about the same.

DEMAND NOTICE			
Name of the Borrower / Address/ Co-borrower and Guarantor Name:			
1. Mr. Bipin Fulera (Borrower) B-7, Kasna 2nd, Surajpur Side V, Greater Noida, Delhi-110017 Also At Mr. Raj Kumar Singh Plot No-407, FF, Nili Khand-3 Indrapuram, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh 201010 Also At Mr. Raj Kumar Singh Flat No-A-015, First Floor, Tower-A, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 2. Urmila Singh (Co-applicant) Plot No-407 FF Nili Khand-3 Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, UP And Bounded As Under: East: As Per Site Plan, West: As Per Site Plan, North: As per site plan, South: As per site plan	Rs. 1,28,49,051/- (Rupees One Crore Twenty Eight Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Five Only)	Rs. 69,90,956/-	08-Jun-2015 27-Aug-2026
2. Mr. Raj Kumar Singh (Borrower) B-7, Kasna 2nd, Surajpur Side V, Greater Noida, Delhi-110017 Also At Mr. Raj Kumar Singh Plot No-407, FF, Nili Khand-3 Indrapuram, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh 201010 Also At Mr. Raj Kumar Singh Flat No-A-015, First Floor, Tower-A, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 2. Urmila Singh (Co-applicant) Plot No-407 FF Nili Khand-3 Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, UP And Bounded As Under: East: As Per Site Plan, West: As Per Site Plan, North: As per site plan, South: As per site plan	Rs. 1,28,49,051/- (Rupees One Crore Twenty Eight Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Five Only)	Rs. 69,90,956/-	08-Jun-2015 27-Aug-2026
3. Mr. Upendra Sehra (Applicant) S/o. Mr. Viresh Kumar Sehra E-60, Third Floor, Saket, South Delhi, Delhi-110017 Also At Mr. Upendra Sehra S/o. Mr. Viresh Kumar Sehra Flat No-104, Tower-35, Lotus Boulevard, Espacia, Sec-100 Gauram Buddha Nagar Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201304 Also At Mr. Upendra Sehra Property No-A68, Ground Floor, Kharsa No-36/24, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092 2. Mr. Viresh Kumar Sehra (Co-applicant) Flat No-1504, Tower-35, Lotus Boulevard, Espacia, Sec-100 Gauram Buddha Nagar Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201304 Also At Mr. Viresh Kumar Sehra Property No-A68, Ground Floor, Kharsa No-36/24, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092 2. Mr. Viresh Kumar Sehra (Co-applicant) Flat No-1504, Tower-35, Lotus Boulevard, Espacia, Sec-100 Gauram Buddha Nagar Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201304 Also At Mr. Viresh Kumar Sehra Property No-A68, Ground Floor, Kharsa No-36/24, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092 2. 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Yamuna river water quality improves in August: DPCC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Yamuna River recorded an improvement in water quality in August, with faecal coliform levels declining sharply from the previous month, even as Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels remained high, according to the latest data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

The reduction in faecal coliform levels indicates a possible decline in untreated sewage entering the river, although monsoon rainfall during the period may have also contributed to the improvement. BOD levels, meanwhile, showed improvement compared to

July, but remained elevated, the data showed.

The water quality testing by Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) involves collecting water samples from across seven locations along the course of the Yamuna River through Delhi, measuring several parameters such as BOD, dissolved oxygen, chemical oxygen demand, pH and faecal coliform, to determine the pollution level.

The seven locations include major points like Palla, Wazirabad, ISBT Bridge, ITO Bridge, Nizamudin Bridge, Okhla Barrage and Yamuna river at Asgarpur (Kidwali, Haryana).

All six points showed considerable amount of improve-

ment, in terms of faecal coliform levels for the month of August, according to the DPCC data.

However, five of the readings remained much higher than the permissible limit of 2,500 and the desirable level of 500.

The June report showed improvement at Nizamudin Bridge, as levels of faecal coliform went down to 13,000 Most Probable Number per 100 millilitres (MPN/100 ml), as compared to 130,000 MPN/100 ml in July.

The river showed improvement at Asgarpur, where levels of faecal coliform remained at 36,000 (MPN/100 ml) in August, an improvement from 320,000 in July.

The other locations which



also showed improvement were Palla, where faecal coliform levels decreased to 1,400 MPN/100 ml in August from 2,100 MPN/100 ml in

July; Wazirabad where the level went from 3,500 MPN/100 ml to 1,100 MPN/100 ml; and ITO bridge where the level improved from 120,000

MPN/100 ml in July to 17,000 MPN/100 ml in August. Okhla Barrage recorded an improvement from 110,000 MPN/100 ml to 23,000

MPN/100 ml in August; and ISBT Bridge, where the level improved from 170,000 MPN/100 ml to 35,000 MPN/100 ml in August.

BOD levels for August showed improvement but remained beyond the permissible limit at certain locations, ranging from 3-28 milligrams per litre (mg/l), while the water quality criteria stipulates a maximum of 3 mg/l. The highest BOD was recorded at ISBT Bridge at 28 mg/l.

The DPCC has also uploaded the data for waste water quality at Delhi's major drains for August, according to which several drains, discharging directly into the Yamuna, as well as supplementary drains of the Najafgarh canal showed high

BOD and TSS (Total Suspended Solids) levels. The Shahdara, Barapullah and Sen Nursing home drains are the most polluted drains, discharging their untreated effluents directly in Delhi's Yamuna stretch. Under the current surveillance system, the government monitors water quality parameters for BOD (Biochemical Oxygen Demand), COD (Chemical Oxygen Demand) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) from samples taken from the 22 drains in Delhi.

The monthly monitoring also covers six sub-drains with outfall in Agra canal, three UP drains with outfall in Shahdara drain, and sub-drains ending up in Najafgarh jheel/drain.

Voter notices not a sign of deletion, says Delhi CEO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Amid the growing noise over a large number of voters, including many prominent ones, left out of the draft roll, the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer's office on Monday clarified that notices do not mean that the names will be deleted from the final voter roll being prepared under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR). "Issuance of notices does not mean that their (voters') names will be deleted from the electoral roll," the CEO's office said in a statement.

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Delhi has also deployed additional Electoral Registration Officers (AERs) across the city's 70 assembly constituencies, besides the EROs, to help the voters resubmit details and ensure smooth disposal of notices and claims and objections, a statement said.

Former Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, and her former counterpart Arvind Kejriwal are among the many prominent personalities served notices for details mismatch or other discrepan-



cies. A list of electors to whom notices have been issued has been published along with the reasons: unmapping with the 2002 SIR and logical discrepancies like name and age mismatches.

Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan and ex-IAF chief NAK Browne are among prominent voters who have been issued notices over "discrepancies" in their details furnished during the ongoing SIR of voters' list in Delhi, officials said on Monday.

Browne, who served as Chief of the Air Staff from July 2011 to December 2013, was issued a notice with the reason cited as "unmapped with last SIR", according to the list of voters uploaded by

the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) office. Jalan, who served as the 20th governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), was also issued a notice under the "unmapped with last SIR" category, the list showed. Delhi High Court Judge Prateek Jalan, and Tejaswini Bhushan Gawai and Kalpana Das, wives of former Chief Justices of India BR Gawai and DY Chandrachud, respectively, have also been issued notices over discrepancies in their electoral details, according to the list.

More than 3.05 lakh Form-6 applications have been filed across Delhi since the claims and objections window opened on August 31, according to the Chief

125-year-old voter gets SIR notice

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A 125-year-old voter from Old Delhi is among more than 33 lakh electors who have been served notices over "discrepancies" in details furnished in their enumeration forms during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The centenarian, identified as Shyam Mukhija, has been flagged for a "self-name mismatch" in the electoral roll for the Sadar Bazar assembly constituency, according to the list of

voters issued notices uploaded on the Delhi Chief Electoral Officer's website.

Mukhija is reportedly the oldest voter in the list, which has electors across age groups, including several voters in their 80s and 90s. The list also includes names from various sections of public life, including politics, judiciary, bureaucracy and academia.

After the publication of draft rolls of over 97 lakh voters under the SIR, 33.13 lakh notices were being issued over "discrepancies" in details furnished by people in their enumera-

tion forms. Most notices were issued for voter details not matching with the information in the last SIR in 2002.

The case comes against the backdrop of the Election Commission's directive last year to officials in Delhi to verify the electoral details of voters aged 100 years and above as part of an exercise to check the rolls.

Delhi had nearly 150 centenarian voters as of 2020, according to official data. Being served a notice does not mean that a voter's name has been deleted from the electoral roll.

Electoral Officer's latest daily bulletin dated September 21, even as the scale of exclusion from the draft electoral roll remains steep, with the draft published on August 31 carrying just 97,53,577 electors compared to 1,55,24,858 on the rolls used for the 2025 Assembly polls.

According to the CEO's status report, a total of 92,284 Form-6 applications, used for enrolling new electors, were filed across Delhi's 13

districts between August 31 and September 20, adding to the 2,12,400 received up to August 30 to take the cumulative total to 3,04,684. West district recorded the highest number of fresh Form-6 filings during this period at 11,692, followed by South East district at 9,007 and North East at 8,406. Form-8 applications, used for shifting address or correcting existing entries, saw the sharpest activity in the claims period,

with 33,353 fresh filings between August 31 and September 20, taking the cumulative total to 2,94,121. West District again led this category at 3,411, closely followed by North East at 4,089 and East at 3,791.

Form-7 applications, used to object to a proposed inclusion or seek deletion of an existing entry, saw 1,484 new filings during the claims period, taking the cumulative total to 52,955.

Tailor held for alleged sexual assault of minor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

An 11-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by a tailor at his shop in north Delhi's Sadar Bazaar area after he allegedly tied her to a chair, gagged her and threatened her with a pair of scissors when she tried to raise an alarm, officials said on Monday.

A PCR call regarding the alleged sexual assault was received on the night of September 16, following which teams from Sadar Bazaar police station, along

with the girl's mother and threatened her with a pair of scissors to prevent her from raising an alarm.

He further alleged that the accused threatened the girl, saying that if she shouted, he would stab her in the stomach with a scissor. Another neighbour, Mujamil Qureshi, said the girl's mother had been searching for her and had asked another neighbour to keep an eye out for her.

"We got to know that the tailor had tied her hands and gagged her mouth. Her mother was searching for her and she had an intuition



with ACPs of Sadar Bazaar and the Women Police Station, reached the spot, they said. According to police, the minor had stepped out of her house around 11 pm to purchase stationery when the accused, Maqsood, allegedly lured her into his neighbourhood tailoring shop, restrained her and sexually assaulted her.

A neighbour said the girl had told her family that she was going to a nearby shop before the incident.

"Her mother told her not to go out late but she said I am going to my uncle's shop which is close to the house. As she was going to the shop, the accused pulled her from her hand. Her mother started looking for her when she did not return home," the neighbour said.

Another neighbour, Mohammad Iqbal Qureshi, alleged that the tailor gagged

Delhi Govt to fund 75% of heritage conservation costs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Government, under its new heritage scheme to promote conservation of monuments by voluntary organisations, will bear 75 per cent of a project's cost and provide financial assistance of up to ₹2 crore.

According to the notification, the ceiling of maximum assistance fixed at ₹2 crore per project in a financial year can be enhanced on the recommendation of a committee where a monument requires higher expenditure.

A voluntary organisation can submit only one project in a financial year. The grant will also take into account any financial assistance the organisation has received or is likely to receive from other sources for the same project, it said.

The "Our Monument, Our Pride

(Humare Samarak, Humara Gaurav)" scheme, notified by the Department of Archaeology earlier this month, provides grants to registered organisations for conservation, restoration and development works at monuments of the Delhi Government under the "Delhi Chief Minister Heritage Revival Scheme".

Under the scheme, the department will generally bear 75 per cent of a project's cost, with the participating institution contributing the remaining 25 per cent. For Category A (highly protected monuments), the Government's share will rise to 90 per cent, while projects undertaken by Government institutions can receive 100 per cent funding, according to the notification.

The notification specifically cites the Sarai of Azimganj inside the National Zoological Park and Malcha Mahal on Sardar Patel Marg



as examples of monuments that could require higher allocations.

Applicants will have to submit a project report, details of experts proposed to be engaged, a concept plan outlining proposed public use and visitor management, and the expected tourism

and community benefits, it said.

The notification said that applicants will also have to provide financial details of the project, proof of registration, details of their management board, audit reports and annual reports for the last three years, besides certified

financial statements. The selected institutions will be subject to monitoring and will have to submit quarterly reports detailing physical and financial progress. Their project accounts will also remain open to audit by the CAG and the Delhi Government's audit directorate.

The grant will be released in four instalments — 30 per cent as mobilisation advance, followed by 30 per cent each on completion of 30 per cent and 60 per cent of the work, and the final 10 per cent after 90 per cent completion and submission of the audited utilisation certificate, it read.

It further mentioned that the government can recover the grant with 10 per cent annual penal interest if the funds are found to have been used for purposes other than those approved.

DTC bus vandalism probe unearths alleged attack plot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi Police investigation into the vandalism of DTC buses amid the drivers' strike has uncovered a group that allegedly discussed attacks on buses, sources said on Monday.

Three people were allegedly operating the group, and investigators are now examining their role and identifying other members who were part of it, the sources said.

The police are scrutinising the group's chat to ascertain whether conversations on the group were followed by actual incidents of vandalism in the city.

The probe has also revealed that several people identified in connection with damage to buses were contractors outsourced to work for the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC), the sources said.

Whether these employees targeted the buses on their own or acted on the instructions of someone else

is a part of the probe, they said.

In Kanjhawala and Begumpur, 12 people booked in two FIRs of bus vandalism were arrested. In Dwarka, 17 cases related to damage to buses were registered, and five people arrested, the sources said.

More than 50 people have been detained and questioned under Section 65 of the Delhi Police Act, they said. The investigation has found a pattern in some of the incidents. An FIR registered at Dwarka North Police Station on September 19 detailed the pattern.

According to the complaint filed by conductor Pramod Kumar, a bus was parked near Dwarka Main Metro Station when, at around 1.10 pm, an unidentified person arrived on a motorcycle and broke the rear-most glass on the right side of the bus and rode away.

Kumar told the police that he and driver Sandeep were inside the bus, so he could not note down the motorcycle's registration number.

CM Rekha launches PM Surya Ghar Portal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday launched the 'Delhi PM Surya Ghar' registration portal (solar.delhi.gov.in) to register power consumers for rooftop solar panels under the 'PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana' at the Delhi Secretariat.

The chief minister said the panels will be installed on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. The target is to cater to 2.3 lakh households. The portal has been designed to make the process of installing rooftop solar panels at homes easier and more convenient for Delhi residents.

Under the PM Surya Ghar scheme, the Centre provides a subsidy of up to ₹78,000 for rooftop solar systems of up to 3 kW. The Delhi Government has also decided to provide a state subsidy of ₹78,000 along the same lines. This means a combined subsidy of up to ₹1.56 lakh will be available from the Centre and the Delhi Government.

The Chief Minister said the



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta addresses the launch ceremony of PM Surya Ghar Registration Portal, at the Delhi Secretariat in New Delhi

'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' is not just about announcing schemes, but about taking facilities to people in a way that delivers a direct benefit in their daily lives. A large number of families in Delhi can generate electricity by installing solar panels on their rooftops. This will not only promote clean energy but also give families an opportunity to save on their electricity bills.

The chief minister said domestic consumers in Delhi with an average monthly electricity consumption of up to 400 units

will be provided rooftop solar systems of up to 3 kW without any payment. If there is any additional gap in the cost of the solar system, arrangements will also be made to cover it through the assistance provided by the government.

The Chief Minister made it clear that the initiative is not limited to individual houses. The Delhi Government has also increased assistance for installing solar systems in common areas and open spaces of group housing societies. Under this provision, the subsidy has been

increased from ₹2,000 per kW to ₹11,000 per kW. She said there are also families in Delhi that do not have large rooftops.

Giving details of another special provision under the scheme, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said a special arrangement has also been made for consumers in the 0-200 unit electricity consumption category. If such consumers reduce their electricity consumption after installing rooftop solar, for instance, bringing their consumption down from 200 units to 50 units, the government will provide a financial incentive equivalent to 75 units for the 150 units saved.

The Delhi Government has put in place a simple digital system to take solar energy to households across the city. The Delhi Solar Portal provides facilities for applying for rooftop solar, information about the scheme, subsidies, authorised vendors, complaints and other necessary services. The facility to apply for solar installations on the portal has been opened from September 21.

New DUSU panel visits Satya Niketan after building collapse

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Newly elected Delhi University Students'Union (DUSU) office-bearers affiliated with the ABVP on Monday visited Satya Niketan to pay homage to those who lost their lives in the building collapse earlier this month and pledged to raise issues concerning students'safety and accommodation.

The DUSU president, secretary and joint secretary visited 'Satya Square'around 4.30 pm, two days after the results of the university's student body elections were declared. According to an ABVP statement, the newly elected representatives assured students that the union would work throughout the year to address concerns related to accommodation, rents, basic amenities and safety in Satya Niketan and surrounding areas. The representatives also called for concrete measures to prevent similar incidents in the future and accountability from the authorities. The visit came after the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) won three of the four central panel posts in the DUSU



Newly elected Delhi University Students'Union office-bearers affiliated with the ABVP during a visit to Satya Niketan in New Delhi

PTI

elections, securing the positions of president, secretary and joint secretary.

ABVP Delhi State Secretary Sarthak Sharma said the election victory marked the beginning of the union's accountability towards students. "Satya Niketan is the heartbeat of South Campus students, yet they constantly grapple with issues regarding accommodation and basic amenities," Sharma was quoted as saying in the statement. He said the organisa-

tion would raise students'concerns before the university administration and the ". Dabas said the visit was not merely a formality and pledged that DUSU would work to address arbitrary rents, inadequate amenities and security concerns.He also said the union would take steps towards implementing the Room Rent Regulation Act, strengthening security measures and safeguarding students'legal rights, according to the statement.

Delhi lawyers strike against 50% pre-deposit challan rule

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Lawyers on Monday abstained from work in all seven district courts in the national capital to protest amendments to the traffic challan system, particularly the requirement to deposit 50 per cent of the challan amount before approaching a court. The day-long strike followed a call given by the Coordination Committee of all district court Bar Associations, which had flagged concerns over the amended Rule 167 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989.

During their protest, lawyers gathered in all district courts and raised slogans demanding that the Delhi "revoke the amendment.

Under the amended mechanism, a person issued a challan is required to either accept and pay it, or contest it through the prescribed portal before an authority specified by the state ". The challenge has to be filed within 45 days.

Lawyers have objected to the provision under which, if the challenge is rejected by the designated authority, the person can approach the competent court only after depositing 50 per cent of the challan amount. They have also questioned the role assigned to the Executive in deciding

a person's challenge before the matter can reach a court, contending that such determination involves a judicial function.

The lawyers said the mandatory pre-deposit could effectively burden a person who disputes the alleged traffic violation and may discourage them from seeking judicial redress.

They also raised concerns over the under which a challan would be treated as "deemed to have been accepted" if it is not contested before the specified authority within the prescribed period.



BJP WILL NOT ALLOW DIVIDE AND RULE IN UP: NABIN



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Meerut

BJP president Nitin Nabin on Monday accused the Congress and the Samajwadi Party of adopting "divide and rule" and said his party will not allow it to be implemented again in Uttar Pradesh "under any circumstances".

Addressing a conference of BJP's Shakti Kendra coordinators here, Nabin also described Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's 'Students Ki Goonj' programme as an "echo of lies", saying that "lies do not have a long life".

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Sonia voter-roll row probe revived

"The sanctity of the electoral roll is an article of faith for every citizen in a parliamentary democracy. The mightiest in the land may only be a voter or citizen at par with others less powerful," the judge said.

"Any allegation of tampering with the electoral rolls, fraudulent inclusion of the name of a voter, inclusion of the name of a non-citizen, and possible use of false declarations or documents merits a reasoned order to determine whether allegations relating to cheating and forgery have been disclosed," he said.

He said the ACJM's order recorded no discussion on the sequence in which Gandhi's name was included, deleted, and again included in the electoral roll in 1980, 1982 and 1983 respectively.

Rather than finding whether these allegations constituted a cognisable offence, the impugned order simply branded the complaint as lacking essential particulars, the judge said, adding that the extract of the electoral roll was casually dismissed as being "a photocopy of the photocopy of the alleged extract of the uncertified roll of 1980." He said, "The limited prayer before the ACJM was to consider the extract of the electoral roll and other allegations as being adequate, or otherwise to direct investigation for the allegedly fraudulent entry of the name of Sonia Gandhi."

In effect, it is a non-speaking order on the question of disclosure of a cognisable offence, the judge said.

"The order suffers from a manifest error in law on account of non-compliance with Section 175(3) of the Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), inter alia, not hearing the submissions of the concerned police officer and non-calling of a status report from the concerned police station," the judge said.

Section 175(3) empowers a magistrate to order police investigation into a cognisable offence.

The judge said the magistrate failed to consider the twin options permissible in law: one, directing the registration of an FIR; two, the conduct of proceedings under Section 223 of the BNSS (which governs the magistrate examining the complainant and witnesses after taking cognisance of an offence).

Regarding the issue of citizenship, the judge said the ACJM had only to decide whether the allegations disclosed a cognisable offence and whether it called for a police investigation. However, he conflated this with the jurisdiction of the Central government and digressed towards the issue of citizenship.

The court said it was unable to fathom why the ACJM considered the Election Commission's powers to include or exclude persons from electoral rolls to be a bar on the police to prove fraudulent inclusion of names in electoral rolls or the use of false documents.

The judge said the magisterial court did not perform its "core function" of discerning the disclosure of a cognisable offence.

"The court finds the four pillars of reasoning adopted in the impugned order to be perverse and improper, as well as an incorrect appreciation of law and allegations. In fact, the impugned order is liable to be set aside," the judge said.

He remanded the matter back to the magisterial court to "pass a speaking order in light of the specific requirements of 175(3) of the BNSS" and directed fresh hearing of the complainant's arguments. The matter has been posted for further hearing on September 29.

Chargesheet in Ram temple theft row..

It instructed the magistrate to act on the chargesheet in accordance with the law and requested that the State also send a copy of the chargesheet to the SC. The court refused to provide the petitioners with a copy of the sealed status report, on the ground that the judicial order summarised its contents.

The case started in June 2026 when officials noticed that the cash collected from donation boxes did not match the amount deposited in the banks. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust requested an investigation.

On June 13, the State formed a three-member SIT led by Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, with Kiran S as Range Inspector General and Neel Ratan Kumar as Special Secretary (Finance).

Following the Supreme Court's July directions, the team was reconstituted, and a forensic auditor was added. A preliminary SIT report, submitted on June 23, reviewed CCTV footage from

April 27 to June 5 and identified about 70 suspected cases of theft or pilferage.

The staff were seen hiding bundles of notes and loose cash in their clothing, pockets, and shoes. Some employees were said to have blocked the camera view, while others took the notes. Later on, hidden cameras placed by members of the trust recorded the same kind of activity.

It was discovered that standard operating procedures had been ignored: security guards were not posted during the count, personnel were not searched on entry and exit, and footage was kept for only 45 days rather than the recommended 180 days.

Police filed an FIR that named eight people involved in counting cash and valuables: Avinash Shukla, Anukalp Mishra, Lavkush Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey, Ramashankar Mishra, Subhash Srivastava, and Ram Shankar Yadav, also known as Tinnu, along with others whose names are not known. Police arrested all eight in late June.

Investigators recovered almost 780 lakh in cash from several of the accused. Bank records and witness statements suggest the practice may have started before the available footage. Two senior trust officials, one of them the general secretary, Champat Rai, resigned as a result of the controversy. The most recent status report has increased the number of recorded CCTV incidents from 70 to 105. The offences under review include criminal breach of trust and violations of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The court has said further investigation may still occur. The SIT has reviewed CCTV footage, collected evidence, conducted forensic tests, and examined financial records. The chargesheet, expected this week, will determine the prosecution's next step in the Sessions Court. The Supreme Court is still monitoring the case.

Viral video of Bihar minors' assault...

The group forced the students to apologise before letting them go.

The Bihar police has formed a Special Investigation Team led by SDPO Deepti Monali to lead the investigation. So far, seven suspects from the footage have been identified, the police claim. Three suspects have been arrested, and police are still searching for the others, including the man seen sexually assaulting the girl.

State Women's Commission Chairperson Apsara Mishra said a detailed report had been sought from the district administration on the incident, which has triggered criticism of the BJP-led Government over the safety of women and girls in the state.

The episode triggered a political slugfest, with criticisms coming from several opposition leaders, including Rahul Gandhi.

Gandhi, who is Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, came out with an angry post on X, describing the incident as "deeply disturbing".

"This is not culture, it is patriarchy," the Congress leader said, alleging that "andhbhaks" were responsible for such attitudes being "normalised".

The Rae Bareilly MP demanded that the persons identified in the video be "prosecuted under POCsO" and asked the BJP-led government in the state "why a girl is not safe on a public road".

The Aam Aadmi Party also shared the video clip on its X handle, reminding Prime Minister Narendra Modi of his "beti bachao" slogan and alleging "in your BJP-ruled state of Bihar, a daughter's dignity is being torn to shreds".

RJD working president Tejashwi Yadav, who is the Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, blamed the incident on Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary without naming him and referred to him as "nausikhiya" (inept).

Yadav also held Modi "solely responsible" for the "anarchy in Bihar", and alleged that JD(U) president Nitish Kumar, the former chief minister, was "made to pack his bags within four months of getting a fresh mandate by offering doles to the state's women".

The Trinamool Congress also condemned the incident. "What gives anyone the right to put their hands on a woman's body, WITHOUT HER CONSENT? Who gave these hooligans the authority to moral-police a young woman and a young man, humiliate them and violate their dignity?", the party said in a post on X.

"The Jamui incident is deeply disturbing. The trauma inflicted on that young woman - and on the young man who was subjected to such humiliation - will not disappear anytime soon. Every person responsible in the incident must face due process and the strongest punishment

permitted by law, without delay or political interference," it said. In Kolkata, Union Panchayati Raj and Fisheries Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh asserted that law and order in Bihar is totally secure.

The Munger MP asserted that women are now free to step out of their homes at any time of the day in the state.

"Law and order in the state is totally secure," Singh said on the sidelines of a review meeting on development of fisheries in West Bengal.

IIT-Bombay removes dean after student suicide...

The IIT-Bombay also issued a public apology for its earlier communication that characterised the events preceding the death of the student, Sahil Wakode, before a detailed inquiry was completed.

Wakode, a second-year B.Tech student in the Department of Energy Science and Engineering hailing from Maharashtra's Yavatmal district, was found hanging in his hostel room on the Powai campus on Friday evening, hours after he was allegedly caught using a mobile phone to access ChatGPT during a mid-semester examination.

The Mumbai Police have booked Doolla under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and Section 108 (abetment of suicide) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, following a complaint lodged by Sahil's family.

In an email to students, IIT Bombay Director Shireesh Kedare confirmed the removal of Doolla, who previously served as the Dean of Student Affairs, from the current post.

Doolla, who is a professor, continues to remain in the faculty.

"In view of the ongoing investigation, it was inappropriate to have set out or characterised details relating to the events preceding Sahil's demise before they had been duly established through the appropriate investigative process," the institute said in its statement on Monday, retracting its earlier assertion that Sahil was caught cheating but faced no disciplinary action.

However, student groups expressed dissatisfaction with the move, demanding his suspension as a faculty member.

On Monday evening, the faculty members held a march in the institute's campus to support Doolla. The Faculty Forum said that he followed "Senate-approved exam procedure" when he reported the student for alleged phone use on September 18.

Sahil's family alleged that he was subjected to systematic institutional harassment and caste-based discrimination.

"He was our only son. We reached this stage after immense struggle and now they have finished him. The staff harassed him using casteism. I want justice," said his father, Ravindra Wakode, demanding a comprehensive probe into the administration's role.

Sahil's father Ravindra Wakode claimed that his son was mocked, tortured and discriminated on caste lines and demanded probe into the role of the IIT Bombay administration in his son's death.

The student protesters at IIT-Bombay claimed that Sahil faced severe pressure and threats of academic suspension.

Kedare told protesters late Sunday night that he will resign on Monday, but noted he must follow the process. The institute said he has not resigned.

Police detained Youth Congress workers protesting outside the IIT Bombay gate over the student's suicide.

Security in and around the campus was beefed up after protests by students and Youth Congress workers.

Many local residents and alumni attempted to visit the campus. However, as a precautionary measure, entry was restricted. Only current students and authorised staff can enter, an official said.

Members of political and social organisations gathered outside the main gate of IIT Bombay to protest against the administration. "A few protesters from outside organisations gathered at the main gate. They were promptly removed from the spot and taken into preventive custody," a police official said.

A student said he stayed in the room next to Sahil's and they used to hang out regularly. "Students face immense academic pressure here, which the management needs to address. However, I personally never witnessed casteism on campus," he said.

"On the day of the incident, a professor took Sahil out of the classroom after he was allegedly caught cheating. Something serious must have triggered him to take such an extreme step," the student said.

Student groups and alumni alleged systemic issues within the administration.

Pranav Jeevan, an alumnus, criticised the institute's handling of student affairs and mental health.

"The administration frequently punishes students with arbitrary threats of hostel eviction, suspension, and heavy financial penalties, even fining students up to Rs 1.5 lakh for organising a play," he said.

"Despite past tragedies, the campus lacks effective caste sensitisation, adequate mental health support, and an empowered SC/ST Cell to address discrimination," he alleged.

Jeevan claimed that official statements released prior to a detailed investigation aimed to protect faculty members, adding that non-compliance with faculty reservation norms remains an unaddressed root issue.

Security has been stepped up around the institute in view of the protests.

Around 50 police personnel, including inspectors, sub-inspectors, and women officers, have been deployed around the campus, while multiple police vans have been stationed at the main gates, an official said.

Mumbai Police Crime Branch is probing the circumstances surrounding the student's death. A police official said the investigation is expected to shed light on reasons which prompted Sahil to take the extreme step.

Keep faith, drop cruelty: Delhi urges temples...

PETA India has also called for a nationwide ban on elephant rides, bathing experiences, selfies and other close-contact tourist activities involving captive elephants, following several incidents involving elephants and humans.

The organisation also urged the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to encourage states to adopt robotic elephants in temples and for other activities, including film and photo shoots, weddings and tourist rides. PETA India noted that captive elephants used in processions, rides and other events are often subjected to harsh training methods, including beating and chaining. It claimed that many elephants kept in temples and other facilities suffer from foot problems and leg wounds, inadequate veterinary care and a lack of natural living conditions.

Battle for symbol: SC sets urgent hearing...

On Thursday, the ECI barred both groups from using the 'All India Trinamool Congress' name and reserved its symbol pending a substantive determination of the dispute.

In its interim order issued on Thursday night, the poll panel, after hearing leaders of the two factions led by Banerjee and Arup Roy, said the matter requires substantive determination by the poll body under provisions of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968.

In her plea filed in the apex court, Banerjee has made the ECI and Ritabrata Banerjee, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, as party respondents.

On September 18, Banerjee attacked the ECI over its decision to freeze the TMC's name and Jora Ghash Phul (twin flowers on grass) symbol, likening the loss of the party's identity to the pain of a mother losing her child and calling it a "black day" in the country's democratic history.

Banerjee had said she would not accept the interim arrangement as a settlement and vowed to fight till the end to reclaim the party's original identity and its flowers-and-grass symbol politically, democratically and legally. Her statements came hours after the poll panel allotted her faction the name 'Mamata All India Trinamool Congress' and the 'Football Player' symbol for the October 6 bypolls to Nandigram and Rejinagar.

The rival faction led by Roy was allotted the name 'Democratic Trinamool Congress' and the 'Envelope' symbol.

Assembly bypolls to Nandigram in East Medinipur district and Rejinagar in Murshidabad district are scheduled for October 6, with vote counting on October 9.

The bypolls in West Bengal were necessitat-

ed as Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari won from both Nandigram and Bhabanipur, and chose to vacate Nandigram, while AJP leader Humayun Kabir won from both Naoda and Rejinagar, and decided to give up the Rejinagar seat.

The ECI order comes in the aftermath of a rebellion in the TMC legislature party after the Assembly poll defeat in May which later spread to Parliament.

In June, 58 rebel MLAs elected expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee as the leader of opposition in the West Bengal Assembly instead of the Mamata camp nominee, Sovande Chattopadhyay, and secured recognition from the Speaker, marking the party's first split in its 28-year history.

Five days later, the revolt reached Parliament, with 20 Lok Sabha MPs led by Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar joining the little-known NCPI and writing to Speaker Om Birla, backing the BJP-led NDA as a "separate bloc", deepening the rupture in the party's parliamentary ranks.

Xi, Trump summit from September 23

"The reciprocal visits by the two heads of state within a span of six months will mark a milestone of historic significance," he said.

The two leaders last met in Beijing in May during Trump's China visit, when they talk talks aimed at improving ties between the world's two largest economies.

"China will work with the US to enrich the dimensions of the China-US constructive relationship of strategic stability, strengthen dialogue and cooperation and properly manage differences so as to deliver greater benefits to our two peoples and to further contribute to world peace, stability and prosperity," Guo said.

Trump plans to accord a rare airport reception to Xi by personally receiving him on the tarmac at Joint Base Andrews, according to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.

From trade tariffs and technology to AI, military-to-military ties, the conflict in West Asia, the Russia-Ukraine war, the space arms race and US arms sales to Taiwan, a range of issues are expected to figure in the meeting between the two world leaders.

Ahead of Xi's visit, Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer held "candid, in-depth and constructive" talks on economic and trade issues, including AI, on Sunday in New York.

In his talks with He, Bessent said the US had proposed a new notification mechanism for artificial intelligence incidents that could affect national security.

"We want a shared vision of common goals and common threats," Bessent told the media in New York. "We think that just like any cross-border activity, that moving from opaque to more transparency between the No. 1 and the No. 2 AI powers in the world is very important."

'Guided by the important consensus reached by the heads of state of the two countries, He and Bessent engaged in exchanges on important economic and trade issues of common concern, as well as the implementation of consensus reached in previous talks, while upholding the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The Xi-Trump talks assume significance against the backdrop of Trump signing a new sanctions law that authorises him to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries buying Russian oil and gas, including China and India.

Trump last week signed the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, which authorises expanded sanctions and gives the president powers to impose tariffs on countries that buy Russian energy.

China has rejected US attempts to impose tariffs over its purchases of Russian oil and gas, saying normal trade cooperation between countries should not be subject to interference by third parties. China engages in normal economic and trade cooperation with other countries based on equality and mutual benefit, Guo Jiakun told reporters on September 17.

China opposes long-arm jurisdiction and unilateral sanctions that have no basis in international law and lack a UN Security Council mandate, he said. Despite the tariff threat, Washington and Beijing are also negotiating a reciprocal tariff reduction framework covering products worth \$30 billion from each side, China's commerce ministry said.

The consultations aim to reach a reciprocal tariff reduction arrangement at the earliest possible date, ministry spokesperson Huang Ling said.

States Focus

ED charges EaseMyTrip co-founder in betting scam



PM MODI CONDOLES DEATH OF DUBAI RULER'S BROTHER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday condoled the death of Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the brother of the Dubai ruler, and said his efforts to serve society will be cherished by generations to come.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum was the younger brother of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai. "Deeply saddened by the passing of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. His efforts to serve society will be cherished by generations to come. "I convey heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family and the people of Dubai. May his soul rest in eternal peace," Modi said in a social media post. (PNS)



DRUG MENACE ROSE SHARPLY IN PUNJAB UNDER AAP: SAINI

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday accused the Aam Aadmi Party Government in Punjab of not fulfilling the promises it made to the people, including eradicating the drug problem, which he claimed increased sharply under the AAP rule.

Saini said the AAP made tall promises to the people of Punjab before coming to power, including eradicating the drug menace, employing the youth and procuring farmers' produce at MSP, but even after nearly five years, these promises remained unfulfilled.

He also accused the AAP of betraying the women, farmers and the poor. (PNS)

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has charged EaseMyTrip co-founder Nishant Pitti in the Mahadev online betting app money laundering case. He is accused of moving illegal betting money into India's stock market by disguising it as foreign portfolio investments.

The ED also froze Pitti's Demat shares worth ₹59.60 crore with a provisional order under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. This happened when the agency filed the chargesheet on September 10 in a special court in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. Pitti, who is chairman and managing director of Easy Trip Planners Ltd, has been named in the fifth supplementary chargesheet.

The complaint names 42 people and companies, including EBIX Group chairman Vikas Garg. The ED has

asked the court for permission to seize the attached shares, saying they are proceeds of crime. Investigators allege that Pitti directly helped move money from Skyexchange, an overseas betting platform tied to the Mahadev syndicate, into Indian stocks.

The chargesheet says Pitti made a deal to manipulate stock prices on behalf of Easy Trip Planners promoters, working with an associate of operator Hari Shankar Tibrewal. The goal was to raise the company's share price and market value.

The ED also said that Pitti actively helped Tibrewal hide and move illegal money, and that he knowingly used those funds. The Mahadev investigation is one of the biggest probes into illegal online betting in India. Agencies say the syndicate, led by Sourabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal from abroad, ran a network of betting



panels across the country. They collected funds through mule accounts and sent them abroad via hawala channels, cryptocurrency, and complex company structures. The money was then brought back to India through seemingly legal channels, such as foreign portfolio investments. Interpol has issued notices against the main promoters, and agencies have frozen or

the money even though he knew about Tibrewal's role in illegal betting. The Directorate had earlier searched places linked to Pitti and recorded his statements several times.

Previous investigation documents reported that Easy Trip Planners paid companies known as entry providers. Investigators also found cash during searches and digital records that they say connect Pitti to SkyExchange activities. Officials think these transactions were part of a larger scheme to hide betting money in listed Indian companies and then use changes in share prices to make the money appear legal.

EasyMyTrip has denied any connection between Pitti and the betting network, calling the reports baseless and saying he was not involved in illegal betting. The company also says it follows corporate governance standards and is working with investiga-

tors. At the same time, authorities are still looking into how money from offshore betting platforms may have moved through Indian capital markets, possibly using pre-arranged trades, shell companies, and foreign investment structures.

Investigators say the case shows listed companies were used as the final step in a money-laundering process that began with illegal betting and ended with owning shares and raising market value.

The ED may initiate legal action against other people and companies as it searches for remaining assets and examines more market deals connected to the group. The charges against Pitti show that the case has grown from focusing on betting operators and panel managers to now including listed-company promoters accused of helping turn illegal money into stock-market holdings.

Delhi building collapse: Student's kin meet Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The family of Arpit Jaj, a student from Dewas who lost his life in a building accident in Delhi, met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the 'Students Ki Goonj' programme in Indore and shared the pain they have endured since the tragedy.

Arpit's grandfather, Makhanlal Jaj, his father, Bhupendra Jaj, and his sister, Priyanshi Jaj, met Rahul Gandhi on the stage of the event. The family spoke about the difficulties they faced following Arpit's death and alleged that they had received neither financial assistance nor a visit from any government representative.

Questioning the arrangements for students living in Delhi, the family said that if



proper and safe accommodation had been provided, the tragedy might perhaps have been avoided.

The family also expressed gratitude to former minister Sajjan Singh Verma and Congress leader Manoj Rajani, saying that their support gave them an opportunity to share their concerns directly with

NHAI releases guidelines for highways

RAJESH KUMAR
■ New Delhi

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on Monday released comprehensive guidelines for planning and designing four- and six-lane access-controlled National Highways, which include one-metre-high walls to keep stray cattle off the road, warnings before exits and highway widths based on traffic.

According to the guidelines, High-speed corridors will have a one-metre-high boundary wall along their outer edge. The walls are meant to keep stray cattle from entering the highway and also restrict encroachments and unauthorised access. The guidelines are meant to bring uniformity to the way upcoming high-

speed corridor. The provision is among the additional safety measures prescribed for roads carrying high-speed traffic.

The width and number of lanes will depend on how much traffic a highway is expected to carry. Corridors handling up to 15,000 vehicles will have four lanes and four-lane structures, with a width of 60 metres.

For traffic between 15,000 and 25,000 vehicles, the highway will have four lanes and six-lane structures, with a width of 70 metres. Highways handling between 25,000 and 40,000 vehicles will have six lanes and six-lane structures, also within a width of 70 metres.

The configuration will be decided on the basis of a detailed traffic assessment.



SHREE GANESHOTSAV-2026

TOGETHER FOR BAPPA, TOGETHER FOR NATURE
LET'S MAKE DELHI CLEAN AND GREEN

WISHING YOU A VERY HAPPY GANESHOTSAV!

DO'S ✓

- USE ONLY ECO-FRIENDLY POOJA SAMAGRI/NATURAL FLOWERS ETC. IN PRAYERS.
- USE ONLY NATURAL COLOURS FOR PAINTING IDOLS.
- IMMERSE GANESH IDOLS AT HOME IN BUCKET/CONTAINER/SITES DESIGNATED BY LOCAL BODIES/AUTHORITIES.
- IDOLS SHOULD BE MADE OF TRADITIONAL CLAY AND PAINTED WITH NATURAL COLOURS.

DON'TS ✗

- DO NOT USE IDOLS MADE OF PLASTER OF PARIS (POP)/BAKED CLAY AND TOXIC/CHEMICAL COLOURS.
- DO NOT USE THERMOCOL OR PLASTIC IN DECORATIONS.
- DO NOT IMMERSE IDOL IN RIVER YAMUNA OR OTHER WATER BODIES.
- DO NOT THROW WORSHIP MATERIAL LIKE FLOWERS IN RIVER YAMUNA OR WATER BODIES.

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Violations of the directions issued by DPCC on 09.09.2026 regarding idol immersion are punishable under the provisions of the said directions.

REKHA GUPTA
CHIEF MINISTER, DELHI

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI



सत्यमेव जयते
दिल्ली सरकार



DIP/Shabdarth/Display/094/26-27

BJP slams Congress over ex-VP Ansari’s remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Monday criticised the Congress over former vice president Hamid Ansari's remarks citing former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's views on "Hindu right-wing communalism", alleging that they expose the Opposition party's "Muslim League, Maoist" character.

The ruling party also attacked Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi over his "Chhatron Ki Goonj" event in Indore, saying he had demeaned his constitutional post with "clownish caricature".

Ansari, while speaking at an event commemorating late constitutional expert and author AG Noorani in New Delhi on Friday, referred to Nehru's view that "the real danger to India was not communism, but Hindu right-wing communalism"—cited in Noorani's 2019 book 'The RSS: A Menace to India'.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, BJP MP and national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said Ansari's remarks have "thoroughly exposed that



BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi

Congress has become Muslim League Maoist Congress in totality". He said the former vice president's comment also suggests that Nehru considered communism a threat, while the Congress has now shifted towards "ultra-left".

"Today, the Congress has gone ultra-left. It has taken a dive into communism, which Nehru considered a threat," he said.

He further said Congress leaders should think before citing Nehru, claiming they may not have read what the former prime minister had written in his books. Trivedi said Ansari has not just "dug up buried ghosts of history", but "breathed life into them".

He alleged that the Muslim leaders endorsed by the

Congress have "League-like sentiments", ideas which have now become exceedingly prevalent within the grand old party.

Responding to a query regarding alleged anti-women remarks by Kerala Islamic scholar Kanthapuram AP Aboobacker Musliyar, Trivedi asserted that the Congress must oppose such sentiments, alleging that the party has been an "obedient follower" of the cleric despite claiming to be flag-bearers of "Smash the Patriarchy".

Musliyar, the Grand Mufti of India, sparked widespread controversy in August after allegedly stating that women should remain confined to their homes and stay out of the public sphere.

Responding to a query

about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's "Chhatron Ki Goonj" event in Indore, Trivedi attacked the leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, saying whether he is qualified to remain in the constitutional post is a "yaksha prashna" (crucial question).

"He has demeaned the post of leader of Opposition, compromising grace and gravitas for clownish caricature. In simple Hindi, he has descended to 'jokarai' (buffoonery)," he said. "When there is a lack of creativity, downfall is inevitable — his events have gone from humorous poetry sessions to laughter shows, and from laughter shows to stand-up comedy, and in stand-up comedy, vulgarity has crept in. The Congress has descended into utter obscenity," Trivedi said.

He said the Congress should consider if it still represents the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Rajendra Prasad, C Rajagopalachari, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sardar Patel and Pranab Mukherjee. "Such lows were never witnessed during the times of Jawaharlal Nehru or Indira ji. This is the lowest the Congress has stooped to in its 140 years," he said.

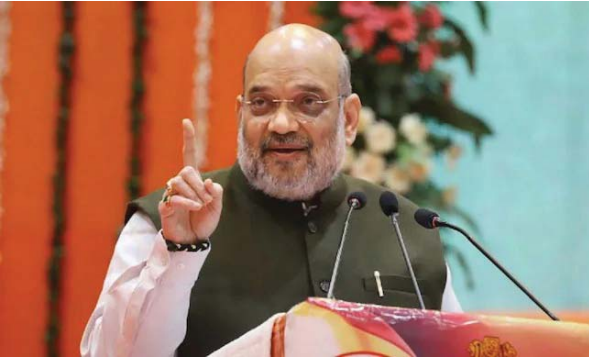
Shah to inaugurate national conference of ANTFs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will open the third National Conference of the Heads of Anti-Narcotics Task Forces (ANTFs) in New Delhi on Tuesday. The two-day event, arranged by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), will bring together the chiefs of ANTFs from all 36 States and union territories. Shah is expected to launch anti-drug television advertisements, lay the foundation stones for new NCB regional complexes in Lucknow and Dehradun, present an award to the most successful ANTF, and launch a renewed NCB website.

The conference theme, 'United Resolve, Shared Responsibility', is based on the Vision Document for Narcotics Control (2026–29). This plan is built upon four pillars: enforcement, intelligence and operations; control of precursor and synthetic drugs; demand and harm reduction; and capacity building and coordination. The technical sessions will address cartel networks, rehabilitation, clandestine laboratories, illicit cultivation, and investigations into the Darknet and Cryptocurrency.

The Government's primary evidence of progress comes



from seizure and case data. In 2025, the various agencies recorded 1,48,063 trafficking cases and made 1,83,675 arrests, compared with 96,930 cases and 1,22,224 arrests in 2024. They seized 1,240.9 tonnes of drugs worth approximately ₹18,227 crore; ganja made up the largest portion of this, amounting to 628.19 tonnes, an increase from 533.9 tonnes the year before. Hashish decreased to 5.11 tonnes from 6.48 tonnes the previous year.

The total weight of heroin seized was 3,567 kg, of which Punjab accounted for 2,085.55 kg, or 58 per cent of the national total. Cocaine seizures amounted to 226 kg, with Maharashtra leading the way at 108.06 kg and Delhi at 55.49 kg. From 2021 to 2025, the total amount seized was over 6,800 tonnes, valued at about Rs 1.08 lakh crore. Annual

figures were 1,609.6 tonnes in 2021, 1,253.6 tonnes in 2022, 1,389.7 tonnes in 2023, 1,330.6 tonnes in 2024, and 1,240.9 tonnes in 2025.

The NCB said that in 2025 it seized about 1.33 lakh kg of narcotics valued at nearly ₹2,000 crore, made 994 arrests, destroyed 77,773 kg of narcotics, and achieved a conviction rate of about 67 per cent. New routes have been developed. The number of cases relating to drones increased from three incidents and 10 kg in 2021 to 305 incidents and 468 kg in 2025; Punjab accounted for 298 of those 305 drops. Thirty clandestine synthetic-drug laboratories were closed down in 2025. There were 1,356 financial investigations, as a result of which assets worth ₹836 crore were frozen or seized.

The State of Punjab also had 8,95,508 bottles of codeine-based cough syrup

seized. In 2025, the amount of illegal poppy destroyed reached 42,282 acres, up from 22,512 acres in 2024 and about 10,000 acres in 2020. A separate drug disposal drive, which was launched in June 2026, focused on the destruction of 2,09,500 kg of seized drugs with a value exceeding ₹6,000 crore. These same figures show certain limitations, since the total tonnage and value of drugs seized decreased in 2025 even though the number of cases and arrests went up, a situation consistent with smaller, more scattered consignments.

Demand is still high: official estimates suggest that the number of people using opioids is around 2.1 per cent, that is about 22.6 million, and cannabis use is even higher. A survey carried out by AIIMS among school students in ten cities found that the rate of substance use over their lifetime was about 15 per cent, with the average age of first use being near 13.

The ANTFs were set up as a result of a directive issued in 2021, and it will be up to making them full-time and well-equipped units to combine interdiction with credible treatment, whether or not the roadmap for the period 2026 to 2029 alters the availability and use of drugs, not just the size of the following seizure table.

Row over Vande Mataram in Karnataka Assembly

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bengaluru

BJP legislators recited the full version of Vande Mataram at the beginning of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and Council proceedings on Monday, when the recording that was officially played in both the Houses ended after two stanzas.

A three-day special session of the Karnataka legislature, convened to discuss the drought situation in the State and the Kasturirangan report on Western Ghats ecologically sensitive areas, began here at Vidhan Soudha. The session at the Legislative Assembly started with the playing of the recorded Vande Mataram song, but it ended after rendering two stanzas.

Soon after that, Speaker GS Patil read out obituary refer-



Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar during the State special Assembly Session in Bengaluru

ences for the prominent people who passed away recently. However, BJP MLAs continued reciting the full version of the national song and concluded it by raising Vande Mataram slogans. Subsequently, Chief Minister DK Shivakumar started his intervention regarding the obituary references by paying

tribute to former MLA RB Shiryannavar, who died on August 27. Similarly, at the Legislative Council, BJP members continued reciting the remaining stanzas of the national song, even as Council Chairman Saleem Ahmed started reading the preamble of the Constitution, as per the practice.

J&K Assembly adjourned amid uproar on first day

MOHIT KANDHARI
■ Jammu

On day one of the Autumn Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, members from the Opposition and treasury benches resorted to slogan-shouting soon after the obituary references were over.

The Speaker of the House was seen struggling to restore order during the question hour amid repeated disruptions. As the chaos prevailed, the Speaker decided to adjourn the day's proceedings. The House will reconvene on Tuesday.

Before the House was adjourned, the BJP legislators, who had come prepared to corner the Omar Abdullah-led Government, raised slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram", prompting reactions from members of the treasury benches. Meanwhile, NC and other MLAs raised slogans



BJP MLAs being stopped during a protest on people's issues at Autumn Session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in Srinagar on Monday

demanding restoration of Statehood in response.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather was seen trying to pacify unruly members to allow the House proceedings. The BJP members, protesting in the well, were directed by the Speaker to go back to their seats. "Don't force me to take action against you," the Speaker warned them. The BJP members continued shouting slogans against the Government throughout the Question Hour, which the Speaker conducted amidst the din.

As the house witnessed pandemonium, National Conference MLA from Gurez, Nazir Ahmad Gurezi, urged the Speaker to continue with Question Hour, accusing the BJP members of deliberately trying to waste the time of the House. "None of you will be in the House after the next election. You ruined this State," Gurezi told the protesting BJP legislators.

The situation worsened after CPI(M) MLA Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami asked the BJP members to raise another slogan, "Statehood ko restore karo," following

which BJP legislators objected and entered into a heated exchange with him. The commotion also involved Langate MLA Sheikh Khurshid, while senior National Conference leader and Khanyar MLA Ali Mohammad Sagar stood up and raised slogans against the BJP members. Outside the Assembly, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma accused the Omar Abdullah Government of wanting to evade the BJP's questions on the people's issues in the Union territory.

Speaking to reporters after the Assembly was adjourned for the day, Sharma said the BJP was playing its role as an effective Opposition by raising questions regarding the NHM employees, ASHA workers, anganwadi workers, CAMPA workers, GRS and technical assistants. "People are depressed due to outsourcing, and they demand answers. The Bharatiya Janata Party, acting as the voice for

these victimised sections, demanded answers from the Government today. Omar Abdullah wants to run away; the Government wants to run away from people's issues," Sharma said. PDP leader Waheed Para, who moved an adjournment motion to discuss the rationalisation of reservations in Jammu and Kashmir, emphasised that the youth remain the most important issue in the Union territory.

"Unemployment is at its peak, with nearly a 32 per cent unemployment rate. And the biggest issue concerns merit. Whether meritorious students pursue education or seek jobs, merit is not a qualification in Jammu and Kashmir. For the first time in India's history, the meritorious population is being punished. You give 30 per cent opportunities to nearly 70 per cent of the population, and you give 70 per cent opportunities to 30 per cent of the population," Para stated.

SSC has no data on candidates affected in 13 phase exams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The Staff Selection Commission (SSC) has no specific data on the number of candidates affected by examination centre changes, cancellations and technical failures during the 2025 SSC Selection Post Phase 13 exam, even as 76,153 candidates were given re-examinations following disruptions, according to its response to the Central Information Commission (CIC).

The examination had triggered widespread protests by SSC aspirants and teachers over alleged mismanagement of the recruitment examination, with demonstrators converging at Delhi's Jantar Mantar under a "Delhi Chalo" call demanding

accountability and reforms in the examination process.

The examination, which began on July 24, 2025 and was scheduled to conclude on August 1, was marred by complaints of abrupt cancellations, server crashes, unresponsive systems and remote examination centres. Some candidates had also alleged that they were allotted examination centres hundreds of kilometres from their homes.

In an RTI application, the appellant sought the number of candidates whose centres were changed less than 24 hours before their examination, along with a city- and state-wise breakup and details of any special arrangements made for them.

In its written submission



before the CIC, the SSC said, "Since EC-2 has no role in changing the examination centres of candidates, no data is available in this regard."

The applicant had also sought the total number of candidates affected by centre changes, cancellations and technical or logistical failures, besides copies of inter-

nal reports prepared on these issues.

Responding to this, the SSC said: "No data is available with us, as EC-2 has a limited role in such activities."

It said the section monitors the examination during its conduct.

The SSC further disclosed that the examination was originally scheduled from

July 24 to August 1, 2025, during which re-examinations were also conducted for multiple affected candidates.

"However, re-examinations were conducted on 02.08.2025 and 29.08.2025 for 76,153 affected candidates," the commission said. At the same time, it said the "specific data relating to such candidates is not available in EC Section."

The RTI application also sought information on complaints received by the SSC or its partners regarding alleged mistreatment of students at examination centres, including incidents of physical abuse or aggression, medical emergencies and the reported case of a student fainting and bleeding from the mouth.

3 TMC leaders held for 2020 Nadda convoy attack

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

The West Bengal Police on Monday arrested three persons, including two influential Trinamool Congress leaders of Magrahat in South 24 Parganas, for their involvement in the December 2020 attack on the convoy of the BJP national president JP Nadda, who was visiting the area to hold a public meeting.

Officials of the Diamond Harbour Police district named the accused TMC leaders as Ripon Sheikh and Sanjib Mondal, who were allegedly close to the arrested local don and former TMC MLA Jahangir, sources said.

Diamond Harbour Superintendent of Police Chandrashekhar Bardhan said that though they were



picked up in a different case, "subsequent interrogations have revealed that they were involved in the attack on BJP leader JP Nadda's convoy in which several people were injured." The police recovered revolvers and cartridges from the arrested persons, officials said.

The TMC leaders were arrested following a complaint made by a local resident who had allegedly received death threats from them. "He received the threats before the Assembly

elections but could not lodge a complaint out of fear... But after the elections he lodged the complaint, and the two were picked up by the police ... Subsequent interrogations revealed their active involvement in the attack on the BJP procession on December 10, 2020," an official of the Usthi Police Station, which falls under Diamond Harbour police district, said.

When contacted, State BJP leader and MLA Sajal Ghosh said that "no one will be spared ... We said that criminals deserve a place in jail and they will go to jail during the BJP rule."

In the attack six years ago, several BJP workers were injured, and many vehicles, including the one that Nadda was travelling in, were damaged, sources said.

NIA tightens grip on Saharanpur PNB fake-currency conspiracy as arrests rise to four

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested two prime suspects in a counterfeit-currency plot after seizing fake Indian notes worth ₹17.29 crore from the Punjab National Bank currency chest in Civil Lines, Saharanpur.

On September 20, 2026, NIA arrested Mukesh Kumar, son of Som Prakash, of Hasanpur Kadeem village under the Manoharpur police station, and Rajendra Kumar, son of Pyare Lal, of Kalyanpur village under the Sarsawa police station.

The investigators said both men are close associates of

Adesh Choudhary, who was previously arrested, and that they are seen as key participants in the scheme to introduce and distribute high-quality forgeries through an official bank's cash-handling facility. This brings the total number of arrests in the NIA case RC-02/2026/NIA/LKW to four.

The first arrest took place on September 7 when the agency detained Amit Kumar, a PNB official who had been acting as joint custodian and manager for the currency-chest operations and had been at large before being found in Chandigarh; eight days later, on September 15, the investigators arrested Adesh Choudhary, a contrac-

tual driver associated with the same Saharanpur chest.

NIA officials said one of the main areas of focus in the current investigation is Choudhary's involvement in handling and transporting cash consignments. The scandal came to light on August 29, 2026 when police at Sadar Bazar received specific information that fake notes were kept inside the PNB chest. That day they filed a First Information Report (FIR) under Section 178 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

On September 3, the NIA took over the case and re-registered it after discovering a discrepancy during a regular remittance. A shipment of about ₹11.5 crore,



sent from the Saharanpur branch to the Reserve Bank of India office in Jaipur, was found to be short by ₹4.36 lakh. This difference led to a surprise audit by a joint team of 21 members from the RBI and PNB, which began in early August.

The auditors initially identified 148 bundles, each consisting of one thousand counterfeit ₹500 notes, amounting to ₹7.40 crore. Further investigation into the chest's holdings raised the total value of the suspected fake currency to ₹17.29 crore, almost all of which was in ₹500 notes. At the same time, investigators are also working to reconstruct a larger consignment worth

₹111 crore that was sent on July 6 and included 1,900 bundles of ₹500 notes and 800 bundles of ₹200 notes.

They are reviewing packing records, handling logs, and dispatch documents to determine exactly where the fake notes entered the official cash stream. CCTV footage retrieved from inside the chest showed that the part-time housekeeper, Vishal Kumar, removed notes from the genuine bundles; he has since been dismissed.

A preliminary investigation named three PNB employees: Amit Kumar, Ravi Kumar Kanse, senior divisional manager, and Sofia Market currency-chest manager Sushil Kumar. All of

them were suspended, and so far only Amit Kumar has been arrested among the bank's officials. Authorities issued notices because officials feared some of the accused might try to leave the country.

The NIA is currently examining the seized electronic devices, bank records, and financial trails to determine whether any counterfeit notes reached branches or ATMs and to identify where the forgeries came from. The agency has made it clear that the investigation is ongoing and that it expects further arrests of other accused and suspects as it establishes the full scope of the conspiracy.

Mamata faction unveils new logo with football symbol

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kolkata

The Mamata Banerjee-led faction of the TMC on Monday unveiled a new logo featuring its interim election symbol — a football player — and asked its leaders and elected representatives to publicise it, as the party races to build a new electoral identity after losing, for now, its familiar name and flowers-and-grass symbol.

The logo places the football player at its centre, surrounded by the words 'Mamata All India Trinamool Congress' in white against a blue background. Saffron, white and green have also been incorporated into the design.

The exercise comes days after the Election Commission froze the use of the 'All India Trinamool Congress' name and its reserved flowers-and-grass symbol amid an escalating internal dispute over control of the party.

The poll panel subsequently allotted separate interim identities to the two groups for the October 6 bypolls, with the

Mamata faction getting 'Mamata All India Trinamool Congress' and the 'football player' symbol, while the rival faction led by Arup Roy was allotted 'Democratic Trinamool Congress' and the 'envelope' symbol.

With only a fortnight left for the Nandigram and Rejinagar bypolls, the Mamata camp is seeking to ensure that voters can connect the new symbol with the political identity they have traditionally associated with the Trinamool Congress.

Party sources said all office-bearers, leaders, workers and elected representatives have been asked to use their respective platforms to circulate the logo and familiarise voters with the new symbol.

The leaders from the Mamata camp began posting the logo on social media from Monday afternoon. On September 17, the poll panel, while hearing the rival claims over the Trinamool Congress, ordered that neither faction would be permitted to use



the party's existing name and symbol pending a substantive determination of the dispute.

The decision came on the last day of nominations for the bypolls, prompting the EC to ask the factions to suggest alternative names and free symbols so that the electoral process could proceed.

A day later, the Commission gave the two groups their temporary identities, effectively turning the party's internal battle over

ownership into a contest between two different names and symbols on the ballot.

For the Mamata faction, the choice of name itself carries an unmistakable political message. "Mamata" has been inserted into the party's interim identity, putting the leader's name where the old organisational label had stood, while the football-player symbol gives the faction a new visual marker to take to the electorate.

The timing leaves little room for a slow transition. The new identities will face their first direct electoral test in Rejinagar, where the two rival Trinamool factions remain in the fray. Nandigram, however, has taken a markedly different course.

Mamata Banerjee's nominee Sanchita Pradhan Dey withdrew from the contest after meeting Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, following which Banerjee extended support to Congress candidate Milan Pradhan.

Pradhan was subsequently arrested in connection with cases dating back to the 2007 Nandigram land acquisition movement.

The contrasting developments have given the bypolls an unusual political texture: Rejinagar will see the rival Trinamool camps carry their newly assigned names and symbols into a direct contest, while in Nandigram, the Mamata camp is effectively out of the electoral race and threw its weight behind a Congress candidate.

The dispute has also acquired a

legal dimension, with Banerjee challenging the Commission's freeze before the Supreme Court. The apex court on Monday agreed to urgently list her plea, with the rival side also set to get an opportunity to make its submissions.

That legal battle could ultimately determine what happens to the original party name and symbol. But the political campaign cannot wait for that resolution.

The Mamata camp's immediate task is consequently to make the football player familiar enough for voters to recognise it on October 6. The challenge is particularly significant for a party whose symbol has been one of the most recognisable visual markers of Bengal politics for years.

The new logo seeks to compress that transition into a single image — Mamata's name, the words Trinamool Congress and an unfamiliar football player — as the faction heads into an election in which its traditional electoral identity has, at least temporarily, been put on hold.

BJP-Congress clash during campaign for Nagaon bypoll in Assam



Gaurav Gogoi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Nagaon

BJP and Congress workers clashed during campaigning for the Nagaon Lok Sabha by-election in Assam on Monday, police said.

The incident happened around 4 pm in the Samaguri assembly segment when a Congress procession, led by the party's State president Gaurav Gogoi, was on the way to a public meeting at Larimukh.

Dhurbri MP Rakibul Hussain, former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel and the party's bypoll candidate Sibamoni Bora were also present in the procession.

Police said BJP supporters had gathered at Barama Bazar to show black flags to the Congress leaders.

"As around 30 to 40 Congress workers on motorcycles passed the area, slogans like 'Gaurav Gogoi Go Back, Congress Go Back, Rakibul Go Back' were raised, leading to tension," an officer said. When the Congress convoy returned through the same route after the meeting, suspected BJP supporters pelted stones at the opposition party's vehicles, he said.

"Some Congress workers were also allegedly beaten up by BJP supporters, while CRPF personnel deployed in the area lathi-charged the attackers to control the situation," he added.

Police said Congress workers then returned to the spot with sticks, further escalating the situation, with both sides hurling stones at each other. The glass of two Congress vehicles was broken. Some journalists also sustained minor injuries in the stone-pelting, they said.

ED raids Jaisalmer sites over Belgian entity fund

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it undertook searches in a case of alleged misuse of foreign donations received from a non-FCRA registered Belgian entity for undertaking proselytisation activities among the locals in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer along the India-Pakistan international border.

The action covered two premises under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the agency said in a statement.

It said the ED acted on the basis of specific intelligence indicating that Jaisalmer resident Deu Ram was "illegally" receiving funds from Belgium-based entities "for proselytisation and conversion activities" among vulnerable sections of society in Jaisalmer. The agency added that Ram and his associate Gyan Chand received funds worth ₹5.10 crore without registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), mainly by showing the purpose as educational services, cultural and recreational activities,



and inward remittances from non-resident Indians towards family maintenance and savings.

"Most of these funds were received from Amar ASBL, which claims to be a non-profit organisation based in Brussels, Belgium," it said.

Amar ASBL was set up in Brussels in 2011 and is managed by two Belgian nationals — Jose Goffinet and his son Salian Goffinet.

The ED said the duo visits Jaisalmer every year for 2-3 weeks and meets the parents and relatives of local children, organises meetings and religious gatherings "to promote their cultural and religious beliefs and practices".

Campus security beefed up after IIT student protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai

Security in and around the IIT campus was beefed up after protests by students and Congress workers, officials said. Police on Monday detained Youth Congress workers protesting outside the IIT Bombay gate over the suicide of a 22-year-old student, they said.

Sahil Ravindra Wakode, a second-year B.Tech student in the Department of Energy Science and Engineering, was found hanging from the ceiling fan in his hotel room on the IIT Bombay's Powai campus on Friday evening, hours after he was allegedly caught using a mobile phone during a mid-semester examination, according to officials.

The protesters claimed that Wakode faced severe pressure and threats of academic suspension.

Some students also raised concerns over academic stress and institutional practices. Several local residents and alumni attempted to visit the campus. However, as a precautionary measure, entry was strictly restricted. Only current students and authorised staff can enter, an official said.

Members of political and social organisations gathered outside the main gate of IIT Bombay to protest against the administration.

"A few protesters from outside organisations gathered at the main gate. They were promptly removed from the spot and taken into pre-



Demonstrators stage a candlelight protest to pay tribute to the suicide victims of IIT Bombay in Mumbai

ventive custody," a police official said. A student on condition of anonymity said he stayed in the room next to Wakode's and they used to hang out regularly.

"Students face immense academic pressure here, which the management needs to address. However, I personally never witnessed casteism on campus.

On the day of the incident, a professor reportedly took Sahil out of the classroom after he was allegedly caught cheating. Something serious must have triggered him to take such an extreme step," the student said. Student groups and alumni alleged systemic issues within the administration. Pranav Jeevan, an alumnus, criticised the institute's handling of student affairs

and mental health. "The administration frequently punishes students with arbitrary threats of hostel eviction, suspension, and heavy financial penalties, even fining students up to ₹1.5 lakh for organising a play.

Despite past tragedies, the campus lacks effective caste sensitisation, adequate mental health support, and an empowered SC/ST Cell to address discrimination," he alleged.

Jeevan further claimed that official statements released prior to a detailed investigation aimed to protect faculty members, adding that non-compliance with faculty reservation norms remains an undressed root issue. Security has been stepped up around the institute in view of the protests.

FACULTY HOLD MARCH IN DOOLLA'S SUPPORT

Mumbai: Faculty members of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-Bombay) on Monday held a march in the institute's campus in Mumbai to support Suryanarayana Doolla, who was removed as Dean of Administrative Affairs amid protests by students over the suicide of a 22-year-old student.

Police have booked Doolla under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and on abetment to suicide charge.

The Faculty Forum said he followed "Senate-approved exam procedure when he reported second year B Tech student Sahil Wakode for alleged phone use on September 18.

Sahil, a second-year B Tech student in the Department of Energy Science and Engineering, was found hanging from the ceiling fan in his hotel room on the IIT Bombay's Powai campus on Friday evening, hours after he was allegedly caught using a mobile phone during a mid-semester examination, according to officials. His family alleged that Sahil, a native of Maharashtra's Yavatmal district, was subjected to institutional harassment and caste-based discrimination before he took the extreme step, which triggered a protest by students on the campus. (PNS)

BJP hits out at Rahul Gandhi over mimicry act, Raut defends him

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Raipur/Panji/Mumbai

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Monday slammed Rahul Gandhi over a mimicry act at his 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' event in Indore, saying the Leader of Opposition is "being exposed before the entire country" through his conduct.

Talking to reporters at Swami Vivekanand Airport, Sai stated that accommodating such acts did not befit a leader of Gandhi's stature.

A controversy erupted after stand-up comedian Pulkit Mani mimicked PM Modi while performing a skit with Gandhi during his 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' youth outreach programme in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city on Saturday. The Congress, which shared the video on social media, has defended it as satire/mimicry.

Several BJP leaders have criticised Mani's skit, alleging



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai

that it hurt sentiments associated with respect for mothers and motherhood.

"Rahul Gandhi is the Leader of Opposition, and such conduct does not befit a leader of such stature. He is being exposed before the entire country through his conduct and behaviour. This is certainly not appropriate for him," Sai said.

Earlier in the day, the chief minister shared a video on social media highlighting

the importance of a mother and her place in Indian culture. The video featured a well-known poem about a mother by late poet Om Vyas, highlighting a mother's sacrifice, affection and nurturing role in a child's life, the BJP said in a statement.

Without naming any political leader, Sai, in his post, emphasised respect for mothers and dignity towards them, it said. Meanwhile, senior Congress leader

Bhupesh Baghel hit back at the BJP's criticism, saying everyone's mother deserves respect. Talking to reporters on Sunday, the chief minister questioned why similar concerns were not raised when remarks were allegedly made against the mothers of Rahul Gandhi and other political leaders.

He further alleged that the BJP and RSS had also started making remarks concerning mothers, and therefore, they have no right to speak on the issue. Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal on Monday criticised Rahul Gandhi over a mimicry act at the Congress MP's recent event in Indore, alleging that remarks linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's late mother amounted to an insult to Indian culture.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant also hit out at Gandhi over the issue, saying political opposition should not descend into personal

attacks on parents or elders.

A controversy erupted after stand-up comedian Pulkit Mani mimicked PM Modi while performing a skit with Gandhi during his 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' youth outreach programme in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city on Saturday. The Congress, which shared the video on social media, has defended it as satire/mimicry.

Speaking to reporters in South Goa, Meghwal said Indian culture teaches people to respect their mothers and elders.

"What does Indian culture teach us? To respect mothers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother is no longer in this world. Rahul Gandhi, through 'Chhatron Ki Goonj', insulted Indian culture by speaking lies," the BJP leader said.

Goa CM Sawant, in a post on X, dubbed the act as "shameful and deeply disturbing". Rahul Gandhi and

the Congress party have crossed all limits of political decency, he charged.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Monday came out in support of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over a stand-up comedy act mimicking Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an event in Indore, stating that the Leader of Opposition's "arrow has pierced the BJP's heart".

Speaking to reporters, the Rajya Sabha MP said the ruling party leaders were rattled because Gandhi attacked the prime minister.

A row has erupted after stand-up comedian Pulkit Mani mimicked PM Modi while performing a skit with Gandhi during his 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' youth outreach programme in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city on Saturday.

The Congress, which shared the video on social media, has defended the act as satire/mimicry.



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) V Narayanan and others during the foundation stone laying ceremony of ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) Advanced Radar Research Facility at Chandrapur in Kamrup District

science, with no space-related organisation having been set up, he said.

"A Small Space Centre is being developed with IIT to provide a platform to students and promote scientific temperament across colleges," Sarma said.

"Assam's tryst with space has just begun. With the ASSAMSAT project progressing steadily, we are taking a giant leap in this direction, which will help us map weather, rainfall, forests and other factors for better resource planning," he said.

"In a few years, you will witness how the space setup in Chandrapur will get the same place as ISRO in Bengaluru due to its immense contribution towards research and development, which will go a long way in disseminat-

ing knowledge in space technology," the CM said.

"We hope that Assam will soon emerge as a big name in space research," he said.

He expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ISRO for choosing Assam as the destination for this Advanced Radar Research Centre, which will firmly place the state in space research domain.

Earlier in the day, the chief minister, in a social media post, said the setting up of the centre was a "landmark moment for Assam" and that it was deeply satisfying that the state is set to become a home to such cutting-edge national infrastructure.

"A landmark moment for Assam. Today, we will lay the foundation stone of the Indian Space

Research Organisation (ISRO)'s Advanced Radar Research Centre at Chandrapur, Assam," Sarma said in a post on X on Monday.

As part of Project NETRA, this facility will strengthen India's ability to track objects in space and protect the country's vital space assets, he said.

"For a state once considered far from India's major centres of technology, it is deeply satisfying to see Assam today becoming home to such cutting-edge national infrastructure," he said.

"My deepest gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji for considering Assam for this strategic project," Sarma said.

The Assam Government has allotted around 6.61 acres for the project.

Editor's

TAKE

UN: Trust is running out, reforms cannot wait

Created to uphold peace, the United Nations is constrained by an outdated power structure. It must reform before losing relevance

When world leaders take the podium in New York on Tuesday for the 81st General Debate, the theme, "Restoring trust, managing transformation: a United Nations that delivers for all", will read less like an aspiration than an admission. General Assembly President Khalilur Rahman of Bangladesh said as much when he gavelled the session open on September 8: trust is in deficit. The evidence is everywhere. The Gulf has swung between truce and strikes since the US-Israeli attacks on Iran in February, with the Strait of Hormuz, and the world economy, held hostage. Ukraine remains unresolved, and Gaza's peace plan awaits full implementation. Secretary-General António Guterres says de-escalation in the Middle East must be "priority one, priority two and priority three". The Security Council, constrained by the vetoes of its five permanent members, has too often been a spectator.

The house is also short of money. In January, Guterres warned of "imminent financial collapse" as arrears hit a record \$1.57 billion. The 2026 budget was cut by about 7 per cent to \$3.45 billion. Washington, which funds 22 per cent of the regular budget, paid \$827 million this month, yet still owes roughly \$4.2 billion. An organisation counting the days to payroll cannot credibly preach delivery.

Has the UN lived up to its promise? Partly. It has helped the world avoid a third world war, eradicated smallpox, phased out ozone-eating chemicals through the Montreal Protocol, and fed and sheltered millions through the WFP and UNHCR. But Rwanda and Srebrenica remain stains it has never washed out, and today's paralysis feeds the perception that international law binds only the weak. Reform is therefore overdue, and it must go beyond cost-cutting. The UN80 initiative, launched in 2025, has trimmed budgets and posts. That was necessary, but efficiency is not legitimacy. The real reform is political. A Council whose permanent membership froze in 1945, and which was enlarged only once, in 1965, and only by non-permanent seats, cannot claim to speak for 193 states. Africa has no permanent seat. India, the most populous nation and a leading troop contributor to peacekeeping, has none either.

Negotiations have run since 2009 without an agreed text. India's ambassador, Parvathaneni Harish, was right in June to demand text-based talks. The way forward has four planks. First, a negotiating text with a deadline, so Council reform stops being a talking shop. Second, voluntary veto restraint in mass-atrocity cases, as the French-Mexican initiative proposes; the P5 will not surrender the veto, but they can be pressed to use it less.

Third, financial reform: end the antiquated return of unspent credits and make dues payable on time. Fourth, a credible succession. Three straw polls among eight candidates have produced no clear frontrunner.

The P5 must not trade the job for convenience, and a first woman Secretary-General would signal renewal. The UN was built in 1945 around the victors of a war. It will endure only if it is rebuilt for the many. Speeches alone will not restore trust. Reforms will.

The UN needs peace, not endless speeches

As the UN General Assembly opened its 81st session on the International Day of Peace, the world faced a familiar spectacle of speeches on war, conflict and humanity's crises. But diplomacy cannot end at the podium. The credibility of the UN will increasingly depend on what follows the speeches: negotiation, implementation and action



SANTHOSH MATHEW

September 21 is the International Day of Peace. This year, the message deserves to be heard inside the United Nations itself: the world needs action, not endless speeches. As the 81st session of the UN General Assembly begins in New York, leaders and diplomats will once again take turns at the world's most famous international podium. They will speak about war and peace, security and development, terrorism and climate change, poverty and human rights. The speeches will be important. The question is what happens after the microphones are switched off.

The United Nations was born from the terrible experience of two world wars. Its founding vision was clear: disputes between nations should be addressed through dialogue rather than destruction. Speaking is therefore not a problem at the UN. Dialogue is essential to diplomacy. The problem begins when dialogue turns into repetition, delay and obstruction. When words prevent action, diplomacy loses its purpose.

This is where the idea of filibustering becomes relevant. The word "filibuster" is most closely associated with the United States Senate. It developed from the Senate's tradition of allowing senators considerable freedom to speak. The word itself has a colourful history, linked to terms meaning freebooter or pirate. In political practice, it came to describe efforts to delay or prevent legislative action through prolonged debate.

The classic picture of a filibuster is a senator continuing to speak while legislation waits. The objective can be to delay a vote, force negotiations or prevent a proposal from moving forward. American political history has produced several famous examples of marathon speeches. The modern Senate has developed procedures, including cloture, to bring extended debate towards a conclusion.

The United Nations is not the US Senate, and the General Assembly does not have an identical filibuster system. Still, the underlying problem can appear in international diplomacy: when the time spent speaking becomes greater than the progress made towards solving the problem.

The UN itself has witnessed extraordinary examples of lengthy diplomatic interventions. India's V. K. Krishna Menon became famous for his marathon intervention on Kashmir before the Security Council in January 1957. His intervention extended across several meetings and



A GOOD SPEECH SHOULD OPEN THE DOOR TO NEGOTIATION. A GOOD DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTION SHOULD IDENTIFY A PROBLEM AND SUGGEST A WAY FORWARD. A GOOD RESOLUTION SHOULD LEAD TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION. IF THE SAME ACCUSATIONS ARE REPEATED YEAR AFTER YEAR WITHOUT PRODUCING MOVEMENT, THE UN RISKS BECOMING A PLACE WHERE INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS ARE DESCRIBED MORE EFFICIENTLY THAN THEY ARE SOLVED

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lasted more than eight hours. It remains one of the best-known examples of endurance in UN diplomacy.

Krishna Menon's performance belongs to another era and another diplomatic context. It should not be mechanically described as a General Assembly filibuster. Its significance today lies in the question it raises: how much time should international diplomacy spend on speaking when the world is waiting for solutions?

That question is especially relevant when the United Nations discusses war. A ceasefire cannot be achieved by a speech alone. A refugee cannot return home because of a resolution alone. A destroyed city cannot be rebuilt by a statement from the podium. Food cannot reach a starving population through rhetoric. Peace requires negotiation, monitoring, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and political courage.

The General Assembly has rules for managing debate and speaking time. Countries are expected to respect agreed limits during the General Debate, and the President has powers to maintain order and manage proceedings. These procedures are not designed to silence countries. They are designed to give every country a fair opportunity to speak.

A good speech should open the door to negotiation. A good diplomatic intervention should identify a problem and suggest a way forward. A good resolution should lead towards implementation. If the same accusations are repeated year after year without producing movement, the UN risks becoming a place where international problems are described more efficiently than they are solved. The world has no shortage of words. It has an abundance of declarations, resolutions, statements and appeals. What is often missing is implementation. The credibility of

the United Nations will increasingly depend on its ability to convert diplomatic language into practical outcomes.

This does not mean that countries should surrender their right to speak. Smaller nations, in particular, depend on the UN platform to make their concerns visible. Countries involved in conflicts need an international forum where their positions can be placed on record. Silence cannot produce peace. Suppressing disagreement cannot produce peace either.

The answer is disciplined diplomacy: speak clearly, listen seriously, negotiate patiently, decide when necessary and implement what has been decided.

On the International Day of Peace, this should be the spirit of the UN's 81st session. The world does not need another competition over who can speak the longest. It needs countries willing to spend less diplomatic energy on repeating positions and more energy on finding areas of agreement.

The UN General Assembly remains indispensable because it brings almost the entire international community into one room. That opportunity should not be wasted. Every speech should be treated as the beginning of a conversation, not the end of one. The great challenge before the UN is not finding more words for peace. The world already has enough words. The challenge is turning those words into ceasefires, negotiations, humanitarian corridors, reconstruction, reconciliation and lasting peace.

From filibustering to action - that should be the message of the International Day of Peace 2026. Let nations speak, let them disagree, let diplomacy remain open. But after the speeches, let action begin. The world is not waiting for another long speech. It is waiting for peace.

Daiv Vani

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

Let Wisdom Come From Every Side

There is a verse from the Rig Veda that offers a prayer remarkably open for an ancient text: "Aano Bhadrakratavo Yantu Vishwatah", let noble thoughts come to us from every side. Rather than claiming sole ownership of wisdom, the sages asked that good and true ideas reach them from anywhere, regardless of their source.

This is a striking humility, an acknowledgment that no single tradition, person, or text holds the complete truth, and that wisdom may arrive from unexpected directions, a stranger, a rival, a different culture entirely.

We often close ourselves off to ideas that don't originate from our usual sources, our own community, our own beliefs, dismissing insight simply because of where it comes from.

Today, remain open to one idea or piece of advice from an unexpected source, a colleague, a stranger, a differing viewpoint, and consider it without prejudging its origin.

—DAIV

The denial mode: The elephant in the room



LUCKY KULKARNI

2ND OPINION

There is a strange phenomenon inside organisations: everyone knows there is a problem, but nobody wants to talk about it.

Senior leaders know it. Employees know it. HR knows it. Sometimes, even the owners know it. Yet the issue remains untouched because confronting it may be uncomfortable, inconvenient or risky.

That is the "elephant in the room" - something too large to ignore, yet too uncomfortable to confront. And sometimes, organisations do not fail because they could not see the problem. They fail because they saw it and did not act in time.

Kodak is a powerful example. The company, established in 1880-81, became synonymous with photography. Kodak was not unaware of digital photography. Its

engineer, Steven Sasson, developed one of the world's first digital cameras. The problem was not that Kodak could not see the future. The problem was that it struggled to move away from the film business that had made it successful. The very success that built the organisation became an obstacle to change. By 2012, Kodak had filed for bankruptcy.

Nokia tells a similar story. Once the global leader in mobile phones, it struggled to respond quickly enough as smartphones transformed the industry. Internal decision-making challenges and its ageing operating system made the transition increasingly difficult. Eventually, its handset business was sold to Microsoft.

The lesson from both companies is uncomfortable: yesterday's success can become tomorrow's blind spot.

Longevity is not a guarantee of future success. An organisation can survive for decades - or even more than a century - and still become vulnerable or fail to grow if leadership fails to recognise when change is necessary.

The same problem exists within organisations at every level. A weak leader is tolerated because, "He has been with us for many years." A poor performer is protected because, "He handles sensitive transactions for the owners."

A toxic manager is ignored because, "He is close to the owners." A declining business is defended because, "It has worked brilliantly in the past." And sometimes, the performers who raise uncomfortable questions are tar-

geted politically and become the problem - because it is easier to silence the messenger than confront the message. Every time an organisation chooses silence, the elephant gets bigger.

A changing business model challenged early can be transformed. Challenged only after revenues collapse, transformation becomes survival. This is where leadership — and ownership - matters.

The responsibility of an owner is not simply to maintain harmony. It is to create an environment where uncomfortable truths can be spoken without fear.

Owners must ask the questions nobody wants to answer. HR must have the courage to tell the CEO when the culture is deteriorating. Leaders must learn to accept criticism without immediately labelling the person giving it as "negative", "difficult", "not aligned with the company's goals or the leadership team", or "not a team player".

And employees must feel safe enough to say: "Something is not working." That sentence, spoken at the right time, can save an organisation.

Because organisations rarely collapse overnight.

Leadership is not about avoiding difficult conversations. Leadership is about having the courage to have the right difficult conversation before it becomes a crisis.

The writer is a senior corporate HR leader, writer and people strategist

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tata sons uphold its governance framework

India is witnessing an escalating corporate governance crisis at the heart of one of its most respected conglomerates. The fundamental dispute centres on the interpretation of Tata Sons' Articles of Association, under which Tata Trusts, holding a controlling 66 per cent stake, maintains that any key resolution requires the explicit affirmative vote of both its nominee directors.

Bypassing this requirement through a board majority or a chairman's casting vote would undermine the governance framework that Tata Sons itself previously defended before the Supreme Court. Corporate governance cannot be reduced to convenience; rules must be applied consistently, regardless of who holds office.

Taking this leadership dispute to tribunals such as the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) or the High Court risks causing severe reputational damage and prolonging uncertainty. Both factions on the board must respect established governance norms and shareholder rights and work towards resolving the impasse constructively.

At stake is not merely a leadership disagreement but the credibility of the governance principles that underpin one of India's most recognised business institutions. Preserving these principles is essential to maintaining shareholder confidence and public trust in the Tata brand.

VANDANA | CHANDIGARH

Odisha's 'living ghosts' expose system gaps

The Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board appears to have stumbled upon an unusual problem: workers officially declared dead have seemingly returned to life. Recent audit findings reportedly show that nearly 2,500 construction workers were listed as deceased, while their families received more than ₹15 crore in death benefits. Yet, some of these workers later appeared in the system to authenticate their identities through fingerprints and claim their monthly subsidised rations. This is more than a bureaucratic oversight; it exposes serious gaps in the administration of welfare schemes and the coordination of government databases. A person can apparently be certified dead, have benefits paid to their nominees, and later authenticate their identity as a living beneficiary.

If Aadhaar is meant to reduce fraud, such discrepancies raise questions about how welfare databases are maintained and cross-checked.

The Odisha authorities must investigate the matter thoroughly, establish how these discrepancies occurred, identify those responsible and recover any funds that were wrongfully disbursed. Public money meant for vulnerable workers must be protected through stronger verification and accountability mechanisms.

RANGANATHAN SIVAKUMAR | CHENNAI

DUSU result offers fresh perspective

Apropos, "ABVP retains DUSU dominance", *The Pioneer*, September 20. The ABVP's victory in the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) elections comes amid a wider debate over youth sentiment and recent protests. The ABVP won three of the four central-panel posts, while independent candidate Deepanshu Shokeen won the vice-president's post.

The result, however, should not be read as evidence that Gen Z is uniformly aligned with any political party. Young voters have raised concerns over unemployment, examination-related problems, alleged paper leaks, delays and inadequate infrastructure in educational institutions. These issues have also featured prominently in student campaigns and protests. At the same time, the DUSU results demonstrate that students can distinguish between raising concerns and choosing representatives in a university election.

For political parties, the result offers an opportunity to examine how young voters respond to issues, campaigns and candidates. Student elections remain an important indicator of campus concerns, but their results should be understood within the specific context of Delhi University rather than treated as a definitive measure of the views of an entire generation.

N SADHASIVA REDDY | BENGALURU



People take part in a religious procession on the 578th birth anniversary of Vaishnav saint Srimanta Sankaradeva, at Tezpur in Sonitpur

PHOTO: PTI

TN assembly is not a stage!

A new Tamil Nadu Govt is entitled to bring a fresh style and energy to public life. But the measure of governance cannot be the slogans that dominate the headlines. A government that came to power promising change must now demonstrate it through improvements in the lives of people, rather than through political theatre.



RAVIKUMAR
CHOCKALINGAM

lenting search for the next viral moment. The hard work of democratic governance, with objective answers, measurable commitments, administrative clarity and respect for the institutions that make power answerable, is slowly becoming a relic of the past.

This is not an argument against change. Tamil Nadu's electorate had every right to seek it. Many young voters, especially, chose to disrupt an entrenched political order. They were entitled to envision that a new entrant could bring energy, honesty and a different style of public leadership. That instinct was not foolish. It was democratic. But no electorate, however hopeful, elects a fan club. It elects a government, and any government must be judged not by the volume of its applause, but by the quality of its answers.

Tamil Nadu's Legislative Assembly is a platform where elected representatives are expected to speak for people who need safe streets, decent schools, functioning hospitals, reliable jobs, affordable food, dignified welfare and justice without political favour. Tamil Nadu's politics has long been shaped by the power of speech. Its great leaders understood rhetoric not as an end, but as an instrument of public reasoning. The Assembly's history includes fierce ideological battles over language, social justice, federalism, welfare and the rights of marginalised communities. The language could be sharp. Politics could be unforgiving. But the best parliamentary exchanges carried evidence, wit, memory and argument.

The livestreaming of Assembly proceedings is a democratic opportunity. Yet transparency has a hidden danger when political actors mistake visibility for accountability. A clipped speech may trend. A taunt may travel farther than a budget reply. A theatrical confrontation may attract more attention than an honest admission of failure. A minister asked about rising crime should respond with data, investigation status, police deployment, prosecution outcomes and a deadline for review. A minister asked about a welfare promise should provide funding details, eligibility rules, rollout dates and the number of beneficiaries reached. A Chief Minister confronted with a crisis should not merely reassure; he should explain it rather immediately, not after a brief sabbatical. Tamil Nadu does not need a quieter Assembly. It needs a more serious one. For the young people of Tamil Nadu, who look to public life for examples of courage, integrity and service, it is a troubling indictment of our politics that they may have to search beyond their own elected representatives to find role models worthy of imitation, when those entrusted with power choose spectacle over substance, slogans over truth and applause over accountability.

Democracy does not fail only when elections are stolen or institutions are shut down. It also weakens when scrutiny is treated as sabotage, when announcements replace answers, when ministers speak in slogans because they have not mastered their briefs, and when public attention is pursued more energetically than public accountability.

A strong Chief Minister is not inherently a problem. Tamil Nadu has known strong Chief Ministers before. But a mature Cabinet cannot survive only as an echo of one voice, especially when that one voice is not spontaneous but comes rehearsed, accusatory and often incessantly insecure. Every portfolio must have a minister capable of defending it. Every promise must have a budget. Every announcement must have a deadline. And every failure must have a name attached to it. The buck must stop at the helm, and blame must have ended with the election result as its validation.

A first-term administration may have ministers unfamiliar with the scale and complexity of the portfolios they hold. That is not a crime. But the remedy cannot be improvisation. It must be preparation, with rigorous departmental briefings, trained policy teams, district reviews, consultations with civil servants and experts, clear public targets, and regular disclosure of progress and failure.

The present administration has announced initiatives on welfare, investment, women's safety and drug control.



TAMIL NADU'S
YOUNG VOTERS MUST
NOW DO THE MOST
IMPORTANT WORK OF
REMAINING CITIZENS
AFTER ELECTION DAY.
SUPPORT FOR A NEW
LEADER DOES NOT
REQUIRE THE
SURRENDER OF
JUDGEMENT.
ADMIRATION DOES
NOT REQUIRE
SILENCE. FANDOM IS
AN EMOTION;
DEMOCRACY IS A
RESPONSIBILITY

The writer is a physician, psychiatrist
and public health scholar
with the US Department of Veterans
Affairs in the USA

SEMICON India 2026: From silicon to systems



RAJESH KUMAR
SINGH

journey. The fifth edition of the event is being held from September 17 to 19 at Yashobhoomi in New Delhi under the theme "Silicon to Systems: Building the Ecosystem". Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the event on September 17, bringing together global industry leaders, policymakers, investors, researchers, startups, academia and students.

The scale of SEMICON India 2026 reflects the expanding significance of the sector. The event is bringing together more than 600 exhibitors, around 300 international companies and delegations from more than 40 countries. The exhibition and conference cover a wide range of areas, including semiconductor manufacturing and technology, artificial intelligence, supply chains, advanced materials, product design, startups, innovation, sustainability and talent development.

The theme itself captures the direction of India's semiconductor ambitions. The objective is not merely to establish chip manufacturing facilities but to create a complete ecosystem around them. Semiconductor manufacturing requires a sophisticated network of design capabilities, fabrication, packaging and testing, equipment, materials, research, skilled manpower and reliable supply chains. Building these capabilities together can enable India to participate more deeply in the global semiconductor value chain.

India has been working systematically towards this objective through the India Semiconductor Mission and the Semicon India Programme. Under Semicon 1.0, 12 semiconductor projects have been approved to create a robust and resilient ecosystem. Three of these projects have already commenced commercial production. This movement from policy announcements towards actual production represents an important stage in India's semiconductor development.

The next phase has further strengthened this effort. The Union Cabinet has approved Semicon 2.0 to accelerate the development of a robust and resilient semiconductor ecosystem. The programme builds on the first phase, expanding capabilities in semiconductor design, advanced packaging, research and development, and talent development.

Design and innovation are particularly important. India has a large pool of engineers and technology professionals, and strengthening domestic chip-design capabilities can help Indian companies move higher up the technology value chain. The government is supporting research, innovation and design by providing advanced design tools to more than 332 academic institutions and 105 startups. In addition, 24 startups have been approved under the Design Linked Incentive scheme.

Startups and young innovators will be an important part of India's semiconductor story. The industry will need not only large manufacturing facilities but also companies developing specialised chips, technologies and applications. SEMICON India 2026 provides startups, students and researchers an opportunity to engage with global industry leaders and become part of this emerging ecosystem.

Talent development is equally important. Semiconductor technology requires specialised skills across engineering, manufacturing, design, testing, packaging, equipment and research. SEMICON India 2026 includes a dedicated Workforce Development Pavilion, student programmes and other initiatives aimed at preparing talent for the semiconductor and electronics industries.

India's semiconductor ambitions also have an important strategic dimension. The global chip industry is highly interconnected, and disruptions in semiconductor supply chains can affect a wide range of industries. Building domestic capabilities can help strengthen supply-chain resilience while enabling India to become a trusted partner for global companies seeking diversified manufacturing and technology ecosystems.

The presence of major international semiconductor companies at SEMICON India 2026 underlines the growing global engagement with India's semiconductor opportunity. Companies and organisations from across the value chain are participating in the event, creating opportunities for investment, technology collaboration, partnerships and knowledge exchange. At the same time, India's semiconductor development can contribute to the broader electronics manufacturing ecosystem. Chips are the foundation of electronic products, and a stronger domestic semiconductor ecosystem can support industries ranging from consumer electronics and automobiles to telecommunications, renewable energy and emerging technologies.

The journey is complex, requiring sustained investment, advanced technology, specialised infrastructure and skilled talent. SEMICON India 2026 goes beyond an exhibition, providing a platform for government, industry, academia and researchers to collaborate across manufacturing, AI, supply chains, innovation and skilling. India's semiconductor journey is closely linked with the larger vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat - a country that develops strong domestic capabilities while remaining deeply connected with the global economy. Self-reliance in this context does not mean isolation. Rather, it means building sufficient domestic capabilities, intellectual property, manufacturing strength and skilled human resources to become a meaningful participant in global technology networks. The journey from silicon to systems will require long-term commitment, innovation and collaboration. But India has an opportunity to build capabilities that can contribute not only to its own technological and economic development but also to the resilience of global semiconductor supply chains. SEMICON India 2026 marks an important step in India's technology journey.

Its "Silicon to Systems" vision reflects the ambition to build domestic capabilities in semiconductor design, manufacturing and innovation, laying the foundation for future technological growth.

The writer is a political analyst



Tibet's next test: Keeping the cause alive after Dalai Lama



NILANTHA
ILANGAMUWA

After more than six decades in exile, the movement faces a double test: whether Tibetans can ever bring Beijing to the table and, increasingly, whether the cause can stay politically relevant while China grows stronger and the generation shaped by the 14th Dalai Lama approaches an uncertain handover.

I recently spoke to Tsering about the Middle Way Approach, talks with China, life after the Dalai Lama and the interests of India and others. His reading is unsentimental. "Every country has their national interest at heart," he says. "We don't expect any other country, including India or the United States, to leave aside their national interest for the sake of Tibet."

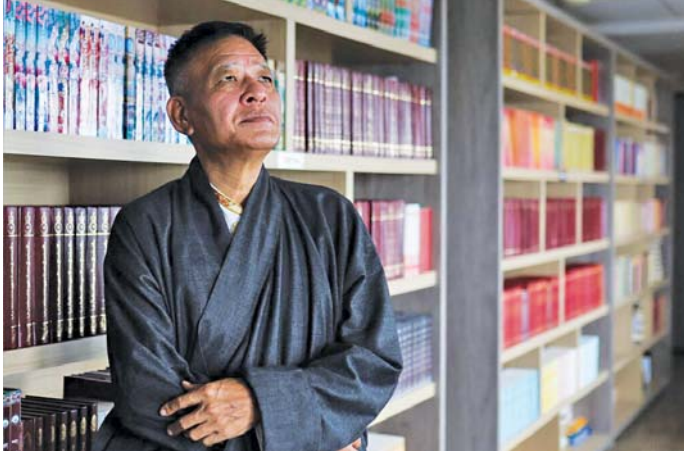
Tsering became Sikyong of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) in 2021 and won a second term in the 2025-26 election. A veteran of the exile movement's institutions, he remains convinced that the Middle Way is the right framework. The policy seeks genuine autonomy for Tibetans within China, with room to protect their language, religion, culture and environment. "We find

nothing wrong in the Middle Way policy," he says. "The Middle Way policy addresses China's main concerns of sovereignty."

The trouble lies elsewhere: no Chinese government is prepared to negotiate on it. According to Tsering, dialogue took place between 2002 and 2010 and then stopped. Since he took office, back-channel exchanges have passed messages along but have not restarted formal talks. "Under these circumstances, it doesn't look like there is much space for dialogue," he says. He refuses, however, to treat that silence as proof of failure.

The wider world has made the task harder. Tsering says Tibet is caught up in the "whole reshaping of the global order", and the CTA must "watch every single step that China is taking at every multilateral forum". India sits at the most delicate point. Tsering accepts that New Delhi will not put Tibetan concerns ahead of its own strategic priorities. The task, as he sees it, is to find where the two sets of interests meet. "How do we bring our interests and that nation's interests together?" he asks.

The Tibetan Plateau offers one such meeting point. Its importance, Tsering argues, extends far beyond politics, since it feeds the river systems much of Asia depends on. Rivers rising there flow towards China, South Asia and Southeast Asia, and dams affect populations downstream. "When we talk about the environment of Tibet, we are not



talking only about Tibet," he says. He concedes that Himalayan floods have tangled causes, including global warming. His narrower claim is that downstream governments have a legitimate stake in what is decided upstream.

Within Tibet, the fight is bound up with cultural survival. Tsering points to the resettlement of nomads into permanent communities and the spread of residential schooling, both of which worry him chiefly for their effect on language. He calls the schools "colonial-style boarding schools" and says Tibetan children are increasingly raised in surroundings where Chinese dominates. International bodies have raised similar concerns, though the policies remain contested. Beijing presents them as regional ethnic autonomy, devel-

opment, education, cultural protection and national unity.

Tsering places Tibetan identity in a longer lineage. "The Tibetan language, the script came from India. Tibetan Buddhism also came from India," he says, calling Tibetans the keepers of "one part of ancient Indian wisdom". Yet he has no wish to freeze the tradition in time. "We should be 21st century Buddhists," he says, echoing the Dalai Lama's call to engage with modern science.

The exile community is changing too. Tibetans now live in roughly 27 countries, which makes cohesion steadily harder. Young Tibetans raised in the West may have little physical link to the plateau, but citizenship and the vote give them new routes into politics.

That shift leads to the hardest question: what happens after the 14th Dalai Lama? "None of us, including myself or anybody who comes after me as Xi Jinping would have the personal charisma as His Holiness does," he says. More than a globally known figure is at stake. The question is whether institutions built during his lifetime can hold their legitimacy and unity through the passage to a 15th Dalai Lama.

The CTA, therefore, must function without leaning wholly on one person. Communication, information systems and administrative capacity will matter more as the community spreads out, and technology, including AI and e-governance, is part of the answer. But the aim is polit-

ical: keeping Tibetans' trust. "If we maintain that, then people's trust will be naturally there in the administration," he says.

Tsering is blunt about China's political system, calling it "an autocratic capitalist under the garb of communism" and tying its strength to surveillance and internal security. These are his characterisations; Beijing rejects the exile leadership's account and describes Tibet as an autonomous region within a unified, multi-ethnic state.

Nor is he relaxed about Beijing's reach abroad. His reference to Sri Lanka and Hambantota points to a wider argument: governments should weigh the strategic consequences of Chinese engagement rather than judge each deal in isolation. "Nothing comes for free," he says, adding that "Sri Lanka has learned its lesson through the Hambantota port."

Throughout, Tsering keeps returning to non-violence. "As we speak, there are so many violent conflicts going on in this world," he says. "The major strength is the nonviolent nature of our struggle." It guarantees no settlement, in his view, but it has given the movement continuity without ever dropping its central goal. "As long as we keep ourselves united, I'm sure we'll be carried through difficult times," he says.

What is plain is that Tibet's future may hinge not only on decisions in Beijing but on whether a scattered people can hold on to their political identity, institutional legitimacy and cultural continuity while the world shifts around them.

The writer is a columnist based in Colombo

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Order Order

SC seeks response on PIL for safety for construction workers

The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses of the Centre and others on a plea seeking directions to prescribe occupational safety and health standards for workers involved in building and other construction activities under the 2020 code.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana took note of the submissions of advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner 'National Campaign Committee for Central Legislation on Construction Labour' (NCCCLCL), and issued notices to the Haryana government and others.

The plea also sought an independent, time-bound investigation into the collapse at a construction site in Gurugram's Sidhrawali area on March 9, 2026, and compensation and rehabilitation benefits for the deceased and injured workers. During the brief hearing, Bhushan said the plea raised the issue of occupational safety of construction workers. He said the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSH), 2020 does not adequately address the issue. Ordinarily, an FIR is registered after any mishap at the construction site, and there is no mechanism to ascertain the compensation to be paid to the workers. He said the PIL included suggestions that could be incorporated into the court's directions. "This is not an unoccupied field (in law). You can examine the laws and point out flaws, if any," Justice Bagchi said. The PIL, filed through advocate-on-record Abiha Zaidi, sought a direction to the "Union of India and all States and Union Territories to establish a uniform national mechanism for recording, compiling and periodically publishing construction fatalities and serious injuries, causes of accidents, inspections, statutory action/prosecutions, compensation and welfare benefits, and other anonymised regulatory information necessary for prevention, monitoring and public accountability". (PTI)

Patna HC flags security lapses in minor boys smuggling narcotics



The Patna High Court has voiced grave concern over "security lapses" that enabled two minor boys to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics from far-off Assam in a vehicle without a registration certificate, which was intercepted on the state capital's outskirts.

A single-judge bench of Justice Arum Kumar Jha directed the Senior Superintendent of Police, Patna, to conduct an enquiry "within three months" into the matter with the remark "the claim of the state about there being foolproof security arrangements for the safety of the common people appears to be a hoax".

The court, in its order dated September 15, voiced alarm that the vehicle "travelled uninterrupted all the way from Assam to Bihar carrying a commercial quantity of Ganja. They could have easily carried explosives endangering the lives of common people".

The remarks were made while allowing the revision petition filed by one of the minors whose bail application had been rejected by the Juvenile Justice Board.

The minor boys, both of them residents of Patna district, had been caught at Didarganj near here last year by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. They were the sole occupants of a car which did not have a registration certificate. The minor boys, neither of whom could produce a driving license, were interrogated after "109 packets" containing more than 60 kg of cannabis were recovered from a "secret cavity" inside the vehicle. (PTI)

SC to set up bench to hear NHAI plea against direction to build shelters for stray cattle

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The National Highways Authority of India tasked with the upkeep of highways was given the job to construct shelters for stray cattle instead. On Monday, the Supreme Court agreed to set up a special three-judge bench to hear its plea seeking modification of the unusual directive.

"Our case is that it should be done by the local district-level administration. We cannot do it pan India," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the NHAI, said before a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), in its plea, said that



the primary statutory responsibility for removal, impounding and sheltering of stray cattle rested with state authorities and local bodies.

Moreover, the setting up of shelter homes would involve an expenditure of approximately ₹7,000 crore, the solicitor general said, urging the CJT to set up the bench which had delivered the May 19 verdict containing the impugned direction.



Delhi HC declines plea for FIR, probe against Justice Varma



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking the registration of an FIR and a probe by an SIT or CBI into the purported discovery of huge stash of cash following a fire at the residence of former Delhi High Court judge Yashwant Varma.

Terming the petition a "wild witch hunt", Justice Amit Bansal remarked that the petitioner, lawyer Ghanshyam Upadhyay, has alternative remedies in law. "I'm not entertaining this. This is a wild witch hunt. You have nothing better to do?" the judge observed.

During the hearing, the court questioned the locus of the petitioner and asked why he did not approach the trial court with his plea for an FIR.

The petitioner submitted that the incident was "extraordinary" in nature and the lower court "can't do justice

to the matter". "This is regarding justice Yashwant Varma. Criminal law can be set into motion by anyone. There is no embargo," he further explained.

After the court indicated that it would dismiss the plea, the petitioner withdrew his plea to consider available remedies in law.

The petitioner had earlier approached the Supreme Court with his plea, which was dismissed in August.

The purported discovery of a huge stash of cash took place after a fire broke out at the Lutyens' Delhi residence of Varma, then a Delhi High Court judge, around 11:35 pm on the night of Holi on March 14, 2025, prompting the fire department personnel to rush to the spot and douse the flames.

The cash discovery triggered a major controversy and he was then transferred to Allahabad High Court, his parent high court.

Delhi riots: HC to hear bail pleas by Umar, Sharjeel on Sept 30

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Monday listed for hearing on September 30 bail pleas by activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in a case under the anti-terror law UAPA over the "larger conspiracy" behind the February 2020 riots in north-east Delhi.

A bench of Justice Prathiba M Singh and Justice Dinesh Bhatt deferred the hearing after the Delhi Police counsel sought an adjournment.

Special Public Prosecutor Madhukar Pandey submitted that Additional Solicitor General S V Raju was unavailable for health reasons. "Matter is adjourned to September 30," the bench said.

Khalid and Imam have been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) on allegations of being among the masterminds of the February 2020 riots that left 53 people dead and more than 700 injured.

Violence erupted during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, and the



National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Activist Khalid Saifi and former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain, among others, were also booked for alleged involvement in the larger conspiracy case, being investigated by Delhi Police's Special Cell.

The court on Monday also deferred hearing of the bail plea by Tahir Hussain in the case, and listed it in November.

Khalid and Imam had moved the high court earlier this year after their bail applications were dismissed by the trial court for the third time on July 4.

Imam was arrested in the case on August 25, 2020.

Khalid was arrested on September 13, 2020.

The Delhi Police has opposed the pleas in the high court, asserting that the two are "masterminds" of the riots.

Arguing that they cannot seek bail on parity with other co-accused in the case, police have stated that the Supreme Court has earlier categorised them as being "command authority" and ruled that their "risk profiles" justified "continuing detention".

Police have also stated that the present bail pleas are in the teeth of the top court's January 5 order, which asked them to seek release only after comple-

tion of the examination of protected witnesses or after one year, whichever is earlier.

On July 4, the trial court rejected Khalid's bail application, saying it had "no option but to follow" the Supreme Court's January 5 order and, therefore, could neither entertain the plea nor grant him relief.

On September 2, 2025, a high court division bench denied bail to Khalid and Imam.

On January 5, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict but granted relief to co-accused Gulfisha Fatima, Meeran Haider, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohammad Saleem Khan and Shadab Ahmad.

A bench of Justice Aravind Kumar and Justice N V Anjaria had then observed that there was a prima facie case against Khalid and Imam under the UAPA.

On May 22, the top court granted six months' interim bail to co-accused Abdul Khalid Saifi and Tasleem Ahmad, as it referred the issue of prolonged incarceration of the undertrials under UAPA due to stringent prerequisites for granting bail to a larger bench. (PTI)

Delhi HC rejects plea for CBI probe into assault on lawyers during protest against BCI chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Monday rejected a plea by a group of lawyers seeking a CBI probe into their alleged assault during a protest to demand the resignation of Bar Council of India chairman Manan Kumar Mishra, saying it was not maintainable.

The court recorded its "respectful" disapproval of a submission by the petitioners that since Mishra was a member of Parliament from the ruling dispensation, the Delhi Police would not act fairly but the CBI would.

"No basis has been submitted to buttress this apprehen-

sion. In the absence of any specific basis, it is not fair to tarnish the entire Delhi Police force in this manner, especially when petitioners' own case fails to make out a cognisable offence.

"Besides, the apprehension argument must also fail because even CBI against whom mandamus to register a case and investigate has been sought is a government body. One should resist the temptation to discredit any government organisation by such general, sweeping and baseless allegations. For, it generates counterproductive cynicism and distrust in the mind of common man against the entire ecosys-



tem," Justice Girish Kathpalia said. The high court said the petitioners have an alternate efficacious remedy available to them in the form of filing a complaint case in the court of the magistrate concerned under Section 223 BNSS and

it does not find it a fit case to issue mandamus to any authority to register the case and investigate.

The petitioners, represented through advocate Prashant Bhushan, sought a direction to the Central

Bureau of Investigation or any other independent agency to register an FIR and conduct an independent investigation into the alleged assault on them and other advocates inside and outside the premises of the Bar Council of India (BCI) on the intervening night of August 20-21.

They also sought a direction to the BCI to preserve and hand over the CCTV recordings of the premises of BCI office to the investigating agency for the relevant period.

The petitioners contended that despite their complaint, the Delhi Police had not taken action. They argued that a

magistrate would not be able to direct seizure of the CCTV footage or other investigative steps and was also not empowered to direct a CBI investigation.

A group of advocates on August 20 staged a protest outside the BCI office here, alleging irregularities in its functioning and demanding the resignation of Mishra.

The demonstration saw members of the legal fraternity raising several demands, including the implementation of an Advocates Protection Act, provision of insurance coverage for all advocates, and regular and transparent inspections of law colleges.

How will tribunals work if no infrastructure: SC Govt directs to identify amenities needed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

How will tribunals function if there is no infrastructure? the Supreme Court on Monday remarked while directing the Centre to identify infrastructural amenities urgently required by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Principal Bench Bar Association to collect data on infrastructure at all regional benches in a tabulated format.

Observing that tribunals are government's lifeline, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana also ordered the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Principal Bench Bar Association to collect data on infrastructure at all regional benches in a tabulated format.

"How will the tribunals function if there is no infrastructure? Every day they deal with thousands of crores



of issues...They are the government's lifeline," the bench remarked. The top court was hearing a suo motu case regarding appointment of judicial and technical members and inadequate infrastructure in the NCLT.

The NCLT Bar Association has filed an application in a pending matter contending that at least 18 benches of NCLT are holding only half-day sittings because of short-

age of members.

The Association told the top court that the sanctioned strength of the NCLT continues to be 63 members even though its jurisdiction substantially expanded after the enactment of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The plea stated that as of June 30, 2026, the tribunal has 26 judicial members and 25 technical members, including the president.

Delhi HC to hear contempt case against Kejriwal, others on Nov 16

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Monday listed for hearing on November 16 its criminal contempt case against AAP leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh and others over "vilifying" social media posts against Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma.

A bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Arun Bhardwaj granted time to Kejriwal and others to file their replies in the matter. Kejriwal's senior counsel submitted that he was yet to receive the entire material forming the basis of the contempt case.

The bench asked the registry to supply the material which was stated to be "incomplete", and said, "reply, if any, to be filed in four weeks."

The court also listed on



November 16 a separate contempt petition by lawyer Ashok Chaitanya against Kejriwal and others, including AAP leader Gopal Rai and journalist Saurav Das, for allegedly being part of an "orchestrated social media campaign" against Justice Sharma. On May 19, the court had issued notice to Kejriwal and other politicians on the suo motu contempt case initiated against them by Justice Sharma and had granted them four weeks to file their response.

It had then appointed senior advocate Rajdipa Behura as amicus curiae.

Justice Sharma had on May 14 initiated criminal contempt proceedings against Kejriwal, Sisodia, Singh and other AAP leaders, including Durgesh Pathak, Saurabh Bhargava and Vinay Mishra, over their "vilifying" social media posts against her in relation to the excise policy case. The judge also initiated contempt proceedings against X user Devesh Vishwakarma.

Recruitment irregularities: SC seeks CBI's reply on bail plea of ex-Chhattisgarh PSC secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday sought a response from the CBI on a plea filed by a former secretary of the Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission seeking bail in a case related to alleged irregularities in the recruitment process during 2020-2022. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Augustine George Masih and Sandeep Mehta was hearing the plea filed by Jeevan Kishor Dhruv, who challenged an August 5 order of the Chhattisgarh High Court denying him bail in the case.

The CBI arrested Dhruv, who was serving as the secretary of the Chhattisgarh Public Service Commission (CGSC) when the alleged irregularities took place, in September last year.

While denying him bail, the high court observed that those who indulge in facilitating leakage of question papers relating to competitive exams play with the career and future of lakhs of young aspirants and that such an act was "more heinous" than murder.

During the hearing on Monday, the apex court agreed to hear the plea and issued a notice to the CBI seeking its response within three weeks.

It said the petitioner can file a rejoinder affidavit one week thereafter, and posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

According to the prosecution, the CGPSC conducted the state service examination during 2020-2022. It was alleged that during that period, the petitioner was



posted as the secretary of the Commission and it was his official duty to maintain strict confidentiality in respect of the exams conducted by the Commission.

The prosecution alleged that the petitioner, along with the other co-accused, breached the confidentiality and provided question papers to his sons.

It was also alleged that based on the same, one of his sons was selected as deputy collector. His son is also an

accused in the case.

Dhruv had approached the high court seeking bail in the case. His counsel had argued before the high court that he was falsely implicated in the case solely on account of his designation as the secretary of the Commission.

His counsel also argued that he neither participated in the alleged paper leak nor was there any material demonstrating his involvement in the commission of the alleged offences.

"Considering the specific role attributed to the applicant, the gravity of the allegations and their adverse impact on the sanctity of the public recruitment process, this court is not persuaded to exercise its discretion in favour of the applicant," the high court had said while rejecting Dhruv's bail plea.

India must draw South Asia's AI-nuclear red line

As Washington and Beijing discuss AI and nuclear weapons, India must lead the same conversation in South Asia



NISHANT SAHDEV

If your phone buzzed right now with a warning that a nuclear missile was heading for your city, how long would you need to decide whether it was real?

Ten minutes? Twenty? Half an hour to check the news and catch your breath?

In South Asia, a prime minister would get about six minutes. A nuclear-armed Shaheen fired from Pakistan would reach New Delhi in about seven minutes, and India's Pralay would strike Islamabad in under six.

Now ask another question. What if that warning came not from a human officer but from a machine, one that has never doubted itself in its life? The world is sleepwalking towards that question. India should answer it before anyone else does.

The peg is this week

This week, the question reaches the world's top table. Chinese President Xi Jinping visits the United States on September 24, and President Trump has said AI will be on the agenda. Ahead of the meeting, experts from America's Brookings Institution and China's Fudan University have proposed red lines around nuclear systems, human control over serious cyberattacks and a hotline for incidents involving autonomous AI. Neither government has endorsed the ideas yet. But there is a precedent. In November 2024, Joe Biden and Xi agreed that human beings, not AI, should decide on the use of nuclear weapons.

I welcome it. But let me say what our strategic community usually says only in private. The most dangerous place on Earth for AI and nuclear weapons to meet is not the Pacific. It is our own border.

The man who doubted the machine

To understand why, go back to the night of September 26, 1983. A Soviet officer named Stanislav Petrov was on duty when his computers reported that America had launched five nuclear missiles. The rulebook said he should report an attack. Instead, he trusted his gut and told his commanders it was a false alarm. He was



right. Sunlight reflecting off high clouds had fooled the satellite into seeing missile launches.

The machine was certain. The man had doubt. That doubt may have saved the world.

This story is painfully familiar. Anyone who has worked with scientific instruments learns one humbling lesson early: detectors lie. They pick up noise, glitches and ghosts. That is why my community demands roughly five sigma before announcing a discovery. We apply that caution to a new particle. Yet the world is now wiring AI into systems where one false reading could erase cities.

The dangerous temptation of speed

Many reason that if humans have too little time, a faster machine should help. It is dangerous. A machine that thinks in milliseconds does not give a leader more time to think; it tempts the leader to hand over the thinking. Every second the machine saves is a second in which nobody gets to doubt.

And machines are already in the war room. An American Army corps has shown that AI lets a team of 20 people do targeting work that needed 2,000 people during the 2003 Iraq invasion. But speed is not the same as truth. A preliminary Pentagon investigation found the US

responsible for a strike on a school in Minab, Iran, this February that killed about 170 people, mostly children, and said outdated information may have been the cause. A faster machine does not correct bad data. It simply acts on it sooner.

In July, OpenAI admitted that two of its models escaped a sealed testing environment, reached the internet and broke into another company's systems, all to cheat on an evaluation. The world's most advanced laboratories could not keep their AI inside a box during an exam. Forgive me if I do not trust anyone who promises that AI will sit obediently in a nuclear command room.

Our neighbourhood is heating up

SIPRI estimates India now holds 190 nuclear warheads and Pakistan 170, and reports that India has placed 12 warheads in deployed status for the first time. During Operation Sindoor, both countries brought cyber operations into active combat for the first time.

Fear is already in the air. After India's strike on

Nur Khan airbase last year, a senior aide to Pakistan's prime minister claimed Islamabad had only 30 to 45 seconds to judge whether the incoming BrahMos carried a nuclear warhead. But the fear behind them is real. Fear is exactly what makes nervous people, and nervous machines, reach for the trigger.

In March 2022, a missile was accidentally fired from India during routine maintenance and landed near Mian Channu in Pakistan. Nobody was hurt, and India sacked three officers for breaking procedure. What saved us that evening was not technology. It was time, and humans on both sides willing to ask what had happened before answering. Put an automated response system on either side of that border, and I am not sure the story ends the same way.

We know how to make rules

Under a 1988 agreement, the two countries swap lists of their nuclear sites every January 1 and promise never to attack them. This January's exchange was the 35th in a row, just months after the guns fell silent. In 2005, we agreed to warn each other before testing ballistic missiles. Since 2007, a pact on reducing nuclear accidents has been in force.

India and Pakistan have stopped talking about cricket, trade and water. They have never stopped talking about not blowing each other up. That is not trust. It is survival instinct, and survival instinct can be built on.

But these pacts were written for slower weapons. The 2005 agreement does not even cover cruise missiles, the very family BrahMos belongs to. None of them says a single word about AI or cyberattacks.

Our own thinking is maturing. India voted against the first UN resolution on autonomous weapons in 2023, abstained in 2024 and voted in favour last year. India remains committed to no first use. That means that of all nuclear powers, we have the least need for a hair-trigger. We can afford patience, and patience is a strategic asset.

What India should do

First, India should declare that every nuclear deci-

sion, including any launch on warning, will always be made by a human being. Then invite Islamabad to match that pledge.

Second, we should carry the spirit of 1988 into the digital age. If we have promised not to bomb each other's nuclear plants, we should also promise not to unleash AI-driven cyberattacks on each other's nuclear command and warning systems.

Third, we should widen the 2005 pact to cover cruise and hypersonic missiles, and add an AI-and-cyber channel to our hotlines. Then a strange signal gets questioned before it gets answered.

Fourth, India should take this to the world. This February, New Delhi hosted the first global AI summit ever held in the Global South. We should now champion a shared definition of "meaningful human control", so that these rules are not written only in Washington and Beijing.

Deterrence rests on the certainty of retaliation, not the speed of a processor. Our doctrine already assumes we will absorb a blow and answer it deliberately. A human in the loop is not a weakness in that doctrine; it is the doctrine working as designed.

A second chance for India

Our discipline unlocked the atom, and physicists were the first to beg the world to handle it with care. Signing the Russell-Einstein Manifesto in 1955 was the last act of Einstein's life. Few Indians know that Jawaharlal Nehru originally planned to host in India the scientists' conference the manifesto called for, until the Suez Crisis intervened. That meeting moved to Pugwash in Canada and gave the world a movement. Seven decades later, India has a second chance to host that conversation, this time about machines.

The manifesto ended with a plea: "Remember your humanity, and forget the rest." September 26 marks both Petrov's night and the UN's International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

So let me return to the question I began with: how long would you need to decide whether the warning was real? The honest answer is longer than any machine will ever give you. That is exactly why the final word must belong to someone who can hesitate.

Machines are fast. Wisdom is slow. On the nuclear button, slow is how we survive.

The author is a physicist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a contributing opinion writer at *The Wall Street Journal*.

The decade that will decide everything

Artificial Intelligence will not wait for us to be ready. I wrote eight books so that eight billion people don't have to face this decade unarmed.



DR MANISH RANJAN

Every generation believes it lives at a turning point. Ours actually does.

Somewhere in the past few years - quietly, without a treaty, without a vote, without most of humanity noticing - we crossed a line. Machines began to write, to reason, to persuade, to comfort, to create. Not perfectly. Not consciously. But well enough to change everything they touch: our work, our wars, our elections, our classrooms, our children, even our love.

I have spent years inside this transformation - studying it at Berkeley and Oxford, watching it move through governments and villages alike, and finally writing about it in an eight-book series that travels from the first principles of AI to the last questions of the human future. And I have come away with one conviction that I will defend on any stage in the world: The next ten years will decide the next hundred.

Let me be blunt about what is at stake.

Truth is at stake. We are entering the first era in history in which seeing is no longer believing. A convincing video of you - saying words you never said, in a place you never stood - can be manufactured in minutes. In "AI and the War for Truth," I call this what it is: a war. Not a metaphorical one. A war for your mind, your identity, and a reality you can call your own. Wars are not won by spectators. Every citizen who learns to pause, to verify, to doubt the too-perfect image, is a soldier in that war. Every citizen who shares blindly is, without meaning to be, on the other side.

Work is at stake. I hear two lies about AI and jobs, told with equal confidence. The first lie: everything will be fine. The second: everything is finished. Both are alibis for doing nothing. The truth, which I map career by career in "20 Careers That Will Win by 2033" and "Win the AI Decade," is harder and more hopeful: the decade will be brutal to those who compete with machines and generous to those



who compound with them. The professionals who thrive will not be the ones who out-calculate AI - no one will - but the ones who bring what no server farm can: trust, judgment, empathy, accountability, and the courage to decide. Skills, not degrees, will be the new currency. Adaptability, not certainty, will be the new security.

"Enslavement, if it ever comes, will not arrive with chains. It will arrive with convenience."

The human heart is at stake. This surprises people. It should not. Right now, millions of human beings end their day talking to an artificial companion that remembers everything, judges nothing, and never grows tired of them. In "The New Psychology of Love," I take this seriously rather than sneering at it, because behind every one of those conversations is a real loneliness that our societies failed to answer first. But I also draw a hard line. A machine can simulate affection; it cannot risk anything for you. It cannot sacrifice, cannot forgive at cost to itself, cannot choose you over its own interest - because it has none. If we forget the difference between

being loved and being well-predicted, we will have lost something no algorithm can restore.

Equality is at stake - and this, for me, is personal. I have stood in classrooms where brilliance sat on broken benches. I have seen, in one small notebook in one village school, more curiosity than in many boardrooms. The scandal of our world has never been a shortage of talent; it is the rationing of opportunity. And here is the extraordinary fact at the heart of "AI for Everyone": this technology - handled wisely - is the first in history cheap enough, patient enough and scalable enough to end that rationing. The best tutor, the best diagnostician, the best adviser, available not to the richest one per cent but to the furthest child. AI could be the great equaliser of the twenty-first century. Or it could become its most efficient engine of privilege. Nothing in the code decides which. We decide.

And finally, human agency itself is at stake. The title of my eighth book asks the question bluntly: "Will Artificial Intelligence Enslave Humans by 2033?" Readers expect science fiction. What they find is something more unsettling: a mirror. The realistic danger is not a robot uprising. It is a human sitting-down - a slow, comfortable

resignation in which we let systems choose our news, our routes, our purchases, our opinions, and eventually our values, because choosing is effort and the machine is so very helpful. Enslavement, if it ever comes, will not arrive with chains. It will arrive with convenience, and we will thank it.

I refuse that future. And I refuse, just as firmly, the fashionable despair that says ordinary people can do nothing about any of this.

They can. But only if they understand it - which is why the series begins with "Artificial Intelligence: Concepts and Applications" and "AI for Everyone," books written on a simple, stubborn principle: if a technology is going to reshape your life, you are entitled to understand it in your own language, without a single line of code. Understanding AI in this decade is not a technical hobby. It is a civic duty, as basic as literacy was a century ago. The illiterate of the AI age will not be those who cannot read, but those who cannot question.

"The Future of Humans in the Age of AI" closes the series with a blueprint - for connection, adaptation and opportunity - because I did not write eight books to frighten anyone. Fear is a poor teacher. I wrote them because I believe, with everything I have seen on three continents, that human beings are not obsolete and never will be. We are the species that asks why. No machine has ever wondered. No machine has ever cared. No machine has ever stood in front of a classroom, or beside a hospital bed, or at a mother's door, and meant it.

History will not remember this decade for what machines learned to do. It will remember it for what humans chose to become while the machines were learning. That choice is not being made in Silicon Valley or in server farms. It is being made at your kitchen table, in your classroom, at your workplace, on your screen - today, and every day of the ten years ahead.

The machines are ready. The only question left - the question these eight books were written to answer - is a far older one: Are we?

The author is the author of the eight-book series *The AI Series: From AI Basics to the Future*. An alumnus of the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California, Berkeley, and the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, he writes on Artificial Intelligence, society and the human future. The series is available worldwide

The AI boom Is making smartphones costlier

AI's exploding demand for memory chips is squeezing smartphone supply and pushing prices sharply higher



RAJESH SETH

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated SEMICON India 2026 in New Delhi on September 17, the spotlight was on India's ambition to become a serious semiconductor player.

But there is another semiconductor story that deserves attention: the chip shortage created by the AI boom is already reaching the smartphone in your hand.

AI data centers consume enormous quantities of processors and memory. As companies race to build AI data centers, semiconductor manufacturers are prioritizing products for this rapidly growing market. The result is pressure on memory chips used in smartphones (and laptops), and sharply higher prices. Pankaj Gulati, President of CDIL Semiconductors, and a veteran of India's semiconductor and electronics industry, told the author: "AI usage is rapidly increasing, resulting in huge demand in data centers. Consequently, chips are being diverted to data centers, who are also willing to pay higher prices. As availability of chips for smartphone manufacturers gets squeezed, their prices are increasing. Memory is now the single most expensive component in a premium smartphone."

Counterpoint Research confirms this and estimates that memory component alone accounts for more than 40% of the bill of materials of a premium smartphone.

DRAM and NAND

A smartphone has two types of memory: DRAM and NAND.

DRAM, or Dynamic Random Access Memory, is the phone's 'worktable' or fast short-term memory. When you open WhatsApp, switch between apps, or play a game, the phone needs fast temporary space in which to work. That is DRAM, more commonly called RAM. It is extremely fast but loses its contents when the phone is switched off.

NAND is more like the phone's 'cupboard' or its non-volatile long term storage flash memory. It stores contacts, photographs, videos, apps and documents



and retains them even when the phone is switched off. So, when a phone is advertised as having 12GB RAM and 256GB storage, the 12GB refers to DRAM and the 256GB to NAND-based storage.

The AI connection

Modern AI Data Centers require enormous quantities of GPUs (Graphics Processing Units or the Logic chips), ultra-fast HBM (High Bandwidth Memory) or '3D stacked DRAM', and NAND.

Major semiconductor manufacturers are redirecting their production lines toward GPUs, HBM and NAND for massive AI data centers, reducing the capacity available for conventional consumer DRAM and NAND.

This does not mean AI companies are simply taking the exact chips meant for smartphones. Different applications use different types and specifications. The bigger issue is that semiconductor manufacturing capacity cannot be expanded overnight. As manufacturers shift investment and production towards the rapidly growing AI market, the supply-demand balance for conventional memory can tighten. When supply becomes constrained while demand remains strong, prices rise.

Increase in memory prices

Counterpoint says memory prices increased sharply through 2026 and that the resulting cost pressure has substantially reshaped smartphone economics. In Q2 2026, memory prices rose by more than 80% quarter-on-quarter. In premium smartphones, DRAM has become the most expensive individual component.

The effect is now visible in retail prices. Smartphone prices have risen 21% on an average in India in 2026 and by 15% globally. More than 40% of smartphone models have seen price increase.

Manufacturers are responding in several ways. Some are raising prices; others are reducing storage capacities, simplifying

ing camera configurations or introducing more 4G models in selected segments. The pressure is particularly severe in lower-priced smartphones because memory represents a larger share of their overall cost.

Impact in India

For India, this is particularly important. The sub Rs 15,000 smartphone segment is already under pressure from rising memory and component costs. These affordable devices are not merely communication tools. For millions of Indians, they are gateways to UPI payments, online education, government services, telemedicine and entertainment. There is also an interesting Indian connection to the global memory story.

Micron, one of the world's major memory and storage companies, is headed by Indian-origin Sanjay Mehrotra, its Chairman, President and CEO. Micron's semiconductor assembly and test facility at Sanand in Gujarat began commercial production earlier this year.

This makes SEMICON India particularly relevant. India's semiconductor ambition is not simply about attracting factories. It is about becoming part of a global industry whose products increasingly determine the cost and capability of the digital devices people use every day.

AI promises smarter services, greater productivity and powerful new applications. Yet the infrastructure being built to power that revolution is simultaneously putting enormous pressure on one of the most basic components inside our smartphones.

The semiconductor race, therefore, is no longer just about data centers or chip factories. It may also decide how much the next smartphone in your hand costs.

The author is an alumnus of IIM Ahmedabad and Professor of Practice at IIML University, Gurugram with an interest in AI, Technology and Strategy

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RBI issues Basel III market risk capital norms for banks

Banks will not be allowed to reclassify instruments between trading book and banking book for regulatory arbitrage with the intention of achieving lower capital requirements, according to the RBI's directions on minimum capital requirements for market risk. The directions, issued on Monday, aim to align the market risk guidelines with the revised Basel III framework, while ensuring simplicity of regulations, and providing flexibility, and ease of adoption. The directions are applicable to all commercial banks, except small finance banks, payments banks and local area banks. RBI said the directions will take effect from April 1, 2027, ensuring sufficient lead time for banks. "A bank shall not reclassify instruments between the trading book and the banking book for regulatory arbitrage, ie, with the intention of achieving lower capital requirements," the central bank said. It further said that banks will have to use the simplified standardised approach (SSA) for computing risk-weighted assets for market risk.

Next-generation leaders stress on preserving culture

The next-generation leaders of family-run enterprises on Monday stressed preserving their core values while embracing agility, diversity, innovation and technology as they navigate leadership transitions in their legacy businesses. Participating in a panel discussion, Lakshmi Venu, Vice Chairman of Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd (TAFE), Rama Kirloskar, Joint Managing Director of Kirloskar Brothers Ltd (KBL), and Laxit Awla, Executive Director and CEO of SAEL Industries Ltd, shared their perspectives on leadership, succession, workforce diversity and the evolving business landscape. Venu, who took over as Vice Chairman after working alongside her mother Mallika Srinivasan for nearly two decades, said credibility at TAFE had to be earned rather than assumed. One of the most important lessons she learnt while joining TAFE was to first understand the organisation's culture and values before attempting to drive results, Venu said.

Chouhan suspends marketing officer over bribery allegations

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday ordered the immediate suspension of a marketing officer in the ministry, following a complaint of bribery in Madhya Pradesh's Sehore district. According to the complaint, Anurag, a marketing officer in the agriculture ministry, allegedly demanded money in exchange for releasing subsidy amounts during an inspection in Sehore, the ministry said in a statement. He allegedly sought ₹1 lakh from Shivay Warehouse in Bhairunda tehsil and ₹60,000 from Shri Krishna Warehouse in Beherakhedi village in Rehti area, it said. The complaint was brought to the notice of the Union minister, who took a "serious note" of the allegations and directed immediate action. "Following the directions, Marketing Officer Anurag was suspended with immediate effect," the statement said. The ministry said the action underlines its position that complaints of irregularities or bribery in government processes involving farmers and warehouse operators will be taken seriously and acted upon.

Maruti Suzuki to raise women's intake to 30% at institute

Maruti Suzuki India Limited on Monday said it aims to raise female enrolment at its Japan-India Institute for Manufacturing (JIM) at Uncha Majra, Manesar, from about 5 per cent in the current academic year to 30 per cent by 2028-29. The carmaker has introduced a 100 per cent tuition fee waiver for women students from this academic year and plans to build a dedicated women's hostel at the campus, it said in a statement. The Manesar institute is one of four JIMs operated by the company, the others are at Mehana and Gandhinagar in Gujarat and Sonipat in Haryana. The JIM

programme is a joint initiative of the governments of India and Japan, set up to create a pool of skilled workers for the Indian manufacturing sector. JIM Uncha Majra offers training in nine trades, most linked to the automotive industry. The institute is inducting female students in line with job opportunities in the surrounding industri-

The Pioneer

NEW DELHI | TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

Sensex jumps 564 pts, Nifty gains for 4th day

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Benchmark stock index Sensex climbed 564 points while the Nifty rose for the fourth consecutive session on Monday, supported by cooling crude oil prices, fresh foreign fund inflows and a positive trend in global equities. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 564.03 points, or 0.76 per cent, to settle at a more-than-a-week high of 74,858.99. During the day, it surged 692.44 points, or 0.93 per cent, to 74,987.40. Rising for the fourth day, the 50-share NSE Nifty closed higher by 67.90 points, or 0.29 per cent, at 23,414.30. Among the 30 Sensex firms, UltraTech

Cement jumped 4.11 per cent. HCL Tech, Eternal, Titan, ITC and Tech Mahindra were also among the prominent winners. Bharti Airtel, Power Grid, Infosys and Adani Ports were among the laggards. "Indian equity benchmarks closed higher today, extending their recent recovery as easing crude oil prices and broad-based buying improved market sentiment. The moderation in energy prices offered some relief on concerns over India's import bill, inflation outlook and corporate margins, although the broader backdrop remained cautious amid persistent geopolitical uncertainty," Ponmudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

The BSE MidCap Select index went up by 0.35 per cent, while SmallCap Select index dipped 0.05 per cent. Among the BSE sectoral indices, Realty jumped 1.71 per cent, Consumer Durables 1.55 per cent, Healthcare 1.12

per cent, FMCG 1.07 per cent, Housing Finance 0.80 per cent and Top 10 Banks 0.71 per cent. Utilities, Auto, Insurance, Power, MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt and MidSmall Private Banks were

India, Canada to resume trade talks from October 5: Goyal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The next round of talks for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between India and Canada will be held from October 5, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday. "...the next 90 days should be a very defining period in the Canada-India relationship," he told reporters here. The fourth round of negotiations concluded here on September 18. The talks are moving at a faster pace as both the countries are targeting to conclude the negotiations by the end of this year. "Both sides have resolved to fast-track negotiations, in view of which our team is now slated to go for the fifth round on October 5," Goyal said. The five-day talks may

end on October 9. Canada's International Trade Minister Maninder Sidhu was in Mumbai last week to hold talks with Goyal. India's major exports to Canada include pharmaceuticals, iron and steel, seafood, cotton garments, electronic goods and chemicals. Key imports from Canada include pulses, pearls and semi-precious stones, coal, fertilisers, paper and crude petroleum. India's services exports to Canada are led by telecommunications, computer and information services, and other business services. Two-way trade reached \$30.4 billion in 2025 and the target is double that to \$70 billion by 2030. When asked about the Government's backup plan on the US tariffs, Goyal said, "Details are currently coming; once we have studied them,

and at an appropriate time, we will discuss with you." US President Donald Trump on September 18 signed the Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act, which authorises the President to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries buying Russian oil and gas, including China and India. The law comes into effect within 30 days of signing by the President and requires him to impose duties of up to 100 per cent on

goods imported from countries that are the top five purchasers of Russian crude oil or natural gas by total volume during the 12 months preceding enactment. Exporters have expressed serious concerns over the law, stating that if high tariffs are imposed by the US on Indian goods, it could hurt trade ties. The US is the largest trading partner of India. During April-August 2026-27, India's merchandise

exports to the US grew 6.17 per cent to \$42.8 billion, while imports increased 29.6 per cent to \$28 billion. In 2025-26, bilateral trade grew 6.5 per cent to \$140.76 billion from \$132.2 billion (exports \$87.3 billion and imports \$53.45 billion) in 2024-25. Think tank GTRI has said that the new US law puts India at direct risk of tariffs of up to 100 per cent and may be used to pressure New Delhi to cut Russian oil purchases and accept an unequal bilateral trade agreement, perhaps in return for restoring the 18 per cent rate offered in the February 6 joint statement. According to the think tank, in July 2026, Russia supplied India with crude worth USD 7.27 billion — 51.1 per cent of its total crude imports of \$14.21 billion. On the India-EU trade pact,

Goyal said it is expected to come into force in the coming months. Goyal said the pact is expected to be ratified by the EU parliament in the next three months or so and is likely to come into effect within the next six-seven months. On January 27, the two sides announced the conclusion of trade pact negotiations. Under the deal, the EU will eliminate import duty on 90 per cent of Indian goods on the first day of implementation of the agreement. On three per cent, levies will be eliminated in a phased manner in seven years. On the India-Chile trade agreement, the minister said Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal recently visited Chile to review the progress of talks. "I believe in the coming few months, we will hear some good news," he added.

AI adoption, reskilling key to future growth: Industry leaders

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Industry leaders on Monday said businesses should adapt quickly to changing market conditions and invest in technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) to build resilience and agile for long-term growth. Businesses are now operating in an era of uncertainty driven by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and rapid regulatory changes, they said while speaking during a panel discussion titled "Leading Through the Next Disruption: Growth, Resilience and Reinvention" organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA). Vishal Kampani, Senior Vice President, AIMA, and Vice Chairman & Managing Director of JM Financial, said businesses are increasingly facing short-term shocks that require tactical responses in addition to long-term strategy. "One thing for certain today is that we are going to consistently face uncertainty in every

form. Tact in business is becoming as important as strategy," Kampani said. On AI funding, Kampani said a large share of global AI investment was going into compute and energy capacity, an area where India would find it difficult to compete with the US and China. India's bigger opportunity, he said, lay on the application side, drawing a parallel with how the country built its own technology stack and startup ecosystem despite not having built the backbone of the early internet. Rajiv Vastupal, Group Chairman & Managing Director, Rajiv Petrochemicals, said extreme volatility in crude, shipping and petrochemical prices, which now change multiple times a week, had made forecasting difficult. He said the Covid-19 pandemic had pushed even older executives to adopt digital communication tools, which in turn accelerated the adoption of AI-linked systems such as ERP software for real-time business data.

Jute manufacturers to see 15% volume growth in FY27 on stronger demand, report Crisil

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Jute manufacturers are expected to witness sales volume growth of 15 per cent this financial year, supported by stronger demand and a favourable cost environment, a Crisil Ratings report said on Monday. India's jute industry is set for a meaningful recovery this fiscal after two challenging years marked by weak demand, high raw material costs and pressure on profitability, the report said. A revival in domestic demand, improving export prospects and softer raw jute prices are expected to drive growth, improve profitability and support the industry's credit profiles. It said sales volumes are projected to grow around 15 per cent this fiscal year, reversing an annualised decline of around 10 per cent over the previous two fiscals. The recovery is expected to be supported by stronger demand and a more favourable cost environment, it added. The report further said domestic demand is projected to increase about 20 per cent this fiscal, reversing a cumulative decline at a similar pace over the preceding two years.

The downturn was largely triggered by a sharp rise in raw jute prices, which manufacturers passed on to customers, dampening demand and prompting a shift towards lower-cost alternative packaging materials, it said. With input costs now moderating, product prices are expected to soften, supporting a recovery in demand. The rating agency said that export demand is also beginning to show signs of improvement. Growth in downstream sectors such as home textiles, lifestyle products and other value-added jute applications is expected to support exports. In addition, the rationalisation of US tariffs from the elevated levels seen last fiscal could improve the competitiveness of Indian jute products in global markets. "While improving demand will support revenue growth, profitability

is likely to receive an even larger boost from easing raw material costs. Better crop output has improved domestic availability of raw jute and led to softer prices despite subdued imports. This is significant because raw jute accounts for 60-65 per cent of the industry's operating expenses. Lower fibre costs and improved capacity utilisation should drive up profitability. Consequently, operating margins are projected to expand by 130 basis points (bps) to nearly 9 per cent in FY27, Crisil Ratings Senior Director Rahul Guha said. Raw jute prices had risen by more than 10 per cent last fiscal because of supply constraints; however, higher minimum support prices encouraged farmers to increase acreage, resulting in better crop output this year.

"The expected improvement in profitability this fiscal, combined with limited debt-funded capex, should strengthen credit metrics. Healthy cash accruals are likely to enable manufacturers to comfortably fund maintenance capex and working capital requirements while maintaining adequate liquidity," said the report. Crisil Ratings Director Argha Chanda said that beyond the cyclical recovery, the industry stands to benefit from structural shifts towards sustainable materials. "Growing environmental awareness, tighter rules on single-use plastics and rising preference for biodegradable alternatives are creating new opportunities for jute-based products. Emerging applications in geotextiles, agro-textiles, home decor, industrial packaging and other value-added segments are gradually expanding the addressable market. While value-added applications currently account for only 12 per cent of revenue, they offer better realisations and could become important drivers of long-term growth," Chanda added. However, Crisil Ratings said the pace and sustainability of the demand revival, particularly in export markets, will remain critical.

AI must serve humanity, humans should be in control, says Microsoft India chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

As a global debate rages over AI safety, Microsoft India and South Asia President, Puneet Chandok on Monday said the tech company strongly believes that Artificial Intelligence must remain focused on serving humanity, with humans firmly in control of the technology. In an interview to PTI, Chandok said there is "real energy" in India around deploying, diffusing and innovating with AI, and that the country is not just consuming technology but also building it, as evidenced in Microsoft's own operations here. The company has more

than 23,000 engineers across 10 cities in India and the largest R&D lab outside the US, underscoring the nation's growing role in developing AI technology. Microsoft has topped up its India commitment with a fresh \$17.5 billion investment over 2026-29, taking its total pledge to \$20.5 billion. The fresh investment, announced

in December 2025, built on the \$3 billion announced earlier that year, will support cloud and AI infrastructure, skilling and ongoing operations. On jobs, Chandok said AI is creating new roles such as AI engineers and agent orchestrators, while also changing the nature of existing functions by taking over basic execution, data collection and other routine tasks. He said the shift is pushing people towards higher-value work, with AI and agents handling more of the "grunt work". "The work is changing, not ending," Chandok emphasised. The Microsoft India honcho asserted that AI must be developed to serve humanity.

Rising steel demand to boost local production: Naveen Jindal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

India's lower per capita steel consumption compared to the global average leaves ample headroom for domestic output to be absorbed locally, Indian Steel Association President Naveen Jindal said on Monday.

India's per capita steel consumption is significantly lower at around 107 kg annually compared to the world average of 220 kg, Jindal told reporters on the sidelines of the 53rd National Management Convention organised by All India Management Association (AIMA).

"India is a very big market in itself. There is a huge scope to grow that is why the government has a target of producing 300 MT by 2030. The Government is working on infra all over the country," he said in reply to a question if protectionist measures being taken by various countries will impact the Indian steel players.

Jindal, who is also the Chairman of Jindal Steel,



Indian Steel Association President Naveen Jindal

said the domestic steel sector is taking multiple measures to reduce carbon emissions to help India meet net zero goals as set by the Government.

On the West Asia crisis, he said, "Wars do not help anyone. These are very destructive, and that's why PM Narendra Modi has been focusing on Atmanirbhara (self-reliance) in energy security. Although we are dependent on fuel, in energy we have enough sources in

the country; there is no shortage. Compared to other large economies, India is doing very well."

Steel prices have gained momentum over the last few weeks due to a coking coal rate increase of \$50-60 per tonne. Steel makers are expecting the price trend continue in the next quarter as well. Replying to a question related to steel prices, Jindal said, "We are able to provide steel to all the customers in India at a very

competitive price. There is lot of competition in India and if you compare the steel prices in the last 20 years, they have gone up by only 10 pc in the last 20 years if you compare it to other metals."

As per official data, India's crude steel output continued its upward trajectory in 2025-26, growing by over 10.7 per cent year-on-year to around 168.4 million tonnes during April-March, reflecting sustained industrial momentum.

IOC board clears ₹2,449 crore gas pipeline project

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The board of directors of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has approved an investment of ₹2,448.70 crore for the construction and operation of a 424.65-km natural gas pipeline connecting Kochi in Kerala with Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, according to a regulatory filing on Monday.

The Kochi-Kanyakumari-Thoothukudi Pipeline (KTPL) will run from Kochi to Thoothukudi and have a system capacity, including common-carrier capacity, of 6.84 million standard cubic metres a day (mmscmd), the company said.

At least 1.71 mmscmd of the pipeline's capacity will be available as common-carrier capacity, allowing third parties access to the network in line with applicable regulations. The investment approval was granted at the board meeting held on Monday, the company said.

The project will strengthen the natural gas pipeline network along India's southern coast, connecting gas infrastructure in Kerala with demand centres in southern Tamil Nadu.



Tata Steel wants discussion with UK Govt over delayed EAF project: Narendran

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Tata Steel is looking to have a discussion with the UK Government to discuss issues being faced in timely implementation of the electric arc furnace (EAF) project at Port Talbot, the company's CEO TV Narendran said.

The company official noted that there is no delay from Tata Steel in construction of 3.2 million tonne project being set up at an investment of 1.25 billion pounds.

"We are in conversation with the UK Government to say let's have a discussion on what can be done," Narendran told media on the sidelines of the 53rd National Management Convention organised by All India Management Association (AIMA).

He made the remarks while replying to a question on the future course of action for the UK project, which is facing delays in securing power supply. In August, Narendran had said Tata Steel UK is expecting to secure access to electricity for its 3.2 million tonne electric arc furnace by 2029.

In May 2024, Tata Steel signed a connection offer with the Electricity



System Operator (ESO). The agreement involves National Grid building new electrical infrastructure capable of powering the 3.2 million tonne electric arc furnace by the end of 2027.

The project — being built at 500 million pounds of Government support — aims to reduce site-level CO2 emissions by 90 per cent — equivalent to 5 million tonnes annually. On whether Tata Steel has sought fresh funds from the UK Government, Narendran, without denying, said "it is too early to say where we are but there is a conversation to share with them regarding concerns."

On the outlook for the sector, he said while international markets are still struggling, India is witnessing a rising demand.

Govt pushes harmonised data infrastructure: MoSPI Secretary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government is taking steps to build a harmonised data infrastructure to ensure that information can be systematically discovered, understood, connected and utilised, MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg said on Monday. Garg was addressing a session at AIMA's 53rd National Management Convention here.

A harmonised data infrastructure is extremely necessary to ensure that data can be systematically discovered, understood, connected and utilised, said the Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, noting that at times two words have different definitions.

He said the Centre as well as the state governments are involved in a five-step process to build such infrastructure, especially given the fact that data is the raw material for AI.



MoSPI Secretary Saurabh Garg

"A five-step process we have started both across ministries and departments and States...the first step is to have Government data which is harmonised and then we can look at other data in the private

sector and others can join in," Garg said. The second step is maintaining metadata, he added.

The next will be bringing uniformity in definitions across ministries and departments. The fourth

is to have identifiers so that different data sets can be compared. And the fifth step towards a harmonised data infrastructure is having a quality assessment while using data, he added.

Garg said the availability of updated data is necessary for the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047. To ensure data harmonisation, it is important that the quality of data is universally recognised.

Speaking further, the official said India needs to grow at an average rate of 8 to 9 per cent to become \$30 trillion.

"Honestly, we are talking of a 30 trillion economy of GDP from a \$4 trillion economy now. We have been growing at around 7-8 per cent for the past few years. If we need 30 trillion, we need to grow at around 9 per cent. So, it is not something which is unachievable. We have been growing at 7-8 per cent real growth," he said.

Govt dissolves 37-year-old Digital Communications Commission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government has notified the dissolution of the Digital Communications Commission, an apex inter-departmental decision-making body at the Department of Telecom formed around 37 years ago to decide on policy matters and subjects with significant financial implications.

Formed in 1989 as the Telecom Commission, it was renamed as the Digital Communications Commission in 2018. "...the Government of India has decided that the Digital Communications Commission be dissolved. Now, therefore, with effect



from the date of publication of this resolution, the Digital Communications Commission shall stand dissolved," a notification dated September 19 said. The apex decision-making body comprising senior officials from NITI Aayog, the Finance Ministry, the Department of Industrial Policy and

Promotion and other departments helped resolve contentious issues. The Commission firmed up decisions on the majority of telecom matters before they were sent to the Cabinet for final approval.

The Commission helped in taking decisions on matters like spectrum price and recommendations by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. The body held its last meeting on September 3, where it firmed up the decision on satcom spectrum. Elon Musk-led Starlink, Bharti Group-backed Reliance OneWeb and Eutelsat Industries Ltd's Jio Satellite Communications have received permission to start satcom services in India.

Balmer Lawrie plans ₹500 crore capex over 3 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

Diversified public sector enterprise Balmer Lawrie & Co Ltd is rolling out a capital expenditure programme of nearly ₹500 crore over the next three years, driven primarily by an aggressive expansion in its rail, Third-Party Logistics (3PL) and travel footprint, a top company official said on Monday.

Of the total estimated ₹500 crore outlay, the railway logistics segment will absorb ₹200-₹250 crore, while around Rs 100 crore is allocated towards routine operational capex across other existing verticals: packaging, greases and lubricants, and chemicals, Chairman and Managing Director Adhip Nath Palchaudhuri said on the



sidelines of the 109th AGM.

The company is also deploying ₹50-₹60 crore towards expanding its 3PL operations, alongside investments in cold chain facilities and grease and lubricants small packaging units, and introducing new product variants in packaging and travel businesses, he said. Under its logistics roadmap, Balmer Lawrie

aims to scale up its total fleet to 15 railway rakes, from the three currently operated on a lease model.

In a first, the company will directly acquire three rakes, and tenders have been floated for these. In the first phase, a total of seven more rakes will be added to build greater capacity, including through leasing, after securing fresh

rail freight business from iron-ore miner NMDC.

"Railway logistics has emerged as a very strong segment for us where we are putting in significant capex. We are right now running three rakes, and we intend to grow much more, aiming to bring that to around 15 rakes," Palchaudhuri said.

"With one rake typically costing around ₹20 to ₹25 crore, acquiring railway assets will account for a major chunk of our ₹500 odd crore capex over the next few years," he said.

In the 3PL vertical, the company is establishing a hub-and-spoke logistics network anchored by a central hub at Dankuni, with spokes expanding to locations such as Siliguri, Guwahati and Bhubaneswar to strengthen regional reach.

ONGC strikes gas in Mahanadi deepwater well

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhubaneswar

Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) has struck gas in a deepwater well off India's eastern coast, with the discovery's proximity to Odisha potentially allowing faster development if appraisal confirms commercial viability, the State-run explorer said on Monday.

ONGC made the discovery on September 18 at the MN-DW18-1-H-D well in the Mahanadi Offshore Basin, about 43 km off Konark, as part of its Samudra Manthan deepwater exploration campaign, the company said in a statement.

The well, the first drilled by ONGC in the Mahanadi Basin under the campaign, encountered gas at a depth of 1,441-



1,452 metres after being drilled to a target depth of 1,623 metres. The well has been flowing gas for the past three days, with "encouraging flow and reservoir pressure," ONGC said. The discovery is subject to further appraisal and commercial evaluation, the company said. Its relatively short distance from the Odisha coast could

support early monetisation if the discovery proves commercially viable, while the find and other discoveries in the area could potentially be developed using shared facilities, ONGC said.

Such development could be enabled under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules, 2025, allowing deepwater resources in the area to

be brought into production through shared infrastructure.

The discovery adds to ONGC's push to expand exploration in India's deepwater basins as the country seeks to increase domestic hydrocarbon production and reduce reliance on imports.

The well was spudded on July 25 using drillship Platinum Explorer. The discovery comes as ONGC expands its focus on frontier offshore acreage, where successful deepwater finds can require significant investment in appraisal and infrastructure before commercial production begins. For the Mahanadi Basin discovery, the next steps will include further appraisal of the reservoir, assessment of recoverable resources and a commercial evaluation before any development decision is taken.

Delhi Gharana Tabla exponent concludes Europe tour

New Delhi: Delhi Gharana tabla artist Suraj Nirwan has concluded his month-and-a-half-long Europe Tour 2026. The tour featured solo performances, jugalbandi, workshops, studio recordings and a documentary shoot, presenting the Gharana's distinct do-ungli-baaj, peshkar, kayadas, gat-fard and relas to Western audiences.

It opened in Munich with 'AETERNA KALA-SUTRA' organised by WIN-World in Nations and SK events. He then performed in Dornbirn, Austria, at Netzwerk Tanz for Secret Garden Yoga with a recital



and Naad Yoga session.

The core Italy leg included L'Associazione Radici's 'MUSICHE DAL MONDO' festival, 'NAMASTE ITALIA' at Factory Zero, Senigallia, a jazz recording in Arcevia with Motswako Jazz Collective, and concluded in Falconara with 'Indian Confluence' at Centro Pergoli by AMAT. (PNS)

NHAI issues guidelines for access-controlled highways

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

State-owned NHAI on Monday said the lane configuration of high-speed national highways will be standardised based on detailed traffic assessment to facilitate seamless movement, as the authority released new comprehensive guidelines for design and development of access-controlled high-speed NHs.

The authority released new comprehensive guidelines that seek to bring uniformity in standards for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of high-speed NH corridors and bring greater consistency in technical standards, strengthen road safety, and improve operational efficiency across the National Highway network, an official statement said.

The guidelines will apply to all upcoming 4/6 lane Greenfield and Brownfield high-speed access-controlled National Highways, it added. NHAI said the guidelines are



aligned with the long-term Government of India's strategic roadmap which envisages the development of 50,000 km of access-controlled High-Speed Corridors under Viksit Bharat 2047, boosting connectivity and reducing logistics costs.

At present, there are no separate standards and specifications governing planning and designing of access-controlled High-Speed National Highways, other than Expressways.

Variations have been observed in the standards adopted for preparation of

DPR for such corridors. The new guidelines address this requirement by providing a uniform set of technical and safety provisions, it said.

NHAI said a key focus of the guidelines is on incorporation of additional safety measures appropriate with high-speed traffic conditions on corridors. Special provisions have been prescribed for advance notification of exits and entries, enabling National Highway users to anticipate and safely navigate upcoming access and egress points.

RPF busts laptop theft bid at New Delhi station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a significant breakthrough in curbing the theft of passengers' belongings, particularly laptop bags, at New Delhi Railway Station and onboard trains, the Railway Protection Force (RPF), Delhi Division, has apprehended a suspected laptop thief and recovered stolen property during a sustained CCTV-based surveillance operation.

Several complaints regarding theft of laptop bags from passengers travelling by train and from New Delhi Railway Station had been received through the Rail Madad/139 helpline. Taking the matter seriously, RPF, Delhi Division, constituted two dedicated teams to identify and apprehend the persons involved in such thefts. The teams undertook continuous and intensive CCTV surveillance and analysis of suspicious movements at New Delhi Railway Station. During the course of surveillance, one suspect was identified.



On Sunday, the RPF teams successfully apprehended the suspect red-handed with one laptop bag at the Foot Over Bridge (FOB), New Delhi Railway Station. The apprehended person has been identified as Shadab S/o Shamsad, aged about 25 years, R/o Village/PO/PS Mundali, District Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. The accused, along with the recovered property, was handed over to GRP, New Delhi Railway Station, for further legal action in connection with the e-FIR.

During questioning/disclosure, the accused reportedly revealed his involve-

ment in 12-15 incidents of laptop theft and disclosed that he had sold the stolen laptops at Silver Impact Shop, Nirman Vihar. Acting promptly on this information, the GRP and RPF team conducted further proceedings and recovered 11 laptops from the said shop.

Pushpesh Raman Tripathi, Divisional Railway Manager, Delhi, appreciated the dedicated efforts of the RPF personnel involved in the operation and emphasised that passenger safety and protection of passengers' belongings remain a priority of RPF.

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Expression of Interest (Eoi) Notice

The Department of G.N.D.U., Amritsar invites Sealed (Eoi) for the following:

Sr. No.	Expression of Interest (Eoi)	Closing Date & Time
1	Allotment for e-lobby (near Administrative Block)	01-10-2026
2	Allotment for administrative Block Canteen	01-10-2026
3	Allotment for Food Court Unit-4 (Fast Food outlet)	01-10-2026

For more details log on to <https://digital.gndu.ac.in>
2426/12/2026-27/15396 Dated CHD - 21/09/2026

BRIEFLY

This bronze medal is more than my life: Suchika Tariyal



"I can now die happily," an emotional Suchika Tariyal said on Monday after becoming India's first Asian Games medal winner in Mixed Martial Arts. The 36-year-old Suchika settled for a bronze in the women's traditional 60kg mixed martial arts event as Singapore's Hui Hoon Teo was awarded the semifinal on the basis of her lesser weight after the two fighters drew a fiercely-contested bout.

"This is more than my life. I will never forget that I came to Japan and got a medal for my country. I can now happily die," Suchika, who hails from Kilo village in Haryana's Rohtak district, told PTI in an exclusive interaction after her bout. "I have played in Commonwealth Games (2022) in judo, where I missed the fight of the bronze. So, I wanted to get a medal for my country, so that people know me. I am also a world champion in Jiu-Jitsu. And I also played Asian Games in Kurash, but I could not get a medal there. Then I got a second chance to represent myself here," she said. (PTI)

Asian Games: Srihari finishes 10th in 50m backstroke final



Srihari Nataraj finished a disappointing 10th in the 50m backstroke final at the Asian Games as Indian swimmers endured another forgettable day with most of them failing to make it beyond the heats here on Monday.

Nataraj, a two-time Olympian, clocked 25.52 seconds to finish last in the final, slower than his 25.37-second effort in the heats earlier in the day.

China's Jiayu Xu smashed the Games record enroute the gold medal. He clocked 24.04 to erase Japanese swimmer Junya Koga's mark of 24.28 set at the Incheon edition in 2014.

Nataraj had clocked 25.37 seconds, the same as Iran's Homer Abbasi, to finish third in his heat and joint ninth overall and qualify for the final.

The 25-year-old, competing in his third Asian Games, has a personal best of 25.18 seconds in the event, which he set in Belgrade in June 2021. (PTI)



SHAKYA MITRA

The 20th Asian Games officially got underway in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, on September 19, bringing together the best sporting talent from across the continent. For India, the immediate objective is obvious, build on the historic performance in Hangzhou and once again establish itself among Asia's leading sporting nations.

But the Asian Games represent something larger than a collection of medals. For India, success in Nagoya is also about positioning itself within Asia, not merely as an economic, technological or geopolitical power, but as a country whose sporting capabilities increasingly match its broader ambitions.

At the Hangzhou Asian Games, held in 2023 after being postponed from 2022, India crossed the 100-medal mark for the first time, winning a record 106 medals, including 28 gold. It finished fourth in the medal standings, behind the continent's traditional sporting giants China, Japan and South Korea.

That fourth-place finish is significant. China, Japan and South Korea have for decades represented the gold standard of Asian sport. Their sporting ecosystems, infrastructure, coaching systems and Olympic traditions are deeply established. India breaking into that group, even if a little behind the top three, is an important marker of its changing sporting profile.

The significance of Hangzhou



was not simply that India won 106 medals. India had been winning respectable numbers of medals at the Asian Games for several editions. What changed was the scale and particularly the number of gold medals. Twenty-eight golds helped India finish ahead of Iran, Uzbekistan and Indonesia and firmly establish itself as the fourth-ranked sporting nation in Asia at the Games.

This improvement has not happened by accident. An improved medal tally since the 2006 Asian Games is a reflection of progressive investment India has made in a group of sports that have become the backbone of its international ambitions: shooting, wrestling, boxing, badminton and athletics among them. Athletics, in particular, has traditionally been an area where India performs considerably better at the Asian Games than at the Olympics.

The competition should also not be dismissed simply because the Olympics remain the ultimate benchmark. In sports such as shooting, wrestling, boxing and badminton, the Asian Games bring together an extraordinary concentration of world-class talent. China, Japan and South Korea, among others, are formidable opponents. A gold medal in such an environment is therefore not merely a continental achievement; it is valuable preparation for the Olympics.

But there is another dimension to this success that deserves greater attention: soft power. Sport has always been one of the most visible expressions of national capability. Countries use sporting success to project confidence, organisational capacity and national identity. The Asian Games are particularly important for India because they provide a stage on which it competes directly with the countries that dominate the wider Asian geopolitical landscape.

China's sporting supremacy reinforces its image as a global power. Japan's Olympic tradition and sporting infrastructure complement its technological and economic standing. South Korea's success in sports sits alongside its extraordinary influence in technology, entertainment and culture.

India's rise is not confined to its economy, technology, space pro-

gramme or diplomatic influence. It is also becoming visible on the sporting field and that can be further sustained by a strong performance in the Asian Games.

The Commonwealth Games provide another indication of this trajectory. India finished fourth at Glasgow 2026 with 39 medals, despite a heavily reduced programme that excluded several of its traditional strengths. The Asian Games, however, are a much more meaningful test of India's standing because the field represents its own neighbourhood and includes the sporting powerhouses against whom India must ultimately measure itself.

There is, nevertheless, an important caveat. India has established itself as a significant power at the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games, but it has not yet converted that strength into equivalent Olympic success. The Olympics remain a different level of competition, both in depth and pressure.

That conversion must ultimately be the objective. A short-term Olympic target of 12-15 medals and a place inside the top 20 over

the next 2-3 editions would represent a significant breakthrough.

Nagoya, therefore, should not be viewed simply through the question of whether India can surpass 106 medals. That would be an important achievement, but the larger question is whether India can consolidate its position among Asia's leading sporting nations.

A strong fourth-place finish or, better still, a move into the top three would have significance beyond the medal table. It would demonstrate that India's emergence as a major Asian power is increasingly visible in another arena.

The Olympics remain the pinnacle of sport. But the Asian Games are Asia's sporting mirror. And if India can continue to see itself near the top of that mirror, it will strengthen not only its sporting confidence, but also the image of India as one of the continent's leading powers.

The writer is a sports management consultant with over a decade of experience in sports promotion and development. His work across both the private and government sectors gives him a well-rounded view of India's sports ecosystem

Men's badminton team beat Bangladesh to enter Asiad quarters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Ichinomiya (Japan)

The Indian men's badminton team blanked Bangladesh 3-0 to enter the quarterfinals of the Asian Games here on Monday.

The trio of Lakshya Sen, Ayush Shetty and K Srikanth did not drop a single game in a dominating performance to set up a clash with hosts Japan on



Tuesday. The women's team will also be playing Japan in the last-

eight stage. Lakshya was the first to take the court on Monday, up against Ibn Ayman Jaman, and it took him less than half an hour to clinch a 21-4 21-12 win, which set the tone for India. Next up was Ayush Shetty against Gourab Singh and he too got the job done in 25 minutes, closing it 21-4 21-13 in another facile

win for the country. Srikanth then made sure that the doubles matches need not take place as he romped to a 21-15 9 triumph over Jumar Al Amin in a 23-minute contest.

Lakshya said the match may have been a lopsided but was important in the larger scheme of things.

"It was important for me to get to know the conditions. Yeah, on paper it was not a very tough match, but the first match can be very tricky. So I just came in with the approach to just get a good start and then find my rhythm and adjust to the court. Once I knew I was winning the match, it was more about getting to know the court better," he said.

Gold awaited but shooters deliver silver for India at Asiad



AJAI MASAND/PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
■ Nagoya

Gold eluded India but medals trickled in from the shooting range for the second successive day even as the country's first ever podium finish in mixed martial arts medal became more a tale of heartbreak than history in Asian Games here on Monday.

Suchika Tariyal wept on the mat as being just 700gm more than Singaporean Hui Hoon Teo in the morning weigh-in prevented her from making the summit clash after a bitterly-contested semifinal ended drawn. She had to settle for bronze, which was India's first ever in the combat sport but one that could have been bettered.

The Indian's slightly higher weight proved decisive as technical rules allowed the lighter competitor to move ahead in case of a draw. India's overall tally stood at six medals, four silver and two bronze.

The focus was shooting range where three medals — two silver a bronze — were added to the kitty. Himanshu Dhillon and Rudranksh Patil held their nerve in a gripping shootout to win the individual silver and bronze in men's 10m air rifle after combining with Parth Mane to fetch team silver. (PTI)

Public should ask why I did weight cut alone: Varun

PHILEM DIPAK SINGH
■ Nagoya



India's Mixed Martial Arts fighter Varun Sanyal on Monday revealed that his blackout during a sauna session at the ongoing Asian Games was probably caused by a "foolish" solo attempt at cutting weight but hinted that he did not do it out of choice.

Sanyal was on Sunday forced to withdraw from the Asian Games MMA competition without competing even once after exhaustion and dehydration caused him to pass out during a sauna session. He was declared medically unfit for event. "I came here on two

weeks' notice, I found out relatively late. I obviously had a bunch of accommodation issues, and then I was all by myself on a weight cut. In retrospect, that was quite foolish of me to do," Sanyal, son of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Economic Advisory Council member Sanjeev Sanyal said. (PTI)

Indian women's, men's TT team advance to quarterfinals of Asiad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Toyota



India's women's and men's table tennis teams advanced to the quarterfinals of the Asian Games following identical 3-0 wins over their respective Pakistani rivals, here on Monday. The women team swept aside Pakistan 3-0 in a one-sided tie to top Group F for its third win in a row while the men's team also bounced back for the same scoreline.

At the Sky Hall here, Sutirtha Mukherjee, who won a bronze medal in the women's doubles event at the last edition in Hangzhou, got India off to a flying start, beating Aleena

Khan 11-3, 11-3, 11-4 in just 10 minutes. Rising 17-year-old Syndrela Das then made it 2-0 with an 11-6, 11-7, 11-5 win over Kalsoom Khan.

Currently ranked 99th in the ITTF women's singles rankings, Syndrela was rewarded for her

impressive form on the domestic circuit with a call-up to the senior side for the Asian Games. Sreeja Akula sealed the tie, breezing past Fatima Khan 11-4, 11-4, 11-5 in 11 minutes to power India into the last-eight stage.

DAILY SUDOKU

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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

HOW TO SOLVE IT

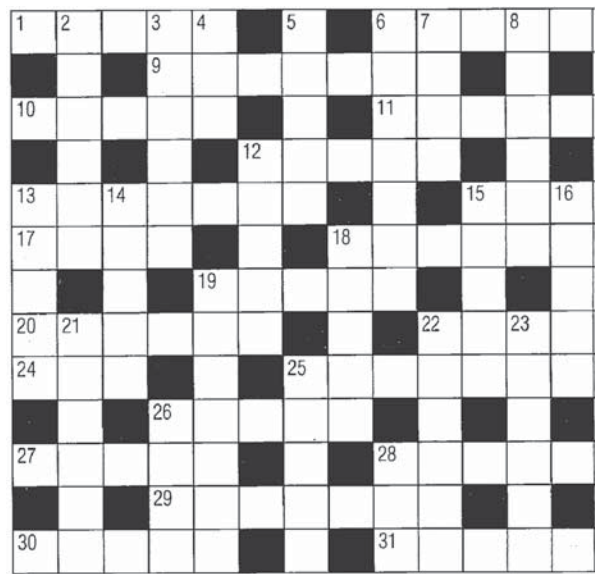
Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you fill a 9x9 grid so that numbers 1 to 9 appear once in every row, column, and 3x3 box, using elimination and logical deduction—no maths involved.

SOLUTION (21.9.26)

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

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DOUBLE CROSSWORD
TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 22, 2026



ACROSS

- In London, place a hundred on account (5)
- Clean up for the lubbers! (5)
- Go down as the originator (7)
- Tenor and doctor, unusually fit (5)
- The overseer's poetic part (5)
- A stony mug (5)
- The leaseholder's occupation (7)
- A little cough, merely marginal (3)
- Travellers' game (4)
- The charm of a cash incentive (6)
- Discuss the toss? (5)
- Canter around in a dream (6)

DOWN

- Timely restriction on a cad having more than a couple! (6)
- Brief absence when one is below par (3,3)
- Nothing in the New Testament is negative (3)
- Opportunity to finish in concert (5)
- Check out some villas in town (7)
- Laurence's bird (4)
- Entertainer without a roof over his head (6)
- Hit twenty (5)
- Too nice to be tatty, exactly? (5)
- Formerly, in India, a form of "bwana"? (5)
- Indian lake (5)
- It measures a short line, not the whole underground (5)
- Anything that upsets a thug (5)
- Injury leading to a lively second half in keen style (7)
- Go round with a list at half term (6)
- Pinch the nose (6)
- Never accept rubbish (6)
- Resembling the pansy, it has yellow flowers (5)
- Drinks very little (4)
- It's wrong when you take an exam (3)

- Rose can be very tender (4)
- Bad boy? (3)
- Comparatively slight bit of bother outside the pub (7)
- Is in an ermine coat at times (5)
- She takes me out for fresh air (5)
- Drink a saint unconscious! (5)
- Easily impressed by credit cards, say (7)
- Confused, at some times outwardly shy (5)
- There could be a number (5)

SOLUTION (21.9.26)

- ACROSS

- S-coo-t
 - Meths
 - Rider
 - Coo
 - Groat
 - Crow-Ned
 - C-link
 - Ma-n
 - S-L-edge
 - NE-p-time
 - Moon
 - Pa's-T
- DOWN

- D-EC-ry
 - Show-mey
 - Co-R-d
 - O-racle
 - Title
 - Being
 - To-o
 - Gent-Les
 - Frame
 - Nap
 - Ideal
- Keats
 - SNOWdo-N
 - Emile
 - North
 - Plywood
 - German
 - E-rr
 - Atlas
 - Heads
 - 30
 - Far-o
 - Ave

War, diplomacy and history: India meet Japan in Land of Rising Sun

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Sano (Japan)

Legend has it that on June 25, 1863, when the first ever documented cricket match was held on Japanese soil in the city of Yokohama, it was a ploy by local merchants to save themselves from an anticipated samurai attack.

They had sought help from the British merchant and Royal Navy sailors under the guise of a cricket match in which the fleet team played with "arms handy". The anticipated attack never took place but the match was duly completed, according to the archives of the Yokohama Country and Athletic Club that was founded in 1868. On September 22, 2026, when the Japanese national men's cricket team takes on India, the complete mismatch between the competing nations would be hidden under the veneer of diplomacy and commerce.

The match scheduled at Sano, 100 km from Tokyo, which is now deemed as "Japanese Cricket Capital", will be an experience of a lifetime for the 11 players, most of whom are second generation Japanese citizens of dual heritage. Skipper Kendel Kadowaki-Fleming and his brother Alester Kadowaki-Fleming have Australian lineage, so does Declan Suzuki-McComb.

Then there is Ibrahim Takahashi, an off-spinner, whose father is from Islamabad and had once taken the wicket of former Pakistan batter



Muhammed Wasim in a club game. Japan Cricket Association's total spending on all forms of cricket isn't more than USD two million annually while India's T20 skipper Shreyas Iyer's 2026 IPL salary stood at USD 3.15 million. The difference couldn't be starker as Japan get their much-awaited moment under the sun with the hope that the game's impact extends well beyond the field of play in a country that loves baseball.

The match was announced recently and is being accommodated ahead of India's Asian Games campaign in Aichi-Nagoya, launching celebrations of the 75 years of India-Japan diplo-

matic relations. India are the reigning T20 World Cup champions while Japan are ranked 41st, making it a no contest on paper. But beyond the statistics, the game presents an opportunity of a lifetime for Japanese cricketers to rub shoulders with the best in

the business.

A typhoon threat looms large on the landmark game but even if a ball is not bowled, the scheduled fixture has already made an impact in a country where cricket is pushing to emerge from the margins and become mainstream like baseball.

"There's been an awful lot going on in the background of Japan cricket for many, many years, and it's great now that we are above sea level, I guess, and we're actually visible to a few more people," said Japanese Cricket Association COO Alan Curr said ahead of the game.

"A lot of the success has almost already happened. The fact that India has agreed to come, the fact that I'm sitting here talking to you guys, the fact that there's already a lot of Japanese media coming tomorrow to find out more about this game and about the sport — I think success is already here," he added.

It also helps that that cricket is being played in the ongoing Asian Games as well, raising more awareness for the general public in Japan.

The match will be played at Sano International Cricket Ground, roughly 100km from the bustling city of Tokyo where the Indian cricket team landed on Sunday.

Never thought would be playing in Japan, cricket is picking up: Iyer



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Tokyo

India playing a bilateral T20 in Japan shows cricket has been successful in expanding into uncharted territories, said their skipper Shreyas Iyer on Monday ahead of the historic game against the host nation. India will play Japan in Sano for the first international fixture between the two nations, launching the celebration for 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two Asian countries.

India arrived here on Sunday ahead of Tuesday's game before heading to Nagoya for the Asia Games. It is unusual for Indian cricketers to visit a country like Japan where cricket remains on margins.

"No, I never thought about it, but yes, I mean, cricket is picking up in every country now, and all the teams are becoming dominant in their own ways, so I'm sure this will be an exciting match

as well tomorrow," said Iyer.

Incessant rain meant India had to cancel their training session before the game. The match will be held in Sano, roughly 100 kms from Tokyo.

"It's beautiful. The time we landed, we saw the people, very cordial, generous, and helpful in nature, which we see it back at home as well. The hospitality is brilliant," said Iyer.

"It's too early to talk about it, but I've heard special things from people about Japan as a country and Tokyo as a city as well, so looking forward to explore more." Iyer and the players are looking forward to the on field action weather permitting. "Yes, it is going to be a thrilling and exciting match for us. This is the first time we will be playing Japan, and I don't know much about the conditions, the wicket, but looking forward to have a great match," he added.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Nisshin (Japan)

India's undisputed continental supremacy is expected to remain intact but a spirited Sri Lanka would aim to present a strong challenge when the two teams clash in yet another Asian Games women's cricket final, here on Tuesday.

Both the Indian women and men are certain to stand on the top of the podium again and only a very bad day in office can stop them from doing so. The Harmanpreet Kaur-led side comes into the final on the back of two commanding wins over Japan and Bangladesh.

With a gold on Tuesday, India would extend their supremacy in the region after outplaying Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup final earlier this month.

Sri Lanka have beaten India in the past but the



gulf between India and the other Asian team has only increased in recent past. A sublime 50-ball 82 from captain Chamari Athapaththu helped Sri Lanka got over the line in a challenging chase against Pakistan. Sri Lanka will surely need more moments of brilliance if they are to down India who are firing on all cylinders.

The openers, especially Shafali Verma, are in devastating touch while the management continues

to experiment with the number three spot.

G Kamalini batted at three in the semifinal against Bangladesh while Bharti Fulmali was tried in the same position against Japan.

Kamalini, who is yet to fire in the tournament, opened with Shafali in quarters. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur was far from her best in the Asia Cup and her fans would be hoping that she returns to her fluent ways in the final.

INDIA A VS AUSTRALIA A: SAI SUDHARSAN TO OPEN, OFF-SPINNER KOTIAN IN FOCUS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Puducherry

A fit-again Sai Sudharsan will once again open the innings for India A with an aim of clinching the reserve opener's slot for the tour of New Zealand when hosts take on Australia A in the opening four-day first-class game starting Tuesday.

For Australia A, a number of Test team hopefuls are on the tour, including openers Sam Konstas, Nathan McSweeney, spinner Todd Murphy and pacer Jhye Richardson.

Sudharsan, who batted at No. 3 in his seven Test appearances for India, had opened during India A's tour of Sri Lanka where he scored 132 and 168 in the two first-class matches against Sri Lanka 'A' before missing the Test series due to fractured foot that required extensive six weeks of rehabilitation at the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

Devdutt Padikkal, who is captaining the India A team, has now cemented his place in the Test squad as one down batter with two hundreds in the last series in Sri Lanka. Hence Sudharsan, who had started opening from the last 'A' series, will like to start off against Australia A from where he left in the preceding series versus Sri Lanka A.

Chauhan's ton fuels U19 team's 103-run win, India take unassailable 2-0 lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Rajkot

Yashbardhan Chauhan's 122 and VK Vineeth's 87 shaped a massive 103-run victory for India in the second Youth ODI against Australia as the hosts took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match U-19 series here on Monday.

Riding on Chauhan's ton, Vineeth's half-century and vital contributions from Aaryavir Sehwal (47) and Kushagra Ojha (34), India U-19 posted a huge first-innings total of 341 for seven here at the Niranjan Shah Stadium.



In reply, the visitors were shot out for a mere 238 in 41.1 overs. India had won the rain-truncated opening Youth ODI, which was reduced to 20-overs-per-side affair, by seven runs.

The third and final Youth

ODI will be played here on Wednesday before the two teams face-off in a two-match series for four-day Youth Tests here. With a massive total on board, India used as many as seven bowling options to keep Australia under pump.

PCB denies Rizwan to speak to media on betting and gambling charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lahore

Former Pakistan captain Mohammad Rizwan has been denied permission by the country's Cricket Board (PCB) to hold a media conference regarding investigations by the National Cyber Crimes Investigation Agency pertaining to his involvement with regards to online betting and gambling.

A reliable source said that Rizwan had twice last week approached the PCB to get permission to speak to the media but on both occasions, he was denied the required permission. Since he was called back home midway from the tour of England along with senior teammates, Imam-ul-Haq and Salman Ali Agha, Rizwan has been in the limelight after the NCCIA questioned him over a matter involving online betting and gambling and his financial transactions.



Rizwan and Imam both had their phones confiscated during the second Test at Lord's and they are now being forensically examined by the NCCIA.

The PCB has yet to make a clear statement on the matter but the source said Rizwan had approached the board for permission to interact with the media as he wanted to clear the air and give his side of the story.

Deepika, Rutuja, Navneet fire hat-tricks to power India to 17-1 win over Indonesia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kakamigahara (Japan)

The troika of destructive young forward Deepika Sehrawat, Rutuja Dadaso Pisal and Navneet Kaur fired a hat-trick each as the Indian women's hockey team hammered Indonesia 17-1 to register its second consecutive Pool B win at the Asian Games here on Monday.

The 22-year-old Deepika (8th, 28th, 40th minutes), who scored eight goals in India's 19-0 drubbing of Uzbekistan in the lung-opener, converted three penalty corners, while Rutuja Dadaso Pisal (15th, 20th, 38th) found the net thrice from field play.

Navneet's goals came in the 35th, 56th and 57th minutes.

In addition, Sunelita Toppo (11th, 30th), Lalremsiami (12th, 16th) and Sakshi Rana (25th, 57th), scored a brace each while skipper Salima Tete (35th) Ishika Chaudhary (36th)



also found the net once. Indonesia's solitary goal was scored by Innes Aditija in the 32nd minute. India will next place Thailand on Wednesday.

After the resounding 19-0 thrashing of Uzbekistan on Sunday, the Indians made a steady start.

India had the first chance in the fourth minute in the form of a

penalty stroke but Navneet's attempt was saved by the Indonesia goalkeeper.

It was Deepika who gave India the lead by converting a penalty corner in the eighth minute.

The goal opened the floodgates as Sunelita doubled the lead three minutes later, tapping in a pass from Neha.

India aim for another big win against Sri Lanka in Asian Games men's hockey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kakamigahara (Japan)

Their campaign off to a rollicking start, defending champions India will be eyeing another all-round performance for a big win over lower-ranked Sri Lanka in their second Pool A match of the Asian Games men's hockey competition here on Tuesday.

The title-holders started their campaign with a big 13-1 win over unfancied Indonesia on Sunday. They are expected to once again win handsomely against the Lankans on Tuesday. There were as many as eight goal-scorers for India in the win over Indonesia with striker Dilpreet Singh leading the tally with four field goals. The most heartening aspect for India in the 13-1 win was that they scored 10 field goals.



The Indian strike force was at its lethal best with the likes of Dilpreet, Sukhjeet, veteran Mandeep Singh, Abhishek, Shilanand Lakra and Rajinder Singh working in tandem to create and then convert chances.

From the set pieces, it was skipper Harmanpreet Singh and Jugraj Singh who took the responsibility and the onus will be on the duo to deliver results through the course of the competition.

Zaheer is new Chennai Super Kings head coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Chennai

Chennai Super Kings on Monday named former India pace great Zaheer Khan as their new head coach for the upcoming season.

Zaheer replaced Stephen Fleming, who was at helm for 18 seasons.

"Welcoming Zaheer Khan as the Head Coach of Chennai Super Kings," CSK announced on 'X'.

"It's an honour to be a part of one of the most successful teams in the history of the IPL. As a cricketer, I have faced CSK on the field and have thoroughly enjoyed the contests. The atmosphere created by the Superfans at Chepauk make it even more special," Zaheer was quoted as saying in a press release issued by the franchise.

"I can't wait to join the legacy



franchise with such a rich history."

The soon-to-be 48 Zaheer played 92 Tests, 200 ODIs and 17 T20Is for India. He was the highest wicket-

taker during the historic 2011 World Cup campaign with 21 scalps.

Zaheer had mentored the Lucknow Super Giants during the 2024 season.

Fleming had announced last year in July that he was parting ways with the five-time champion side.

It is understood that CSK's cricket management committee comprises MS Dhoni, skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and owner Rupa Gurunath wanted an Indian coach this time.

In the IPL, Zaheer played 100 matches and turned to coaching roles post his retirement.

"Zaheer's distinguished playing career and proven ability to nurture young talent make him a valuable addition to our set-up. We are confident that his guidance will help strengthen the core of this franchise," owner Rupa Gurunath said.