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States Focus

Bokaro police dispose of 439 cases in August



PNS ■ BOKARO

Bokaro Police disposed of 439 cases in August 2026, against 248 cases reported during the month, reflecting intensified efforts to strengthen crime control and investigation. The performance was reviewed at the monthly crime meeting led by Superintendent of Police Nathu Singh Meena on September 8.

The disposed cases included 30 missing-person cases, 12 rape/POCSO cases, 13 mining cases, nine murder cases, 36 cheating/fraud cases, 45 road accident cases, 25

house-breaking cases, 25 vehicle thefts and 33 theft cases, besides 183 miscellaneous cases.

Police also executed 186 NBW/PW warrants and three attachment orders, while disposing of 1,237 passport-related and 1,763 character verification cases. Bokaro courts convicted 32 accused in 13 cases involving offences including POCSO, cheating, murder and serious assault. Through the CEIR portal, 78 mobile phones were recovered in August, while 567 recovered phones in total have been returned to their verified owners.

Wild elephant kills 64-year-old man in Garhwa

Pioneer News Service ■ Garhwa

A 64-year-old man was killed in a wild elephant attack in Garhwa, highlighting the continuing threat posed by human-elephant conflict in forest-fringe areas of the district.

The deceased, identified as Anati Yadav, was attacked by a wild elephant on Sunday. The incident left his family devastated and triggered fresh concerns among residents living close to forest areas over the growing risk of encounters with elephants.

The Forest Department has provided ₹1 lakh as immediate relief to the bereaved family. The remaining ₹9 lakh will be released after completion of the required verification

and documentation.

South Division Divisional Forest Officer A.B. Abraham said the compensation was being provided under the new government provision that came into effect on June 29, 2026. Under the provision, families of people killed in elephant attacks are entitled to ₹10 lakh in compensation.

Officials said the family would have to submit documents including the application, death certificate, post-mortem report and verification certificates from the mukhiya or forest committee. After departmental verification, the remaining amount will be sanctioned.

Of the total compensation, Rs. 4 lakh will be deposited in a savings account and Rs. 5 lakh placed in a fixed deposit.

Governor calls on new graduates to turn knowledge into action

Pioneer News Service ■ Jamshedpur

Jharkhand Governor and Chancellor of state universities Santosh Kumar Gangwar on Tuesday urged graduating students of Jamshe



Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar along with meritorious students during the fourth Convocation ceremony of Jamshe

ditional role of educated and self-reliant women in realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat@2047'.

He said education should not be viewed merely as a means of securing employment, but as a way of developing wisdom, values and a sense of responsibility.

Referring to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, he said the policy was an important initiative aimed at linking education with skills, research, innovation, creativity and holistic development.

Gangwar emphasised the important role of educated and self-reliant women in realising the vision of 'Viksit Bharat@2047'.

He said education should not be viewed merely as a means of securing employment, but as a way of developing wisdom, values and a sense of responsibility.

BSL's Coke Oven Dept holds street play on workplace safety

PNS ■ BOKARO

Bokaro Steel Plant's Coke Oven & Coal Chemical (COCC) Department organised a safety awareness street play at Coal Tower-4 to promote safe work practices and strengthen the safety culture at the workplace.

The programme was attended by the Executive Director (Works), Chief General Manager (COCC), Chief General Manager (Safety & Fire Services), senior officials, employees and contractual workers.

The Executive Director (Works) witnessed the street play and appreciated the team for its creative effort to spread safety awareness. He said such participatory activities help reinforce safe behaviour among



employees and urged all personnel to strictly follow prescribed safety procedures, standards and guidelines. Under the 'My Area, My Responsibility' initiative, Safety Captains who have made significant contributions to promoting safety awareness and leadership across different zones of the department were also felicitated by the Executive Director (Works). The programme highlighted BSL's commitment to making safety a top priority and fostering a strong sense of individual responsibility among employees.

Special camps to be held for birth-death certificates and Aadhaar

Pioneer News Service ■ Deoghar

A Janata Darbar was organized on Tuesday chaired by Deputy Commissioner Saurabh Kumar Bhuwania to address the problems of district residents and ensure their quick resolution. During the event, people from urban and rural areas of the district placed before the DC issues related to land acquisition and compensation payment, Jharkhand Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana, pension, and housing. The DC heard the problems of all those present one by one and assured them that all complaints brought to notice would be investigated and

emic environment that encourages curiosity, research, innovation and leadership among its students.

Expressing confidence in the university's future, Gangwar said it would achieve new milestones in education and research in the coming years.

He also urged the graduating students to connect their individual achievements with the progress of society and the nation. Their success, he said, should inspire other young women to pursue their aspirations and move forward in life.

The Governor said Jamshe

SAIL holds Cyber Hygiene Awareness Programme at MTI



PNS ■ Ranchi

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) organised an awareness programme on "Cyber Hygiene and Security" at its Management Training Institute (MTI), Ranchi, on Tuesday for executives of its Ranchi units.

The programme was organised as part of the Central Vigilance Commission's (CVC) Vigilance Awareness Campaign 2026 to sensitise employees to the evolving cyber threat landscape and promote safe digital practices.

The session was conducted by Pradeep Kumar, Cyber Deputy Superintendent of Police, Ranchi, and R.K. Mishra, Sub-Inspector, Jharkhand Police. It was attended by Sanjay Dhar, Executive

Director (HR-L&D), and Deepak Jain, Executive Director, SAIL Digital Transformation Division.

The speakers highlighted the growing sophistication of cyber crimes and the increasing use of social engineering and artificial intelligence (AI) by fraudsters. Participants were briefed about cyber frauds such as boss or CEO impersonation, fake job and franchise offers, love and gift scams, AI-generated deep-fakes and voice cloning, ATM and card fraud, skimming, OTP misuse, SIM-swap fraud, WhatsApp scams and sextortion. Employees were advised to follow basic cyber hygiene practices, including using strong and unique passwords, enabling two-factor authentication (2FA), keeping devices and applications updated.

'Project Rakt Sanchayan' launched in Dumka to boost blood reserves

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ DUMKA

To tackle shortages in local blood banks and ensure that patients receive timely transfusions, the Dumka district administration rolled out an extensive initiative christened 'Project Rakt Sanchayan' during a high-level review meeting on Tuesday.

Presiding over the session with health officials and Indian Red Cross Society representatives, Deputy Commissioner Abhijit Sinha directed authorities to institutionalise regular voluntary blood donation camps across the district while ordering a comprehensive inspection of all privately run blood banks to verify adherence to statutory protocols and clinical safety norms. Under the aegis of 'Project Rakt Sanchayan',



Dumka Deputy Commissioner Abhijit Sinha chairs a review meeting with district health officials and Red Cross Society representatives to launch 'Project Rakt Sanchayan' on Tuesday. PNS

the administration, in active collaboration with educational institutions, community organisations, and youth bodies, has finalised a comprehensive calendar of donation camps for the month of September. Emphasising that

blood donation must transition from an ad-hoc emergency response to a sustained civic movement, Sinha instructed the Red Cross Society to launch aggressive awareness campaigns aimed at dispelling persistent social

myths surrounding voluntary donation and inspiring broader public participation.

The administration placed particular emphasis on safeguarding the lifeline of thalassaemia patients, who depend on recurring transfusions. Sinha directed officials to maintain an adequate buffer stock of all blood groups at local blood banks to eliminate supply deficits for vulnerable patients, stressing that special donation drives must be mobilised whenever reserves dip below safety thresholds. The health department was instructed to conduct regular demand-and-supply audits to preempt stockouts.

Widening the net of institutional participation, the Deputy Commissioner directed that all private hospitals and nursing homes across

Dumka be mandatorily integrated into the donation drive. The health department, alongside the Red Cross Society, has been tasked with charting an operational timetable to ensure regular camps within private health-care facilities. Concurrently, strict directives were issued to clinical teams to uphold safety protocols, mandating rigorous pre-donation health check-ups, safe collection procedures, and certified storage standards under qualified medical supervision. Sinha also warned that private blood banks found flouting regulatory guidelines on testing, storage, or distribution would face severe penal action. The meeting was attended by the Civil Surgeon, top Red Cross functionaries, and senior district officials.

XLRI unveils 51 rural ventures cohort

PNS ■ Jamshedpur

The XLRI Council for Innovation, Technology & Entrepreneurship (XCITE), with support from NABARD, has announced its inaugural cohort of 51 rural ventures aimed at strengthening entrepreneurship across eastern and northeastern India.

The selection followed a competitive process that began with 338 applications. Of these, 107 ventures were shortlisted for the second round, while 92 entrepreneurs presented their ventures before an evaluation panel. Final pitches were held from August 18 to 20 at XLRI, Jamshedpur, and on August 24 and 25 at the NABARD Regional Office in Guwahati. The ventures were



assessed through a standardised seven-point scorecard covering founder readiness, viability, market clarity, financial discipline, social impact and scalability. The final cohort was reviewed and approved by the RIC.

The selected ventures represent nine states, including 25 women-led ventures and 20 led by ST founders. They operate across agriculture and allied activities, food processing, crafts and hand-

looms, manufacturing, rural value chains and the circular economy.

Meanwhile, XLRI hosted the Jharkhand Emerging Entrepreneurship Summit 2026 on August 21, featuring discussions on grassroots entrepreneurship and an exhibition of rural products. XCITE will provide the selected ventures with incubation, mentorship, institutional support, finance and market linkages.

Gambling den raided in Garhwa, 8 held with Rs 10.49 lakh cash

Nityanand Dubey ■ Garhwa

Police raided an alleged large-scale gambling den operating near Sugahi Dam in Urka village under Nagar Untari police station limits in Garhwa district and arrested eight people, recovering Rs 10.49 lakh in cash from the spot.

The raid was conducted after the Superintendent of Police received information on September 7 that gambling was being organised on a large scale near the dam. Acting on the tip-off, police formed a special team with assistance from the Quick Response Team (QRT) and surrounded the area before launching the operation.

As police moved in, several gamblers attempted to flee.



Around 10 to 12 people managed to escape under the cover of darkness, while eight others were apprehended at the spot.

Police recovered ₹10,49,500 in cash along with four motorcycles, eight mobile phones, a black bag, a mat and 155 playing cards from the alleged gambling site.

The arrested individuals were identified as Sundar Sahu (45), Pradeep Kumar Vishwakarma (36), Samreshwar Rajak (53), Bajajji Shah (27), Purnendra Vaishya (37), Dilip Kumar (36), Ramresh (44) and Akhilesh Upadhyay (45). According to police, the accused are residents of different parts of

Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

A case has been registered at Nagar Untari police station under Sections 318(4), 112(2) and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with Section 11 of the Bengal Public Gambling Act.

Police have launched a search operation to trace those who escaped during the raid. Investigators are also probing how long the gambling operation had been running and whether it was being facilitated or supported by local individuals.

The recovery of more than Rs. 10 lakh in cash has also prompted police to examine the wider network allegedly involved in the betting operation and determine the source and movement of the money.

NCST Member reviews works at CMPDI

PNS ■ Ranchi

Dr. Asha Lakra, Member, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), visited CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi, on Tuesday and held a review meeting with the senior management of CMPDI to review matters related to the implementation of constitutional safeguards provided for Scheduled Tribes (STs). Chaudhari Shivraj Singh, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, CMPDI; Ajay Kumar, Director (Technical/P&D); Nripendra Nath, Director (Technical/CRD); Sanjay Kadambar, General Manager (Human Resources); Mamta Toppo, Liaison Officer (Scheduled Tribe), along with senior officials of CMPDI; officers of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes were present in the meeting.



Dr. Lakra held detailed discussions with the CMPDI management on various matters concerning employees belonging to the Scheduled Tribe community, including promotion, recruitment, training, reservation, CSR initiatives and other related issues. She reviewed the status of the concerned

matters, sought relevant information and provided necessary directions for effective implementation.

Dr. Lakra also interacted with members and representatives of the All India SC/ST/OBC Coordination Council and the Coal India SC-ST Employees Association (CISTEA). She heard their

grievances, demands and discussed the issues raised by them.

Thereafter, Dr. Lakra visited the Earth Science Museum at CMPDI (HQ), Ranchi, where she took a keen interest in the exhibits and gained an overview of the activities, operations of the Coal Industry.

States Focus

Sanjay Seth seeks tax-free status for ‘Hanuman Ansh’ in State

PNS
■ Ranchi

Union Minister of State for Defence and Ranchi MP Sanjay Seth has written to Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, urging the state government to make the recently released Hindi film ‘Hanuman Ansh’ tax-free in Jharkhand.

In his letter, Seth said the film presents Indian culture, Sanatan values and devotion to Lord Hanuman in an impactful manner in a contemporary setting. The film is based on the life and teachings of Neem Karoli Baba, a revered saint and devotee of Lord Hanuman.

Seth said Neem Karoli Baba enjoys a deep following among people in Jharkhand, with many devotees visiting Kainchi Dham to seek his blessings.

According to Seth, films such as ‘Hanuman Ansh’ can play an important role in taking values such as truth, courage, service, sacrifice and devotion to dharma to the younger generation. ‘Hanuman Ansh’ is not merely a film but also a medium to connect the younger generation with India’s spiritual and cultural heritage,” he said.

The Union minister urged the Chief Minister to issue appropriate directions for granting tax-free status to the film in view of its social, cultural and spiritual significance. He said such a move would enable people from different sections of society to watch the film and provide another opportunity for them to connect with Jharkhand’s rich cultural heritage.

Seth also said there was a need to encourage positive and inspirational films that promote Indian culture and traditional values among the masses. He pointed out that the Uttarakhand government has recently announced that ‘Hanuman Ansh’ would be tax-free in the state.

Heavy rain forecast across State from September 9

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

Several districts of Jharkhand received good rainfall on Tuesday, while the Ranchi Meteorological Centre has forecast heavy rain at several places across the state over the next three days, beginning Wednesday. The weather department has also warned of thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds during this period.

According to the Meteorological Centre, there is no significant change expected in maximum temperatures during the next 24 hours. However, temperatures are likely to fall by 3 to 4 degrees Celsius over the subsequent three days.

The weather is expected to remain generally cloudy across Jharkhand from

BJP launches statewide agitation, seeks withdrawal of cases against students

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

The BJP launched a statewide agitation on Tuesday, demanding the withdrawal of cases registered against students and a CBI probe into irregularities in the JPSC and JSSC CGL examinations. Party workers took to the streets and raised slogans against the government. A program to gherao all DC and SP offices across the state from September 8 to 11 has been scheduled. It kicked off today in Ranchi, Dumka, Hazaribagh, Jamshe­dpur, and Garhwa.

In Ranchi, BJP workers marched from District School Shahid Chowk to the Collectorate, raising slogans against Hemant Soren along the way. Led by State President Aditya Sahu, the protest saw the presence of



State BJP President Aditya Sahu and party workers stage a protest and gheraoed Deputy Commissioner (DC) and Superintendent of Police (SP) offices in Ranchi on Tuesday. Pix by Vinay Murmu.

several leaders, including Hatia MLA Navin Jaiswal, Ranchi MLA C.P. Singh, former MP Deepak Prakash, and Ranchi Mayor Roshni Khalkho.

In front of the Collectorate,

BJP leaders launched a fierce attack on the government. State President Aditya Sahu said: “The party has always stood with the students’ movement. Irregularities occurred in the exam, and

when students protested, the government used brutal force against them and filed cases. We demand a CBI probe into the entire matter and the withdrawal of cases registered against the stu-

dents. This agitation, starting today, will continue across all districts of the state until September 11.”

Ranchi MLA CP Singh stated, “The state government deliberately does not want a CBI inquiry because its own people might get caught. But we will not back down; we stand with the students.” Hatia MLA Navin Jaiswal added, “If the government is clean, it should order a CBI probe and withdraw all cases against the students.”

Apart from Ranchi, senior party leaders led the movement in other districts as well. Leader of Opposition Babulal Marandi was in Dumka, former Chief Minister Raghubar Das in Hazaribagh, former Chief Minister Madhu Koda in Jamshe­dpur, and Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth in

Garhwa. Leaders in these districts reiterated the demands for a CBI probe into examination irregularities and the withdrawal of cases against students.

Under the BJP’s four-day agitation plan, demonstrations and DC-SP office gheraos are being conducted at 24 district headquarters according to a date-wise schedule, with responsibilities assigned to top leaders: Aditya Sahu (State President); Ranchi on Sept 8, Seraikela on Sept 9, and Khunti on Sept 11. Babulal Marandi (Leader of Opposition); Dumka on Sept 8, Pakur on Sept 9, Sahibganj on Sept 10, and Godda on Sept 11. Raghubar Das (Former CM); Hazaribagh on Sept 8, Dhanbad on Sept 10, and Lohardaga on Sept 11. Sanjay Seth (Union MoS for Defence); Garhwa on Sept 8 among others.

Court rectifies ‘typing error’ in its order in exam irregularities case

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

The CID Special Court has corrected a typing error in its order dated September 5, 2026 in connection with CID Police Station Case No. 16/2026 related to alleged irregularities in the JPSC examination.

Following a petition by the prosecution, the court clarified that Abhay Kumar Tiwari alias Manoj Kumar Tiwari himself appeared in the examination, not his father Sukhdev Tiwari. In fact, due to a typing error in paragraph-9(i) of the previous order, the father’s name of Abhay Kumar Tiwari was incorrectly recorded, which made it appear as though his father had also taken the exam. The prosecution had requested the court to rectify this error.

After reviewing the records, the court acknowledged that it was an inadvertent typographical mistake. The modified order states that Manoj Kumar Tiwari alias Abhay Kumar Tiwari,



associated with TDPL and son of Sukhdev Tiwari, appeared through JPSC in the FRO (PT) Examination 2024 with roll number 24400147 and the ACF (PT) Examination 2024 with roll number 24300086, both conducted by TDPL.

Characterizing the situation as a serious conflict of interest, the court stated that this is a clear violation of the principles of fairness and integrity in public examinations.

The court also clarified that the original order dated September 5, 2026, remains otherwise unchanged, and today’s corrective order shall

be read alongside that original order and considered an integral part of it.

The Court clarification has come at the time when there was media reports that Abhay Tiwari’s father Sukhdeo Tiwari had passed away in 2018 itself.

On July 22 this year, Abhay Kumar Tiwari, a Jharkhand government employee arrested by the state Crime Investigation Department allegedly ran an organised syndicate that leaked and manipulated competitive examinations conducted by the JPSC and JSSC. Tiwari had cleared twelve examinations cleared in 13 years, a

record few aspirants across India could match. For millions spending years chasing government jobs, he could have been an inspiration.

When arrested Tiwari was working dual jobs as he was Block Supply Officer (BSO) in Poreyahat, Godda along with he secretly acted as the marketing manager and authorised representative for TRS-Data Processing Private Limited (TDPL), the outsourced private agency entrusted with conducting major state recruitment exams. TDPL was already a blacklisted firm in Uttar Pradesh for previous exam irregularities.

Tiwari’s family nexus in JPSC-JSSC exam irregularities was deep rooted as his wife and brother were also behind the examination irregularities. The Jharkhand Crime Investigation Department (CID) arrested Sushama Kumari (wife) and Akshay Tiwari (brother) on August 18, 2026, in connection with alleged irregularities in the JPSC and JSSC-CGL recruitment examinations.

Govt aims to strengthen vector-borne disease control in State

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

A two-day state-level orientation programme on vector-borne diseases concluded in Ranchi on Wednesday, focusing on strengthening disease surveillance, early detection, timely treatment and coordinated action across Jharkhand.

Organised jointly by the Jharkhand Vector-Borne Disease Department and Kaivalya Education Foundation (KEF), an initiative of Piramal Foundation, the programme was attended by vector-borne disease officials and district VBD consultants from all 24 districts.

A key outcome of the orientation was a greater emphasis on data-driven surveillance and timely response. District officials were guided to regularly analyse disease data, identify emerging trends and undertake targeted interventions. Strengthening coordination between state, district and block levels was also stressed.

The training focused on improving early identification, testing, treatment and follow-up of patients, particularly for



malaria and kala-azar. Officials were encouraged to intensify active case detection and ensure suspected patients are promptly linked to diagnostic and treatment services.

State Programme Officer Dr Ranjit Prasad highlighted the need to prevent further transmission by protecting infected patients from mosquito bites. He stressed regular use of mosquito nets and urged that nets be provided to patients along with treatment. The programme also emphasised a multi-sectoral approach involving urban local bodies, drinking water and sanitation authorities, the Education Department, Panchayati Raj institutions, rural development agencies and community organisations. National Health Mission, Jharkhand Campaign Director Shashi Prakash Jha called for regular data review, timely action, stronger public awareness.

BJP accuses Govt of interference in SIR process

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

State BJP president Aditya Sahu on Wednesday accused the JMM-Congress government of politically interfering in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and alleged that officials were being used to protect a particular vote bank.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state office, Sahu alleged that the government was attempting to influence the SIR exercise and prevent the deletion of allegedly ineligible names from voter lists. He claimed that discrepancies reported from Santhal Pargana, particularly Sahibganj, Rajmahal and Pakur, raised serious questions about the transparency of the electoral



State BJP president Aditya Sahu along with other leaders during a press conference in Ranchi on Tuesday. PNS

process. Sahu demanded 100 per cent verification of voter lists in sensitive areas of Santhal Pargana. He alleged that some administrative officials, including BDOs and CDPOs, were being involved in political meetings and accused the government of allowing political considerations to influence the electoral-roll revision process.

Citing an alleged case from

Barharwa in Pakur district, Sahu said an FIR had been registered against four people and a Common Service Centre operator for allegedly using forged residential documents in an attempt to get names added to the voter list. He also cited discrepancies in voter ages and household-wise voter numbers in parts of Rajmahal and Sahibganj. Sahu alleged that such cases indi-

cated possible attempts to include ineligible voters in electoral rolls and demanded investigation into all complaints. He said the BJP would not tolerate such alleged irregularities and would approach the courts if necessary. He also questioned the state government’s decision to allow offline certificates, alleging that the move could facilitate the inclusion of ineligible voters. BJP state vice-president Rakesh Prasad also demanded a high-level inquiry into alleged preparation of fake documents with the assistance of Pragma Kendra operators. He questioned how allegedly illegal immigrants could obtain voter ID, Aadhaar and PAN cards in the region without the involvement or protection of officials.

JMM hits back at BJP over SIR allegations

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) general secretary Vinod Kumar Pandey has hit back at BJP state president Aditya Sahu’s allegations regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, accusing the BJP of making “fabricated allegations” after being caught attempting irregularities in the process.

Pandey said the BJP had no moral right to question the voter-list revision process, claiming that several BJP workers and Booth Level Agents (BLA-II) were allegedly caught by local residents while attempting irregularities during the SIR exercise in districts including Godda and Garhwa. He said FIRs had also been registered in some cases.

He alleged that the BJP was politicising the sensitive issue and targeting a particular community. If the party had evidence of irregularities, he said, it should submit the documents to the



Election Commission and the concerned authorities instead of making political allegations.

Pandey said electoral-roll revision is a constitutional process conducted under the supervision of the Election Commission, with prescribed rules and documentary procedures for adding or

deleting names. Any discrepancies can be raised before the competent election authorities, he added. On BJP leaders’ statements regarding Santhal Pargana, Pandey said linking errors in names, ages or addresses in electoral rolls directly to alleged Bangladeshi infiltration was inappropriate. He said anyone attempting to secure voter registration using forged documents should face legal action, but isolated cases should not be used to cast suspicion on an entire community.

He also asked the BJP to clarify what conclusions the Election Commission or competent authorities had reached in the cases it was citing.

Pandey alleged that the BJP was giving a political colour to the SIR exercise to create confusion and distrust in society. He said the JMM remained committed to transparency in the democratic process and voters’ rights, while any genuine irregularity should be investigated impartially.

ICRISAT technology to boost State’s farm planning: Minister

Pioneer News Service
■ Ranchi

Agriculture Minister Shilpi Neha Turkey on Tuesday held a meeting with officials of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to explore the use of advanced technology for scientific, precise and climate-resilient agricultural planning in the state.

The meeting, held at the minister’s office at Nepal House, focused on integrating modern technologies with the state’s agricultural system to improve planning and implementation of agriculture-related schemes.

Agriculture Department Secretary Abubakar Siddiqui, Special Secretary Gopal Ji Tiwari, Agriculture Director



Vidyanand Pankaj and other senior officials attended the meeting.

During the meeting, ICRISAT officials made a detailed presentation on the institute’s ongoing work and technological solutions. Discussions centred on the use of geospatial technology, Geographic Information

System (GIS), satellite imagery and machine learning for accurate mapping of crops and land across Jharkhand. The proposed technology would help identify the types of crops being cultivated in different parts of the state, assess land suitability for specific crops, map cultivation patterns in upland areas

and determine cropping intensity across regions. Such data could reduce the agriculture department’s dependence on limited field observations and enable more scientific and reliable planning.

Turkey said that a uniform agricultural strategy would not be effective in a state like Jharkhand, which has diverse

geographical and agricultural conditions.

“Different areas require crop and agricultural strategies based on their land, soil, rainfall and water availability. Accurate and reliable data is therefore extremely important,” she said.

The minister said data generated through ICRISAT’s technology could help determine which crops would perform better in particular areas, what type of seeds should be made available to farmers and where specific agricultural interventions should be undertaken.

Focus on soil acidity and declining fertility: Soil acidity and declining soil fertility in several parts of Jharkhand also emerged as key concerns during the meeting.

Officials discussed the impact of factors such as excessive soil acidity, rainfall patterns and chemical use on soil health and productivity.

ICRISAT proposed developing scientific data on soil and crop patterns using satellite technology, GIS and machine learning. Based on such data, strategies could be formulated for improving soil pH and reducing acidity through lime application, organic soil management and agricultural practices suited to local conditions.

The technology could also support the availability and promotion of pulses, oilseeds and climate-resilient crop varieties based on local soil and climatic conditions.

Technology to support irrigation planning

Turkey said the use of such technology should not remain confined to the Agriculture Department. Accurate land and crop data could also prove useful to the Irrigation Department and other related departments in planning infrastructure and interventions.

She said data-driven planning would facilitate targeted implementation of government schemes, better utilisation of resources and delivery of appropriate technologies, seeds and other agricultural inputs to farmers.

ICRISAT officials said the institute has been working on similar technology-based services and data-driven agricultural solutions in states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha and

Rajasthan.

Turkey said Jharkhand’s agricultural development strategy should go beyond increasing production and focus on improving farmers’ incomes, promoting crop diversification, restoring soil health, ensuring better utilisation of water resources and strengthening agriculture’s resilience to climate change. “We want Jharkhand’s agricultural system to move beyond estimates and traditional data and become based on accurate data and scientific analysis. By leveraging the technical capabilities of institutions like ICRISAT, we can develop more effective, region-specific agricultural strategies for farmers in the state,” she said.

IN FOCUS



People gather to witness the grand chariot procession of Mother Mary marking the culmination of St Mary's annual feast at Shivajinagar, in Bengaluru on Tuesday

FDA flags railway, ISKCON kitchens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Mumbai

The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has suspended the food licences of an IRCTC-linked supplier in Kurla and three food establishments at ISKCON, Juhu, for alleged violations of norms.

The FDA suspended the licence of R K Associates & Hoteliers in Kurla West after an inspection on September 2 found cockroaches in storage and processing areas, uncovered food, food preparation near open garbage, damaged floor tiles and cracks and damaged surfaces on walls, among other deficiencies, an official release said.

The FDA has launched a state-wide crackdown on food establishments violating the laws and rules regarding hygiene and food safety after IAS officer Tukaram Mundhe took over as its commissioner in May this year.

The inspector also found deficiencies in personal hygiene at R K Associates & Hoteliers. An employee with an injured finger was allegedly handling food, and only 21 of the 34 food handlers could produce medical fitness certificates.

Inspections were also carried out on September 3 at



Representative image

three food establishments at ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), Hare Krishna Land, Juhu, an official release said.

At one of the establishments, the FDA found inadequate records of periodic testing of water used for food production, improper inspection of raw materials and improper temperature and humidity conditions for storing raw and prepared food, the release said.

It also found food and non-food items stored in a manner that posed a risk of cross-contamination, pest

infestation, inadequate cleaning and lack of calibration of measuring and monitoring devices.

It issued the licence suspension order on September 7 after examining the inspection report and photographs, the FDA said.

The food services restaurant at ISKCON, Juhu, was found to have an open rear kitchen entrance without adequate measures to prevent pest entry, no required laboratory testing, inadequate lighting, deficiencies in raw-material inspection and cleaning,

clogged drains with food waste and pest droppings, and lapses in medical examinations, vaccination and training records of food handlers.

The third establishment, ISKCON Govindas Restaurant, was found to have deficiencies in food testing, drinking-water testing, raw-material inspection and segregation, cleaning, drainage, pest control, calibration of equipment and food-handler hygiene and training. Its licence was suspended with immediate effect on September 7.

JNU student alleges language harassment



Representative image

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Fresh allegations of academic misconduct have emerged at Jawaharlar Nehru University (JNU) after the Progressive Democratic Students Union (PDSU) accused an assistant professor at the Centre for Japanese Studies of harassing a non-Hindi-speaking student through "linguistic discrimination and public humiliation".

The student body has demanded an impartial inquiry by the university administration, alleging that the faculty member, created a "suffocating environment" that violated JNU's code of conduct and pedagogical standards.

According to a detailed statement issued by the PDSU, the assistant professor pressured a female student from South India to speak and write in Hindi during classes, despite her not being a Hindi speaker. The organisation claimed that the professor mocked her accent and encouraged other students to laugh at her, causing severe mental and emotional distress.

"The student was made to repeat in class -- 'I will try my best to study Hindi' -- and was frequently asked to write, read or translate complex Hindi and Sanskrit words, phrases and verses," the PDSU said, adding that the student has since suffered anxiety, nausea and panic attacks.

Rahul flight safely lands after scare

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

An Air India flight carrying Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi had to abandon its first landing attempt at Lucknow airport on Tuesday after gusty winds affected landing conditions, before touching down safely on a second attempt minutes later.

Air India flight AI-1717, operating from Delhi to Lucknow, initiated a go-around at around 3:45 pm, after the flight crew assessed the weather con-



Representative image
COMMONS

ditions and decided not to proceed with the initial landing.

The aircraft circled before making another approach and landed safely at approximately 3:55 pm, sources said.

All passengers were able to disembark normally after the aircraft reached the terminal. There were no immediate reports of any injuries or disruption among those on board.

A go-around is a standard aviation procedure in which pilots discontinue an approach when landing conditions are not considered suitable and make another attempt once it is safe to do so.

Air India has not issued an official statement on the incident so far.

Kerala MLAs walk out of NCW meet over Hindi-only sessions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi/Thiruvananthapuram

A group of women MLAs from Kerala walked out of an NCW workshop on Tuesday before its conclusion, protesting that the programme was conducted largely in Hindi, which they found difficult to follow.

A two-day capacity-building workshop for women legislators was organised by the National Commission for Women in Faridabad.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla inaugurated the workshop on Monday. The women legislators from Kerala alleged that conducting the programme



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla during the inaugural session of the two-day Capacity Building Programme for Women Legislators. She is a Change Maker organised by the National Commission for Women (NCW) in Faridabad

in Hindi made it difficult for participants from non-Hindi-speaking states to understand and follow the sessions.

"We attended the programme expecting that, as legislators, we would get some new suggestions and practical guidance on how to effectively participate in legislative proceedings," Deputy Speaker Shanimol Osman said. Besides Osman, the women representatives from Kerala were Ministers Bindhu Krishna and K A Thulasi, and MLAs K K Rema, Fathima Thahliya, Vidya Balakrishnan and Usha Vijayan.

The sessions were conducted entirely in Hindi, Osman said, adding that participants from Kerala could not

understand the language.

"Normally, when national-level conferences are held, considering that India is a diverse country, some arrangements are made to accommodate participants from South India and the Northeast.

But here, there was no such arrangement," she told reporters in New Delhi.

There was no immediate reaction from the NCW to their allegations.

Speaking to PTI, Fathima Thahliya said there was little scope for interaction as the programme proceeded through a series of classes without even an open-house discussion.

Orangutans spark smuggling probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Balasore (Odisha)

At least five orangutans, which are not indigenous to India, were rescued in a forest in Odisha's Balasore district, prompting the authorities to suspect that wildlife smugglers might be behind the animals' sudden appearance there, a minister said on Tuesday.



The state government urged the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) to inquire into how the critically endangered great apes reached Bichitrapur forest area under Bhograi block.

Forest and Environment Minister Ganesh Ram Singhkhuntia said the five orangutans were rescued by the forest patrolling team on Tuesday morning.

"These animals are not found in India and are mostly seen in rainforests of Malaysia, Indonesia, Borneo and Sumatra in Southeast Asia. We suspect that they might have been released in the Balasore district forest which borders West Bengal by an international wildlife smuggling racket," the minister said.

NCPCR summons Meta India chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has summoned the Managing Director and Head of Meta India on Wednesday in connection with its inquiry into alleged advertisements related to child sexual exploitation and abuse material (CSEAM) on the platform.

The child rights body had on July 3 taken suo motu cognisance of a media report by

BBC Eye regarding alleged advertisements related to CSEAM and sought an explanation from Meta Platforms, Inc.

Meta submitted its response to the commission a week later.

NCPCR has now decided to institute an inquiry to determine the facts of the matter and in continuation of the same, summoned the MD and Head of Meta India to appear before it on Wednesday, officials said.

The commission's move comes amid

concerns over the alleged availability and promotion of child sexual exploitation material through online platforms.

In July, the government issued a stern notice to Meta on CSEAM in paid advertisements on Instagram.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had ordered Instagram to disable all ads and content promoting and facilitating access to CSEAM and also demanded a detailed explanation on it.

FROM PAGE - 1

Ahead of BRICS, Delhi's anti-terror response...

India has now had four opportunities to hold the position, following 2012, 2016 and 2021. For this reason, security preparations are being treated as operational rather than ceremonial. Since the BRICS schedule has been expanded, there will be more motorcades, more hotels, more roads closed, and more buildings suddenly considered high value. The traffic police have already started planning routes for the convoy rehearsals.

The NSG's drills take place on civilian infrastructure; this way, if a meeting place or route is affected, the last responders will already be on the ground. The force is not saying the city is sealed, but rather that the crisis procedure has been carried out in full view of the public, with the involvement of other agencies.

Modi-Putin meet before BRICS

Defence cooperation is also likely to feature prominently, with the proposed sale of Russia's Su-57 fighter aircraft expected to be discussed. Peskov said Moscow was prepared to consider India's request for technology transfer.

The Modi-Putin meeting will take place a day before the BRICS Summit, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. Putin is expected to join other leaders, including Chinese President Xi Jinping, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Peskov also highlighted the growing significance of BRICS, describing the grouping as having developed beyond an organisation into a bloc. Speaking about India's BRICS presidency, he said cooperation among member countries was based on mutual trust, respect and shared interests.

He further said the global order was undergoing a transformation, with the influence of a unipolar system declining. According to Peskov, BRICS represents countries seeking a more balanced international system in which nations have equal standing.

Freight corridors driving growth: PM

Describing the dedicated railway freight corridor as the lifeline of a rapidly developing nation, the PM noted that India's economic transformation was accelerating due to the modern freight structure.

Earlier, passenger and goods trains were forced to run on the same tracks, which severely hampered both passenger travel and freight movement, but the dedicated corridor altered that dynamic, he explained.

Modi said that the Eastern and Western Freight Corridors are now emerging as the main backbone of the nation's trade and commercial activities. He said the 2,800-km Dedicated Freight Corridor serves as a testament to how the country's work culture has been fundamentally transformed over the past 12 years.

Criticising the administrative delays under the previous government, he pointed out that though the concept originated in 2004 and a special purpose vehicle was set up in 2006, files remained stuck without progress until 2014.

India is scripting a new saga of manufacturing, spanning "chips to ships", with components, final products and the supply chain for self-reliance being set up in the country, Modi said.

He said India had emerged as a major manufacturer of railway coaches, metro coaches and locomotives in the last decade.

A 100-km journey that earlier took 6.5 hours for a freight train can now be covered in less than half the time, while a 30-hour journey by truck can be completed in 10-12 hours on the Dedicated Freight Corridor, the PM noted.

Earlier, the PM walked on an elevated ramp to arrive on stage, and was greeted by the audience, mostly young people. He reciprocated with folded hands and waved back. PM Modi later inaugurated the BJP's newly built Namo Kamalam office in Navsari town of south Gujarat.

Seven foreigners face NIA charges

It lists Van Dyke and six Ukrainian nationals: Petro Hurba, Taras Slyviak, Ivan Sukmanovskyi, Marian Stefankiv, Maksim

Honcharuk, and Viktor Kaminskyi.

Van Dyke was arrested at Kolkata airport. Hurba, Slyviak, and Sukmanovskyi were detained at Lucknow airport on March 13, while Stefankiv, Honcharuk, and Kaminskyi were arrested at Delhi airport the same day. Investigators have called the group alleged mercenaries.

The case was first registered under Section 18 of the UAPA, which covers conspiracy, as well as parts of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

In the chargesheet filed on Tuesday, the agency said much of the investigation into UAPA offences is done, but it still needs more time. This is because they are looking into the import and recovery of many drones and accessories sent through India, and they are still examining a large number of seized digital devices.

The chargesheet noted that further investigation could "indicate their possible involvement in acts affecting/threatening the unity, integrity, security and sovereignty of India or strike terror in any section of the people of India in a manner affecting India's interests." The NIA requested the court's permission to continue investigating under Section 193(9) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita so that "all the aspects of the larger conspiracy" involving the accused and others can be uncovered.

Ukrainian nationals entered India in December 2025 after obtaining tourist visas. They later crossed the Myanmar border and reached Victoria Camp to provide training to Ethnic Armed Groups of Myanmar. Before leaving Indian territory, they travelled to Guwahati on different dates and stayed in different hotels.

Investigators said the accused planned their movement in India and Myanmar "in such a way that it does not seem suspicious to anybody."

The NIA said the men were arrested to investigate the larger conspiracy and to look into their possible links with Indian insurgent groups in the northeast. The use of tourist visas, hotel stays in Guwahati, crossing into Myanmar, alleged training of armed groups, and the recovery of drones and electronic devices have kept the terror angle in focus, even though the first chargesheet only covers immigration offences.

Meanwhile, forensic checks of seized devices and investigations into drone shipments are ongoing. Officials say these findings will determine if the foreigners are later charged under the anti-terror law.

MEA distance itself from Eiffel Tower BAPS temple controversy

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has described the controversy surrounding a BAPS delegation's visit to the Eiffel Tower as a matter between the organisations directly involved.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India was aware of the inauguration of a BAPS Hindu temple in the Paris region but said the ministry would not comment on the specific dispute linked to the Eiffel Tower.

“We are aware of the opening of a temple by the BAPS Sanstha in the Paris area. As to the particular issue pertaining to the Tower, this is a matter purely between the entities concerned,” Jaiswal said during a media briefing in New Delhi.

The controversy erupted after reports that female employees at the Eiffel Tower were asked to move away from their regular work areas during a visit by around 100 people associated with BAPS, or Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha.

French union representatives reportedly objected to arrangements under which



MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

some women were moved to different areas while certain duties were temporarily assigned to male employees. There were also allegations that female staff had been instructed not to cross particular areas while the delegation was present.

The reported incident resulted in a staff protest, and the Eiffel Tower was closed for a day before reopening to visitors.

The company operating the landmark, Société d'Exploitation de la Tour Eiffel, later acknowledged that the delegation had requested limited interaction with female employees.

The operator said such arrangements should not have been permitted.

BAPS has since expressed regret over the controversy and said it was taking the concerns raised by Eiffel Tower employees seriously. The organisation said the visit had been coordinated with the tower's teams and scheduled around the start of normal operating hours to reduce disruption.

BAPS also said that, to its knowledge, no visitor had been denied access to the Eiffel Tower. It apologised to anyone who may have been affected by the incident and reaffirmed its commitment to

mutual respect and service.

The controversy has drawn criticism from several senior French political figures. Paris Mayor Emmanuel Gregoire described the reported arrangements as unacceptable and said an investigation would be undertaken.

National Assembly President Yaël Braun-Pivet also criticised the reported treatment of female employees, saying demands from foreign visitors should not result in women being asked to step aside.

France's Minister for Gender Equality and the Fight Against Discrimination, Aurore Berge, called the incident unacceptable and stressed that gender equality remains a fundamental principle in the country.

Former Prime Minister Gabriel Attal also criticised the reported restrictions, saying cultural or religious beliefs should not determine the position of women in public spaces.

The BAPS delegation was in France in connection with the opening of a new Hindu temple near Paris. The organisation has described the BAPS Hindu Mandir of Paris as its first traditional Hindu temple in France.

Delhi traffic advisory issued ahead of BRICS summit rehearsal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

Ahead of the motorcade rehearsal for the BRICS Summit 2026, the Delhi Traffic Police have released a comprehensive advisory, imposing restrictions and diversions on major roads in the national Capital from Tuesday evening.

The advisory stated that the motorcade rehearsal would take place from 7.45 pm to 10 pm on September 8. The advisory also said the BRICS Summit would be held at Bharat Mandapam in Pragati Maidan from September 11 to 13.

The traffic police said over 35 roads would be regulated and that traffic diversions would take place at 22 locations during the advisory period.

The following major roads are likely to be affected: Sardar Patel Marg, Mother Teresa Crescent, Teen Murti Marg, Akbar Road, Tees January Marg, Rajesh Pilot Marg, Subramania Bharti Marg, Mathura Road, Moti Lal Nehru Marg, Dr Zakir Hussain Marg, Brig Hoshiyar Singh Marg, Janpath, Ashoka Road, Barakhamba Road and Tolstoy Marg.

The advisory includes 22 diversion points, such as Dr Dinesh Nandini Dalmia Chowk, Ram Charan



Aggarwal Chowk, Mir Dard Chowk, Kasturba Gandhi Marg/Outer Circle, Janpath/Connaught Place, Patel Chowk, the roundabout at the RML Hospital and Vande Matram Marg/Simon Bolivar Marg.

At Dr Dinesh Nandini Dalmia Chowk, traffic heading towards Mathura Road and Tilak Marg will be prohibited, and vehicles will be directed via routes such as BSZ Marg, IP Marg, and Delhi Gate, depending on their destination.

Commercial vehicles heading beyond Ram Charan Aggarwal Chowk towards the W-Point will also be prohibited. At Mir Dard Chowk, traffic will be directed via roads such as Mir Dard Marg, Abdul Gaffar Marg, DDU Marg, Kotla Marg and BSZ Marg.

Restrictions will also apply

around Connaught Place, with traffic heading for the C-Hexagon diverted from the Outer Circle. At Patel Chowk, vehicles bound for Windsor Place and the RBI on Sansad Marg will face restrictions.

Traffic flow around Dhaula Kuan, Moti Bagh, Lodhi Road, and the Mathura Road corridor will also be controlled.

Traffic on the Mathura Road heading towards Bharat Mandapam will also be diverted at various points, such as underneath the Lodhi Flyover, at Neela Gumbad, underneath the Oberoi Flyover and at the U-turn opposite the DPS on Mathura Road.

The advisory also proposes alternative routes for commuters travelling to the major railway stations. For New Delhi Railway Station, routes have been suggested via ISBT Kashmiri Gate,

Boulevard Road, Rani Jhansi Marg, DBG Road, Panchkuian Road, and Connaught Place, among others.

At Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station, people can take routes via AIIMS, Ring Road, Ashram Chowk, and Mathura Road; alternative routes have also been proposed for Old Delhi. During the advisory period, the traffic police recommend using the Metro when travelling to the airport. The advisory sets out different road routes for commuters coming from Gurugram, Dwarka, New Delhi, and South Delhi, as well as from West, North, and East Delhi, to reach the airport terminals. Metro services will run fully at all stations, though some bus routes might be diverted during VIP movements.

Taxis and autos will be allowed to operate, but roadside parking will not be permitted except in designated areas. The traffic police said emergency and medical vehicles would be given priority and that they would ensure their routes remained clear. Essential services and utility operations would also keep going without interruption. The traffic police asked commuters to remain informed by checking their official social media accounts.

CRPF to replace Indian Army in Jammu anti-terror operations



MOHIT KANDHARI

■ Srinagar

In a tactical shift in their strategy ahead of the winter months, the top brass of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been directed to take over counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism (CI/CT) operations from the Indian Army in vulnerable pockets of the Jammu region in a phased manner.

Security agencies have so far identified 21 locations in Kathua and Udhampur districts where CRPF units, supported by specialised Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) companies, will replace Army camps currently handling hinterland CI/CT roles.

CoBRA battalions, equipped for jungle warfare, can act as a force multiplier to effectively deal with the foreign terrorists who have carved out their safe hideouts inside jungles and execute targeted killings without coming on the radar of the security forces, especially in the Jammu region.

Soon after the formal induction of these battle-hardened companies into the multi-tier security grid, the CRPF will be tasked with undertaking operations in the forested areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Having successfully led anti-Naxal operations in central India, select CRPF units are currently being de-inducted from the Left Wing Extremism (LWE) theatre to be repositioned in Jammu and Kashmir, officials added.

The reorganisation of paramilitary forces will allow Army infantry and Rashtriya Rifles units to be withdrawn from routine anti-terror duties in the hinterland and redeployed to strengthen the Line of Control and Line of Actual Control.

At present, quick reaction teams (QRTs) of the CRPF are already participating in anti-terror operations along with the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir police and the Indian Army.

Some of the CRPF units also remain deployed in the outer cordon to plug the escape routes of terrorists and deal with the local masses during the engagement of troops with the anti-national elements.

In several areas, CRPF personnel have already set up Temporary Operating Bases (TOBs) in the upper reaches to track down the suspected movement of armed terrorists following a surge in the terrorist related incidents in the forested areas of Kathua and Udhampur.

Last year in April, a new Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) was raised for Jammu and Kashmir, on the directions of the Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Last year, Pakistan-based terrorists launched several operations targeting security personnel and patrolling parties to inflict maximum injuries and spread the reign of terror across the Jammu region. In response, the security forces had to launch massive combing and

search operations to track down the footprints of perpetrators behind these attacks. The Pakistan-based terrorists relied heavily on their network of over-ground workers, and on the other hand, the security forces were not receiving adequate human intelligence to launch anti-terror operations to neutralise these hiding terrorists.

According to official sources, 21 CRPF companies comprising around 2,100 personnel, along with at least nine CoBRA teams, are expected to man the camps. Sources indicated that troop numbers and formal handover procedures are being finalised, with the first phase focused on the most sensitive sites. The CRPF will operate from existing Army infrastructure to ensure continuity.

According to the latest assessment of the Intelligence agencies, Pakistan is making desperate attempts to push fresh groups of armed terrorists inside Indian territory via the Line of Control and the International border with Pakistan. During the winter months, the plain areas of Jammu and the Line of Control in the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch become active transit points for the various terrorist groups.

The Home Ministry has already given its nod to modernise the CRPF units by equipping CRPF personnel with specialised winter gear, including Himsuraksha clothing sanctioned earlier this year.

BJP confident of winning West Bengal by-elections

SAUGAR SENGUPTA

■ Kolkata

The BJP is confident of winning the Assembly by-elections to two seats, Nandigram and Rejinagar, polling to which would be held on October 6, Bengal Chief Minister Adhikari, who vacated the former seat after winning from the Bhawanipore constituency in Kolkata, defeating former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the April-May State elections, said.

While Nandigram is in East Midnapore district, Rejinagar is in Murshidabad district. Both the seats are differently important considering their

political status and features. Adhikari has been the sitting MLA of Nandigram, the main battleground of Mamata Banerjee's land movement that eventually catapulted her to power in 2011. In 2021, Adhikari won the seat, defeating Banerjee by a margin of little more than 1,900 votes, before becoming the Opposition Leader in the State Assembly. Adhikari, a son of the soil, is confident of winning this seat for the BJP by breaking all records. “The question is not who wins Nandigram... Because it is for sure that the BJP will win it... The question is who bags the second position...



West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari

The TMC or the breakaway section of the TMC or the Left that has suddenly risen to hog the opposition lime-light... Both Nandigram and Rejinagar will help the BJP Government and the other political parties to rejig their strategies in future,” said Bishwanath Chakrabarty, a

political analyst.

Rejinagar, on the other hand, is a Muslim-dominated seat and a traditional stronghold of the Congress and later on the Trinamool Congress before Kabir left that party to form his own. He won this seat in this year's elections along with the Bharatpur seat. Rejinagar fell vacant after he chose to retain the other seat. The seat is important because it is likely to witness a keen contest between BJP, Congress, Left and Kabir's party, and the results would decide whether the BJP can capitalise on the division of Muslim votes in the region.

Senior Bengal minister Dilip

Sharma said, “The way the Government has worked in the past four months, there is no doubt that the BJP will win by a huge margin... Rest assured, we are winning... Nandigram definitely and Rejinagar too... The people have reposed their faith in us by giving us such a huge mandate, and the Government is responding to it by taking all the decisions very confidently and effectively.”

The polls are to be held on October 6, and results will be declared on October 9. The last date for filing nominations is September 16, and withdrawal of nomination can be done till September 19.

Kashmir offers stories beyond landscapes: Pankaj Tripathi, Divyendu

MOHIT KANDHARI

■ Srinagar

Budding filmmakers, movie buffs and students attending the first-ever International Film Festival in Srinagar on Tuesday interacted with the star cast of the popular web series Mirzapur.

During their exchange of ideas, Actors Pankaj Tripathi and Divyendu, known for their roles as Kaleen Bhaiya and Munna Tripathi, respectively, said Kashmir can offer filmmakers stories beyond its landscapes, including its people, food, culture and everyday life.

Responding to a question related to filmmaking in Kashmir, the duo said the region offers rich material for storytelling, praising its natural beauty and deeply rooted local narratives.

“We like Dal Lake. Kashmir has beautiful, rooted stories,” they said.

They added that Kashmir can offer filmmakers stories beyond its landscapes, including its people, food, culture and everyday life.

“Kashmir is one of the most beautiful parts of the country. If infrastructure is further developed, it would be wonderful to come here and tell stories about Kashmir,” they said.

Another renowned filmmaker Intiaz Ali during his interaction with the media said Kashmir has many untold stories, characters and



cultural traditions that can provide rich material for filmmakers, while expressing hope that the region's growing connection with cinema would create more opportunities for local talent.

Interacting with the media at SKICC Srinagar, Ali said he always hopes to return to the region whenever he shoots a film. “We always hope that whenever we shoot, we come back to Kashmir. There is perhaps no other place in the world that is so cinematic,” he said.

On Laila Majnu, he said the film was deeply rooted in Kashmir, with its characters and setting closely connected to the region. “Laila Majnu is a film based in Kashmir. The characters are from Kashmir, and the whole setting and feel of the film are Kashmiri,” he said.

Ali said he was happy that the film continued to remain

popular in Kashmir even years after its release. “Eight years later, it is still popular here. This is Kashmir. I am very happy and I thank Kashmir for Laila Majnu,” he said.

Speaking about the future of cinema in the region, the actors Pankaj Tripathi and Divyendu said Kashmir's storytelling potential goes far beyond its scenic beauty. There is a lot of future ahead. There will be theatres, OTT platforms and many other opportunities. There is tremendous scope,” they said, adding that young talent in the region could benefit from the evolving film ecosystem.

Responding to students and aspiring filmmakers attending the festival, the actors said film festivals and masterclasses offer valuable opportunities to learn from experienced professionals.

“We have seen how films are made. In a four-day festival, if there are masterclasses, that is a very good thing. There will be a lot to listen to and learn,” they said.

Reflecting on Kashmir's long association with the film industry, the actors noted that while filmmakers historically visited the region for song sequences and shoots, there is now an opportunity to tell deeper stories about its people and culture.

“Kashmir has had a connection with cinema for a long time. People used to come here for songs and shoots. But there are so many other things, the people, food and culture. Why not talk about them?” they said.

Meanwhile, Five films, helmed by directors from Jammu and Kashmir, have been selected for the J&K Select Section, the competitive category of the 1st International Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (IFFJK), 2026.

The films were recommended by the Preview Committee constituted for the festival, following a review of submissions and assessment of their artistic merit and suitability for the competitive section.

The selected films include Searching for the Grandpa, directed by Mohammad Wali; Arifa, directed by Rohin Ravendran Nair; Batt Koch (The Lost Lane), directed by

Siddarth Koul and Ankit Wali; Tasrufdaar (Djinns of Kashmir), directed by Kapil Mattoo; and Naqsh-e-Daur (The Story of Ghulam Nabi Dhar), directed by Baba Tassaduq Hussain.

Spanning Kashmiri and Hindi languages, the films explore themes ranging from childhood, family and memory to displacement, identity, heritage, resilience and the changing social landscape of Kashmir.

Searching for the Grandpa follows two young siblings in a Kashmiri village on Eid. Arifa centres on a woman returning to her ancestral home in Kashmir and confronting memories of her childhood and father. Batt Koch explores displacement, identity and the enduring idea of home through the story of a Kashmiri migrant family. Tasrufdaar (Djinns of Kashmir) weaves together mystery, memory and the scars of Kashmir's past, while Naqsh-e-Daur portrays the life and legacy of a Padma Shri-honoured woodcarver in downtown Srinagar, highlighting Kashmir's craftsmanship, heritage and resilience.

The selected films will form part of the competitive programming of the four-day International Film Festival, offering audiences and filmmakers an opportunity to engage with distinctive cinematic voices and stories from Jammu and Kashmir.

Deaths due to passive smoking in India up 50% compared to 1990: Lancet study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

Deaths in India due to second-hand smoke increased nearly 50 per cent in 2023, compared to 1990, even as death rates improved by about 30 per cent, according to a global analysis published in The Lancet Public Health journal.

The estimates also suggest that while the population

exposed to second-hand smoke increased from 375 million in 1990 to 444 million in 2026 — up by 18.4 per cent — age-standardised prevalence dropped from 43.2 per cent in 1990 to 30.6 per cent in 2023 in India.

Age-standardised prevalence is a statistical adjustment made to data to allow a fair comparison of prevalence across age groups.

An international team of

researchers forming the ‘Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2023 Second-hand smoke Collaborators’ estimated prevalence of exposure to passive smoking and the disease burden it contributes to across 204 countries and territories.

“In 2023, an estimated 2.71 billion people worldwide were exposed to SHS (second-hand smoke), including 767 million children aged 0-14



years,” the authors wrote.

Globally, exposure prevalence was 33.9 per cent in 2023. China, India, and Indonesia accounted for nearly half of the world's exposed population, with 664 million, 444 million, and 142 million people exposed, respectively, in 2023, they found.

However, “age-standardised prevalence was highest in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania (48.4 per cent),

with female individuals in some countries experiencing nearly 1.8 times the exposure prevalence of male individuals,” the team said.

In India, absolute deaths in 1990 due to passive smoking were 2,17,700, while those in 2023 were 3,25,600 — death rates or deaths per hundred thousand population, however, fell from 46.1 in 1990 to 30 in 2023, down by 35 per cent, the findings show.

■ States Focus ■



VP PAYS TRIBUTES TO BOSE AT INA MEMORIAL IN MANIPUR

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Tuesday paid tributes to legendary freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at the INA Martyrs' Memorial Complex in Manipur's Bishnupur district, an official said.

Radhakrishnan visited the historic flag-hoisting site at Moirang Kangla, where the Indian National Army (INA) under the leadership of Bose hoisted the Tricolour for the first time on Indian soil on April 14, 1944, he said.

"The vice president also toured the INA War Museum gallery commemorating the valour and sacrifice of the INA. He also paid floral tributes to the statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at the complex," the official said.

Earlier in the day, the vice president was accorded a guard of honour upon his arrival at the Imphal airport. (PTI)



BHUPEN HAZARIKA'S VOICE CARRIES ASSAM'S SOUL: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that the voice of eminent singer-composer Bhupen Hazarika carried the soul of Assam and the spirit of the Northeast to the entire nation.

The Prime Minister, in a tribute to Hazarika on his birth centenary, said that his songs brought people closer. "On his 100th birth anniversary, remembering the legendary Dr Bhupen Hazarika Ji. His voice carried the soul of Assam and the spirit of the Northeast to the entire nation," Modi said in a post on X. "Through his music, he beautifully gave expression to the thoughts and spirit of countless people. His songs brought people closer," he said. (PTI)

ED finds ₹60 crore discrepancy in TMC MP-linked newspaper raids

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kolkata

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) detected alleged financial irregularities of around ₹60 crore in an Urdu newspaper linked to TMC Rajya Sabha MP Nadimul Haque, during searches for over 24 hours, officials said on Tuesday.

The marathon searches at premises linked to Haque and his media entity began on September 7 morning and were completed early Tuesday.

"Financial records and digital documents are being examined to establish the trail

of the transactions and determine the nature and source of the funds under investigation," an ED official said.

The central probe agency is probing alleged illegal financial transactions involving the newspaper and is examining whether some of the funds were routed through hawala channels, sources said.

During the searches, ED officials examined bank transaction records, financial documents and digital material, and questioned Haque at his residence and office in Kolkata, he said.

The ED investigators are

Bihar floods worsen: Over 34 lakh people affected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

The Bihar flood situation worsened as over 34 lakh people across 13 districts have been affected, with the authorities sounding an alert in downstream areas after the water level of the Ganga crossed the "flood mark" at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur district on Tuesday, officials said.

A small boat capsized in a flood-hit area of Kharik Raghupur in Bhagalpur district this morning. State Disaster Relief Force (SDRF) personnel rescued all 10 people aboard the boat, officials said.

Floods have affected

around 34.31 lakh people across 480 gram panchayats in 13 districts of Bihar, including Patna, Bhagalpur, Vaishali, Saran, Begusarai, Khagaria and Munger.

Around 29.13 lakh people have been impacted by floods as overflowing rivers inundated large swathes in 13 districts on Monday.

According to the Bihar Meteorological Service Centre, the State has recorded 79.6 mm of rainfall in September so far, which is 31 per cent above normal.

The Disaster Management Department in a statement said, "The Ganga at Sultanganj in Bhagalpur recorded 36.80 metres at 8 am on September 8, sur-



passing its previous Highest Flood Level (HFL) of 36.75 metres recorded on August 17, 2021. The trend, however, remains stable.

Several rivers, including the Gandak, Kosi, Budhi Gandak, Ganga, Punpun, Bagmati and Ghaghra, are flowing above danger levels at multiple locations.

The water levels of the Gandak river at Dumriaghat and Hajipur, Kosi at Baltara and Kursela, Budhi Gandak at Khagaria, Ganga at Digha,

TN Assembly passes resolution urging Union Govt to ensure official names of OBCs in Census

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chennai

The Tamil Nadu Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution urging the Centre to collect details related to OBCs during the second phase of the 2027 census only on the basis of the official lists of the State and Union Governments that specifically identify such castes.

Minister for Backward Classes Welfare V Sampathkumar moved the resolution and briefly traced the history of the census in India.

The minister said that if people used different names to denote the same caste, including regional variations, the data collected could become unclear.

This could lead to difficulties in enumeration and may also prevent the full benefits of the census exercise from being realised.

"Hence, the exercise must stick to official names alone as per the notifications of the



State and Union Governments to ensure social justice and equal justice," he said.

The Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities notified by the State and Union Governments should be pre-loaded into the census enumeration portal/application, he said.

Selecting a caste from the pre-loaded data using a 'drop-down menu' would be the appropriate method,

the minister noted.

The resolution said data must be collected solely based on the names contained in the official lists, and the ambiguous 'open-column method' for enumerating BCs, MBCs and DCs must be completely dispensed with.

It said: "In order to ensure social justice for all sections of society, this Assembly unanimously resolves to urge the Union Government to

collect the caste details of Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities during the second phase of the 2027 census of India, in the same manner as followed for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes."

The collection of caste-wise details of OBCs has been omitted from censuses conducted after Independence.

Hence, it is essential to obtain accurate data based on the lists of Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes and Denotified Communities notified by the state and Union Governments in accordance with the Constitution, the resolution said.

DMK MLAs were not present when the resolution was debated and passed, as they had been evicted following a ruckus.

After legislators, including those from the AIADMK and PMK, spoke in support of the resolution, it was passed unanimously.

No share cut from other communities: Fadnavis over Maratha quota row



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

With activist Manoj Jarange's fast for Maratha quota entering its 11th day, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday said the Government would grant whatever is permissible under the Constitution but would not take from one community's share to give another.

He was replying to questions on the issue of Maratha reservation and reports that a late-night meeting was held by the Government to discuss Jarange's agitation.

Jarange, who began his latest hunger strike at Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district on August 29, has been demanding reservation for the Maratha community under the OBC category, including implementation of the Hyderabad and Satara Gazette records and issuance of Kunbi caste certificates to eligible members of the Maratha community.

Kunbi is a traditional agrarian (farming) community that officially falls under the OBC category, making them eligible for reservation benefits in education and

Government jobs.

Activists from the Other Backward Classes had also staged an agitation in the village to safeguard the constitutional rights and reservation share of the OBC community.

Fadnavis said the ruling alliance had taken all major decisions concerning the (Maratha) community so far and would take any further decisions required within the framework of the Constitution and subject to court orders.

"Whatever is permissible under the Constitution will certainly be given. Whatever is subject to the court's decision will be dealt with accordingly. We are not going to take from one community's share and give it to another," he told reporters at Uran in Navi Mumbai.

The Government had not merely taken decisions on paper, but the actual benefits of these decisions were visible to the Maratha community, he stressed.

"We will do everything that is possible. We have never closed the doors for dialogue. A Government finds a solution through discussions, and the entire process is moving forward in that spirit," Fadnavis said.

MP hooch tragedy: Death toll rises to 15

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Sagar (MP)

The death toll in the spurious liquor tragedy in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district rose to 15 on Tuesday after two more victims succumbed during treatment, police said on Tuesday.

One of the deceased men is an accused in the bootlegging network, while nearly 40 people remain hospitalised, three of them in critical condition, an official said.

Talking to media, Sagar Superintendent of Police (SP) Anurag Sujania said that a total of 15 people have died so far in the spurious liquor case, including one of the accused.

He said that the police



have so far arrested 14 of the 30 accused in the case and a search is on for the others.

Meanwhile, a pall of gloom has descended on Gugra Khurd village in the district, where five people have died so far after consuming poisonous liquor.

The deceased include three men from the same family - two brothers and a cousin.

Villagers claim that 30 people from the village are

also looking into the alleged movement of funds linked to the TMC, he said.

According to ED sources,

investigators found discrepancies relating to transactions worth around ₹60 crore for which they could not



BJP demands resignation of Mann over Punjab villager's suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday demanded Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's resignation over the alleged suicide of a man, who was pressured by local AAP leaders to apologise for questioning Minister Harpal Singh Cheema over the drug menace in his village.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, party spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia also demanded the resignation of Cheema and the lodging of an FIR under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections related to abetment of suicide.

According to media reports, a 47-year-old daily

wager, identified as Gulzar Singh, a resident of Dirba in Sangrur district, died after consuming poison on Monday night after some local leaders of the ruling party allegedly pressured him to apologise for questioning Cheema during an event in the village on September 6.

"Gulzar Singh raised the issue of drug menace during Cheema's visit to his village. Singh told Cheema that his son takes chitta and urged the minister to take action on its supply," Bhatia said.

"After the minister left, an AAP leader, who is the sarpanch of the village, visited Gulzar Singh's home and asked him to apologise to the minister for his



BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia

remarks," the BJP leader added.

Neither the ruling party nor the Punjab Government has responded to the BJP's charge.

"When the protector turns the predator, he has no right to remain in office. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann must immediately resign

from his post," Bhatia said.

Before Singh died at a hospital, he narrated the entire episode and took the names of those who threatened him for raising the drug issue before Cheema, the BJP spokesperson said, showing video footage of it.

He demanded that all those named by Singh in the

video be booked for abetment of suicide under BNS.

"Cheema must also resign immediately," Bhatia demanded, adding, "Since he (Gulzar Singh) belonged to a Scheduled Caste, action should also be taken under provisions of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act."

Some BJP leaders took to X condemning the death and demanding action.

BJP national spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari alleged that the ruling party in Punjab has become a "gangster party".

In a video post on X, he pointed to the induction of Gurpreet Singh Sekhon, one of the man accused in the 2016 Nabha jailbreak case, into the AAP two days ago.

6 killed as speeding truck collides with SUV in Maharashtra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Gondia

As many as six people, including a three-year-old boy, were killed and seven others were injured after a speeding truck collided with an SUV in Maharashtra's Gondia district, police said on Tuesday.

The victims were labourers from neighbouring Madhya Pradesh and were travelling to Karimnagar in Telangana for work, an official said.

The grisly crash occurred on Monday night near Nagra village, about 4 km from the district headquarters, Inspector Vaibhav Pawar of Gondia Rural police said.



The truck driver, Mohsin Khan (32), a resident of Gondia, crashed into the SUV coming from the opposite

direction, he said.

Pawar said that the victims were extricated from the mangled vehicle, with the impact killing six of them on the spot, while seven sustained injuries and were shifted to a Government hospital.

The deceased were identified as Kiran Santosh Vaidhy (26), Santosh Matre (38), Sushila Matre (35), Rupsen Tejpal Satyakar (35), Jyoti Rupsen Satyakar (32) and three-year-old Aarush Matre, all residents of Kirnapur tehsil of MP's Balaghat district.

A case under sections 281 (rash or negligent driving) and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Motor Vehicle Act has been registered against the truck driver.

People of Manipur suffering both within and outside State under Modi Govt, says Kharge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday alleged that the "incompetence" of the Modi Government has left the people of Manipur suffering both within the State and outside it. His attack came after the alleged lynching of well-known Manipuri musician Chongtham Vikram Singh by a mob in Delhi.

"The merciless lynching of Chongtham Vikram Singh ji, a well-known musician from Manipur, by a mob is yet another chilling reminder of the utter lawlessness



under the BJP," he said in a post on X. "Students are unsafe. Women face atrocities every day. People from Northeast India face discrimination. Dalits, Adivasis

and minorities remain highly vulnerable.

"Under HM Amit Shah's watch, Delhi has become a crime capital, with the NCRB recording highest levels of crimes in the national capital year after year," the Congress chief alleged.

Expressing his condolences to the bereaved family, Kharge said, "They deserve justice, and those responsible must face the strictest action."

"The incompetence of the Modi Sarkar has left the people of Manipur suffering both within their state and outside it," the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha alleged.

PM Modi: Working to provide free online coaching to students

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Vadodara

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the Government was working to reduce the burden of fees faced by the families of students preparing for competitive examinations by providing free online coaching.

Speaking at the 'NaMo for Viksit Bharat' programme here where he inaugurated or laid foundation stones for ₹35,000 crore-worth development projects, the PM referred to the announcement he had made in this regard in his August 15 Red Fort speech.

"You are aware that lakhs of young people prepare for competitive examinations. Every year, a significant



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the inauguration and foundation stone laying of ₹35,000 crore development projects at an event, in Vadodara, Gujarat

PTI

portion of our families' earnings is spent on coaching for these students," Modi said.

"We aim to save money for the families of poor and middle-class students. Consequently, the Government is moving towards providing free online coaching, allowing our youth

to prepare under the guidance of India's best teachers. The Government itself will oversee this coaching arrangement," he added.

Changing global needs had also changed the approach to education, with skills being given equal importance alongside degrees, the prime minister noted.

Hence, the Government was reshaping the education policy and institutions, he said. Artificial Intelligence expertise would not be limited only to the IT sector and it could be used in agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing and robotics startups, he noted.

India was witnessing an "extraordinary era," Modi said, and called upon the youth to prioritise the goal of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Election petition, SIR delay bypolls to 2 LS seats

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

An election petition and the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls have delayed bypolls to two Lok Sabha seats, while a by-election to another parliamentary constituency has already been announced.

The Basirhat seat in West Bengal, the Shillong seat in Meghalaya and the Nagaon constituency in Assam fell vacant on different dates.

The Election Commission on Monday announced a bypoll to the Nagaon Lok Sabha seat but not to the other two.

Responding to a query on why bypolls to the Shillong and Basirhat parliamentary seats were not announced, senior EC functionaries said the ongoing SIR in Meghalaya and a pending election petition in the Calcutta High Court were behind the deci-



sion. An election petition was filed challenging the election of TMC's SK Nurul Islam from Basirhat. But months after taking the oath as a Lok Sabha member, he died on September 25, 2024.

Despite his death, the petition challenging his election remains pending. An election petition can be filed against the victory of a candi-

date in the concerned high court within 45 days of the declaration of results.

EC officials said an "election petition with second prayer" is pending.

The second prayer in an election petition usually asks the high court to declare the petitioner or another candidate as duly elected, after the first prayer declaring the

winning candidate's election as void.

The Shillong Lok Sabha seat was vacated following the demise of Voice of the People's Party MP Ricky Andrew Syngkon on February 19 this year.

Poll authority functionaries said the SIR is in progress in Meghalaya, where the final electoral rolls will be published on October 21.

The lone Lok Sabha bypoll will be held in Assam's Nagaon constituency, which was vacated by Pradyut Bordoloi. Votes will be cast on October 6, and counting will take place on October 9.

Bordoloi had won Nagaon on a Congress ticket in 2024 but quit the party in March this year and joined the BJP ahead of the Assam assembly elections. He subsequently resigned from the Lok Sabha, contested the assembly polls as a BJP candidate from Dispur and won.

Congress seeks FIR over purification ritual at UK Haldwani rally venue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

A Congress leader on Tuesday sought registration of an FIR against Shri Ram Dharmarth Seva Nyas president, Girish Chandra Pandey and 15 others over an alleged "purification" ritual performed at Ramila Maidan in Uttarakhand's Haldwani after the party president Mallikarjun Kharge's address.

In his complaint at Parliament Street police station, MP Mallu Ravi alleged that Pandey and 15 unidentified persons entered into a "criminal conspiracy" and performed a yajna and sprinkled Gangajal at the venue on August 10, two days after Kharge addressed the meeting there on August 8.

Ravi alleged that the act was aimed at insulting and



Police stop Congress leaders during a protest march towards the Uttarakhand CM's residence over an FIR filed against Rahul Gandhi in Haldwani over the 'purification' row, in Dehradun

PTI

humiliating members of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities and was contrary to constitutional guarantees of equality and the abolition of untouchability.

He said the incident had deeply hurt his feelings and those of his community, adding that he had received

calls from several people expressing concern over the alleged practice.

Ravi urged the police to register a case, arrest those responsible and take strict legal action under the SC/ST Act, the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act and relevant provisions of the BNS.

CWMA directs Karnataka to release 6,000 cusecs to TN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on Tuesday upheld the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's (CWRC) recommendation directing Karnataka to ensure a flow of 6,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days. The decision was taken at the 57th meeting of the CWMA held in Delhi under the chairmanship of SK Haldar. Officials from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka among others participated in the meeting.

"Karnataka has released 33 TMC of Cauvery water towards Tamil Nadu's Biligundlu border point so far in accordance with the directions issued by the CWMA and CWRC," Cauvery Neeravari Nigama Limited Managing Director Mahesha told reporters after the meeting. He added that



despite Karnataka being in a "distress situation", the state has been following the orders of the CWMA and CWRC and there has been no violation so far. "If the situation were normal, it would be different. But now that we are in a distress situation, we have to follow the distress-sharing proportion as per the orders

issued by the CWMA and CWRC. We have been following those orders so far and, accordingly, have released water," Mahesha told reporters.

Earlier in the day, the CWRC had recommended that Karnataka release water to Tamil Nadu at a rate of 6,000 cusecs for the next 15

days. The recommendation was upheld by the CWMA later in the afternoon, Mahesha said.

"The people of Tamil Nadu are demanding nearly 20,000 cusecs. They made this demand at the meeting, but at the same time, the CWMA's direction is restricted to 6,000 cusecs," he added. This

follows the CWMA's earlier order on August 25 when, upholding the CWRC's recommendation, it had directed Karnataka to ensure a flow of 9,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days.

The meeting was held following the Supreme Court's direction to the Tamil Nadu Government a day earlier to raise before the CWMA its grievance over the release of its proportionate share of Cauvery water by Karnataka.

At its 141st meeting on August 24, the CWRC had directed Karnataka to release water from its reservoirs and ensure a flow of 9,000 cusecs at the Biligundlu border point. The flow had to be maintained continuously for 15 days, during which Tamil Nadu was expected to receive approximately 11.66 TMC of water.

The release is expected to benefit Kuruvali cultivation and meet Tamil Nadu's drinking water requirements.

Rahul questions Amit Shah over Manipuri musician's death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday lashed out at the Modi Government over the beating to death of a musician from Manipur here, asking what Home Minister Amit Shah's ministry is doing to stop this "growing lawlessness" and demanding a swift investigation into the incident.

Vikram Singh, a 54-year-old Manipuri musician, died after a group of delivery workers and dhaba staff allegedly assaulted him when he objected to their shouting and drinking alcohol outside his Kilokari village apartment early Monday, officials said.

Police arrested seven men and apprehended one juvenile in the case. "Chongtham



LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi meets Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan at 10 Janpath, in New Delhi

PTI

Vikram Singh ji, a renowned musician from Manipur, went downstairs to ask some men to lower the noise outside his home. He was beaten to death for it," Gandhi said on X. A father, killed outside his

own home, in his own country's capital, he said.

"After many such incidents, every Northeast family in Delhi is asking the same question today - are we safe here?" the Leader of

Opposition in the Lok Sabha said. "What are Shah's MHA and Delhi Police doing to stop this growing lawlessness, especially against people from the Northeast?" Gandhi said. There must be a swift investigation, and the culprits must be brought to justice, he asserted and expressed condolences to Vikram's family, he said. The Sunlight Colony police station received a PCR call regarding the beating of Singh, who has been residing in Kilokari village for several years.

A preliminary enquiry revealed that Singh, who belonged to the Meitei community, objected to men creating a nuisance outside his house. He sustained injuries during the attack, in which the men rained blows and punches on him, police said.

Singh's son Yaiphaba rushed him to Holy Family Hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries, they said. Police initiated an investigation into the circumstances leading to the assault and Singh's death.

The North East Students Society, Delhi University (NESSDU) condoled Singh's death and described him as a "respected Manipuri musician". "According to reports, Singh went downstairs from his residence in Kilokari, New Delhi, after a group of six men were allegedly drinking and creating a disturbance outside his apartment. When he requested them to lower the noise, he was reportedly attacked by the group and sustained severe injuries, to which he later succumbed," the students' body said.

MP CM Yadav visits BEEAH HQ in Sharjah to discuss waste management

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Dubai

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday visited the headquarters of BEEAH in Sharjah during the three-day Annual Investment Meeting (AIM Congress) 2026 and held a high-level bilateral meeting with BEEAH Group CEO and vice-chairman Khalid Al Huraimel.

The discussions focused on environmental protection, smart city development, circular economy and advanced waste management solutions, with particular emphasis on their potential implementation in Madhya Pradesh.

During the visit, Yadav inspected BEEAH's facilities for the treatment of industrial waste, sewage waste, waste reprocessing and disposal of inert material. Experts briefed him on the advanced technologies being used at the facility.

Yadav invited BEEAH to explore investment and technology partnerships in municipal solid waste management and waste-to-energy projects across Madhya Pradesh. He said the State was moving rapidly towards clean energy and sustainable urban development and that BEEAH's digital, AI-enabled and circu-



MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visits the BEEAH waste management facility in Sharjah

PIONEER PHOTO

lar-economy capabilities could complement Madhya Pradesh's smart city and clean-energy initiatives.

The Chief Minister also discussed the potential for collaboration in electric vehicle-based fleets and renewable energy projects.

Highlighting Indore's waste management model, Yadav said the city had established an exemplary model in solid waste management and bio-CNG. He proposed that BEEAH work with the Indore model to develop advanced solutions aimed at improving waste management and achieving the goal of zero-waste landfills.

Yadav also formally invited Al Huraimel to the Global Investors Summit 2027, scheduled to be held in Bhopal next year. He urged BEEAH to consider Madhya

Pradesh as a priority destination in its future global expansion plans.

During the visit, Yadav toured BEEAH's AI-enabled and net-zero-ready headquarters, designed by renowned architect Zaha Hadid, and appreciated its sustainable design and advanced facilities.

Established as a public-private partnership in 2007, BEEAH has expanded from a waste management company into a diversified group operating in environmental services, renewable energy, technology, healthcare and sustainable real estate. According to the information shared during the visit, the group has more than 13,000 employees representing 46 nationalities and operations across the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

MPSC aspirants protest in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

Scores of MPSC aspirants staged a protest in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar on Tuesday, alleging widespread corruption and paper leaks, and demanded a high-level probe into the recent recruitment examinations.

Protesters gathered at the Kranti Chowk area of the city, demanding the immediate appointment of officers with a "clean image" to the top posts in the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC). A similar march was held in Pune on Monday.

ED action against Haque part of Operation Lotus 2.0: TMC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Trinamool Congress on Tuesday said the Enforcement Directorate's search of its Rajya Sabha MP Nadimul Haque's Delhi residence was part of "Operation Lotus 2.0" to put pressure on party lawmakers who do not cross over.

TMC sources claimed a former leader of the party had been in touch with



Haque as part of an attempt to pressure him, but the MP refused to "strike a deal".

The ED on Monday searched seven premises linked to Haque and his Urdu newspaper Akhbar-E-Mashriq in Kolkata, Delhi and Ranchi as part of a money-laundering probe. Officials had said the probe relates to allegations concerning the publication and dissemination of material promoting communal disharmony.

NGT orders replacement of dead saplings and tighter waste control in Bhopal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

National Green Tribunal's (NGT) Central Zone Bench in Bhopal has directed authorities to replace all saplings that died during compensatory plantation undertaken over the past five years and ensure 100% survival of the new plantations.

The direction came during the hearing of a petition filed by Nitin Saxena concerning tree felling and compensatory plantations linked to development projects in Bhopal. The bench, comprising judicial

member Justice Shyo Kumar Singh and expert member Sudhir Kumar Chaturvedi, expressed serious concern over the extremely low survival rate reported by the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Forest Department's Environmental Forestry Division. The tribunal observed that compensatory plantation is intended to offset the environmental impact of trees felled for development works. However, the death of planted saplings due to inadequate maintenance defeats the purpose and results in



environmental loss.

The NGT directed the authorities to immediately replace saplings that have died over the last five years and ensure regular watering and protection until the plants are fully established. It also sought details of the

average height and girth of saplings planted during the period, rejecting reliance solely on plantation figures recorded on paper.

The tribunal has sought site-wise photographs of 10,000 trees planted along roadsides and medians and 70,000 trees on land allotted by the Bhopal Collector in Huzur tehsil. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board have been given 30 days to submit the required information.

In a separate matter, the NGT issued directions for

stricter management of biomedical waste in Bhopal. The case involved alleged dumping and burning of expired medicines, medicine strips, syrup bottles and injection vials at an open site in Rani Avantibai Transport Nagar behind the RTO premises. A joint committee reported that the waste had been removed and handed over to an authorised Common Biomedical Waste Treatment Facility (CBWTF). The facility confirmed receiving 5.2 kg of expired medicines, which were disposed of through incineration. A sub-

sequent inspection on August 27 found the site clear of biomedical waste and related residues. The tribunal directed that biomedical waste transport vehicles have GPS-based online real-time tracking, separate cabins for staff and colour-coded waste containers, leak-proof waste compartments and bio-hazard markings.

The NGT directed that biomedical waste must be collected, transported and treated within 48 hours of generation. The MP PCB was asked to ensure that healthcare establishments have the

required authorisations and memberships of authorised CBWTFs and take action against violators.

The municipal corporation was also directed to strengthen source-level segregation and separate collection of household healthcare waste and ensure its regular handover to authorised facilities. It was asked to prevent mixing, unauthorised disposal and open burning or dumping of waste. The next hearing in the tree plantation matter has been scheduled for October 6. Advocate Harpreet Singh Gupta represented Saxena.

TAKE

A five-storey hostel in Delhi collapsed after years of regulatory neglect and dangerous construction. Once again, it took a collapse for authorities to wake up

Audits mean little without independent inspectors insulated from the bribery that residents in Satya Niketan already allege. Certification means little without a public registry that a student or parent can check before signing a lease. And suspension cannot be the ceiling of accountability – officials who cleared or ignored illegal conversions must face the same liability as the men who built them. Delhi does not lack rules for who may run a hostel. It lacks the will to enforce them before, rather than after, the bodies are counted. Nor is this a Delhi problem alone – millions of students across India's university towns live in hostels converted the same way, licensed loosely if at all, and inspected on the same schedule: never, until something falls down. Seven families now know the cost of that gap. The only honest tribute is to close it before the next monsoon, not after the next collapse.

Congress-led governments ran Delhi for fifteen consecutive years under Sheila Dikshit, during which unauthorised colonies climbed into the thousands and regularisation became routine policy. When the Supreme Court ordered sealing of illegally-used premises in

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That episode is widely cited as the moment enforcement became politically costly enough that governments have since preferred renewable moratoria to sustained implementation — a pattern the Supreme Court itself called a “cat and mouse game... to protect the vested interests of those having little or no respect for the rule of law”.

Three decades, seven documented mass-casualty events, and one official, unresolved seismic warning have outlasted every administration that has governed Delhi. That is public record, not partisan conjecture — and it is one voters and courts alike are entitled to keep asking every party in office to answer for.

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

—DAIV



We will experience eternal bliss (5.21). We will be



ISRO has scripted history by achieving a soft landing on the Moon through Chandrayaan and advancing space-docking technology through SpaDeX. The Indian Human Spaceflight Programme is an ongoing project to develop the technology needed for crewed spaceflight into low Earth orbit.



Himalayan Day: Guarding the roof of the world

Himalayan Day is a reminder that the mountains are more than a symbol of natural beauty. Emptying villages, climate-driven instability, unchecked tourism and fragile infrastructure are reshaping the region, turning an environmental and demographic crisis into an urgent national security challenge



KRIPA NAUTIYAL

Every year on Himalayan Day, we pause to celebrate a mountain system that has shaped civilisations, sustained economies, and defined the northern edge of the Indian subcontinent for millennia. Yet this year, celebration alone feels insufficient. Behind the

postcard images of snow-capped peaks and terraced valleys lies a quieter, more urgent story - one of emptying villages, sinking towns, warming glaciers, overwhelmed hill stations, and a national security question that has crept up on us largely unnoticed.

The Himalayas are part of a vast highland arc running nearly four thousand kilometres from Kyrgyzstan to Myanmar, encompassing the Pamir, Hindukush, and Karakoram ranges. Every one of the roughly four hundred mountains on earth that exceed seven thousand metres, including all fourteen that top eight thousand, lies within this system. Far from being an uninhabited wilderness, the Himalayas support around fifty million people, spanning an extraordinary range of ethnicities, languages, and faiths, with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam all converging across its length.

In India, the Himalayas cover Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the northeastern states, extending into Tibet, Bhutan, and Nepal. In Uttarakhand, communities like the Jaunsari trace their lineage to the ancient kingdom of Kuninda, remembered even in the Mahabharata — a reminder that these mountains have never simply been geography. They have been home, sanctuary, and civilisation, sustained by generations of traditional knowledge in farming, ethno-medicine, and reading the land itself. There is now a warming of crumbling mountains. Nowhere was this made clearer than on 26 August 2026, when a section of glacier atop Langtang Lirung in Nepal collapsed without warning, sending a catastrophic surge of ice, rock, and water nearly a hundred kilometres down the Trishuli River. More than 390 people were killed and 1,500 reported missing after the glacial collapse triggered catastrophic flooding across the Nepal-Tibet border region, with entire settlements in Nepal's Rasuwa and Nuwakot districts buried or swept away, and the strategic Gyirong border crossing with China destroyed. Satellite analysis showed the glacier moving at an accelerating rate in the months before it finally gave way - a pattern scientists link directly to warming temperatures and thawing permafrost in the high Himalaya. This was not an isolated freak event. Uttarakhand's own history includes the 2013 Kedarnath disaster and repeated glacial lake outburst warnings across Chamoli, Pithoragarh, and Uttarkashi. As glaciers retreat and permafrost weakens, the mountains that sustain a fifth of humanity are becoming measurably less stable - and the communities living closest to them are the first to pay the price. Joshimath's case is a warning from within.

Instability is not confined to remote glaciers. In early 2023, the town of Joshimath — gateway to Badrinath and home to around 20,000 people — began visibly sinking, with cracks spreading through homes, hotels, and roads until construction had to be banned across the area. Experts at the time stressed that resettlement must balance risk, impoverishment, and reconstruction carefully, with fair compensation so displaced families are not left destitute. Joshimath was a warning that unplanned construction and disregard for fragile mountain geology can turn any Himalayan town into a slow-motion disaster. The Himalayas are also being affected by the weight of too many feet visiting them. Char Dham pilgrimage numbers and hill-station visits have surged into the millions annually, straining water supplies, waste systems, and roads never designed for such volume. Even international pilgrimage routes are exposed: the Gyirong crossing destroyed in the 2026 floods carried over 100,000 crossings in just the first half of the year, much of it tied to the Kailash pilgrimage. Unregulated construction for resorts and homestays, hillside deforestation, and vehicles idling for hours on narrow roads add further pressure to a landscape already destabilised by climate change — turning affection for these mountains into one more force degrading them.

There is a crisis behind the celebration as well. Over the past two decades, Uttarakhand has lost lakhs of people from its remote hill districts to outmigration. State records now classify more than 1,800 villages as



HIMALAYAN STATE, DEMOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY ARE BOTH DESTINY. RECOGNISING THAT TRUTH — THROUGH SUSTAINED INVESTMENT, DISCIPLINED REGULATION, AND GENUINE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN DEFENCE, DEVELOPMENT, SCIENCE, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES — IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL. IT IS A NATIONAL SECURITY AND SURVIVAL IMPERATIVE THAT CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED

The writer is an anthropologist and defence and strategic studies expert. He has undertaken research on a unique Himalayan tribe

“ghost villages” — completely abandoned - with another 1,000 having lost more than half their population. Villages once celebrated for their crafts, such as one in Pithoragarh once renowned for wood carving, now stand hollowed out. The causes are painfully mundane: no roads, no schools within reasonable distance, no healthcare, and no reliable livelihood.

What makes this crisis different from ordinary rural-to-urban migration elsewhere in India is geography. These are not interior villages - they sit along India's most sensitive and contested frontiers with China and Nepal. That is where a demographic and developmental issue becomes a national security one.

Empty borders indeed are dangerous borders

Inhabited border villages perform functions no technology can fully replace. Locals have traditionally served as the eyes and ears of security forces, offering ground-level intelligence, informal early warning, and logistical support that satellites cannot replicate — a role documented as far back as the 1962 war and the 1999 Kargil conflict. As villages empty, this human network collapses, forcing security forces to stretch thin resources across larger, uninhabited zones, while depopulated areas also weaken India's claims of effective territorial control, a principle central to resolving border disputes.

The contrast with China is stark. Beijing has invested heavily in Tibet's border regions — new settlements, roads, military infrastructure, and deliberate population-settlement programmes — while comparable Indian forces are often based near sea level and require lengthy acclimatisation before deployment. Where China is repopulating its side of the Line of Actual Control as a strategy, India's border districts are demographically retreating. Outmigration further erodes the recruitment base for regiments like the Garhwal and Kumaon Rifles, prized for natural acclimatisation to altitude, while removing the community vigilance that has long helped monitor smuggling and trafficking along the open Nepal border, and the local knowledge and manpower that disaster response depends on most when a crisis strikes. None of this is irreversible. India's own experience during COVID-19 showed that reverse migration is possible when circumstances demand it, and mountain regions in Switzerland, Japan, Austria, South Korea, and Norway have all confronted similar decline and found ways to stabilise or reverse it - models Uttarakhand can adapt.

Addressing this requires treating border regions as both a developmental and a security priority, together. Practical steps include: creating “strategic border development clusters” with concentrated investment in roads, connectivity, healthcare, and schools; strengthening delivery of the Border Area Development Programme and Vibrant Villages Programme, which currently suffer gaps between allocated and released funds; adapting Japan's “Furusato” hometown-tax model, advocated by me in a number of forums, so migrants can direct part of their income tax to their ancestral villages; and mobilising retired soldiers as formal village defence volunteers. Equally urgent is building climate and disaster resilience directly into this agenda - glacial lake monitoring, stricter enforcement of seismic building codes, and an independent technical review of construction in towns like Joshimath and Dehradun — alongside regulating tourism growth through visitor caps, waste management mandates, and genuine enforcement of environmental clearances on the Char Dham and other pilgrim routes, so that the mountains are not loved to death even as they are repopulated. Himalayan Day should be more than a commemoration of natural beauty. It is a reminder that these mountains are inhabited, living, and fragile strategic spaces, where every abandoned village is a quiet retreat of India's presence at its most sensitive frontier, every unregulated tower and overcrowded pilgrim route is a disaster waiting to happen, and every warming glacier is a warning we can no longer treat as distant.

In this Himalayan state, demography and geology are both destiny. Recognising that truth — through sustained investment, disciplined regulation, and genuine partnership between defence, development, science, and local communities — is no longer optional. It is a national security and survival imperative that can no longer be ignored.

When parents need a break, society must step in



ARCHANA DATTA

A news story highlighted a recent initiative by New York City offering four hours of free, supervised childcare for children aged six to 13, to enable parents to do whatever they choose to do. Many consider it a radical shift in public policy stance in recognising the idea of leisure as a parental right, as against the conventional public policies that implement structurally supportive facilities for relieving their financial, temporal, and social pressures.

NYC's pilot project highlights the importance of parental wellbeing, emotional fulfilment, and the need for personal joy and rest, as ingredients of a happy

society, going beyond the concept of affordability or efficiency. Globally, in the face of falling fertility rates, many governments resorted to cash incentives to check the trend which threatened long-term economic stability. However, empirical evidence revealed that cash benefits alone cannot remove ‘invisible liabilities’, the recurring burdens of modern parenting, and bring in long-term societal changes, but can generate only short-term demographic bumps or the ‘tempo effect’. Countries with massive outlays like South Korea and Singapore continue to struggle with record-low birth rates despite multi-billion-dollar packages. While studies indicated that comprehensive structural support-affordable universal childcare, flexible parental leave for fathers, and job security-moderates the decline better.

The IMF and UN research also confirmed that expanding physical childcare infrastructure has roughly five times the positive impact on long-term fertility compared to equivalent spending on direct cash transfers. While parenting, from the perspective of sociology, is not merely a private or biological act of raising a child, but a socially constructed role and institutional practice. Parents, as agents of socialisation, act as primary links between the newborn and society. Parenting has come under intense focus as smartphones, algorithmic social media feeds, and immersive online gaming environments proliferate and completely rewrite the playbook for child development and family dynamics.

According to research, a staggering 66 per cent of parents state that parenting is harder today than it was two decades ago due to the onslaught of social media in everyday life. Many parents also encounter reverse socialisation as the rapid technological change flips the traditional family relationship, more so in developing countries because of structural inequalities, rapid infrastructure shifts and massive generational gaps.

Global scientific research confirms that ‘digital parenting’-which encompasses how parents manage their children's screen habits as well as their own device usage-has evolved into a critical public health concern. The US Department of Health and Human Services found that nearly half of all parents feel completely overwhelmed by daily stress because of a multitude of unique factors which include not only financial strains, children's health, safety and future, technology and social media, but also parental isolation and loneliness. While a new study based on 42 countries found that parents in the developed world often experience higher rates of mental health strain and burnout largely due to cultural individualism and lack of communal support. On the other hand, meta-analyses of data between 2010 and 2021 from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), comprising about 54 per cent of the world population, found that the children of parents with mental health problems were nearly twice as likely to have social-emotional development problems, compared to children of parents without them.

While India's rapid shift from traditional joint families to nuclear household structures has fundamentally altered the landscape of parenting, leaving modern parents to navigate unprecedented levels of psychological, financial, and emotional stress. Over the last few decades, urbanisation, professional migration, and a rising desire for individual autonomy have eroded the informal welfare networks that once shared the heavy lifting of childrearing. A research study from the Indian Journal of Paediatrics validated that nuclear families in India report the highest initial parenting stress levels, primarily because parenting has become a closed loop with no built-in safety net of grandparents or the extended kin.

Parental well-being, undoubtedly, forms the crucial foundation for a child's holistic growth. When caregivers experience high stress, poor mental health, or physical exhaustion, their capacity to nurture and stimulate the child diminishes (UNICEF). On the other hand, strong parent-child relationships act as a vital buffer against stress, and parents directly support the child's relational health (Van Leer Foundation). Multiple sociological and public health studies demonstrated that structured, guilt-free free time directly reduces parental burnout, strengthens couple dynamics, and fosters healthier parent-child relationships. When a society, workplace, or family ecosystem actively protects a parent's personal time, it sets off a positive chain reaction across the entire household. The right to leisure for parents is far more than a nice gesture; it is a fundamental necessity for parental welfare and sustainable family health. The state and society must stop viewing parenting as a purely private and individual responsibility, but look at it as a collective priority. The public policy interventions should go beyond alleviating primary logistical and financial stressors of raising a family, and must also support evidence-based community programmes that teach child development, stress management, and emotion regulation to help build parental resilience. Societal institutions and social networks must also evolve to reduce parental isolation and foster shared responsibility.

The writer is a former Director General of All India Radio, a retired Indian Information Service officer, and a media educator



The NCRB numbers challenge Akhilesh's crime narrative



VIKRAM SINGH

Akhilesh Yadav has repeatedly questioned the state of policing in Uttar Pradesh. He refuses to accept that law and order in the state has improved significantly compared with the past. In

the process, he appears determined to dismiss or downplay the official figures released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). This approach is unbecoming of a former chief minister. In India's democratic system, institutions perform their mandated roles, and senior political leaders are expected to respect them. Selectively accepting or rejecting institutional data based on political convenience runs counter to the spirit of democracy.

Clear improvement in crime rates

The NCRB's *Crime in India 2024* report presents unambiguous numbers. The national average crime rate under BNS/IPC cases stood at 252.3 per lakh population. Uttar Pradesh recorded a substantially lower rate of 180.2-nearly 28.5 per cent below the national average. Given that the state accounts for roughly 17 per cent of India's population, a higher absolute number of cases is only to be expected. The meaningful metric for comparison remains the crime rate per lakh popu-

lation. On that basis, Uttar Pradesh ranked 18th among all states and Union territories. This ranking reflects a tangible improvement in the law-and-order situation.

In 2024, a total of 35,44,608 cognisable crimes were registered across the country. Uttar Pradesh accounted for 4,30,552 of them. Relative to its population share, this figure is proportionate and lower than expected. The state's murder rate stood at 1.3 per lakh population against the national average of 1.9, placing it 29th in the country. Rates for dacoity, robbery and kidnapping for ransom were also well below the national averages. These are not abstract statistics; they reflect ground realities.

Stronger police performance on chargesheets

Registering cases is only one part of the picture. A key measure of police efficiency is the chargesheeting rate. Uttar Pradesh Police achieved a chargesheeting rate of 76.7 per cent, higher than the national average of 75.6 per cent. This indicates that investigators are completing inquiries and taking cases to court at a better rate



than the national norm. The chargesheeting rate in crimes against women has also remained robust.

Highest conviction rate in crimes against women

The most striking figure concerns convictions in cases of crimes against women. According to the NCRB 2024 report, Uttar Pradesh recorded a conviction rate of 76.6 per cent-the highest among major states. Of the thousands of cases that reached completion in the courts, the majority ended in conviction. This outcome is the result of sustained zero-tolerance policing, Anti-Romeo

rejection

When a leader of Akhilesh Yadav's stature continues to attack the policing system while ignoring or rejecting NCRB data, it undermines democratic norms. The NCRB is a central government agency that compiles figures supplied by the states. No data set is perfect, but dismissing official statistics for political reasons is neither constructive nor responsible. As a former chief minister, he should respect institutional findings. If he disagrees with the numbers, the proper response is to present alternative credible evidence or rigorous analysis-not blanket denial.

squads, dedicated women's help desks at police stations, fast-track courts and a strengthened prosecution system.

The rate of crimes against women itself remained below the national average. In 2024, it stood at 58 per lakh female population. The rape rate was 2.8, compared with the national average of 4.3. The data show not only better control over crime but also greater success in securing punishment for offenders.

Institutions deserve respect, not political

The Yogi government's zero-tolerance approach towards crime, decisive action against organised mafias, modernisation of the police force, expanded CCTV networks, the UP-112 emergency response system, and focused measures for women's safety have together produced measurable results. The downward trend in crime rates has continued over successive years. Even in the 2023 data, Uttar Pradesh remained well below the national average.

The numbers speak for themselves

The NCRB figures clearly endorse the improvement in Uttar Pradesh's law-and-order situation under the Yogi government. A lower overall crime rate, a stronger chargesheeting performance, and the country's highest conviction rate in crimes against women among major states together present a coherent and positive picture. Achieving this in India's most populous state was never going to be easy. Opposition parties have every right-and indeed a duty-to-raise questions. Those questions, however, must be grounded in facts. Rejecting institutional data does not strengthen democracy or public trust. The evidence shows that law and order in Uttar Pradesh is better than it was. Accepting that reality and building on it is the more democratic course. Political rhetoric is no substitute for respect for facts.

The writer is a former Director General of the Uttar Pradesh Police and is currently the Chancellor of Noida International University



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Order Order

LG Saxena to administer oath to J&K, Ladakh HC CJ

For the first time since Ladakh became a Union Territory in August 2019, its Lieutenant Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena, will administer the oath of office to Dr Justice Pushpendra Singh Bhati as Chief Justice of the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh on September 9, highly placed official sources said on Tuesday. The ceremony will take place at 11 am at the Convention Centre in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, the sources said.

On September 5, President Droupadi Murmu had appointed Justice Bhati, a judge of the Rajasthan High Court, as Chief Justice of the J&K and Ladakh High Court, with effect from the date he assumes charge of his office.

He will succeed Justice Sanjeev Kumar, who has been serving as the Acting Chief Justice since June 2.

(PTI)

Plea to review duration of law courses: SC bats for expert body

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said there should be an expert body on legal education while terming as “important” the issue raised in a plea seeking setting up of an education commission to review the curriculum and duration of law courses. “This is an era of expert bodies and there should be an expert body on legal education,” a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said.

“This is an important issue and the Union of India has an important role in this. They should come out with something,” the bench observed. The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

The plea said that the New Education Policy 2020 promotes four-year graduation courses in all professional and academic courses but the Bar Council of India has not taken appropriate steps to review the existing syllabus, curriculum and the duration of the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) and Master of Laws (LLM) courses.

It said the five-year duration of the BA-LLB and BBA-LLB courses was “disproportionate to the course material” and the long duration put an excessive financial burden on the students and their families. It has sought a direction to the Centre to set up a legal education commission or an expert committee consisting eminent educationists, jurists, retired judges, advocates and professors to review the syllabus, curriculum and duration of the LLB and LLM courses.

(PTI)



Graham Staines murder: SC asks Odisha to decide Dara’s remission plea

“You can’t keep it lingering like this,” the Supreme Court on Tuesday told the Odisha government, asking it to take a decision on the remission plea of Ravindra Pal alias Dara Singh, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of Australian missionary Graham Stuart Staines and his two minor sons in 1999.

A bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Vijay Bishnoi expressed displeasure over the state government’s failure to inform the court whether a decision has been taken on Singh’s remission plea.

“You want to reject it, you do it. You take a decision. We will deal with it. You can’t keep it lingering like this,” the bench said. The counsel



appearing for the State told the bench that a letter seeking adjournment has been circulated in the matter as the advocate-on-record was unwell.

Referring to its August 19 order passed in the matter, the bench said it had directed the State Sentence Review Board to take a decision and apprise the court of it.

“Last time also, time was

‘Confidential’ label alone not enough to deny mine maps, CIC orders disclosure of permissible info

The Central Information Commission has directed the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) to revisit the denial of Digital Elevation Model (DEM) maps of three limestone mines in Telangana, observing that merely classifying the information as confidential was not sufficient to deny its disclosure under the Right to Information Act.

Information Commissioner Sudha Rani Relangi directed the IBM’s Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) to provide relevant permissible information after



severing portions exempt from disclosure under the RTI Act.

If the information cannot be disclosed, the CPIO has been asked to incorporate relevant justification in a revised reply.

HC refuses to quash summons to Rahul over PM remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday refused to quash the summons issued to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in 2019 by a magistrate court in a complaint over his alleged defamatory comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A single bench of Justice N R Borkar dismissed Gandhi’s petition against the magistrate court’s order, but extended by six weeks an earlier directive to the lower court to defer hearing on the defamation plea.

Gandhi, the Leader of

Opposition in the Lok Sabha, sought the extension so that he can file an appeal in the Supreme Court.

The direction to defer the hearing on the defamation complaint meant that Gandhi would not be required to appear before the magistrate.

Justice Borkar said it did not find any “perversity and illegality” in the magistrate’s order and hence no reason to interfere. “This court finds no infirmity in the order. Hence, the petition is dismissed,” the HC said.

The complainant, M H Shrishrimal, had opposed Gandhi’s plea in the High



Court, claiming that being a member of BJP, he too was aggrieved by the remarks made against his leader.

The court refused to accept Gandhi’s contention that the complainant was not an

aggrieved party as the remarks were against a person and not the political party. BJP is a “determinate body with a class of members”, and complainant Shrishrimal is an active

SC rejects proposal of Parsvnath Developers for homebuyers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected the proposal of Parsvnath Developers specifying details about handing over possession of flats or repaying monies with interest to hundreds of hassled homebuyers, saying that it seemed like “another device” to delay the proceedings.

The top court cautioned that unless a fresh proposal satisfying the claims of all the “allottees or homebuyers” in companies and their subsidiary firms is placed on record, it will be “constrained to appoint a High-Powered Committee for entrustment of all the responsibilities.”

The homebuyers’ claims



refer to the refunds, compensation for delayed possession, and non-execution of RERA orders. Taking the proposal of Parsvnath on record, a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana said, “We are satisfied that the proposal is nothing but another device to delay the compliance of possession of (flats) and

delay the repayment of monies (to homebuyers.”

The bench permitted the firm to file another proposal which may be acceptable to homebuyers who are waiting endlessly for their homes.

It observed that state authorities, which should have worked to secure the interests of homebuyers, apparently conspired with the builder, which did not even follow the orders of a quasi-judicial forum like Haryana RERA. The bench also refused to entertain a plea of the Insolvency Resolution Professional (IRP), appointed in the insolvency proceedings against the real estate firm, that at least one of the frozen bank accounts be allowed to be operated by him for running affairs of the firm.

Tenure of 248 members of tribunals extended under new law: Govt to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Centre on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court that 248 members of different tribunals have been found eligible for extension under the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2026 and their services are being extended. The government said that eligible tribunal members would continue in office until they completed the five-year tenure prescribed under the new law or attained the applicable maximum age limit.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana took note of the submissions that three



members, two judicial and one technical, of the National Green Tribunal are demitting offices during the day and it will have adverse impact on the functioning of the green tribunal.

The bench, as an interim measure, extended the

tenure of three NGT members till appointments are made to their posts.

“We have heard with respect to three members of NGT, whose term is expiring today. Even though these members may not be entitled to further extension in view

of age embargo. However, the Attorney General states that the selection process for appointment of new members will be completed very soon.

“To ensure that day-to-day functioning of NGT is not hampered, we direct that

member of the party since 2018, Justice Borkar said.

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a prominent face of the BJP, and any remarks made against him therefore cannot be said to be incapable of affecting those who are members of the party,” the court said.

The court added that whether the remarks made by Gandhi were of a personal nature intended against PM Modi alone could be determined only during the trial after examination of evidence and witness statements.

After the court passed its order, Gandhi’s counsel Sudeep Pasbola urged it to

extend the interim order passed in 2021 for eight weeks so that the Congress leader could appeal in the apex court.

Shrishrimal’s lawyer, however, opposed this and said the trial in the case has been at a standstill since 2021. Justice Borkar continued the interim order for six weeks. Gandhi had challenged a Girgaum magistrate’s order of August 28, 2019, for a process against him on Shrishrimal’s complaint. The complaint had alleged that Gandhi defamed PM Modi in a public speech on September 20, 2018, in Rajasthan.

SC dismisses BDPL’s plea, brings one of India’s longest-running corporate disputes to end

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a significant victory for Peerless General Finance and Investment Company Limited, the Supreme Court on Tuesday declined to interfere with the judgment of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) and dismissed the appeal filed by Bhagwati Developers Private Limited (BDPL) in a dispute over the transaction of shares. The dismissal of the plea of BDPL brings to an end one of India’s longest-running corporate disputes, which has continued for more than three decades.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe dismissed the petition filed by the BDPL and refused to inter-



fere with the April 16 order of the NCLAT. Senior advocate Harish Salve, assisted by advocates Arunabha Deb and Ashika Daga, represented Peerless while senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, assisted by advocate Faraz Anees, appeared for BDPL.

The dispute originated in proceedings instituted in 1991 and concerned corporate decisions and share transactions undertaken by Peerless

in 1987-88.

At the heart of the dispute were the issuance of 30,000 equity shares by Peerless through private placement, approved by its shareholders and the board of directors, and the transfer of 15,626 shares by the existing shareholders. The transactions were subsequently challenged on allegations that they were intended to alter the control of Peerless and involved improper use or routing of funds.

The original proceedings were instituted under Sections 397 and 398 of the Companies Act, 1956. After the original petitioners sought withdrawal of the proceedings, BDPL was subsequently permitted to continue the litigation as the petitioner.

Prefer death to being called coward: Judge in 23rd capital punishment verdict in 4 months

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Muzaffarnagar (UP)

Additional District and Sessions Judge Ravi Kumar Diwakar, while pronouncing his 23rd capital punishment in the last four months in a dowry death case on Monday, said in his verdict that he would prefer death to being called a “coward judge”.

In his judgment awarding the death penalty to a man who burnt his wife over dowry demands, the fast-track judge asserted that he would not discharge his judicial duties “under pressure from mafias, gangsters or criminals”.

Diwakar observed that his parents had taught him to fear God and no one else, and



that if he performed his judicial duties out of fear of strongmen, mafias, gangsters or criminals, public faith in the judiciary would erode.

In his judgment, Diwakar said he would prefer death to being known as a coward judge and would continue serving as long as he could follow his principles.

The judge also stated that

he had been receiving threats from mafias and criminals, and alleged that about 100 serious cases had been withdrawn from his court, allegedly to benefit mafias and criminals.

It learnt that Diwakar has sought protection from senior officers, alleging that his security cover in Muzaffarnagar has been reduced.

Religious bodies cannot assume authority of courts: HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bilaspur

A religious institution or private body cannot assume the authority of a court established by law or use religious belief to determine or enforce an individual’s rights, the Chhattisgarh High Court observed while nullifying a divorce order passed by a private Sharia body.

A bench of Justice Amitendra Kishore Prasad set aside an order issued by ‘Idara-E-Shariya Islami Court’ in Raipur declaring a 38-year-old woman divorced, holding that fatwas or decisions passed by such extra-judicial forums have no binding legal authority.

The court had reserved its



order on August 12 and pronounced it on Monday.

The petitioner, Nirosh Abbasi, had challenged an order dated January 18, 2022, issued by the ‘Idara-E-Shariya Islami Court’, by which it had purportedly declared that she had been divorced through ‘triple talaq’.

She also challenged the very existence of the body,

contending that it was functioning in violation of the Constitution and had no legal authority to determine her marital status.

Abbasi’s first husband died in 2015, and she subsequently married Mohammed Abid Khan of Raipur in 2020.

Khan claimed that Abbasi’s children from her first marriage were unable to adjust

with the new family and, on that purported ground, she was subjected to ‘triple talaq’.

Abbasi had contested the purported divorce, asserting that religious law could not override the law applicable in India. She had also alleged harassment, cruelty and ill-treatment by Khan and his family members and submitted a complaint to the Raipur Superintendent of Police in October 2021, following which a first information report was registered.

The High Court noted that despite the registration of the FIR and pendency of proceedings before competent authorities, the ‘Idara-E-Shariya Islami Court’ proceeded to issue its January 18, 2022 order.

INTERVIEW



A DEGREE MAY TELL EMPLOYERS WHAT A GRADUATE KNOWS, BUT IT DOESN'T ALWAYS SHOW HOW THEY WILL PERFORM AT WORK. THE REAL GAP IS JUDGMENT. WHEN FACED WITH INCOMPLETE DATA, UNCLEAR BRIEFS AND COMPETING DEMANDS, MANY GRADUATES STRUGGLE. INDUSTRY EXPOSURE CAN HELP BRIDGE THAT GAP



Universities prepare students for industry

As Indian higher education moves towards a more industry-aligned, flexible and employability-focused future, the relationship between universities and the world of work is undergoing a significant transformation. In conversation with *The Pioneer*, Vikas Rai Bhatnagar, Group Vice Chancellor, Chandigarh University, shares his perspective on the gaps between education and industry, the role of experiential learning, the impact of NEP 2020 and the changes needed to prepare students for an evolving professional landscape

India has expanded access to higher education significantly. Why is that still not translating into enough employable graduates?

Access used to be the biggest challenge for students outside Tier 1 cities. Online education has changed that in ways a physical campus never could on its own. But access without industry connection only creates more degree-holders, not more employable professionals. That is the real gap today: at Chandigarh University Online, we have expanded reach faster than we have built the bridge between education and industry.

Much of what is called industry-academia collaboration today is still limited to a guest lecture that is rarely revisited. What is actually missing is industry being involved in curriculum design from day one, helping decide what students learn, not simply commenting on it after the fact. When that connection is built properly, the difference is visible. Students stop asking, "What will be on the exam?" and start asking, "Would this solution hold up in a real client meeting?"

If higher education is serious about employability, the answer is not simply more access, more courses, or more degrees. It is building a system where industry shapes what is taught, assessment measures how students think and solve problems, and faculty are continuously equipped to teach what the market actually demands.

What are graduates still missing when they step from the classroom into the workplace?

Judgment. Employers aren't complaining that graduates don't know enough, most of them know plenty. The complaint I hear most is that graduates can't operate with

ambiguity. Give them a well-defined problem with a textbook method and they'll execute it well. Give them a messy brief, half the data missing, three stakeholders wanting different things, and they freeze. That's not a knowledge gap, it's an exposure gap, and the only way to close it is to stop treating industry exposure as a guest lecture and start treating it as a co-taught module.

That's the thinking behind bringing organisations like KPMG, Microsoft, PwC and PMI directly into the classroom at Chandigarh University Online, not as one-off speakers but as people who help shape what's taught and grade what students produce against a live brief. When a PMI-certified practitioner working on building a curriculum, the classroom stops being a simulation of work and starts being an early draft of it

Industry-academia partnerships have existed for years. Why have they largely failed



to deliver the kind of industry exposure students actually need?

Stop calling it "collaboration" and start calling it "co-ownership." Most industry-academia partnerships I've seen are a guest lecture, a signed MoU, a photo, and then silence for a year. Nobody's job depends on the partnership succeeding, so it doesn't.

What works is when a company puts a real business problem on the table with a real deadline, and a faculty member's course grade depends on how well students solved it, not how well they memorised the theory behind it. We've run this model with corporate partners on some of our online postgraduate programmes: students work in teams against a live brief and get evaluated by people who must live with decisions like that in their own jobs. It changes the tenor of the classroom completely.

The other change needed is longer commitment windows. A one-semester partnership barely lets you calibrate the brief. Three years in, you start seeing which students the model actually transforms.

Five years after NEP 2020, has the policy genuinely

changed the way Indians access and experience higher education?

For online degree education specifically, NEP has done more than any single policy before it. Multiple entry and exit, the academic credit bank, and the formal recognition of ODL and online programmes at par with on-campus ones have together made it legitimate and not a fallback option for a working adult to build a degree over time instead of in one uninterrupted stretch. I've watched learners in their thirties and forties, already employed, resume an education they'd abandoned a decade earlier so that they could move up in their careers. That's the policy doing exactly what it was designed to do.

If you could redesign Indian higher education from scratch, what are the three changes you would make first?

First, make industry-embedded, evaluated project work a mandatory graduation requirement for every degree not an optional internship a student can skip, a live external brief with real accountability built into the grade. Second, give online and on-campus degrees genuine parity in the eyes of employers and regulators, not just on paper - same rigour, same recognition, no asterisk. Third, build a funded national infrastructure for continuous faculty upskilling, with protected time attached, not another circular asking colleges to "encourage" it.

If I had to rank them, I'd start with the industry-embedded requirement, because it forces the other two to happen anyway. You can't run a mandatory live-project model without faculty who are current enough to supervise it credibly. Change what a degree requires students to actually do, and the rest of the system has no choice but to catch up.

Perspective turns knowledge into wisdom

D PARTHASARATHY

Dean, Office of Academics and Professor, Nayanta University

Imagine a city announces a new flyover to reduce traffic congestion. The traffic engineer is pleased: traffic will move faster. The economist calculates the savings in travel time. The politician points to a visible symbol of development. Pollution experts measure the reduced emissions due to smoother flow of traffic.

Now ask the shopkeeper whose storefront will disappear beneath the flyover. Ask the pedestrian who now has to cross six lanes of traffic. Ask the bus commuter who wonders why the money was not spent on public transport, as flyovers serve a minority of the population. Ask the residents of the neighbourhood who will live with the noise and pollution.

Suddenly, the problem looks very different. This is the paradox of complex problems: the more we know about them, the more we may discover that there is to know. Expertise tells us how to solve a particular problem; perspective provides clarity on what the problem actually is.

Universities trying to improve student learning, governments tackling inequality, companies managing organisational change or challenges posed by AI, and societies responding to climate change-all confront problems that cannot be adequately understood from a single vantage point.

A traffic engineer sees traffic, usually only vehicular traffic. A sociologist may observe patterns of inequality and access. An economist perceives incentives and trade-offs. A political scientist sees institutions and power. An environmental scientist sees ecological costs. The commuter, pedestrian,



shopkeeper and resident see something else again: the consequences of decisions made by others with little consideration for their well-being. Perspective begins with a deceptively simple question: Who is affected, and in what ways? Perspective is not merely about collecting different opinions. It requires empathy-the ability to imagine what a problem looks like from somewhere other than where we happen to stand. What is a solution to one group of stakeholders may actually be a problem to another.

And empathy alone is not enough. Different perspectives come with different amounts of power to serve populations and to design specific solutions.

Hence, we must also ask: Whose perspective is heard? Whose is missing? Who gets to define the problem? Who benefits from a solution, and who bears its costs? This is where perspective becomes a question of justice and equity.

That is also why education should be more than the accumulation of specialised knowledge. History, economics, sociology, political science, philosophy, liter-

ature and the sciences offer not merely different information but different ways of seeing. A broad education should teach us to move between these ways of seeing-and to recognise the limits of our own.

Diverse experiences-through fieldwork, community engagement, collaborative projects, literature, case studies and encounters with people whose lives differ from their own-can deepen this process. Classroom discussions, field experiences, community engagement, collaborative projects and encounters with unfamiliar social worlds can all become occasions for this kind of learning.

This requires the classroom to become a space where a diversity of experiences becomes a source of evidence, rather than merely something students are invited to mention. The teacher can deliberately design questions for which students' different locations, family backgrounds, social experiences, disciplines or observations produce genuinely different answers. That is a powerful moment of learning about perspective. The classroom becomes a small laboratory of perspective.

From classrooms to startup founders

RASHMI MITTALI

Pro-Chancellor, LPU

In 2014, India counted a few hundred startups. By January 31, 2026, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade had recognised 212,283 of them; the count has since crossed 2.40 lakh, with over 23.36 lakh direct jobs created by the close of the financial year - enough to make India the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. FY26 alone added more than 55,200 recognised startups, the highest in any year since Startup India was launched in 2016, and a rise of nearly 52 per cent over the previous year. The Union Budget for 2026-27 has backed this trajectory with capital rather than applause: a further ₹20,000 crore for the ₹1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation Fund; a ₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund; and a sharpened focus on deep tech, semiconductors and frontier sectors.

Behind that arithmetic lies a question higher education has not yet answered at scale: where do founders actually come from? They come from classrooms. Almost every founder in that 2.40 lakh was, a few years earlier, a student being prepared, quite deliberately, for employment rather than enterprise. That is the gap. India has built world-class instruments for funding a startup once it exists. What it has not built, uniformly, is a university system that treats the making of one as a legitimate academic outcome.

This is a design problem, not a resource problem - and design problems have solutions that can be copied.

For instance, institutional case

studies from universities illustrate the impact of long-term academic restructuring around enterprise building. Students have earned over ₹20 crore through startups, freelancing, consultancy, paid internships and innovation grants, resulting in over 400 student-launched ventures. Additionally, more than 15,000 students now participate in experiential learning models rather than traditional classroom routes.

During a campus investor event, student-led startups raised ₹2.65 crore, while enterprises such as Femora AI and Macbease were featured at the India AI Impact Summit 2026. Notably, alumnus Anirudh Sharma co-funded space-tech company Digantara, securing \$12.5 million in venture funding to build space-surveillance satellite infrastructure.

None of that is accidental, and none of it came from motivational lectures. It came



FOR THIS APPROACH TO BECOME NATIONAL PRACTICE RATHER THAN AN INSTITUTIONAL EXCEPTION, FOUR THINGS MUST CHANGE:

- **Academic Credit for Enterprise:** Entrepreneurship must carry academic credit as a matter of course - a registered venture, a granted patent, or a shipped prototype should count towards a degree exactly as an examination does.
- **District-Tied Incubators:** Every institution should operate a functioning incubator tied to the industry of its own district, not a nameplate on a corridor.
- **Early Campus Risk Capital:** Risk capital must reach the campus at the stage where ₹5 lakh decides more than ₹5 crore later; the Budget's new funds need an explicit academic channel.
- **Academic Fail-Safes:** Failure must be made academically survivable so that a student whose venture folds in the sixth semester loses a company, not a year.

from changing the rules of the degree itself.

A student can now earn up to half of their academic credits through experiential learning. Attendance is relaxed for founders whose ventures cross Technology Readiness Level Six, and academic relaxations follow DPIIT registration.

Scholarships are calibrated not to examination marks but to

monthly startup revenue, grants received, private investment raised and intellectual property granted - a venture earning above 78 lakh a month or attracting 70 lakh in investment can carry a full programme fee waiver. Three incubators, from a NIDHI Technology Business Incubator to an MSME-supported facility, sit on the same campus as the classrooms. In short, the university stopped treating a company as a distraction from the degree and started treating it as evidence of one.

The return here is measurable. A generation trained to build rather than only to apply will create employment instead of queuing for it - and India's demographic advantage, the youngest large workforce in the world, will convert into an entrepreneurial one only if its campuses are wired for it.

A cap table is a short document listing who owns what and who was willing to build it. The task before Indian higher education, between now and 2047, is straightforward: make certain that the names on those documents are increasingly the students' - and that they got there because their university helped, not despite it.

India's examination system enters a new era of trust

SUMAN CHAKRABORTY

Director, IIT Kharagpur
Institute Chair Professor and JC Bose National Fellow

India's public examination system is not merely an administrative mechanism for conducting tests. It is one of the largest exercises of institutional trust and social mobility anywhere in the world. For a young person in a metropolitan coaching centre, a student in a village with intermittent connectivity, or a first-generation learner, the examination hall represents something profoundly democratic: the belief that where I come from should matter less than what I can demonstrate. That belief is precious, and it must be protected.

This is the larger context in which the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2026 needs to be understood. The original 2024 legislation created a statutory framework against organised unfair practices in public examinations. The 2026 amendment, which received Presidential assent on July 31, 2026, strengthens that framework substantially. But its significance goes beyond punishment. It recognises that the architecture of examination malpractice has changed, and therefore the architecture protecting

examinations must change as well.

Today, vulnerability can exist anywhere along a complex chain-question preparation, digital storage, printing, transportation, examination centres, communication networks and organised intermediaries. Technology has made examinations more scalable and attacks more sophisticated. Artificial intelligence (AI) adds another dimension. AI can improve question-bank management, detect anomalies, strengthen cybersecurity and identify suspicious patterns. But the same ecosystem can amplify organised misconduct.

The answer cannot be technological retreat, nor can algorithms manufacture integrity. The principle for the AI era is clear: humans must set the rules; technology must strengthen their implementation. AI should be a value enhancer, not a value setter. An algorithm may identify an anomaly, but human institutions must determine what constitutes misconduct. AI may flag a suspicious pattern, but due process must decide culpability. Technology may strengthen surveillance and authentication, but society must determine the boundaries of fairness and justice.

For India, the consequential question is not what a perfect examination system looks like, but what is the fairest, most secure and humane system that can work reliably for millions of



people. National deployment must account for bandwidth limitations, power interruptions, language diversity, accessibility, geographical remoteness and digital preparedness. India must resist both the romanticism that technology can be avoided and the techno-utopianism that technology can solve everything.

A law intended to protect examinations

cannot depend only upon the severity of punishment. Deterrence also depends upon the probability and speed of consequences. But deterrence is not punishment alone; deterrence is consequence made credible. Speed must never replace fairness; it must support it. The amendment retains an appellate pathway to the High Court, including appeal against orders granting or refusing bail, while providing timelines for such appeals. Confidence comes not from severity alone, but from severity bounded by due process.

Every paper leak has consequences far beyond the leaked paper. It penalises the student who refused shortcuts, disadvantages families that invested scarce resources in preparation, damages confidence in merit and, when an examination is cancelled or repeated, disrupts preparation, travel, expenditure and emotional energy. Examination integrity is therefore fundamentally about protecting the honest candidate. The strongest message should not merely be, "Be afraid to cheat." It should be: "If you play fair, the system will protect your effort."

India now has the opportunity to move from examination security to examination resilience. Security asks how we prevent a question paper from leaking. Resilience

asks whether we can anticipate vulnerabilities, detect breaches early, contain their spread, establish responsibility quickly and recover without imposing disproportionate costs on innocent students. This requires secure-by-design infrastructure, controlled access privileges, cryptographic authentication, auditable chains of custody, intelligent anomaly detection, cybersecurity stress-testing and rapid-response protocols.

India is entering an era in which AI will increasingly participate in learning, assessment, administration and decision support. The question is therefore larger than whether examinations become more digital. It is whether they become more trustworthy while becoming more technological. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2026 is an important step in that direction because it recognises that organised attacks on examination integrity require stronger deterrence, specialised investigation and time-bound adjudication. Its ultimate success should not be measured by how many people are punished, but by how rarely these provisions eventually need to be invoked. Ultimately, an examination is not a test of our technology. It is a test of our collective commitment to fairness.

FROM THE WORLD

CHINA

Climate change behind flood

The massive flash flood that struck the Tibet-Nepal border on August 26 has put China's numerous hydropower projects in the region, including the mega dam on the Brahmaputra River, under renewed scrutiny, as Chinese experts said global warming and accelerating glacier retreat may have contributed to the recent gigantic mudslide.

The disaster was likely the result of a combination of factors, including rising temperatures and accelerated glacier melt according to Chinese climate experts.

"According to our monitoring, we can see the short-time rain days, or the imbalance of the rain pattern and the rising of the temperature in Tibet," said Sun Xiaoguang, head of the Meteorological Observatory of the Tibet Autonomous Region. (AP)

PAKISTAN

Hate banners target Ahmadis

Extremist elements on Tuesday displayed banners carrying derogatory and hostile messages against Ahmadis outside a university in Punjab province, a day after UN experts expressed grave concern over continuing discrimination, violence and legal restrictions targeting the minority community. Several banners, displayed along Sargodha University Road, called for the exclusion and social boycott of Ahmadis.

Some described Ahmadis as "disloyal to Pakistan", demanded their removal from key positions and called for their complete boycott. "We hate Qadianiyat," read one banner, referring to the community. Jamaat-i-Ahmadiyya condemned the display of banners, saying that differences in religious beliefs must never become a basis for spreading hatred against any sect or community. (PTI)

Houthi attacks on Saudi ignite fires at oil facilities, 70 hurt

SAMY MAGDY ■ Cairo

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebel group in Yemen launched a wave of attacks on Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, wounding more than 70 people and igniting fires at oil facilities and utilities in the kingdom, authorities said.

The attack was a major escalation in renewed fighting between an important US ally and the Iranian proxy group. It also threatened to further destabilise a region rocked by nearly three years of wars and deliver a new blow to the global economy.

Weeks of clashes have



added pressure to limited global oil supplies as the Houthis target a shipping route Saudi Arabia has used to transport oil to world markets while the Strait of Hormuz is throttled due to the US-Iran war. Tuesday's attacks hit Saudi oil facilities connected to the alternative route, the Bab el-Mandeb, a strategic waterway off the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula that connects the

Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.

The conflict between Saudi Arabia, one of the US's closest Middle East allies, and the Houthis, a Shiite militant group armed and trained by Iran, goes back years.

The new fighting has threatened to reignite the country's civil war, which began in 2014 when the Houthis seized the capital, Sanaa, and much of northern Yemen and forced the Government into exile. A Saudi-led coalition intervened the following year to try to restore the Government to power. Fighting has greatly died down since a truce was reached four years ago. (AP)

Eiffel Tower shut as staff strike over controversial Hindu group visit

ADITI KHANNA ■ London/New Delhi

The Eiffel Tower was closed for a day after its staff went on strike over female employees being "moved away" for a visit by a Hindu religious group, according to the iconic Paris monument's management and staff.

The incident that triggered the strike took place on Saturday during a visit by around 100 people associated with BAPS (Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam) Swaminarayan Sanstha, Euronews reported.

When asked about the controversy, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a media briefing in New Delhi: "We are aware of the opening of a temple by the BAPS Sanstha in the Paris area. As to the particular issue pertaining to the Tower, this is a matter purely between the entities concerned."

Diane Davoine, a union representative in France, said in a statement that female workers had been "moved away from their workstations as the delegation passed by". Eiffel Tower employees condemned what they described as "professional instructions that led to female employees being sidelined, replaced and made invisible because of their sex", the report said.

In a statement issued by the CGT trade union, the staff condemned "workplace instructions that led to female employees being sidelined, replaced and rendered invisible on the basis of their gender". "Some were asked to



leave their posts and withdraw to other areas. In some posts they were replaced by men," according to the statement quoted by France24.

"And all female employees were instructed not to go through or cross certain areas while the delegation was present." The popular tourist hub in the French capital, which witnesses nearly seven million visitors a year, opened as usual on Tuesday, after the operating company, Societe d'Exploitation de la tour Eiffel (SETE), acknowledged that limited "interactions with women" had been requested by a BAPS delegation, and that the "conditions should not have been accepted".

Paris Mayor Emmanuel Gregoire said the Eiffel Tower staff's anger was legitimate, said the reported conditions unacceptable and said an investigation would be launched to establish what happened. "I am taking note of the anger expressed by the employees of the Eiffel Tower,

and I want to tell them that their discontent is legitimate," Gregoire said on X.

"It is not acceptable that such conditions can be tolerated. These are neither my values, nor those that the Eiffel Tower should uphold, where everyone - regardless of gender - should be able to move about and act freely, without distinction between women and men.

It is urgent that full light be shed on the facts that led to this mobilisation." "Equality between women and men will never stop at the foot of our historical monuments, nor anywhere in this city.

It must be applied everywhere, for everyone," he added. "I will ensure this, everywhere and without exception. An investigation will be launched as quickly as possible." The BAPS Hindu temple in Paris has issued an apology and said it understood the concerns raised over the incident, adding that they took them "very seriously". (PTI)

Indian envoy Trivedi meets Bangladesh president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

Indian High Commissioner Dinesh Trivedi on Tuesday met Bangladesh President Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, in his first meeting with the newly elected head of State, and discussed strengthening the "deep-rooted" and multifaceted ties between the two countries.

Alamgir was sworn in as President on August 21. Trivedi paid a courtesy call on Alamgir at Bangabhaban and conveyed warm greetings to the president, wishing him success in his continued service to the people of Bangladesh, the



Indian High Commission said in a social media post. "The discussion underscored the deep-rooted bonds between India and Bangladesh, built on shared history, close cultural ties

and strong people-to-people relations," it said. They emphasised the importance of strengthening the bilateral partnership for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the two countries, the mission

said. Later in the day, Trivedi met Minister of Shipping, Railways, Road Transport and Bridges Sheikh Rabiul Alam. State Minister for Road, Highways and Railways Habibur Rashid was also present.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a range of issues of mutual interest relating to railways, shipping, connectivity and bilateral development projects.

"They underscored the importance of strengthening connectivity between India and Bangladesh as a key enabler of economic engagement and closer people-to-people ties," the mission said in another post.

Flights to Indonesia's Capital resume after volcano activity

NINIEK KARMINI/EDNA TARIGAN ■ Jakarta

Flights to and from Indonesia's Capital and nearby regions resumed Tuesday after ash from a volcanic eruption forced two days of airport closures that halted nearly 3,000 flights. Soekarno-Hatta International Airport and Halim Perdanakusuma Airport serving Jakarta and three other regional airports reopened just after midnight, Transportation Minister Dudy Purwagandhi said. Two resumed normal operations by late morning after one reopened Monday.

Purwagandhi said the airports were allowed to resume operations only after authorities determined conditions were safe for aviation. He said airport authorities and airlines were required to inspect all aircraft before flights resumed.

"Pilots and flight crews were also instructed to remain aware of restricted airspace zones established around areas affected by



volcanic ash," Purwagandhi said. Aviation authorities temporarily restrict aircraft from areas where ash has been detected because volcanic particles can damage engines and other critical systems.

The continuous eruption of Anak Krakatau with lava fountains and loud booms ended on Sunday but the volcanic island remained active Tuesday, with four eruptions recorded between dawn and midday. (AP)

Bangladesh SC warns ICT prosecutor over sub judice remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dhaka

Bangladesh's Supreme Court on Tuesday warned the chief prosecutor of the country's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) against making public comments on matters pending judicial review, a day after he said deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina had no scope to appeal against her death sentence.

"The apex court has warned the chief prosecutor (Aminul Islam) for speaking openly about a pending matter in the media, and he has been asked to refrain from commenting on it," a court official said.

Islam acknowledged the warning, saying, "I will not make any comments in advance from now on."

The warning came during the hearing of an appeal filed by death row convict Abul Kalam Azad, also known as Bachchu Razakar, against his conviction by the ICT-BD in absentia. A four-member bench of the Appellate Division adjourned the hearing for four weeks after a brief hearing, with Islam appearing for the state.



Rajnath arrives in Sri Lanka on three-day visit



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is welcomed by Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha upon his arrival at Bandaranaik International Airport, in Colombo, Sri Lanka PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Sri Lanka on Tuesday for a three-day visit aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and expanding cooperation in defence and regional maritime security.

"Looking forward to a productive engagement with the leadership of Sri Lanka during the visit," Singh said ahead of his visit to the island nation.

He will also be interacting with the Indian diaspora.

"Besides our longstanding partnership as well as deep historical and civilisational ties, Sri Lanka is one of our most important partners under the Neighbourhood First and MAHASAGAR initiatives," he added. Singh was received at the Bandaranaik International Airport by Sri Lanka's Deputy Minister of Defence Maj Gen (Retd) Aruna Jayasekara and Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha, the Ministry of

Defence said. He received a warm and traditional welcome from the Sri Lankan side, reflecting the close and enduring ties between India and Sri Lanka, it added.

According to the ministry, Singh is leading a high-level delegation comprising senior officials from the ministries of Defence and External Affairs. This is the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Sri Lanka in 38 years. Coinciding with his visit, the Indian Navy's INS Udaygiri, an advanced indigenous stealth guided-missile frigate, arrived at the Colombo port on Tuesday.

The frigate was received in accordance with naval traditions, the Sri Lanka Navy said.

Sri Lanka Navy personnel will also visit the frigate for capability familiarisation, knowledge sharing and onboard training, it said.

The crew of INS Udaygiri will participate in goodwill events with the Sri Lanka Navy and visit tourist and cultural sites.

Nepal death toll climbs to 1,357 as rescue efforts continue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Kathmandu

The death toll from the devastating flash floods in Nepal rose to 1,357 on Tuesday as more bodies were recovered from the affected areas, authorities said.

Rescue teams continued to search for 5,326 people, while 13,583 people have been rescued so far, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) said on Tuesday.

The death toll from the devastating flash floods reached 1,357 after more bodies were recovered from different affected areas. The joint command of security forces have recovered 363 bodies from Chitawan district, 223 from Nawalparasi East, 222 from Nawalparasi West and 197 from Nuwakot. Similarly, 169 bodies were recovered from Rasuwa, 75 from



Gorkha, 70 from Dhading and 38 from Tanahu. So far, 102 bodies have been handed over to the family members after identification and fulfilling due legal formalities,

according to NDRRMA.

The floods, triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border, sent the Bhotekoshi River raging downstream, washing

away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges and damaging hydropower projects across northern and central Nepal.

The disaster also killed at least 43 people on the Chinese side, while more than 500 people remain missing in Tibet, according to Chinese media reports.

Around 3,500 people were staying in Government-run holding centres across Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading as of Monday, according to the NDRRMA. But many others displaced by the floods have sought shelter wherever they could, including schools, temples, monasteries, empty office buildings, community buildings and tents set up in forested areas.

Major rescue operations are also underway at hydropower projects in flood-affected districts, where 121 men are believed to be trapped in underground tunnels.

El Nino effect leaves over 115,000 in Sri Lanka facing drinking water shortage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

Over 115,000 people in Sri Lanka are facing drinking water shortages as an emerging El Nino condition, coupled with high temperatures and scant rainfall, intensified dry weather across parts of the island, officials said on Tuesday.

Meteorology Department Director General Ajith Wijemanna said an El Nino condition was developing and could be contributing to the prevailing weather pattern. El Nino, a periodic warming of the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, can alter tempera-



ture patterns across the region. Its development is being closely monitored for its possible impact on Sri Lanka as the dry spell continues.

The island nation, surrounded by the Indian Ocean, is likely to feel the effect more intensely, experts opine. According to the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), 115,586 people have been affected by the El Nino weather pattern across seven of Sri Lanka's 25 administrative districts.

The severe heat and lack of rainfall have affected many areas, creating serious challenges for the availability of water, it said in a

press release. Pragith Danansuriya, a DMC official, said 115,534 people are currently affected by the shortage of drinking water.

In the north-central Anuradhapura district, the water level in Eruwewa reservoir, which has a capacity of about 3,500 acre-feet, has fallen to around 1,000 acre-feet, irrigation officials said. Water levels have also declined in areas, including Matale in the central region and Nandikadal in the northeast, officials said.

The prolonged dry conditions are also affecting aquatic life and wildlife. Thousands of small fish have

been found dead in the Mullaithivu lagoon in the northeast, with officials attributing the deaths to the mixing of seawater and freshwater.

Natural water sources are drying up in several areas, forcing wild animals to move in search of alternative sources of water.

The drought has also affected agriculture, with crops including paddy, coconut, banana and guava facing damage due to lack of water.

Wijemanna said some rainfall could be expected from the end of September, raising hopes of relief from the prevailing conditions.



As one founder put it, India's drone revolution is creating an opportunity "much larger than drones alone." This report draws on data from Tracxn, Market and Markets, IMARC Group, the Drone Federation of India, and recent reporting in Business Standard, Outlook Business and other industry publications, current as of mid-2026.

Duleep Trophy final: Shami, Mukesh lead East Zone’s charge, restrict South to 242/6

G UNNIKRISHNAN ■ Chennai

Veteran pacer Mohammad Shami’s decisive blows while operating in short spells helped East Zone close in on the Duleep Trophy title, reducing South Zone to 242 for six on the third day of the final here on Tuesday.

Skipper Tilak Varma (56, 133b) and CV Milind (0) were batting at stumps after Shreyas Gopal (26) got out in the closing minutes of the day. South still trail by 466 runs and overhauling East’s humongous 708 is nearly impossible from this point.

Shami’s three spells on the day were - 3-2-1-0, 4-1-10-1 and 4-1-6-1 - for an overall 11-4-17-2 and the short bursts were, perhaps, prompted by the humid Chennai conditions.

While the numbers do not look intimidating, they offered ample evidence of Shami’s control over his craft and the ability to crank up when it mattered.

When the South Zone bowlers struggled for impact in the first two days on a docile pitch, Shami bowled a lovely stump-to-stump line, bringing back the memories of some of his remarkable Test match spells.

The right-arm pacer was incredibly persistent with his lengths, seldom



giving any room for batters to play their shots.

Shaikh Rasheed (29) and Devdutt Padikkal (62) were involved in a 56-run stand for the third wicket, looking good for something bigger.

But Shami intervened at that juncture, trapping Rasheed in front of the wicket with a peach which came in that little bit to avoid the forward prod

of the batter. The 36-year-old was summoned 20 overs later by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who wore the captain’s band for a while in the absence of Ishan Kishan, and made an immediate impact.

The pacer jettisoned Ravichandran Smaran, whose partnership with South skipper Tilak had swollen to 45 by then.

The set up was impeccable. Shami started with a fuller delivery on the stumps and then followed it up with two deliveries that came in to the left-hander.

The fourth one moved away from Smaran, who feathered it to stumper Kumar Kushagra, who nudged Sooryavanshi into taking the DRS and the TV umpire upheld the appeal for a caught behind. Before that Padikkal looked set for another big knock while tackling East bowlers with characteristic solidity.

Fresh from his fruitful tour to Sri Lanka, the Karnataka batter cruised to a fifty in 65 balls, reaching the little landmark with a drilled four through third man off pacer Mukesh Kumar.

But the Bengal pacer had his revenge very soon. Mukesh bowled one on the pads of Padikkal, knowing the left-hander’s penchant to play the pick-up flick.

He indeed played that shot but did not time it that well, only to give substitute DP Das an easy catch in the deep. (PTI)



Important season for me: Mukesh after impressing in Duleep Trophy

G UNNIKRISHNAN ■ Chennai

Mukesh Kumar has boosted his India comeback efforts, taking 11 wickets so far in the ongoing Duleep Trophy and the pacer said the upcoming domestic season carries a lot of “importance” for him.

The Bengal pacer’s last appearance in India colours was in 2024, quietly getting pushed behind in the rush of some new-gen pacers like Prasidh Krishna and Gurnoor Brar.

“This is a very important season for me because the Duleep Trophy is the first tournament of the season, and we are currently playing the final. To prepare for this, I arrived at the BCCI CoE some four days ahead of the Duleep Trophy,” East Zone’s Mukesh said after the third day of the Duleep Trophy final against South Zone here.

“I was focusing on how I wanted to bowl, training with the red ball, and working on fitness. Hopefully, the upcom-

ing Ranji Trophy season goes well too,” he said.

That red-ball preparation did not go in vain as Mukesh played a big role in East’s victory over Central Zone in the semifinal at the Centre of Excellence grounds, taking seven wickets. He carried that form onto the title clash here as well, already plucking the important wickets of in-form Devdutt Padikkal and Narayan Jagadeesan.

“Yes, the plan against Devdutt was to bowl stump-to-stump because if I bowled outside off, we knew he was coming off two centuries in Sri Lanka. On wickets like this, if you offer width to batters, runs will leak. “Our plan as fast bowlers was to stay as consistent as possible and bowl dot balls, letting them take the risks. They would try to force the pace and get out because they need to score runs,” he said. The South Zone pacers were trying to purchase wickets through short-pitched deliveries but that strategy did not yield any results as East piled up 708 runs in their first innings. (PTI)



Mandhana strengthens her position in T20 rankings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

India opener Smriti Mandhana on Tuesday strengthened her position inside the top five of the ICC T20 rankings after producing a remarkable 124 against Hong Kong in the ongoing Women’s Asia Cup.

Mandhana’s 64-ball innings not only helped India secure a 137-run victory and a place in the semi-finals but also saw her become the all-time leading run-scorer (10,880 runs) in women’s international cricket across all formats, surpassing Mithali Raj (10,868).

The innings was also her 18th international century, moving her clear at the top of the women’s international centuries list.

Mandhana is ranked fifth in the standings. India all-rounder Deepti Sharma has also made notable progress in the T20I rankings.

Her contributions with both bat and ball have lifted her two slots into sixth position among the leading bowlers and she remains strong in fifth place among the all-rounders, underlining her continued importance to India’s success in the tournament.

United Arab Emirates captain Esha Oza continues to underline her status as one of the leading Associate Member players, moving to 39th among the T20I batters and remaining just outside the top 20 in the all-rounders’ rankings.

Cricket Australia approves privatisation in BBL, Melbourne Renegades up for sale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Melbourne

Cricket Australia on Tuesday approved private investment in its flagship T20 event, the Big Bash League, clearing the decks for Melbourne Renegades sale in full even though the country’s players’ body said “significant issues remain unresolved” in the new plan. CA announced that it would invite bids from private owners for a 100 per cent stake in Melbourne Renegades.

But the Australian Cricketers Association (ACA) CEO Paul Marsh said the two bodies remain a “long way apart on a new agreement” which includes a renegotiated pay deal with the players.

The new ownership in the franchise will be in place for the 2027-28 Big Bash League and Women’s Big Bash League seasons, and the sale process will have no impact on the upcoming seasons of the BBL and the WBBL this Australian summer, reported cricket.com.au. The Melbourne Renegades is being run in a caretaker mode by CA.

The body will also consider putting the other clubs for sale under the “self-determination” model, “which allows each state to make its own decision if and when to sell stakes in

their BBL clubs,” the report added. Hobart Hurricanes, Perth Scorchers and Melbourne Stars are the other clubs believed to be interested in private investment.

But others such as Sydney Sixers, Sydney Thunder, Brisbane Heat, and Adelaide Strikers, are not interested in private investment at the moment. Cricket Australia chairman Mike Baird said the governing body will continue

to have control over international scheduling, availability of the players, salary caps as well as media rights.

While CA will retain power to approve or veto investors and set reserve price, any changes to club names, colours and branding would need approvals. In case of Melbourne Renegades, CA will be the approving party while for other teams, the same would be the relevant state body.

Warner captain of Australia Champions in WCL Season 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Melbourne

David Warner was on Tuesday named captain of the Australia Champions team, now owned by Ricky Ponting, for the third season of the World Championship of Legends.

Ponting was also revealed the owner of the franchise along with Puneet Singh as the team unveiled a new identity ahead of the third

season. Warner was named as the latest marquee addition to the squad in an event here.

“There’s nothing better than getting back out there, playing alongside some greats of the game and giving the fans plenty to cheer about,” Warner said in a statement.

Ponting said, “I’m excited to be part of Australia Champions and the World Championship of Legends.

NZ batter Chapman opts for casual contract but open for India series



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Auckland

New Zealand batter Mark Chapman has opted for a “casual contract” instead of a formal central deal with New Zealand Cricket to “pursue an opportunity” in the Australian Big Bash League but will remain available for the upcoming home series against India. New Zealand Cricket announced Chapman’s decision with a statement on Tuesday.

“Black Caps batter Mark Chapman has made the decision to shift to a casual contract with New Zealand Cricket for the 2026-27 season to pursue an opportunity in the Australian Big Bash League.

“Chapman remains available for selection for the upcoming India tour of New Zealand alongside the four other casually contracted players in Finn Allen, Lockie Ferguson, Adam Milne and Tim Seifert,” the NZC stated.

Real Madrid faces Inter Milan in Champions League as Mourinho aims for another title



JAMES ROBSON ■ Madrid

Real Madrid kicks off its Champions League campaign against Inter Milan on Tuesday, with new coach Jose Mourinho aiming to win the trophy for a third time.

Mourinho is back at Madrid for a second spell after last managing the club in from 2010-13. He won a league title and the Spanish cup during that time, but not the Champions League. Since then Madrid has gone on to dominate European club soccer’s biggest trophy, winning it six more times and extending its record to 15 titles.

And while another Champions League would see Mourinho join Pep Guardiola, Luis Enrique, Zinedine Zidane and Bob Paisley on three wins, he doesn’t feel the need to make up for the fact that he was unable to lift

the trophy when he was last at Madrid.

“I finished my work here in 2013. We won what we won, and we lost what we lost. We gave everything, but it’s a closed chapter,” Mourinho said. This has nothing to do with the past—absolutely nothing. These are two different moments in Real Madrid’s history. “In 2010, they hadn’t reached the quarterfinals in years, nor had they played a semifinal in many years.

Now, it’s a Real Madrid that has won in the last 10 years. These are two different moments, but it doesn’t change my way of thinking. If you ask me if I’m excited about winning the Champions League with Real Madrid, obviously yes, but completely separate from any context of not having achieved it previously.” Madrid hosts Mourinho’s former club Inter at the Santiago Bernabeu.

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नेत्रदान

नेत्रदान – महादान, रोशन करें किसी की पहचान

नेत्रदान है जीवनदान!

आपके नेत्रदान से दो नेत्रहीन व्यक्तियों को नई रोशनी मिल सकती है और उनका जीवन बदल सकता है।

नेत्रदान क्यों करें ?

मृत्यु के बाद नेत्रदान से दो लोगों की दृष्टि लौटती है।

यह एक सरल, सुरक्षित और महान सेवा है।

नेत्रदान से समाज में प्रेम, करुणा और मानवता को बढ़ावा मिलता है।

आपका छोटा सा निर्णय किसी के लिए नई जिंदगी बन सकता है।

नेत्रदान करने की प्रक्रिया

1. नेत्रदान फॉर्म भरें या नजदीकी नेत्र बैंक/अस्पताल में संपर्क करें।

2. मृत्यु के बाद सूचना दें तुरंत नजदीकी नेत्र बैंक को संपर्क करें।

3. टीम आपके घर आएगी नेत्र संग्रह की प्रक्रिया त्वरित व सम्मानजनक होगी।

4. दो लोगों को मिलेगी रोशनी आपके से दो व्यक्तियों को नई दृष्टि मिलेगी।

आज ही संकल्प लें – मैं नेत्रदान करूंगा / करूंगी

नेत्रदान करें महादान करें जीवनदान करें

सभी सरकारी अस्पतालों में निःशुल्क नेत्र जाँच एवं उपचार का प्रावधान है

आकस्मिक स्थिति में किसी भी मरीज को एम्बुलेंस द्वारा स्वास्थ्य केंद्र पर पहुंचाने हेतु निःशुल्क राज्य हेल्पलाइन नंबर 108 (टॉल फ्री) पर कॉल करें।

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नेत्रदान एवं अन्य किसी भी स्वास्थ्य संबंधित किसी भी जानकारी/शिकायत हेतु 24/7 निःशुल्क राज्य हेल्पलाइन नंबर 104 (टॉल फ्री) पर कॉल करें।

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राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, झारखण्ड

स्वास्थ्य, चिकित्सा शिक्षा एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार

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