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PIONEER IN SHORT

BRAHMOS TESTS SUCCESSFUL

The Indian Army on Monday successfully conducted a combat launch of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a test range in the Bay of Bengal. Executed jointly by a BrahMos unit under the Southern Command and the Tri-Services Andaman & Nicobar Command, the mission featured coordinated planning and simulated battlefield conditions. The missile, fitted with upgraded guidance and control systems, demonstrated high-speed stability, terminal accuracy and reliable target engagement. All operational objectives were achieved, underscoring the Army's readiness to deliver real-time precision strikes amid evolving security challenges. Southern Command chief Lt Gen Dhiraj Seth praised the achievement, calling it a significant step in strengthening long-range strike capabilities. The test reaffirms the accuracy and dependability of the indigenous BrahMos system and marks continued progress in India's strategic deterrence and technological advancement.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking during the first day of the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi

PTI

House or arena? PM fires

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said Parliament is not a place for drama but for delivery and attacked the Opposition, accusing it of turning the House into a “warm-up arena” for elections and an outlet to vent out frustration after defeat.

Speaking to reporters outside Parliament ahead of the start of the Winter Session, he said the House

must not become a stage for political theatrics but a platform for constructive and result-driven debate, and offered to give the Opposition tips to bring positivity in politics.

“Even for raising slogans, you can do so across the country. You have spoken where you have been defeated. You can also speak where you are yet to face defeat. But in Parliament, the focus should be on policy, not slogans,” PM Modi said in a swipe at

Opposition parties for their performance in Bihar. The Monsoon Session of the Parliament was washed out over the Opposition's protests on Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar. The Opposition has also threatened to stall the Winter Session of the Parliament over SIR if the issue is not discussed in Parliament.

Referring to the drubbing of Opposition parties in the Bihar polls, he said they were perturbed by the elec-

toral loss and unable to digest failure.

“Defeat should not be the ground to create disruption. Victory should not convert into arrogance either,” the PM said.

Highlighting the importance of informed debate, PM Modi urged members to offer constructive and accurate critiques where needed, so that citizens are better informed. “This work is demanding, but it is essential for the nation,” he said.

SC strikes at digital arrests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday issued a slew of notices to multiple departments, agencies and States in connection with digital arrest scams. A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi asked the States, including Opposition-ruled West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana, to accord consent to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) under the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act for probing digital arrest cases in their jurisdiction.

The court also issued notice to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and sought its response as to why AI or machine learning technology was not employed to identify mule accounts and freeze those which are used in cyber fraud cases.

The court, which passed the directions in a suo motu case registered on the complaint of an elderly couple from Haryana, noted that mostly senior citizens were targeted and their hard-earned money was extorted by the cyber criminals.

“The gravity and enormity of crimes can very well be



<FILE PHOTO

judged by the fact that senior citizens were mostly targeted by the fraudsters by adopting different devices to dupe them,” the bench said.

It directed information technology (IT) intermediaries to provide details and cooperation to the CBI in probes related to digital arrest cases.

The bench also directed the CBI to seek assistance from Interpol to reach cyber criminals operating from offshore tax haven countries.

It asked the Department of Telecom to ensure that telecom service providers do

not provide multiple SIM cards to one user or entity, which may be used in cyber crimes. “The Department of Telecom to submit a proposal for the consideration of this court which can be enforced by the telecom service providers to deter multiple SIM cards in one name or entity,” the bench said.

To ensure better coordination with the CBI, the bench asked all States and Union Territories (UTs) to set up a regional and State cybercrime coordination centre to deal with such online offences.

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The ByStander



TOBACCO, SIN GOODS TAXES RECAST

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday introduced two bills in the Lok Sabha to maintain tax incidence on tobacco, pan masala and other “sin goods” after the GST compensation cess ends. The Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, proposes replacing the current compensation cess on all tobacco products with a revised excise duty, giving the Centre flexibility to raise rates and preserve revenue. The bill sets excise duty on cigarettes, cigars and cheroots at ₹5,000-₹11,000 per 1,000 sticks, while imposing 60-70 per cent duty on unmanufactured tobacco and 100 per cent on nicotine and inhalation products.

FOOTBALL REPS TO MEET MINISTER

Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will meet key stakeholders in Indian football on December 3 to address the ongoing crisis in the sport. The discussions will include representatives from the All India Football Federation (AIFF), former commercial partner Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), and various clubs. The intervention follows a Supreme Court directive for the ministry to facilitate a solution. The crisis arose after FSDL informed AIFF in July that it would suspend the Indian Super League (ISL) due to uncertainty over the renewal of the 15-year Master Rights Agreement, which expires on December 8. The disruption has affected the planning and conduct of domestic football leagues.

To prevent fraud, phones to get built-in Sanchar Sarthi app

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The Department of Telecom (DoT) has directed manufacturers and importers of mobile handsets to ensure that its fraud reporting app Sanchar Saathi is pre-installed in all new devices within 90 days.

According to the direction dated November 28, all mobile phones that will be manufactured in India or imported after 90 days from the date of issuing of the order will need to have the app.

“The central Government hereby directs every manufacturer and importer of mobile handsets that are intended for use in India... From 90 days of issue of these instructions, ensure that the Sanchar Saathi mobile application, as specified by DoT, is pre-installed on all mobile handsets manufactured or imported for use in India,” the order said. For all such devices that have already been manufactured and are in sales channels in India, the manufacturers and importers of mobile handsets will be required to push the app through software updates.



Representative photo

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“All manufacturers and importers of mobile handsets that are intended for use in India shall submit compliance reports to the DoT within 120 days from issue of these directions,” the direction said.

The app enables users to report International Mobile Equipment Identity number (IMEI)-related suspicious misuse and also to verify authenticity of IMEIs used in mobile devices.

Tampering with telecom identifiers, including the 15-digit IMEI number of mobile phones, are non-bailable offences and can lead to imprisonment of up to three years, fines up to ₹50 lakh, or both under the

Telecommunications Act 2023. Telecom subscribers can also report about fraudulent calls, lost mobile phones etc through the app. The DoT has asked mobile phone companies to ensure that the pre-installed Sanchar Saathi application is readily visible and accessible to the end users at the time of first use or device setup and that its functionalities are not disabled or restricted.

The DoT direction said that action will be taken as per the provisions of the Telecommunications Act 2023, the Telecom Cyber Security Rules 2024 and other application laws if the firms fail to comply.

GPS SPOOFING NEAR KEY AIRPORTS, GOVT SAYS

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The Union Government on Monday informed the Parliament of incidents of Global Positioning System (GPS) spoofing reported near major Indian airports. Acknowledging these cyberattacks for the first time, the Government added that the Wireless Monitoring Organisation (WMO) has been directed to identify the source of spoofing. GPS spoofing refers to attempts to manipulate navigation systems by giving false signals.

Responding to questions raised by MP S Niranjana Reddy, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu said, “Some flights reported GPS spoofing in the vicinity of IGIA, New Delhi while using GPS based landing procedures, while approaching on RWY 10. Contingency procedures were used for GPS spoofed flights approaching to RWY 10. There were no effects on movements of flights, on other runway ends having conventional navigational aids being operational.”

CONTINUED ON >> P4

CM links Bhagwad Gita message to education and public life

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ujjain

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav on Monday inaugurated the three-day International Gita Mahotsav at Dussehra Maidan, urging students and citizens to view the Bhagavad Gita as a guide for courage, duty and moral clarity.

Opening the festival on Gita Jayanti, Dr Yadav greeted attendees and said the event sought to draw attention to the lessons Lord Krishna gave Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. He said Ujjain's historic and spiritual identity made it an apt host, noting that traditions place Krishna at the Sandipani Ashram after the killing of Kansa.

Dr Yadav said the narrative of Krishna learning at the ashram, confronting adversity and placing dharma above power should inspire students to value education and resilience. He pointed to recent efforts by several states to introduce the Gita in school curricula under the National Education Policy, saying the move aimed to reinforce ethical and cultural values.

The Chief Minister said the state government, guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was marking Gita Jayanti with public programmes empha-



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sising devotion, knowledge and duty. He said the government had accorded importance to teachings of the Gita and stories of Krishna in school syllabi and described the text as containing the “essence of life”.

He announced that Indore would receive a Gita Bhavan and said similar centres were being built across urban local bodies. These buildings, he said, would house libraries and computer-science learning facilities and serve as cultural spaces.

Calling Krishna a figure who upheld principles of duty over allegiance, Dr Yadav recalled that while Krishna's army

fought for the Kauravas, he stood with the Pandavas. He also referred to accounts of Krishna appointing a disciple, not his son, as successor in Dwarka.

Dr Yadav lit a ceremonial lamp before a Krishna portrait as the programme began. Scholars including Dr Shriram Tiwari honoured him and other guests before a recitation from Chapter 15 of the Gita.

The festival, organised by state cultural and education departments and local administration, will continue at Dussehra Maidan until December 3, with participation from students, priests and teachers.

In Punjab, being *vehla* is a sport that wins the day in digital age

MONIKA MALIK ■ Chandigarh

Being called *vehla* (idle) in Punjab is usually an insult—a shorthand for laziness, drift and wasted time. But in Moga's Gholia Khurd village, the word has been rehabilitated, repackaged and turned into a medal-worthy talent. Here, doing absolutely nothing is no longer a flaw—it is a competitive sport, a social experiment, and an oddly mesmerising public spectacle.

Fifty-five contestants—husbands and wives, grandparents and grandchildren, young men and elderly women—have gathered under one roof for an unusual endurance test of stillness: the *Vehle Rehan da* Competition, where partici-



Representative photo

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pants sit for hours without phones, without movement, without washroom breaks and without distractions. The last person to remain seated wins.

The rules are simple, severe, and almost comic in their cruelty. Mobile phones are banned. Sleeping is forbidden. Games are outlawed. Food from home is not allowed. Fights or raised voices mean instant disqualification. Once a contestant gets up to use the washroom, they're out for good—with no second chances. Even “match-fixing” earns an immediate exit.

The reward? A bicycle and ₹4,500 in cash for the winner, ₹2,500 for the runner-up, and ₹1,500 for third place. But

RULES FOR VEHLE REHAN DA COMPETITION

- Mobile phones strictly prohibited
- No one is allowed to get up or change position
- No washroom breaks during the contest
- Sleeping is not permitted at any stage
- No games, physical activity or time-pass allowed
- Outside food or drinks no allowed

- Fighting, shouting or arguments invite instant disqualification
- Intoxicated participants are barred from entry
- Any kind of ‘match-fixing’ leads to immediate exit
- Once out, re-entry is strictly forbidden
- Only the last person sitting is declared the winner

more than money or metal, what's at stake is a strange new bragging right—Punjab's ultimate champion of doing nothing.

Organiser of Moga's village event, Vikramjeet Singh, called it a need-of-the-hour competition. “We have forgotten

how to sit and talk...Mobile addiction has taken over our lives. This contest checks how long a person can sit peacefully without screens, without noise, without running away from their own thoughts,” he said.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Chief Minister leads Gita Mahotsava recitations in Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav on Monday called the Bhagavad Gita a "marvellous and sacred text" that resolves every human doubt, as Madhya Pradesh marked Gita Mahotsava with large-scale recitations across the state and a grand International Gita Mahotsav in Bhopal.

Speaking at Ravindra Bhavan, Dr Yadav said the Gita held the essence of universal knowledge and consciousness. He said Lord Krishna guided humanity through dharma and duty, teaching Arjuna to act without attachment to results. He extended greetings to people across the state and said the scripture reminded individuals that the soul ultimately merges with the divine.

The Bhopal event opened with Vedic chants, lamp-lighting and floral tributes to Krishna. In the presence of saints and scholars,

11,000 Krishna followers, devotees, students and young brahmacharis recited the 15th chapter together. Organisers described the chanting as spiritually charged and said it created a deep devotional atmosphere. Dr Yadav joined participants for group photographs and their celebrations. Dr Yadav said it felt as though Krishna himself were present. He recalled last year's mass recital by 3,500 students at Lal Parade Ground and said this year's programme would set a new record, with more than three lakh Gita readers reciting across 55 districts, 10 divisions and 313 development blocks.

Across the state, schools and grounds hosted simultaneous recitations. In Jabalpur, around 5,100 students from 13 schools recited 15 shlokas at Shri Pandit Lajashankar School. Officials said the initiative helped familiarise students with the Gita's teachings and build confidence

through collective chanting. Sehore held a district-level recital of the 15th chapter at the Residential Sports Complex. Speakers highlighted the Gita's message of karma, knowledge and devotion, and said its principles remained relevant for disciplined, ethical living.

In Narmadapuram, about 2,000 students gathered at SNG School Ground. The programme began with Saraswati Vandana and continued with a mass recital. Speakers asked students to avoid excessive mobile-phone use and oversleeping, urging them to develop disciplined study habits. Pipariya marked the International Gita Jayanti Mahotsav with a recital organised by the Culture Department. Veer Bharat Nyas and World Gita Pratishthanam. At Government Girls' College, students recited verses and received free copies of the Gita. Raisen saw around 2,100 participants chant together at the

Government Girls' Higher Secondary School Ground. The event drew criticism when a senior official joined the aarti wearing shoes while holding a Gita, prompting objections from attendees.

Back in Bhopal, Dr Yadav said Krishna placed education above all and studied at Sandipani Ashram in Ujjain, where he mastered the Vedas, Upanishads, 64 arts and 14 sciences. He said Krishna's friendship with Sudama, rooted in that ashram, taught lessons in loyalty and generosity. The Chief Minister said the state was developing all sites linked with Krishna's life as pilgrimage destinations. He said places believed to have been touched by Krishna's footsteps were being mapped as "Shri Krishna Pathway". He added that Gita Bhavans were being built in all urban bodies, with the first at Indore's Rajwada now ready.

Additional Chief Secretary for

Home, Culture and Tourism Shivshekhar Shukla said cultural initiatives had expanded under Dr Yadav's leadership. He said 11,000 devotees in Ujjain had also recited the 15th chapter earlier in the day and that more than three lakh reciters across the state would set a new milestone. He said the government was working with dedication to take the Gita to every household.

This year's International Gita Mahotsav featured an AI-based musical drama, Krishnayan, along with dance performances, an art exhibition and a special presentation by artists with disabilities titled Gita on Wheels.

Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang, Minister of State Krishna Gaur, Minister of State Dharmendra Singh Lodhi, MLAs Rameshwar Sharma, Bhagwandas Sabnani and Vishnu Khatri, along with saints, scholars and hundreds of Gita reciters, attended the programme.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav addresses during a programme organised on International Gita Mahotsav, at Ravindra Bhawan in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

CM to conduct intensive departmental reviews from Dec 2

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav is set to conduct a series of intensive departmental review meetings beginning December 2, according to a schedule issued on Monday. The multi-day exercise, spread across December 2, 3, 8 and 9, aims to evaluate the performance, pending targets and future action plans of key government departments ahead of the new administrative quarter. The review will open on December 2 at the State Assembly, where the Chief Minister will personally assess the functioning of three major departments - Narmada Valley Development, Water Resources and Energy - from 4 pm to 5.30 pm. Earlier in the day, Panchayat & Rural Development Minister

Prahlad Singh Patel and School Education Minister Uday Pratap Singh will present their departmental progress reports before the CM takes over the back-to-back sessions.

On December 3, the venue shifts to the State Mantralaya, where meetings begin at 11 am with an appraisal of the Public Health and Family Welfare Department, led by Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla. Reviews continue through the day, covering Cooperatives, Women & Child Development, Food & Civil Supplies, Social Justice, Agriculture and Horticulture, with respective ministers scheduled to brief the Chief Minister on achievements and challenges. The final session of the day, from 4.15 pm to 5 pm, will focus on Horticulture and Food Processing under

Minister Narayan Singh Kushwaha.

A second round of review meetings resumes on December 8, beginning with Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection at 11 am, followed by Commerce, Animal Husbandry, Urban Development, Tribal Affairs and OBC Welfare. Ministers Govind Singh Rajput, Jayant Malaiya, Narmada Prasad Prajapati, Kailash Vijayvargiya, Kunwar Rishad Shah and Nagar Singh Chauhan are slated to participate. The final meeting of the day will cover Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), headed by Minister Bhattam Karat.

The concluding day, December 9, will see reviews of Public Works at noon and Medical Education from 12.45 pm, followed by a Cabinet meeting from 3 pm to 5 pm at Khajuraho.

CAT aspirant killed in hit-and-run

Bhopal: A 23-year-old CAT aspirant was killed in a hit-and-run in the early hours of Monday near Bhadbhada Bridge in Kamla Nagar, police said. Police identified the victim as Yogesh Pal, also known as Raja, who was returning home on his motorcycle around 3 am after dropping a friend in Ratibad when an unidentified heavy vehicle hit him and fled. Morning commuters spotted his body and alerted police, who sent it for post-mortem and later handed it to the family. Yogesh, a resident of Baghsewania, was the younger son of a physiotherapist posted at a government Ayurvedic hospital. His elder brother works in the private sector. Investigators are reviewing CCTV footage from the area to trace the vehicle and its driver. The probe is ongoing.

Field teams comb forests as tiger census begins in Madhya Pradesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh on Monday launched the first phase of Tiger Census-2026 across all its tiger reserves, rolling out a coordinated, technology-driven field exercise aimed at producing a sharper and more credible estimate of the state's big-cat population. The seven-day operation is underway in Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Ratapani and every other reserve in the state.

An early highlight came from Pench Tiger Reserve, where field teams sighted a male tiger around 8 am in the Bison beat. Multiple pugmarks and scat samples were also recorded across different locations, signalling strong tiger activity. To facilitate census work, all parks have shifted the morning safari start time from 6.30 am to 7.30 am.



Deputy Director of Pench Tiger Reserve Rajneesh Singh said it was a lucky day for the Pench staff as they recorded the first big cat sighting of the exercise.

The forest department is using camera traps, specialised foot surveys, habitat assessment and other scientific tools to ensure robust data collection. Madhya Pradesh last reported 785 tigers in the 2022 census,

retaining its position as the country's leading "Tiger State". Volunteer participation remains a distinctive component of the effort. In Pench, 22 volunteers selected for the count have arrived from 13 states and 20 cities. Their professions range from medicine, veterinary sciences and astrology to software engineering, civil engineering, shipping, education and government service. The volunteers' median age is 33, with participants between 21 and 56 years.

The census follows a structured methodology. The first three days focus on carnivores such as tigers, leopards and wild dogs. The next three days are dedicated to herbivores including barasingha, sambar, chital, nilgai, bison and wild boar. All data is being logged directly into designated mobile applications by trained forest staff and volunteers. Officials say the expanded, science-led approach will generate a more reliable picture of tiger movement, prey availability and habitat quality across Madhya Pradesh. As the exercise progresses, the department expects additional sightings and a stronger evidence base to guide future conservation planning.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav greets Speaker of the Madhya Pradesh State Assembly Narendra Singh Tomar on the first day of the winter session in the state assembly in Bhopal on Monday. Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar (L) also seen in pic. Pioneer photo

Instagram honey-trap gang busted, two policemen under scrutiny

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Police have arrested a woman and two men accused of running a fast-moving Instagram honey-trap racket, while two constables from the Yadav Colony outpost have been sent to the police lines after suspicions of their involvement surfaced.

Police said the woman, who posed online as "Ragini Sharma", lured a 19-year-old from Belkheda to Jabalpur after weeks of chatting. The teen and his cousin met her in Vijay Nagar on Saturday before she took them to a rented house in Shatabdipuram.

After sending the cousin out to buy snacks and beer, she allegedly summoned her associates Sahil and Vivek. The duo barged in, assaulted the teen and recorded a video. They demanded Rs 100,000, threatening to upload the clip and file a rape case if he refused to pay. The cousin returned and was

also threatened. When the relatives they called reached the spot and declined to pay, the woman and her accomplices phoned two constables, who arrived within five minutes - far quicker than normal for the distance.

The complainants alleged the constables also tried to intimidate them, warning they could be jailed based on the woman's claim. The family alerted SP Sampat Upadhyay, who ordered an immediate inquiry by Kotwali CSP Ritesh Kumar Shiv. The probe found the constables had not informed superiors and reached the location without a woman officer, violating protocol. Both have been attached to the police lines, pending further action.

Ragini, Sahil and Vivek have been booked under multiple BNS sections and sent to jail. Police are investigating how many men were targeted and whether more people were linked to the operation.

Protest over child deaths rocks assembly

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The opening day of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly's winter session on Monday saw dramatic scenes as Congress MLAs, led by Leader of the Opposition Umang Singhar, staged a sharp and symbolic protest inside the Assembly premises over the recent deaths of children allegedly caused by contaminated cough syrup and what they described as rising crimes against children and government apathy.

Congress legislators arrived carrying effigies of infants to highlight what they called the state government's failure to protect children. In one of the most striking visuals of the demonstration, a woman Congress MLA appeared dressed as 'Putana', the mythological figure associated with harm to infants, to symbolise what the party termed the "dangerous negligence" of the BJP government and its health administration.

Addressing mediapersons, Umang Singhar accused the government of extreme insensitivity, particularly in the wake of child deaths reported from Chhindwara. "Several households have lost their little ones forever, mothers' arms have fallen empty, yet this government - like a modern-day Putana - has no time to review the responsibilities of the Health Department," he said.

Singhar added that hospital mismanagement had reached a level where "children are being bitten by rats", yet the government was allegedly avoiding discussion, refusing to answer questions, and not fixing accountability. "This is not an isolated incident - it raises serious concerns about child safety, the state of healthcare facilities and the priorities of the government. People want to know why the government remains silent even when children's lives are at stake," he said.

Congress MLAs reiterated that they would continue to raise the issue aggressively both inside and outside the House. "The BJP government's negligence has become intolerable.

Congress writes to Chief Electoral Officer over lapses in electoral roll revision

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Congress has raised fresh concerns over major irregularities in the state's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, alleging that thousands of eligible women voters - particularly those who migrated to Madhya Pradesh after marriage from other states - are facing unnecessary hardships in getting their names included in the voter list.

In a formal letter to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on Monday, JP Dhanopia, chairman of the party's election commission coordination committee, urged urgent intervention to protect the voting rights of married women who have relocated from states such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and others. The letter states that while these women were enrolled in the 2003 electoral rolls of their native states, their names have not been included in the 2025 electoral draft lists despite possessing valid documents.

According to the Congress, the difficulties stem from

arbitrary handling of the enumeration form during the SIR process. The party alleges that numerous errors have surfaced - forms not being delivered on time, incomplete or blank forms being distributed, and enumerators failing to match existing household data. Women seeking to enrol in their marital homes reportedly received no guidance, leading to widespread confusion during the verification period that runs until December 16.

The letter also states that the Election Commission's instructions require physical delivery of enumeration forms and door-to-door verification, but the process has been reduced to uploading forms on the voter portal, causing delays and misreporting.

Congress argues that the SIR process cannot be considered complete or legally sound unless the names of all eligible married women voters are added to the rolls. Dhanopia has requested the CEO to issue clear directions to district administrations to ensure that no eligible woman is disenfranchised due to administrative lapses or technical errors.

National T-20 cricket tourney for the visually challenged opens

Jabalpur: The National T-20 Cricket for the Visually Challenged 2025-26, known as the National Nagesh Trophy, opened Monday at Ranital Stadium with teams from five states beginning a five-day competition. Squads from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Haryana and Puducherry will play 10 matches through the week. Sonu Golkar, General Secretary of the Cricket Association for the Visually Challenged in Madhya Pradesh, said the tournament aims to expand competitive opportunities and strengthen public recognition for players with visual impairment. Two matches opened the tournament. Puducherry managed 63 runs in 20 overs before Haryana chased the target in just five overs without losing a wicket. In the second fixture, Madhya Pradesh put up 111 for 8 in 20 overs, but Odisha overhauled the target with 112 runs in 11 overs, also without loss. Teams are formed using a mix of players with different levels of visual capability. The B1 category includes players with no sight, while B2 and B3 cover those who can see up to three metres and six metres respectively. Organisers said balancing these categories is essential to ensuring fair and competitive play across all teams.

Farmers launch sit-in on NH-52 over minimum support price, loan waiver

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Under the banner of the Bharatiya Kisan Mazdoor Mahasangh, thousands of farmers from four districts gathered at Khalghat in Dhar district on Monday, launching a massive sit-in along National Highway 52.

The demonstration, peaceful yet resolute, focuses on four key demands: a complete farm loan waiver, a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP), national status for the cow, and relaxation of provisions in the land acquisition law.

From early morning, farmer groups began arriving from fields and villages, and within hours the highway-side stretch had transformed into an expansive protest site. Organisers said they had been in dialogue with the administration for several days, but with "no meaningful progress" farmers felt compelled to escalate their agitation.

Gopal Patidar, a senior leader of the Mahasangh, said farmers had reached the limit of their patience. "We have held repeated discussions, but nothing concrete has emerged. That is why we have started this

peaceful sit-in. If the government does not accept our demands, this movement will continue for as long as needed," he said.

At the protest site, farmers performed a symbolic havan and took an oath with handfuls of soil, reaffirming their commitment to the struggle. To avoid gridlock on the busy national highway, the district administration diverted traffic from NH-52 and deployed teams to manage movement along alternative routes. Officials said efforts were being made to ensure minimal inconvenience to commuters. A substantial police force was stationed at the venue, with security tightened across the area. Dhar Superintendent of Police Mayank Awasthi said the atmosphere remained completely peaceful. "Farmers are sitting in an orderly manner. Our teams are maintaining traffic discipline and ensuring the situation stays under control," he said.

Farmer groups said the current mobilisation marks only the beginning of their statewide campaign. They stressed that they would not withdraw until the government responds with concrete action on their long-pending demands.



Congress party MLAs stage a protest against the death of children due to kidney failure after consumption of contaminated 'Coldarif' cough syrup in Chhindwara, on the first day of the winter session of Madhya Pradesh State Assembly in Bhopal on Monday.

WCR penalises 573 passengers for chain pulling

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

West Central Railway's Bhopal Division acted against 573 passengers for chain-pulling violations in the month of November, imposing fines totalling Rs 103,425, officials said on Monday.

The cases were registered under Section 141 of the Railways Act, which treats unauthorised alarm-chain

pulling as an offence punishable with up to one year's imprisonment, a fine of up to Rs 1,000 or both.

Railway officials said misuse of the chain disrupts operations, delays trains and endangers passenger safety. The Railway Protection Force, working under the direction of Divisional Railway Manager Pankaj Tyagi, has intensified checks to curb violations.

Senior DCM Saurabh Kataria said the RPF is taking strict measures to prevent such incidents and appealed to passengers to cooperate. He added that unnecessary chain-pulling causes inconvenience to travellers and results in operational losses.

The division said it aims to improve passenger services and urged travellers not to pull the chain without a valid reason.

ABVP protests for CBI probe into RGPV

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

ABVP activists on Monday staged a protest outside the residence of Technical Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar, demanding a CBI investigation into alleged multi-core financial irregularities at Rajiv Gandhi Proudyogiki Vishwavidyalaya (RGPV) and immediate state intervention in the university's functioning. After the demonstration, the student organisation submitted a memorandum alleging that RGPV withheld audit reports for five consecutive years - 2019-20 to 2023-24 - and conducted major financial transactions without authorised approval. ABVP said crucial records are missing, fixed deposits were broken without documentation, penalties were deducted from university funds without accountability and a corpus fund of nearly Rs 100

crore remains in a suspicious and unverified state. The group also alleged that internal controls and financial monitoring mechanisms inside the university have "practically collapsed", creating an environment where large decisions can be carried out without routine checks. ABVP state minister Ketan Chaturvedi said the pattern suggests "organised financial irregularities" concealed for years. He said students believe that releasing the pending audit reports could identify those responsible, arguing that only a CBI inquiry can ensure transparency. The group demanded the immediate imposition of Section 54 to place RGPV under direct government control, and reiterated its long-standing call to split the university into three units to reduce administrative strain. The organisation also said academic functioning at RGPV has deteriorated, citing delays in

examinations, recurring errors in results and unresolved complaints. Chaturvedi said these issues indicate the university is drifting from its academic mandate and undermining student confidence, with routine processes becoming unpredictable for thousands of students across affiliated institutions. During the protest, ABVP also raised concerns about VIT Bhopal, alleging unsafe drinking water, poor food quality and persistent administrative neglect. Leaders claimed several students suffered health issues linked to campus conditions and said longstanding complaints have gone unanswered. ABVP further alleged that demonstrators faced intimidation and warnings of exam repercussions, which the organisation described as an authoritarian response to a peaceful protest.

Intoxicated man fires shots near iconic tea stall on Fatehgarh road

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Talaiya police have registered a case against Idgah Hills resident and poultry farm owner Vinod Sharma after he allegedly brandished his licensed revolver, fired multiple rounds in the air and assaulted a youth following a tyre burst outside a busy tea stall late Sunday night. The incident occurred around 11:30 pm outside Raju Tea Stall on Fatehgarh Road, a location that has long been a nuisance for motorists and pedestrians as groups of affluent young men park their vehicles there, clogging the narrow stretch late into the night. Officers said Sharma was driving his Maruti Swift when a tyre burst forced him to halt near the crowded spot, prompting several local youths to gather out of curiosity.

Police said Sharma, who appeared intoxicated, panicked on seeing the group and mistook them for attackers. He allegedly pulled out his licensed .32 revolver, waved it threateningly and fired several rounds in the air, triggering chaos for nearly 20 minutes as people ducked for cover and traffic stalled. Amid the commotion, Sharma also punched one of the youths. Onlookers briefly overpowered him, but he managed to break free and fled moments before patrol teams reached the spot. Based on complaints from the assaulted youth and other witnesses, Talaiya police have booked Sharma under the Arms Act and other relevant sections. Officers confirmed he holds a valid arms licence issued in Bhopal. Raids are under way to trace him, and investigators are examining CCTV footage from the area as the probe continues.



An artisan prepares effigies representing Dow Chemicals and RSS, for the survivor gas victims to protest ahead of the 41st anniversary of 1984 gas tragedy, in Bhopal on Monday

Pioneer photo



ABVP activists stage a protest against the alleged corruption in Rajiv Gandhi Proudyogiki Vishwavidyalaya (RGPV) demanding for a CBI inquiry, at the residence of higher education minister Inder Singh Parmar in Bhopal on Monday.

Lokayukta traps SI, aide in bribery case

PNS ■ Indore

Lokayukta police on Monday arrested Rajod sub-inspector Vikram Devda and a private intermediary for allegedly demanding and accepting a Rs 12,000 bribe. Complainant Jeevan Rathore of Aklolia village said Devda detained his relative Tejpal after an allegedly false assault complaint and sought money for bail, release of a seized tractor and quick filing of the chargesheet. Officials said Devda accepted Rs 2,000 during the trap, while the remaining Rs 10,000 was allegedly taken inside the Rajod station premises by Ambaram Singhar on his instruction. Both were caught red-handed and booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Mutilated leopard carcass found as wildlife crimes surge

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

A mutilated leopard carcass discovered on the outskirts of Indore has triggered a major wildlife-crime investigation amid a surge in big-cat killings across Madhya Pradesh. The carcass was found late Saturday in Garhi village, under the Double Chowki range, about 30 km from Indore. Forest officials said the leopard had been strangled with clutch-wire, its paws chopped off and its canines machined out before being dumped by the roadside. A post-mortem confirmed death by suffocation. Sniffer dogs at the scene led teams to a nearby farmhouse, deepening suspicion of an organised poaching gang. Investigators believe two or three people killed the leopard elsewhere and transported the body to evade detection.

A wildlife offence case has been registered. The State Tiger Strike Force has joined raids to identify the network and check for interstate links. The killing comes as Madhya Pradesh, home to more than 3,700 leopards, faces a sharp rise in wildlife crimes. The state has reported 26 wildlife-smuggling cases so far this year, including eight suspected tiger poachings, and 36 unnatural big-cat deaths. Recent crackdowns include a Mumbai-linked bush-meat racket busted in Indore in October and the jailing of an international tiger-bone trafficker in Narmadapuram in May. This year's tiger-poaching incidents have raised alarms across multiple reserves. In August, a male tiger was found dead in Satpura Tiger Reserve's Tawa backwaters with a snare around its neck and

a missing paw. In Balaghat's Sonwani Sanctuary, the carcass of a tigress with missing claws allegedly vanished and was burnt by forest staff. In October, a decomposed tiger was recovered in Bandhavgarh's buffer zone amid the disappearance of a tigress and her three cubs, prompting a wider probe. Forests around Double Chowki, Choral and Ralamandal Sanctuary remain especially vulnerable due to rapid urbanisation, mining and expanding highways that offer easy access to poachers. With a 30 per cent shortage of frontline forest staff and rising interstate trafficking groups, conservationists warn that these peri-urban forests are turning into entry points for bigger poaching networks. They are calling for more patrols, camera traps and community vigilance to protect wildlife.

Eye and dental check-up camp held in Gulmohar

Bhopal: A free eye and dental check-up camp was held in Gulmohar on Sunday through a joint initiative of Sewa Sadan Eye Hospital and the Gulmohar Pujya Sindhi Panchayat. The camp was inaugurated by trustees and Panchayat officials. A total of 120 people were examined, with four cataract cases referred to Sewa Sadan for free surgery, while others received free eye drops. Dental screenings found several patients requiring procedures including braces, root canals, extractions and fillings. Blood pressure and diabetes checks were also conducted. Trustee Tulsidas Adwani said Sewa Sadan now offers super-specialty eye services at concessional rates and advised people above 40 to undergo regular eye examinations.

Infant boy dies as overcrowded e-rickshaw overturns in Chunabhatti

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

A nine-month-old boy died late Sunday night after an overcrowded e-rickshaw collided with a parked car and overturned in Bhopal's Chunabhatti area. Police said the infant, Pratham, was in his mother Surekha's lap when the vehicle rammed into a parked car on the roadside, throwing him onto the road. He died on the spot from severe head injuries. Three others - his mother, grandfather Mohan Thakur

and another woman - were injured and taken to hospital for treatment. The family from Journalist Colony was heading to Kolar to attend a gathering when the crash occurred. The e-rickshaw was carrying eight passengers in total. Chunabhatti police reached the spot, recovered the baby's body and sent it for post-mortem. A case has been registered against the driver for rash and negligent driving. The child's uncle, Shailendra Kumar, alleged the accident happened due to the driver's carelessness.

Survivor groups accuse BJP of failing Bhopal gas victims

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

Marking the 41st anniversary of the Union Carbide gas disaster, four survivor organisations on Monday accused the BJP of bearing primary responsibility for what they described as "continued injustice" faced by victims more than four decades after the 1984 tragedy. At a press conference in the city, the groups released a "Bhopal Survivors' Chargesheet against the BJP", alleging the party had prioritised the interests of US corporations over those of Indian citizens. Rashida Bee, President of the Bhopal Gas

Peedit Mahila Stationery Karmchari Sangh, said the ruling party at the Centre and in the state had "betrayed the Bhopal survivors like no other political party", citing chronic neglect of health and environmental concerns. Survivor groups alleged BJP leaders had previously protected Union Carbide's local management from accountability for contamination around the former factory site. They also claimed a senior party figure issued a legal opinion that, they said, favoured Dow Chemical on environmental liability issues. Balkrishna Nameo, who heads

Bhopal gas victims

the Bhopal Gas Peedit Nirashrit Pensionbhogee Sangharsh Morcha, alleged that in 2002, then Home Minister LK Advani directed dilution of criminal charges against former Union Carbide chairman Warren Anderson and the corporation. He said the move was blocked only after a district court judge rejected the a crucial application. Rachna Dhingra of the Bhopal Group for Information & Action said medical and economic rehabilitation efforts had suffered under BJP governments. She cited the discontinuation of an empowered commission approved in 2008.

Public-health warnings fail to curb newspaper-served food in Bhopal

ANKUSH SINGH ■ Bhopal

Charming as it may be, the city's favourite pohajalebi nasha is far from safe when it arrives on a sheet of old newspaper. Yet across Bhopal, from quiet neighbourhood corners to the bustle of railway platforms, food continues to be served on yesterday's headlines nearly three years after the practice was officially banned. The ban was issued on September 6 2022 by the Bhopal District Administration under the city collector, following guidelines from the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. The order barred the serving or wrapping of any food on newspapers or printed paper, warning that chemical dyes, inks, and contaminants could seep into what people eat. Although the rule applied to all tea stalls, market lanes, office clusters, and crowded junctions, enforcement proved patchy. In many parts of the

state capital, the ban slipped quietly out of view. At Ashoka Garden, Semra, and the busy stretches surrounding Bhopal's railway stations, vendors still hand out samosas, kachoris, pohajalebi and other snacks on folded newspaper sheets. For some stall owners, the directive never truly registered. Others acknowledge it but say switching to bowls, foil, or food-grade paper would sharply reduce already narrow profits. At Semra's breakfast point beside the vegetable market, customers queue each morning for kachoris and jalebis served - hot and sticky - on the familiar grey surface of newsprint. On Platform 6 at Bhopal railway station, a fruit vendor lays slices of fruit on softened newspaper squares in full public view, with no signage or warning about the health risks involved. Several customers admit they did not know the practice could be harmful. Ashok Yadav, a 42-year-old taxi driver from



Semra, says he buys snacks served on newspapers every day. "I did not know it could be harmful to health. People should be made aware," he says. For others, the matter is framed as a basic hygiene issue rather than policy compliance. School teacher Nisha Verma, 35, says vendors near the station should switch to safer packaging. "Serving fruits on newspapers could pose risks to people. Vendors should adopt proper packaging to ensure safety," she says. Rahul Mishra, 28, a computer operator from Ashoka Garden, believes the problem goes deeper. "Breakfast on newspa-

pers and tea in thermocol cups are health hazards. Authorities need to take strict action," he says. The widespread use of thermocol and disposable cups remains a parallel concern. In MP Nagar's Zones 1 and 2 and outside Rani Kamlapati Station, tea is routinely poured into thermocol and waxed-paper cups, while snacks are handed out on lightweight plastic plates despite repeated advisories. Experts warn these materials bring their own risks. Thermocol and some plastics are lined with chemical wax that melts when exposed to heat. As hot tea fills the cup, wax and micro-particles can leach into the beverage, potentially causing digestive irritation, hormone disruption, and long-term chemical accumulation in the body. Newspapers, meanwhile, expose consumers to contaminants of another kind. "Newspapers pass through many hands before reaching the customer. Eating food on

newspapers introduces bacteria and chemicals into the body," says Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr Manish Sharma. "Consumption of food served this way can lead to serious illnesses, including diarrhoea and typhoid." District Food Safety Officer Pankaj Shrivastava says action is taken when complaints are reported. "We take action against shopkeepers according to complaints. The district administration has advised vendors and customers that serving or consuming food on newspapers is harmful to health," he says. But across the city's informal food network, enforcement visibly struggles to keep pace. One Semra vendor, requesting anonymity, offers a blunt explanation. "We serve a cost-sensitive market. People want cheap food, and newspapers are convenient," he says while handing out yet another batch of samosas with a bright red chutney seeping into the newsprint.

Show-cause notice to VIT after inquiry finds health lapses

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Higher Education Department on Monday issued a show-cause notice to VIT Bhopal University after a government inquiry flagged serious lapses that preceded a night of violent student unrest and arson on November 25. The notice, issued under Section 41(1) of the MP Private Universities Act 2007, follows a report from the state's regulatory commission that found poor hostel mess conditions, unsafe drinking water and a jaundice outbreak affecting at least 35 students between November 14 and 24. The inquiry committee said mess services in hostels, which house nearly 15,000 students, were "highly unsatisfactory". Students, including women hostel residents, reported foul-smelling drinking water. The university

acknowledged multiple jaundice cases but could not furnish complete records sought for the period between November 1 and 24. The report said the campus was run "like a fortress", with the administration exercising rigid control and suppressing dissent. It cited claims that Sehore's Chief Medical and Health Officer was stopped at the main gate for two hours during a visit. Students told the panel they feared harassment for speaking up, including threats of exam restrictions or poor marks in practicals. Complaints over food, they said, were dismissed with remarks that they must "eat what is served". Investigators said discipline on campus was driven by fear rather than trust, and that rising student anger was ignored until the situation escalated beyond the administration's control. The university called police only at 2 am, by which time violence had already

broken out. The campus health centre lacked registration under clinical establishment rules, had no proper medical waste disposal and maintained no reliable record of jaundice cases, the panel found. Despite the outbreak, no preventive measures were taken and management showed "no interest" when questioned about disease control. The committee also flagged a lack of transparency, saying students and parents were often kept uninformed in writing. Decision-making power, it said, was concentrated in two or three senior officials, leaving others with nominal roles. The department said the university adopted a "non-cooperative" stance during the inquiry. It has given the university administration seven days to respond, warning that failure to do so could trigger disciplinary action under Section 41(2) of the Act.

CIC summons PCCF over blocked RTI on cheetah project

STAFF REPORTER ■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh State Information Commission has escalated regulatory action against Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Shubh Ranjan Sen for allegedly blocking public access to information related to the cheetah reintroduction project in Kuno National Park. Sen had reportedly categorised the requested information as a 'national security threat', a justification the Commission says appears inconsistent with the RTI Act's mandate. Chief Information Commissioner Vijay Yadav has issued a formal notice directing Sen to appear before the Commission on December 12, 2025, and submit a written response. The notice outlines possible statutory penalties, including a fine and a departmental inquiry, signalling the Commission's intent to reset accountability narratives within the State's conservation administration.

The proceedings stem from a complaint filed by wildlife and RTI activist Ajay Dubey, who had sought details in July 2024 regarding implementation protocols, management mechanisms and budget utilisation associated with the cheetah project. According to the complaint, Public Information Officer Saurabh Kabra was responsible for providing the information but instead withheld it after receiving a written directive from Sen to reject the RTI request entirely. The complaint argues that this directive violated the RTI Act, which requires the PIO to independently assess all requests. Sen had reportedly invoked Section 8(1)(a) of the Act, a clause that allows withholding information if disclosure could compromise national security, sovereignty, foreign relations, or cause broader strategic or scientific harm. Dubey has contested the legitimacy of this reasoning, asserting that the cheetah project is a taxpayer-funded

conservation initiative, not a programme that falls under any restricted security category. Dubey has publicly criticised the move, saying, "This is a clear misuse of the RTI Act. The cheetah project is funded by public money, and citizens have a right to know how it is being managed. Blocking basic conservation data by labelling it a security threat sets a dangerous precedent and undermines transparency." He has demanded strict punitive action, including a statutory fine, a departmental probe and compensation, arguing that the attempt to suppress information was deliberate and unlawful. With Sen now summoned for a hearing on December 12, the Commission is preparing for a detailed review of compliance standards within the wildlife department. The outcome is expected to influence transparency protocols for high-visibility environmental initiatives across Madhya Pradesh.

Farm crisis sparks turmoil on opening day of winter session

Bhopal: The opening day of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly's winter session on Monday witnessed heated exchanges over the deepening farm crisis, with the Opposition pressing the government for clear commitments on MSP for maize and soybean. Leader of the Opposition Umang Singhar demanded to know whether the state would procure maize at MSP and whether soybean would be purchased at the same rates offered in neighbouring states. The Agriculture Minister balked at giving a direct assurance, responding with a "wait and

watch" remark - a phrase that immediately drew sharp criticism from Singhar, who said farmers were anxiously awaiting clarity and the government was asking them to simply wait. The minister later clarified that his comment was not directed at farmers. The House debated agricultural issues for nearly five hours before being adjourned till Tuesday. Earlier, under Rule 139, discussions were held on crop losses due to excessive rainfall. Following Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar's direction, the Municipal Amendment Bill was introduced by Urban

Development Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, with debate scheduled for Tuesday. Singhar issued a three-line whip to all Congress MLAs, directing them to remain present during discussions on farmers' issues and to vote against the government if required. The Opposition also raised alleged irregularities in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and flagged reports of BLOs dying under work pressure. Minister Vishwas Sarang objected to the mention of eight such deaths, calling it a breach of House decorum.

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DEMAND NOTICE

Notice U/S 13(2) Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

60 DAYS NOTICE FOR MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Borrower's and Guarantor's Name & Address	Account No. & Outstanding Amount	Details of Mortgage Property
Branch: Canara Bank, Dal Bazar, Gwalior, Gwalior, Mob.: 8112811296, Email: cb0295@canarabank.com		
Borrower - 1. M/s Om Fabricators & Construction Add: Maa Pitambara Vihar Colony, Tansen Road, Kabra Ka Tal, Gwalior, (M.P.)-474001	A/C 0295256012030 170002339843 0295619002758 Rs. 19,32,161.14/- + Interest and other Expenses Demand Notice Date 12-11-2025	Property Owner - Mr. Kalyan Singh Rawat - Emt of Residential House Situated At : M.H. No. 17/1156, Part of Survey No-115, Kabra Ka Tal, Behind of Loko Shed, Tansen Road, Village- Mahalgao, Ward No-17, Gwalior, (M.P.-474001) Area-690 Sqft. Boundaries: East-House of Tyagi Ji,North - Colony Road, West- Colony Road, South- House of Rawat Ji
<small>The Borrower mentioned above has availed total credit facilities as mentioned above from CANARA BANK and the mentioned Guarantors provided guarantee and secured by way of mortgage of above mentioned property. The borrower failed to adhere to terms and conditions of sanction. The account became irregular and classified as NPA as mentioned above as per RBI guidelines. The Bank intends to enforce the said property mortgaged by you and issued Demand Notice as mentioned above for recovery of outstanding amount as mentioned above with interest and expenses thereon under registered post with acknowledgment due which were not served to the borrowers and guarantors. Hence this publication issued. Hereby Borrower/Guarantor are called upon to pay the amount mentioned above with rate of interest (Contractual Rate), costs, charges etc., thereon within 60 Days from the date of publication failing which the undersigned will be constrained to initiate action against mortgaged property under section 13 (4) and the provision of said act to realize our Bank's dues. Your attention is invited to provisions of the Sec (8) of Sec (13) of the act in respect of time available to you to redeem the secured assets.</small>		
Place: Gwalior	Date: 01.12.2025	Authorised officer - CANARA BANK

IN FOCUS



People taking part in a Shobha Yatra on the occasion of Gita Jayanti, in Patiala

DRDO sanctioned 148 new projects: MoS Defence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has sanctioned a total of 148 new research and development projects in the last three years, the Government informed Parliament on Monday.

Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, in a written response to a query in Rajya Sabha, also said the Department of Defence Research and Development has policy and mechanism for collaborative research in developing critical and futuristic technologies for defence and security applications through a network of DRDO Industry Academia-Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE).

“A total of 15 DIA-CoEs have been established which are steering translational research activities in nearly 82 identified research verticals,” he said. The ministry was asked about the steps taken by the Government to enhance research and development in defence manufacturing.

It was also asked about details of various research operations taken up by defence organisations during the last three years along with the amount sanctioned and utilised for the research operations. “DRDO has sanctioned a total of 148 new R&D projects in the last three years,” Seth

said. In his response, he also shared a tabulated data showing details of budget estimates (BE), revised estimates (RE) and actual allocations in respect of the Department of Defence Research and Development along with actual expenditure for the last three years, along with allocations — budget estimates for the year 2025-26.

The BE approved for the different FYs are — ₹21,330.20 crore for 2022-23, ₹23,263.89 crore for 2023-24, ₹23,855.61 crore for 2024-25 and ₹26,816.82 crore for 2025-26. Seth also said the DRDO has developed a “pool of 2,000 industries” to manufacture sub-systems, systems and equipment.

“The technology of DRDO-developed systems are transferred to Indian industries at zero ToT (transfer of technology) fee for development-cum-production partner (DCPP)/ Production Agency (PA)/ Development Partner (DP). Consultancy services of DRDO scientists to industry is made available,” he said.

Also, the DRDO is coming up with a “new policy” to facilitate easier interaction with emerging start-ups.

“This policy aims to streamline the process of engaging with start-ups and leveraging their innovative ideas for defence applications,” the minister said.

Govt pushes AI and AR-VR to preserve heritage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government is “actively promoting” the use of artificial intelligence, augmented reality and other advance technologies in the preservation of cultural heritage, digitisation of museums and cultural dissemination, the Centre informed Parliament on Monday.

In a written response to a query in the Lok Sabha, Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat also said modern digital technologies such as AR-VR (augmented reality-virtual reality), projections, digital kiosks, etc., have been adopted in various museums under the Ministry of Culture to improve and enhance the visitors’ viewing experience.

He was asked whether the Government is promoting the use of AI, augmented reality and other advance technologies in the preservation of cultural heritage, digitisation of museums and cultural dissemination.

“The Government is actively promoting the use of artificial intelligence, augmented reality and other advance



technologies in the preservation of cultural heritage, digitisation of museums and cultural dissemination,” Shekhawat said.

Various initiatives include the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), Museum Digitisation initiative, Immersive Visitor Experiences using Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). The ministry has also been using a software named ‘JATAN’ for digitisation of various artefacts showcased in its museums,

and till date eight renowned national-level museums and two ASI museums have been digitised through the ‘JATAN’ software, he said.

Shekhawat also said the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment through ‘TULIP’ aims to empower marginalised artisans by providing them with a platform for global exposure and sale of their products through e-marketing. The Union minister said the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) presently maintains one archaeolog-

ical museum in the Vindhya region at Khajuraho, located in the Chhatarpur district in Madhya Pradesh. The museum was upgraded in 2023 with the addition of new display galleries and inclusion of more antiquities for public viewing.

In a separate query, he was asked whether the Government is providing adequate funds and resources to the ASI for archaeological excavations and conservation work in Nalanda in Bihar, and

whether the Government has formed a team of experienced archaeologists, draftsmen, surveyors and cinematographers for this work.

“Yes sir, the Government is providing adequate funds and resources to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for archaeological excavations and conservation work in Nalanda,” the minister said in his response.

He further said the ASI has a “well experienced team” for excavation and conservation work, and the involvement of local communities in excavations and conservation work provide employment to the local people along with enabling them to participate in the preservation of their heritage. “Nalanda is a major tourist destination through ongoing conservation work and archaeological excavations,” Shekhawat said.

There are 3,685 ancient monuments and archaeological sites, and the remains of national importance are looked after by the ASI, he said in response to another question. “The havelis of the Shekhawati region of

Rajasthan are not protected monuments under the jurisdiction of the Archaeological Survey of India. At present, (there is) no proposal for the inclusion of the Shekhawati havelis in the UNESCO’s Tentative List,” he said. In response to a separate query, the minister said, the Ministry of Education through the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru, under the Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India (SPPEL), works on the protection, preservation and documentation of “all the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 people, which are called endangered languages”.

“In the first phase of the scheme, 117 endangered languages/mother tongues have been chosen from all over India for study and documentation,” he said.

In his response, he also shared a list of these 117 endangered languages, which include Lamongse, Bhunjia (East Central Zone), Kagate (North East Zone) and Nihali (West Central Zone).

CBI arrests absconder in 1989 Rubaiya Sayeed kidnapping case in Srinagar

PIONNER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi/Srinagar

CBI on Monday arrested an “absconder” carrying a ₹10 lakh reward in connection with the sensational 1989 kidnapping of Rubaiyya Sayeed, the daughter of the then Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, for allegedly being part of a conspiracy hatched by members of the banned JKLF terror group. The person, identified as Shafat Ahmed Shangloo, is alleged to be a close confidant of Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin Malik.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested an “absconder”, Shafat Ahmed Shangloo, wanted in the 35-year-old case relating to the kidnapping of Rubaiyya Sayeed, the agency said in a statement.

“The said accused Shangloo conspired with Yasin Malik and others in committing a crime under various sections of Ranbir Penal Code and TADA Act during the Year 1989. The absconder is carry-



Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of former J&K Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, arriving to appear abduction case

FILE PHOTO

ing a reward of ₹10 lakh on his head. He will be produced before the TADA Court Jammu, within the stipulated time as per law,” the CBI Spokesperson said.

According to officials, Shangloo was allegedly an office bearer of the banned terror group and was handling the outfit’s finances.

The CBI, along with the Jammu and Kashmir Police, arrested Shangloo from his residence in the Nishat area in Srinagar after following the due legal process, the officials said. Malik, who has been attending the court hearings through video-conferencing, has been identified by eyewitnesses, including

Rubaiyya Sayeed.

The JKLF chief, who is serving a jail term in Delhi’s Tihar Jail in a terror financing case, is not produced in the court physically due to a Ministry of Home Affairs order restricting his movement.

During the court hearings, Sayeed had identified four other accused besides Malik of being involved in the heinous crime. She was abducted from near Lal Ded Hospital in Srinagar on December 8, 1989, and was freed five days later after the then VP Singh Government, which was supported by the BJP, at the Centre released five terrorists in exchange. Now living in Tamil Nadu, Sayeed

is listed as a prosecution witness by the CBI, which took over the case in 1990. Malik, 56, was sentenced by a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in May last year. He was arrested in early 2019 in connection with the 2017 terror financing case registered by the NIA.

In order to expedite the trial, the CBI had appointed its senior counsel Monika Kohli as the chief prosecutor after framing charges against Malik in the much-publicised cases related to the Sayeed’s abduction and killing of four IAF personnel in Srinagar more than three decades ago.

Kohli, a leading lawyer, has been representing the CBI as a retainer counsel in the High Court for the last one decade and had successfully opposed bail to Malik in the two sensational cases which had taken place in 1989-90 when militancy broke out in the valley.

A special TADA court has already framed charges against Malik and nine others in the kidnapping case of Sayeed.

Chhattisgarh Govt sanctions ₹429 crore for civic bodies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Raipur

The Chhattisgarh Government has sanctioned projects costing ₹429.45 crore in 13 municipal corporations in the ongoing financial year under the ‘Mukhyamantri Nagarothan Yojana’ to develop iconic infrastructure in urban bodies across the state, a Government official said on Monday. The scheme, announced in the budget for 2025-26, will cover all 14 municipal corporations in the first phase, and municipal councils and nagar panchayats in the next one, the official said.

According to a Government release, with the approval of Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao, who also holds the Urban Administration and Development department, 26 projects costing ₹429.45 crore have been sanctioned so far in the ongoing fiscal year in 13 municipal corporations. These works include marine drive expansion, oxygen-cum-sports complex, interstate bus terminal, road junctions, hi-tech bus stands, auditoriums, lake beautification, park development, water supply augmentation, corridor development, Gaurav Path construction, road widening and bypass construction, it said.

A provision of ₹500 crore has been made for the scheme in the ongoing financial year, the release said. Work orders have already been issued for five projects, and foundation stones have been laid for five others, it said. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said that the ambitious scheme will bring

significant transformation to Chhattisgarh’s urban infrastructure landscape. “The plan has been designed keeping in mind sustainable urban development and citizen-centric solutions. It will help make Chhattisgarh’s cities modern, beautiful and vibrant,” the release quoted Sai as saying. Deputy CM Sao said the scheme has been launched in line with this year’s budget to promote liveable, well-planned and dynamic cities.

He said that the scheme aims to develop key infrastructure, including roads, widening projects, bypasses, flyovers, service lanes, underpasses and other essential facilities, considering the growing population and traffic needs. Riverfront development and large public parks will also be taken up to make cities cleaner, greener and more organised, Sao added.

District-level committees, headed by collectors, will regularly review ongoing works in their respective districts to ensure timely and quality execution. Municipal commissioners will serve as member-secretaries, while executive engineers from the Public Works Department and Public Health Engineering Department will be included as members in these committees, it said.

Untreated sewage, missing effluent plants key reasons for Yamuna’s pollution: Govt

PIONNER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Untreated sewage, missing effluent treatment plants, project delays and a major shortfall in solid waste processing are the key reasons the Yamuna remains polluted in the national capital, the Jal Shakti ministry said on Monday.

The ministry also said that the Delhi Jal Board spent about ₹5,536 crore over the past three financial years on efforts



to keep the river clean. In a written response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary said Delhi had a sewage treatment gap of 414 MLD in August 2025, lacked common effluent treatment plants in several approved industrial areas, and continued to face delays in completing and upgrading sewage treatment projects.

He added that Delhi generates 11,862 tonnes of solid waste daily but has the capac-

ity to treat only 7,641 tonnes, leaving a gap of 4,221 tonnes. The minister noted that the Yamuna enters Delhi at Palla, where its water quality fluctuates through the year depending on water availability and catchment discharge.

Median Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Dissolved Oxygen (DO) levels between January and July 2025 stood at 4 mg/l and 6 mg/l respectively, according to the Central Pollution Control Board. A DPCC assessment in

September recorded improved figures, with BOD at 2.5 mg/l and DO at 9.5 mg/l, both within healthy limits.

The minister said the National Mission for Clean Ganga is supporting States through financial assistance. Under the Namami Gange programme, 35 projects amounting to ₹6,534 crore have been sanctioned for rejuvenation, aimed at creating 2,243 MLD of sewage treatment capacity. Of these, 21 projects have been completed, he said.

FROM PAGE - 1

In Punjab, being vehla is a sport that wins...

The concept may sound eccentric, but it has already proved infectious. Similar vehla competitions held earlier in other villages of Punjab — especially in Barnala’s Gehal village — drew massive attention, with videos clocking lakhs of views and crowds gathering to watch people... do nothing. What began as a joke has now turned into a rural trend, part detox camp, part endurance theatre.

In Ghoria Khurd, children, youth, women and elders sat wrapped in blankets on mattresses supplied by organizers. Some read religious texts, some whispered silent prayers, others stared into the distance as if negotiating treaties with their own restlessness. For the elderly, the stillness came naturally; for the smartphone generation, it was a slow-burning torture.

“The elders smile,” Vikramjeet laughed. “But seeing young people survive without a phone — that is the real suspense.”

Food is arranged by the organizers and served at the spot because no one is allowed to move. Even the act of standing up is grounds for eviction. The competition, unbound by time, could end in 12 hours, 24 hours, or even longer. The winner is simply the one who outlasts everyone else.

Behind the humour lies a deeper anxiety. Vikramjeet spoke of broken families, rising tension, divorces, suicides, failing eyesight

in children and relationships dissolving into screen-glare. “Mobile has created distance between people sitting in the same room,” he said, adding, “If families sit together, talk together, half the tensions of life will disappear.” The participants echoed that sentiment quietly. A schoolboy admitted that he had never spent so many hours without touching a phone. An elderly man said that he hadn’t experienced such silence in decades. Spectators do the real talking — whispering bets, counting minutes, gasping when someone finally gives in and stands up.

What makes the competition even more fascinating is its contradiction - in a digital age obsessed with speed, likes and reels, hundreds now gather to cheer patience, inactivity and quiet endurance. Punjab’s loudest land has found entertainment in stillness.

GPS spoofing near Key airports, Govt says

After being mandated by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to report instances of GPS jamming/ spoofing since November 2023, regular reports are being received from other major airports in the country.

“GNSS interference reports are being received from Kolkata, Amritsar, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai airports,” the minister added.

Last month, the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation (DGCA) asked airlines, pilots and air traffic controllers to report GPS spoofing incidents within 10 minutes of the occurrences, amid recent such incidents at the Delhi airport. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) require immediate reporting by pilots and air traffic controllers whenever abnormal GPS behaviour is detected.

SC strikes at digital arrests

It asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to ensure that the views of various Union ministries, including Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Telecom, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, are put before it to deal with cybercrimes cases.

The top court said all states and UTs and their police agencies along with the CBI are free to freeze bank accounts used in defrauding citizens.

The top court directed the CBI to induct any officer from states and technical experts and associate them as members of the probe team on digital arrest cases.

On November 3, the top court said it needs to deal with digital arrest cases with an iron hand, while expressing shock over the scale of such cybercrime cases in the country, with over ₹3,000 crore allegedly extorted from victims, including senior citizens.

4,493 gross polluting industries identified by CPCB, 29 ordered shut: MoS Choudhary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has identified a total of 4,493 Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) across the country in its report this year, of which 3,633 were operational, and 860 had shut down on their own, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Monday.

Among the operational units, 3,031 were found complying with environmental norms, while 572 industries were issued show-cause notices, 29 received closure directions and one unit was issued specific directions.

In a written response to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Raj Bhushan Choudhary said that according to the CPCB, there are a total of 4,493 industries under GPIs.

“Out of which, 3,633 industries were operational, and 860 industries had closed down on their own. Among the operational industries, 3,031 industries were reported to be complying with the envi-



ronmental standards, while 572 industries were issued show-cause notices and closure directions were issued to 29 non-complying industries,” the minister said in a written response.

The CPCB, in its 2025 report on ‘Polluted River Stretches (PRSS) for Restoration of Water Quality’, identified 296 polluted river stretches on the 271 rivers in 32 states/Union territories. It report is based on the assessment of 623 rivers.

The board has also categorised river water quality based on its intended use, specifying that water meant for drinking must meet ‘Class A’ standards after disinfection and Class B standards for outdoor bathing.

Meanwhile, the Jal Jeevan Mission has reported providing 12.51 crore rural households with tap water connections since its launch, covering 81 per cent of rural homes.

The Ministry, however, has said

BJP Chief seeks clarity on staggered civic poll orders



Maharashtra BJP president Ravindra Chavan on Monday urged the State Election Commission (SEC) to review and clarify revised election-related directives for postponing the polls in some civic bodies, claiming that recent orders had caused “confusion”.

₹51,000 crore spent on welfare pensions in 18 months: Naidu

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday said the TDP-led NDA Government has spent ₹51,000 crore on welfare pensions in the past 18 months. Addressing a public meeting at Unguturu village in Eluru district during the distribution of NTR Bharosa pensions, Naidu said the state will spend ₹1.6 lakh crore on the scheme over the next five years, at ₹33,000 crore per year.



Mallikarjun Kharge calls for fair play in Rajya Sabha



Rajya Sabha Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday assured Chairman CP Radhakrishnan of cooperation from the Congress party in the smooth conduct of the House, as he also urged him to treat the Opposition and Treasury benches equally.

RS Chairman urges members to uphold Constitution

Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan on Monday urged members to uphold the Constitution and follow parliamentary norms while adhering to the ‘Lakshman Rekha’ as envisaged under the rules of the Upper House. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge and leaders from various political parties felicitated him in the Upper House.



FM Sitharaman moves Bill to raise tax on tobacco, pan masala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday introduced two bills in the Lok Sabha to levy excise duty on tobacco and tobacco products, and a new cess on manufacturing of pan masala, which will replace the GST compensation cess on such sin goods.

The Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, will replace the GST compensation cess, which is currently levied on all tobacco products like cigarette, chewing tobacco, cigars, hookahs, zarda, and scented tobacco.

The bill seeks “to give the Government the fiscal space to increase the rate of central excise duty on tobacco and tobacco products so as to protect tax incidence,” once the GST compensation cess ends, according to the statement of objects and reasons of the bill.

The Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025, seeks to levy cess on the production of specified goods like pan masala.

The Government may notify any other goods on whose manufacturing such a cess can be levied.

Sin goods like tobacco and pan masala currently attract a GST of 28 per cent, plus a compensation cess which is levied at varied rates.

The central excise amendment bill seeks to levy excise duty on cigars / cheroots / cigarettes in the range of ₹5,000 – ₹11,000 per 1,000 sticks. Also, it proposes levy of 60-70 per cent on unmanufactured tobacco and 100 per cent on nicotine and inhalation products.



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaking during the first day of the Winter Session of Parliament PTI

Currently, cigarettes attract a compensation cess of 5 per cent ad-valorem plus a ₹2,076-3,668 per 1,000 sticks cess, depending on the length.

Once the compensation cess ends, sale of tobacco and related products will attract a 40 per cent GST plus excise duty, while pan masala will attract 40 per cent GST plus the Health Security se National Security Cess.

“It is proposed to levy the Health Security se National Security Cess to contribute towards the twin purposes of enabling targeted utilisation for public health, as well as national security,” the statement of objects and reasons of the bill said.

TMC member Saugata Ray opposed introduction of the two bills saying that tobacco is harmful but the Central

Excise (Amendment) Bill does not mention that. With regard to the Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025, Ray said that since cess proceeds are not shared with states he opposes the bill. At the time of the introduction of the GST on July 1, 2017, a compensation cess mechanism was put in place for 5 years till June 30, 2022, to make up for the revenue loss suffered by states on account of GST implementation.

The levy of compensation cess was later extended by four years till March 31, 2026, and the collection is being used to repay the loan that the Centre took to compensate states for the GST revenue loss during the Covid period.

Since that loan repayment is going to be fully repaid sometime in December, the

compensation cess will cease to exist.

On September 3, 2025, the GST Council had decided to continue with the compensation cess on tobacco and pan masala till the loans taken are repaid.

On other luxury items, the compensation cess ended on September 22, when the GST rate rationalisation was implemented with just 2 slabs of 5 and 18 per cent. A 40 per cent rate was fixed for ultra-luxury goods, aerated drinks and other demerit goods.

The Central Excise Amendment Bill, 2025, and The Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025 will ensure that the tax incidence on sin goods like tobacco and pan masala remains the same after discontinuation of the compensation cess.

Punjab, Haryana saw 90% drop in farm fires this season: Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government on Monday informed Parliament that Punjab and Haryana together recorded about 90 per cent fewer farm fire incidents during the 2025 paddy harvesting season compared to 2022.

Responding to a question from Congress MP Charanjit Singh Channi on the impact of stubble burning, Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav told the Lok Sabha that farm fires remain an “episodic event” that aggravates pollution in the winter months.

He also said Delhi recorded its lowest January-November average air quality index since 2018 barring the Covid lockdown year of 2020.

Channi had asked whether Delhi’s AQI crossed 450 despite a 20 per cent reduction in farm fires in Punjab this year. He further asked about the steps being taken to enforce directives of the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) and provide alternative machinery to farmers.

The minister said air pollution in Delhi-NCR is the result of several local and regional factors, including vehicular and industrial emissions, dust from construction, municipal waste burning, landfill fires and meteorological conditions. Stubble burning in Punjab and NCR region is an additional “episodic event”.

According to the written reply, Delhi recorded 200 “good” air quality days (AQI less than 200) in 2025 so far, up from 110 in 2016. The number of “very poor” and



Congress MP Charanjit Singh Channi

“severe” air quality days also came down from 71 in 2024 to 50 this year.

Listing the measures taken to curb stubble burning, the minister said Punjab and Haryana together received a total of ₹3,120 crore since 2018-19 for supplying crop residue management machines.

More than 2.6 lakh machines have been distributed to individual farmers and over 33,800 to custom hiring centres.

The CAQM has directed both states to ensure rent-free availability of these machines to small and marginal farmers.

The commission has also mandated the use of paddy straw-based biomass pellets or briquettes in brick kilns beyond NCR to reduce open burning, with co-firing targets rising annually from 20 per cent this year to 50 per cent by 2028.

Thermal power plants

within 300 km of Delhi have been asked to co-fire biomass pellets up to 10 per cent with coal.

A total of 31 flying squads from the Central Pollution Control Board were deployed across hotspot districts in Punjab and Haryana between October 1 and November 30 to monitor enforcement actions.

Senior-level meetings were held through October and November with the environment minister, agriculture minister, state governments and district officials to review preparedness and push for stricter implementation of directives, the reply said.

The minister said the Government is assessing utilisation of crop residue machines, reviewing district-level efforts and ensuring adequate supply chains for biomass to thermal power plants and pellet units.

OPPOSITION PROTESTS HALT LOK SABHA; MANIPUR GST BILL PASSED

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day on Monday amid unrelenting protests by opposition parties demanding a debate on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Amid the uproar, a bill to implement amendments to the GST law in Manipur was passed after a brief discussion. The Bill was introduced earlier in the day by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to replace an ordinance on the issue. The state is under President’s rule, hence Parliament is using its powers to pass the legislation.

Before being adjourned for the day around 2.20 PM, the House saw two earlier adjournments during the Question Hour in the morning and later in the afternoon.

The first day of the Winter session, which will have 15 sittings, saw frequent disruptions.

Several Opposition members trooped into the Well shouting slogans and protesting over SIR, as they have been demanding a debate on the issue.

During the 12 minutes of the Zero Hour, Sitharaman introduced three bills besides tabling supplementary demands for grants for 2025-26. Two bills to levy excise duty on tobacco and tobacco products, as well as a new cess on the manufacture of pan masala, were introduced.

They are the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the Health Security and National Security Cess Bill, 2025.

Govt open to SIR debate: Kiren Rijiju



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Monday asserted in the Rajya Sabha that the Government is not averse to holding a discussion on SIR or electoral reforms, as he asked the Opposition not to insist on setting a timeline.

He was responding to opposition members who were demanding an immediate discussion on the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls or electoral reforms in the House. Not satisfied with the minister’s response, members of several opposition parties staged a walkout from the Upper House.

Responding to the opposition parties’ demand to start an immediate discussion on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls or electoral reforms, the minister sought more time to respond to the matter. Chairman CP Radhakrishnan earlier disallowed the notices given by nine opposition members on several issues, including a discussion on SIR under

rule 267, leading to protests by the Opposition. The chairman later asked members to raise their Zero Hour mentions.

“Nobody is undermining any matter which was brought out by the opposition party yesterday in the all-party meeting or Business Advisory Committee (BAC) today. What I am saying is, it is under the consideration of the Government,” Rijiju said. “...If you put a condition that it has to be taken up today itself, then it becomes difficult, because you have to give certain space,” he added.

The minister informed that certain opposition parties raised matters other than the SIR and stressed the need to protect their rights as well.

“However, I am saying again, the matter related to whatever you call it, special session of Parliament, electoral reforms or whatever. I have stated before the beginning of the winter session that the Government is not averse to taking up discussion on anything,” Rijiju said.

Parliament row over Renuka Chowdhury’s comment on dogs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A war of words broke out on the first day of the winter session of Parliament on Monday after Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury said “Those sitting inside bite, dogs don’t.” She made this remark after she arrived in Parliament with a rescued stray in her car. Taking objection to it, some ruling party members accused Chowdhury of indulging in drama.

The Congress MP said she had picked up the stray earlier in the day and was taking it to a veterinarian. She also claimed that the Government does not like animals and questioned the

objections raised by the ruling party MPs, saying there was no law against rescuing a stray dog.

“This Government does not like animals. Animals don’t have a voice. It (dog) was in the car, so what is their problem? It is so small, does it look like it will bite? Those sitting inside Parliament bite, not dogs,” she told reporters when asked about the dog in her car. “Which law says that I can’t rescue a dog?” the Rajya Sabha MP added.

Chowdhury, a self-confessed dog lover, has a few pets at home. Sources close to the MP said her driver was supposed to take the canine to a veterinarian after dropping her off at Parliament.

Security staff appealed to her to refrain from taking the dog inside the premises, it was learnt.

However, BJP MP Jagdambika Pal accused Chowdhury of indulging in a “tamasha” (theatrics) and violating protocol by bringing a dog to Parliament. He argued that members cannot bring anyone inside Parliament without proper documents and demanded action against the Congress MP. “You are not serious about debating issues. You are making a joke of Parliament with such tamasha. She is a member of the House and should raise issues of public importance instead of indulging in such drama,” Pal said.

Priyanka Gandhi slams block on raising public issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Raising issues concerning the people is not drama but not allowing democratic discussion on them is, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Monday while hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for accusing the Opposition of indulging in drama in Parliament.

Responding to Modi’s remarks ahead of the Winter session of Parliament, Priyanka Gandhi demanded a debate on urgent issues such as air pollution and SIR and said these were huge public issues that needed to be discussed in Parliament.

“What is Parliament for. It’s



Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra arriving on the first day of the Winter Session of Parliament in New Delhi PTI

not drama. Speaking about issues and raising issues is not drama. Drama is not allowing discussion. Drama is not having a democratic discussion about issues that matter to the public,” she told reporters outside Parliament. “We have spoken about air pollution, why are we not raising it. Why are we not allowed to discuss these things,” she asked.

She termed the air quality issue in Delhi shameful and said everyone must come together to take strong steps to tackle the problem and save the health of children, elderly and those already suffering from respiratory issues. “I really feel that this situation is shameful. This is

the capital city of our country. I feel that we should set aside parties and all should put all our forces together - administrative, political, civil society, judicial and we should take some strong steps,” she said.

Citing a study, she said 22 lakh children have permanent damage to their lungs apparently due to air pollution. “How one can do this to our children. There are old people who are suffering, people who have asthma already and people have other respiratory issues, hospitals are full of respiratory issues. How can we sit here and do nothing.

“I really feel that all of us should get together and take strong steps. We are here to

support the government. The Central government and state government must take immediate action,” the Congress leader said.

Hitting out at the opposition for stalling parliamentary proceedings earlier in the day, Modi said, “We need to work with a sense of responsibility. Parliament is not a place for drama, it is a place for delivery.”

Speaking to reporters outside Parliament ahead of the Winter session, he said the session must not become a stage for political theatrics but a platform for constructive and result-driven debate, and offered to give the opposition tips to bring positivity in politics.

■ States Focus ■



HIMACHAL PRADESH CM SUKHU WARNS CHITTA MAFIA

Issuing a strict warning to 'chitta' (adulterated heroin) mafia in Himachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Monday said drug peddlers have no place in the 'Devbhoomi', announcing rewards for those who help in busting major networks. The chief minister led an Anti-chitta Awareness Walkathon from the Dari ground in Dharamshala to the Police Ground on Monday. Addressing the event, he said, "This fight is not just against traffickers, it is against the entire network of drug mafia and their empire. Anyone found selling drugs to our children, will land in jail." The walkathon was marked with anti-drugs slogans, with students and the citizens carrying placards displaying the message "Drug Free Himachal", and seeking eradication of all types of addictive substances, including chitta, from the state.



ODISHA'S PER CAPITA DEBT BURDEN IS AT ₹26,978: CM

The per capita debt burden in Odisha stood at ₹26,978 till the end of October of the current financial year, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi informed the state assembly on Monday. In a written reply to a question by BJP legislator Tankadhar Tripathy, the chief minister said the total outstanding public debt of the state government as on October 31 is ₹1,26,799 crore. The per capita loan burden in Odisha has remained much lower in comparison to other states, he claimed. The Budgetary annual interest provision for the FY 2025-26 is 6500 crore. As per data shared by the chief minister in the House, the public debt was ₹92,775.18 crore by the end of 2019-20, and it surged to ₹1,20,710.18 crore by FY 2024-25. The government has succeeded in bringing down the total loan burden by ₹9040.16 crore during the financial year 2022-23. However, the total debt burden again rose by ₹8145.59 crore in 2023-24 and ₹24,399.78 crore in the last fiscal, as per the data. During the current financial year (till October), the state government has borrowed ₹14,725.79 crore from different sources including ₹7,000 crore from open market and ₹2301.43 crore from the central Government.

NIA raids Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam in Delhi blast probe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jammu

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday carried out multiple raids across South Kashmir districts of Pulwama, Shopian and Kulgam in connection with a "white-collar" terror module that was behind a car blast near Delhi's Red Fort on November 10. The probe teams are on the lookout for some more members of the 'White-collar' terror module who may have evaded arrest so far.

Preliminary investigations had revealed the terror module was planning a series of blasts on the Babri mosque demolition anniversary across different cities. In this connection, the NIA teams have intensified their searches to track down the members of the sleeper cells in hiding. According to official sources, the raids were conducted as part of NIA's efforts to unravel the complete terror conspiracy in the case RC-21/2025/NIA/DLI and prevent any fresh strike.

Separate teams of the central investigation agency conducted raids at the residences of all accused arrest-



ed so far from the Kashmir valley in connection with the 'White Collar' terror module.

According to official sources, the homes of Dr Muzammil Shakeel Ganai of Pulwama, Dr Adeel Ahmed Rather of Anantnag, and Mufti Irfan Ahmad Wagay of Shopian were raided. They had all played a key role in the terror attack that killed 15 innocent persons and left many others injured, as per NIA investigations.

During the ongoing

probe, the NIA teams have established the role played by Moulvi Irfan Ahmad Wagay in radicalising the young minds of doctors and bringing them together to execute the terror plot.

After Wagay was picked up by the Jammu and Kashmir police, his interrogation led to the arrest of Dr Adeel Ahmad Rather from Saharanpur before the Delhi car blast took place.

The NIA teams also raided homes of two other accused - Amir Rashid Ali, in whose

name the car used in the blast was registered, and Jasir Bilal Wani @ Danish, who had provided technical aid to the terrorist involved in the deadly attack.

The anti-terror agency, which was handed over the investigation by the Union Home Ministry, Government of India, soon after the attack, is working closely with various state police forces to track and arrest every member of the terrorist module involved in the carnage.

Visit Bengal personally: Bengal BJP to CEC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

The Bengal BJP has raised serious concern over the alleged "hijack" of BLOs by the TMC so as to vitiate revision of voters' lists and appealed to Gyanesh Kumar the Chief Election Commissioner of India to personally visit Bengal with the full bench of Election Commission of India to find things for himself.

This, while the Trinamool Congress, Congress and the Left have jointly criticised the ECI for realising late the absurdity of completing the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in two months before ordering extension of the dates of submission of enumeration forms by a week or so.

Alleging that the TMC cadres were "threatening, hijacking and dominating" the booth level officers of Bengal into capitulation so as to vitiate the SIR process State BJP president Samik Bhattacharya has said that Kumar "should personally

visit Bengal with his full team... If he is thinking that he will be able to correctly monitor the entire situation of Bengal through satellite system sitting in Delhi. Then it is not going to happen because he needs to understand the real situation of Bengal which is different from other States."

He alleged that the BLOs of Bengal, particularly those in the bordering States of Malda and Murshidabad had literally been hijacked by the TMC goons who were dictating the regarding how the enumeration forms were to be filled.

"These are after all trifle government servants who can be easily threatened, dominated and forced into submission" he alleged saying the situation was that fake names and false information were being retained or uploaded.

"The safety and security of the BLOs are a prime responsibility of the Election Commission. This is EC's jurisdiction. that is of the Chief Election Commissioner

which is why he should do some on-ground monitoring of the situation. He should come to Bengal instead of sending his officers."

The comparatively sensitive border districts account for about 140 Assembly seats while Murshidabad and Malda jointly have about 35 seats. Presently out of 5 parliamentary constituencies in the two districts three are with the TMC and two with Congress and BJP respectively.

The BJP had been claiming that there were atleast 1.25 crore fake entries in the electoral rolls in Bengal that include Bangladeshi infiltrators, dead or left voters whose names should be deleted.

The TMC on the other hand has accused the ECI of "working at the behest of its bosses in Delhi for helping the BJP win elections."

TMC spokesperson Arup Chakraborty said that "BJP has given a target to the ECI which is trying to fulfill. Earlier it had given two months' time for SIR which

is absurd and unrealistic. But as the ECI failed to achieve the target fixed by the BJP 'akas' (bosses) they are now readjusting the time schedule... They want to ensure that the electoral rolls in a given number of seats are manipulated so as to confirm a BJP win. But the people have caught their game and are quite angry but they will once again defeat BJP in Bengal as they have done in the past." He said like on previous occasions the BJP will bring it's "Rathis and Maharathis" (big commanders) but will not be able to win the elections.

CPI(M) State secretary Md Salim on the other hand slammed the ECI for "taking orders from the BJP" which was once again proved by the extension of dates for surrender of enumeration forms.

Senior Congress leader Adhir Chowdhury too attacked the Commission for creating a situation where only either the BJP or the TMC can win.

18th Bihar Assembly commences with swearing in of newly elected members

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

The 18th Bihar Legislative Assembly commenced on Monday with newly elected members being administered the oath of office.

They were sworn in by pro tem Speaker Narendra Narayan Yadav, who informed the House that members could take oath in Hindi, English, Urdu, Sanskrit or Maithili, and the process would begin with cabinet ministers.

Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary, who has been elected from Tarapur assembly seat, was the first to take the oath, followed by fellow Deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha, who has retained Lakhisarai for a fourth consecutive term.

After taking oath, the ministers greeted the pro tem Speaker and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who, incidentally, is a member of the Legislative Council. Next in line, for taking oath, was veteran BJP leader Prem Kumar, who is understood to be the main contender for the Speaker's post.

The election of the Speaker is scheduled on Tuesday. After Prem Kumar, it was the turn of RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, who is tipped to retain the post of the Leader of the Opposition.

A number of MLAs, including minister Anand Shankar Prasad, took oath in Maithili, while some others, mostly from the Seemanchal region, did so in Urdu. A few



members also took oath in Sanskrit. At least two members, Vishnu Deo Paswan and Rahul Kumar Singh, elected from Darauli and Dumraon, respectively, took oath in English.

Some of the members ended up swearing "in the name of God" as well as "in the name of Truth", only to be corrected by the pro tem Speaker, a veteran several-term MLA, who told them that they could choose only one of the options.

The House was adjourned for the day after Khyati Singh, the secretary in charge of Vidhan Sabha, said that quite a few members had not turned up and they will be sworn in on Tuesday after the election of the Speaker. The pro tem Speaker, who spoke before commencement of the swearing in, told the House, "Many formalities have to be completed in the ongoing session, a reason why no questions will be taken".

The five-day session is also scheduled to witness an address by Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, jointly to members of both Houses, on Wednesday, when the second supplementary budget is also scheduled to be tabled. On Thursday, there will be the government's reply to the debate on motion of thanks on the Governor's address.

The session will conclude on Friday with a debate on the second supplementary budget, followed by passage of the appropriation bill.

The session comes close on the heels of the assembly polls in which the ruling NDA won a brute majority, bagging 202 out of 243 seats.

The triumphant mood in the ruling camp was evident when the chief minister and his cabinet colleagues upon reaching the Vidhan Sabha premises, where they were presented with bouquets of flowers.

Andhra tightens temple safety after fatal incidents

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Amaravati

In the wake of three major temple tragedies in Andhra Pradesh in 2025, Chief Secretary K Vijayanand on Monday directed officials to pay special attention to private temples where heavy influx of devotees is expected, as several festivals and special occasions are lined up. As many as 22 people died and nearly 100 were injured during the three temple mishaps.

In January, six devotees died and nearly 40 more were injured during a stampede at Bairagi Patteda near MGM School in Tirupati as hundreds of them jostled for tickets for Vaikunta Dwara Darshanam at Lord Venkateswara Swamy temple on Tirumala Hills.

On April 30, seven people, including a couple and two of their relatives, were killed when a rain-soaked wall

collapsed at the Sri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Simhachalam near Visakhapatnam.

Exactly a month ago, nine devotees died and over two dozen others were injured when a metal staircase railing broke off at Venkateswara temple in Kasibugga.

"Pay special attention to private temples in the state and the heavy influx of devotees. Several festivals and special occasions are lined up in the coming days, and therefore all temples are expected to witness large crowds," said Vijayanand in an official release.

He directed them to monitor private temples within their jurisdiction and observed that such temple managements must inform officials in advance about the number of devotees expected during festivals and special occasions.



MLA Mamkoottathil case: Activist Rahul Easwar denied bail, remanded to jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Thiruvananthapuram

A court on Monday dismissed the bail petition of activist Rahul Easwar and remanded him to judicial custody for allegedly defaming the complainant in the sexual assault case against MLA Rahul Mamkoottathil.

Thiruvananthapuram Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Elsa Catherine George dismissed the bail plea after hearing the arguments from both sides.

The court diary recorded that Easwar (43) was arrested and produced before the court around 4.30 pm.

"Bail application is filed

and detailed arguments are adduced by both sides in open court. Bail application is dismissed vide separate order. For the reasons in the remand report, he is remanded to District Jail, Thiruvananthapuram till December 15," the court diary stated. Easwar was arrested on Sunday after the Thiruvananthapuram Cyber Police registered a case for allegedly defaming on social media the woman who had lodged the sexual assault complaint against Mamkoottathil.

Police said the case was registered on the woman's complaint that her photograph was circulated on

social media.

In his bail plea, Easwar contended that he had not disclosed the identity of the complainant as alleged by the police.

He also alleged that the arrest procedure was improper, saying that notice was issued immediately before he was taken into custody.

Opposing bail, the police submitted that Easwar had earlier been involved in defaming complainants in similar cases. The police also produced videos claiming he had defamed complainants in sexual assault cases.

After reviewing the submitted materials, the court rejected the bail plea.



Siddaramaiah set to visit Shivakumar's residence for unity breakfast on Dec 2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bengaluru

In an apparent display of unity, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is likely to visit his deputy D K Shivakumar's residence for breakfast, just days after the two broke bread in the wake of a raging power tussle.

Official sources on Monday said the CM is likely to have breakfast with Shivakumar on December 2.

However, Siddaramaiah said he is yet to receive a formal invitation and would go on receiving it, while Shivakumar maintained that it's a matter between him



and the CM, and that they were working like "brothers". In an attempt to break the logjam over the leadership row involving the two leaders, Shivakumar had visited the CM's residence for a similar breakfast

meeting, convened by Siddaramaiah at the behest of the Congress high command.

Following the initial meeting held on Saturday both leaders had publicly stated that "there won't be any confusion".

Hemant's calm leadership strengthens MP's BJP

GIRISH SHARMA
■ Bhopal

Five months after taking charge as Madhya Pradesh BJP president, Hemant Khandelwal is slowly but decisively emerging as a quiet yet effective organisational stabiliser.

His rise has surprised many within the party who initially doubted whether his soft-spoken persona could command a state unit as vast, complex and politically dynamic as Madhya Pradesh. Yet today, his imprint is unmistakable — not crafted through confrontation or dramatic assertion, but through steady administrative discipline and a deliberate effort to mend longstanding divides within the party.

One of Khandelwal's most consequential interventions has been the revival of a long-discussed but inconsistently implemented mechanism to ensure ministerial accessibility at the state BJP headquarters.

The process, first envisioned during the Shivraj Singh Chouhan era, struggled to gain traction due to scheduling and coordination challenges. Under Khandelwal, however, it has taken firm shape: two ministers are now required to be present at the party office every day, engaging directly with workers, addressing grievances and improving the communication loop between grassroots cadres and the government.

Senior party leaders say this structural reform has greatly energised the rank and file.

For many workers who felt distant from decision-making and administrative channels, the renewed accessibility offers both reassurance and recognition. "It

feels like the organisation is listening again," a Bhopal-based party worker remarked.

Equally significant has been Khandelwal's quiet intervention in resolving one of the BJP's most persistent internal rifts. In Sagar district, tensions between Minister Govind Singh Rajput and senior MLA Bhupendra Singh had simmered for years, often spilling into organisational operations. In a move widely described as politically astute, Khandelwal visited Sagar, invited both leaders to a lunch meeting and persuaded them to share a platform — a breakthrough that eluded even earlier leadership.

Insiders said Khandelwal's gesture reflected a leadership style built on personal engagement and silent bridge-building rather than public messaging or factional posturing.

When Khandelwal took charge in July 2025, many within the BJP viewed him as polite, unassuming and too consensus-oriented for a role often associated with firm command. But his early months in office have shown that leadership can also be exercised with restraint — firm without theatrics, persuasive without confrontation, and anchored in everyday organisational discipline.

Party sources say Khandelwal has been meticulous in strengthening coordination between the government and the organisation, encouraging district units to hold more regular reviews, and urging cadre-based outreach in the run-up to the next electoral cycle. His style, they say, mirrors a broader BJP ethos of structured accessibility and disciplined functioning.

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Apple trying to scuttle probe: CCI tells Delhi HC



Justifying the law on global turn over based penalties, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Monday told the Delhi High Court that the mobile phone giant Apple is trying to scuttle the probe. Senior Advocate Balbir Singh, appearing for CCI, said that the law is necessary so that an entity with no turnover in India can also be brought under the CCI net. "The object of this is the global turnover concept has been taken in those circumstances where you don't have a base in India, how do you punish them?" he said.

He also claimed that Apple has filed the present plea to scuttle the CCI probe against it. The High Court on Monday issued notice to Central Government and the CCI on a plea filed by tech giant Apple challenging the law allowing penalties on the "global turnover" of companies for anti-competitive practices. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela directed the Government and CCI to file their responses in a week and posted the case for further hearing on December 16.

Anil Ambani moves SC against SBI classification of his account as fraud



Industrialist Anil Ambani has moved the Supreme Court challenging an order of the Bombay High Court which upheld the State Bank of India's (SBI) decision classifying his and Reliance Communications' accounts as fraud. The matter is yet to be listed for hearing. The High Court had on October 3 dismissed Ambani's plea challenging the SBI decision and said there was no merit in the plea. The SBI had last year classified the accounts as fraud, alleging misappropriation of funds by entering into transactions that violated the terms of loans extended by it.

Ambani moved the HC, arguing that the bank had not followed the principles of natural justice as it did not grant him a hearing. Certain documents, based on which the classification orders were passed, were not provided to him initially and were furnished only after six months, the petition claimed. The CBI had registered a complaint after the State Bank of India claimed a loss of ₹2,929.05 crore resulting from alleged misappropriation by Reliance Communications and Anil Ambani.

SC refuses to extend time limit for uploading of Waqf property details on UMEED portal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to extend time for the mandatory registration of all waqf properties, including 'waqf by user', under the UMEED portal. A bench comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and Augustine George Masih asked the petitioners to approach the respective tribunals before deadline.

"Our attention has been drawn to the proviso to Section 38.

Since the remedy before the tribunal is available before the applicants, we dispose of all the applications by granting them liberty to approach the tribunal by the last date of the six month period," the bench said.

Besides the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi and various others have moved the top court, seeking extension of time for mandatory registration of all waqf properties. Earlier, a lawyer had said



the six-month period for the mandatory registration of waqf was nearing its end.

In an interim order on September 15, the top court put on hold a few key provisions of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, including a clause that only those practising Islam for the last five years could create waqf, but refused to stay the entire law, outlining the presumption of constitutionality in its favour. It also held the



Disenfranchisement claims exaggerated, ECI to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Election Commission has strongly defended in the Supreme Court its ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, saying that allegations of mass deletion of genuine voters are "highly exaggerated", "speculative" and politically motivated. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi on November 11 had sought separate responses from the poll panel on the pleas filed by the DMK, CPI(M), the West Bengal unit of the Congress and Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders, challenging the SIR exercise in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal respectively.

Filing separate affidavits in the top court, Pawan Diwan, the Secretary of the Election Commission, sought dismissal of the petitions filed against the poll panel's decisions to conduct SIR.

In an 81-page counter-affidavit filed on November 26 in a petition by TMC MP Dola Sen and others, the poll panel said the narrative alleging widespread disenfranchisement in West Bengal was being "amplified to serve vested political interests."

"That it is submitted, that a harmonious reading of Articles 324 and 326 read with Sections 16, 19, and 22 of RP Act 1950, read with Rule 21 A, makes it clear that the ECI is vested with powers to assess the eligibility of the electors including citizenship for enabling the



constitutional right to vote. The guidelines issued with respect to the SIR exercise are constitutional and in the interest of maintaining the purity of electoral rolls which is a pre-requisite for free and fair elections that form a basic feature of the Constitution," it said.

The poll panel said its powers to undertake such revisions are firmly grounded in Articles 324 and 326 of the Constitution, and in various provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules.

In its affidavits, the poll panel said, "Under Article 324 of the Constitution, the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the

Legislature of every State are vested in the Election Commission of India."

The constitutional provision forms the bedrock of the Election Commission's plenary authority in all matters relating to the preparation of electoral rolls and conduct of elections, it said.

These provisions, it said, not only authorise but require the Commission to assess voter eligibility, including citizenship, to maintain the "purity of electoral rolls," which the top court has recognised as essential to free and fair elections.

The affidavits said the present SIR is being conducted under... Orders issued on 24 June and 27 October 2025 using powers vested in the Commission under Article 324 and Section 21(3) of the RP Act. The EC stressed that the

preparation and revision of electoral rolls is a "cooperative and participatory exercise", and that only those electors who cannot trace their eligibility to the last nationwide SIR conducted in 2002 are required to sign enumeration forms and later submit documents if asked.

The affidavits emphasised that eligibility under Article 326, citizenship, age, residency and absence of disqualification, is presumed unless contrary inputs are received. Therefore, allegations of arbitrary classification or violation of Article 14 were "misconceived", it said.

"That the SIR exercise adds to the purity of elections by weeding out ineligible persons from the electoral roll. The entitlement to vote flows from Article 326 read with Sections 16 and 19 of the

RP Act 1950 and Section 62 of the RP Act 1951....," it said.

Refuting accusations of up to 30 per cent voter exclusion in West Bengal, the Commission revealed that 99.77 per cent of existing electors had already been supplied pre-filled enumeration forms and 70.14 per cent of forms had been received back. These data points, the EC stated, "demonstrate that errors, under-inclusiveness and mass disenfranchisement claimed by the petitioner are highly exaggerated".

The affidavit details that booth level officers (BLOs) must visit each household, leave repeated notices at locked homes and attempt contact at least three times.

The BLOs are expressly barred from collecting documents during enumeration, a safeguard added in the

Phase-II SIR order dated October 27, 2025. Electors who are absent during BLO visits can have forms submitted by family members, or file them online via the EC portal or mobile app, it said.

Instructions have also been issued to ensure that the elderly, disabled and vulnerable citizens receive all necessary assistance, it said.

In two separate affidavits, the poll panel defended SIR in Tamil Nadu.

The ECI reiterated that the nationwide revision is being conducted after a gap of more than 20 years.

The pan-India SIR was launched through Order dated June 24 beginning with Bihar. Phase-II, covering 12 states including Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, commenced after a follow-up order on October 27, it added. "This Court would be loath to countenance the highly speculative and exaggerated contentions of the Petitioner in the present Writ Petition as regards possibility of mass disenfranchisement and improper implementation of SIR in the State of Tamil Nadu," it said. It said the ECI is cognizant of its responsibility towards the electors, and all possible efforts are being made to ensure the SIR exercise is implemented successfully and no eligible elector is left out of the electoral rolls.

Dismissing these concerns, the EC said the claims were "highly speculative and exaggerated." The EC criticised political parties for raising objections while failing to extend cooperation.

Man who impersonated Amit Shah's nephew to con businessman gets bail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to a man who was accused of cheating a businessman of ₹3.9 crore by impersonating the nephew of Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bhishnoi noted that the accused, Ajay Kumar Nayyar, has undergone over four years in custody and the conclusion of trial will take time.

The court took into consideration that "the offence is of Sections 419 and 420 read with Sections 120B and 34 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860, wherein the maximum sentence prescribed is only seven years and the petitioner is in custody for more than four years." The bench said the charges were framed in 2022 and even after three years, the cross-examination of first witness is going on, while there are a total of 34 witnesses. "In our view, the trial shall take time to

conclude," the bench said.

Additional Solicitor General Vikramjit Banerjee, appearing for the Delhi Government, opposed the bail plea. On September 1, the Delhi High Court had dismissed Nayyar's bail plea, considering the nature of the allegations against him.

"Considering the nature and expanse of the allegations against the applicant, coupled with the pending consideration of amendment in charge to include the offences under Sections 467, 471 and 120B of IPC punishable with life imprisonment, and also keeping in mind the antecedents, at this stage, I do not find it a fit case to grant bail to the accused," the High Court order said.

Nayyar allegedly promised the complainant a ₹90 crore tender from the Central Government for supply of leather to renovate the President's estate.

According to the prosecution, a family friend introduced Nayyar to the complainant at Jalandhar

Gymkhana Club. Nayyar, posing as Amit Shah's nephew Ajay Shah, promised the complainant that he would get him the tender for the Government contract. The complainant was subsequently shown a demand draft of ₹90 crore in favour of his company and asked to pay ₹2.5 crore as processing fees, the prosecution alleged. After several rounds of meetings with Nayyar, the complainant paid him ₹3.90 crore through cash and RTGS on different occasions towards the tender.

But Nayyar showed him photo of another demand draft of ₹127 crore, stating that the cost of the tender has been increased from ₹90 crore to ₹127 crore, the prosecution said. When the complainant sensed that he is being cheated, he filed a police complaint, following which the accused was arrested in December 2021.

Nayyar sought bail on the ground that charges were framed in 2022 and the trial would take a long time to conclude.

Panel to select new CIC on December 10: Centre to SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Centre on Monday informed the Supreme Court that Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led panel is likely to meet on December 10 to select and recommend names for the post of Chief Information Commissioner and information commissioners of the Central Information Commission (CIC).

A bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, which was hearing a plea seeking filling of vacant posts of CIC and State information commissions (SICs), was told by Additional Solicitor General KM Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, that the meeting has been fixed and notice for it has been sent to the members of the panel.

Under Section 12 (3) of the Right to Information Act, the Prime Minister is the chairperson of the committee, which also comprises the Leader of Opposition and a



Union Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, that selects and recommends the names for appointment as Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioner. The top court recorded the submission of the ASG and deferred the hearing on the plea. The apex court asked the Chief Secretaries of all the states to submit details of the total strength of SICs, vacant posts in SICs and number of appeals and complaints pending before the Commissions. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioners includ-

ing Anjali Bhardwaj and others, said that the Government has not filled the vacant posts, which is resulting in piling of cases before the commissions. He said that some states have made two to three appointments and are saying they don't need to fill all the posts as they have sufficient strength of members to deal with the pendency of cases.

Bhushan said there are at least seven comprehensive orders of the court in which it had directed the Centre to expeditiously fill up the vacancies in the CIC and SICs.

Secure safety, help return Indian woman held captive in Dubai: Delhi HC to Centre

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre and the Consulate General of India in Dubai to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of a 25-year-old Indian woman who is allegedly held captive in Dubai by a foreign national.

Justice Sachin Datta also asked the authorities to help the woman return to India, if she so desires.

"In the circumstances, given the gravity of the situation, the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Consulate General of India in Dubai, UAE are directed to take immediate steps to ensure the safety and well-being of the petitioner's daughter and verify the allegations made in the present petition," the court said in its order passed on November 26.

The court asked the authorities to file a status report within two weeks and listed the matter for further hearing on December 15.

The court was hearing a petition by a man seeking direction to the Ministry of



External Affairs to consider his representation and take requisite steps to repatriate his 25-year-old daughter, an Indian citizen, from Dubai in UAE, where she is allegedly held captive by a foreign national. Petitioner V Thirunavukkarasu said his daughter came in contact with the foreign national while she was working as a nurse at a Chennai hospital where the man was admitted for treatment.

He claimed that the foreign national offered her a medical assistance job in

Dubai for a year.

Believing him and considering the pay offered, she agreed and travelled to Dubai in January 2023.

The plea said after some time, the family's communication with the woman gradually reduced and even after two years, she was not permitted to return to India by the man.

It alleged that the man illegally seized the woman's passport and visa to prevent her from returning to India.

The plea said that in October, the petitioner

received a distressing call from his daughter who said she was subjected to physical abuse and deprived of even the basic necessities. The petitioner also showed to the court certain photographs sent by the woman of being physically abused.

The petitioner said he made a representation to the Consulate General of India in Dubai in November seeking help in rescuing his daughter, however, since there was no positive outcome, he approached the court.



Editor's
TAKE

Winter chill in Parliament session

With the Opposition determined to press for a debate on SIR, tempers are likely to rise — or the winter season's frost will settle over the proceedings

Winter is about to commence, but in the Winter Session of Parliament the chill has already set in. It opened on December 1 amid brewing political tension. What should have been a routine legislative session-tableting ten new Bills, discussions on national issues, and crucial financial business-now appears headed towards turbulence and confrontation. Until December 19, heated exchanges, adjournments, and walkouts seem inevitable. The Opposition's insistence on a full-fledged debate on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls – an issue that has not only united otherwise fragmented Opposition parties but also given them a common rallying point after the electoral setback in Bihar-has set the tone for the session. During Sunday's all-party and Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meetings, the Opposition made it abundantly clear that the House would not function smoothly unless the government agreed to discuss SIR. Samajwadi Party leader Ramgopal Yadav bluntly warned that no business would be allowed without such a debate, while other Opposition leaders placed responsibility for any disruption squarely on the government. The Congress, the TMC, and several regional parties have positioned SIR as a symbol of broader concerns-electoral manipulation, institutional weakening, and what they describe as "vote chori".

To counter the Opposition's plank, the government is expected to foreground a different thematic anchor for the session: a discussion on the 150 years of Vande Mataram, India's national song. This is likely to generate its own heat. For the Opposition, the timing appears deliberate – an attempt to shift attention towards cultural nationalism and away from uncomfortable questions on electoral processes, national security lapses, and foreign policy drift. For the government, marking the historical milestone is both legitimate and apolitical. But inside Parliament, symbolism rarely remains neutral; everything becomes political. In fact, a considerable amount of business is scheduled for the Winter Session. The government is set to introduce the Health Security se National Security Cess Bill, 2025, to levy an additional cess on pan masala and gutka; another Bill to increase taxes on cigarettes; a proposal for revised GST rates for Manipur; and supplementary demands for grants. These government initiatives will be taken up-though likely amid uproar in the House.

The Opposition, meanwhile, wants its own legislative and discussion agenda to be prioritised. The Telugu Desam Party has demanded debates on economic performance. The Congress seeks debates on SIR, national security after the Delhi blasts, Jammu & Kashmir statehood, and shifting foreign policy positions involving the US and Russia. While Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has expressed confidence that the House will run smoothly, the signs point otherwise. The opposing approaches could trigger a familiar parliamentary deadlock: the Opposition demanding accountability and the treasury benches insisting on order. The likely outcome-disruptions, walkouts, adjournments, and yet another session washed out.

The vanishing ethics of Indian democracy

India, once admired for its spiritual heritage and leadership rooted in universality and compassion, now finds its democratic fabric strained by political hypocrisy, social discord, and the abandonment of Gandhian principles



JS
RAJPUT

The eternal human pursuit of progress and excellence, which sustains communities and nations in the long march of global civilisation, succeeds only when conducted on the pedestal of a sound moral and humane foundation. This becomes even more relevant in today's fiercely competitive world, which speaks of peace and fraternity yet consistently generates violence and wars. Amid the glitz and glamour of materialistic pursuits, the bonds of human relationships are being seriously diluted. Distrust, discard, and the dilution of humane connections increasingly define relations between communities and nations.

The mutuality between humans and nature-essential for sustaining life on Earth-is being ruthlessly devastated. Furthermore, democracy, which promised a new world of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity' for all, now confronts a deafening dilution of its moral, ethical, and humanistic dimensions. During the second half of the 20th century, much was expected from India, which had attained independence following a unique path. The nation carved out a place of respect for itself by sharing the universality of its ancient heritage, its lived values, and its wisdom-a legacy that was increasingly recognised in the West.

Swami Vivekananda had already won hearts when he uttered the first words of his historic address in Chicago in 1893: "Brothers and Sisters of America!" The calming whiff of spirituality and morality pervaded not only those present in the hall but also spread far and wide across the West. People learned that spirituality unites hearts and helps them internalise the essential unity of all religions. When the colossal persona of Gandhi emerged on the global horizon, the essence of Indian civilisation and its knowledge quest spread even wider.

Globally, people watched with deep interest-and some apprehension-to see whether this could indeed be the path to human emancipation, peace, and brotherhood; the means to achieving the utopian dream of a world without wars and violence. That was not to be. Yet the focus on the 'deprived, desolate, excluded, and those denied basic God-given rights' was one of the great achievements of the Indian freedom struggle. Thanks to stalwarts such as Gandhi, Dr Rajendra Prasad, and Dr Ambedkar, these concerns were emphatically woven into the Constitution of India. But have we been truly sincere in ensuring the spirit of the Constitution is realised in practice?

What a tragedy that these very groups are constantly misled and used as political fodder in the vote-accumulation strategies of ambitious politicians. In my interactions with young people in uni-



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The author is an
educationist, a Padma
Shri awardee, and works
in religious amity and
social cohesion

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 The Pioneer

versities and other institutions of higher learning, I invariably refer to the ancient Indian philosophy of *Sarva Bhuta Hite Ratah* – being devoted to the welfare of all-which represents the essence of Gandhian values.

The question that regularly arises, almost in chorus, is: Where are Gandhian values today? Having witnessed the dawn of independence, one must accept that democracy in practice offers little evidence that Gandhian values are even considered relevant by most political formations.

The electioneering in Bihar in November 2025 was another stark eye-opener-especially for those who still swear by Mahatma Gandhi's name-revealing what our political leaders, particularly those claiming to be the inheritors of his legacy, have done to his principles. Practically every day some politician makes public statements or delivers speeches clearly intended to damage social cohesion and religious harmony.

People witness the sheer hypocrisy of those who claim to be in politics solely to serve the 'last man in the line'. Sadly, most cannot find that last man and instead focus only on serving their near and dear ones. Elections should logically be moments for reflection, review, and re-envisioning. Those in power are expected to present an honest record of their achievements, along with their vision and concrete action plan for the next five years. Those in opposition should present details of their constructive work, their success in correcting the power structure, and convince people how they would govern better if given a chance.

This is simply not happening. I have no hesitation in recalling the apprehensions Gandhi ji

expressed in a letter written over a century ago, on January 241922:

"We should remember that immediately on the attainment of freedom our people are not going to secure happiness. As we become independent, all the defects of the system of elections, injustice, the tyranny of the richer classes as also the burden of running administration are bound to come upon us... But there is hope, if education spreads throughout the country. From that people would develop from their childhood qualities of pure conduct, God-fearing, love. Swaraj would give us happiness only when we attain success in the task. Otherwise, India would become the abode of grave injustice and tyranny of the rulers."

Could anyone remain unmoved by this prophetic foresight and his deep understanding of Indians and their psyche?

The common man has lost hope in the promises made by most political formations and their leaders. The same applies to the countless illogical freebies politicians announce, which only generate uniform disdain across the voting population and among future voters. Gandhi's "last man in line" is being fed nothing but false assurances and empty promises. These trends will only grow if left unchecked. The only encouraging sign is that voters have learned to read between the lines. Albert Einstein wrote:

"The most important endeavour is the striving for morality in one's own actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it... To make morality a living force and bring it to clear consciousness is perhaps the foremost task of education."

There is no alternative to this.

The Pioneer
SINCE 1865

What happened to the internet we once loved?



SHAINY
SHARMA

2ND OPINION
THE PIONEER

There was a time-nostalgic, sepia-toned, and almost mythical-when social media feeds overflowed with sunset photos, cheerful selfies, and the occasional unsolicited monologue on politics, gluten, or the meaning of existence. Today, the digital amphitheatre feels strangely quiet. Timelines that once brimmed with performative enthusiasm now resemble deserted railway platforms. And before we congratulate ourselves for having collectively achieved spiritual detachment, it is necessary to diagnose the real ailment: enshittification.

Coined by digital critic Cory Doctorow, this colourful term captures the slow, almost biological decay of online platforms. It describes the predictable cycle in which platforms

move from serving users, to serving advertisers, and finally to serving shareholders with unwavering devotion. The trajectory rarely changes. First, users enjoy features, updates, and a sense of community. Then the platform quietly pivots. Advertisers become the new aristocracy, users are demoted to serfs, and shareholders ascend the throne.

This cycle is now unfolding everywhere. Instagram's beloved chronological feed has been replaced by an algorithm that behaves like a mischievous deity-blessing some posts while banishing others into obscurity. Facebook, once a powerhouse of organic reach, has tumbled from 12 per cent visibility in 2013 to a nearly invisible 2 per cent in 2023. TikTok creators routinely complain that their videos disappear from public view unless they pay for algorithmic favour. And as the global social media advertising market ballooned to USD 226 billion in 2024, platforms responded with relentless ad-stuffing.

The authenticity that once made social media addictive has been replaced by a parade of curated façades and commercial theatrics. According to Pew Research, 64 per cent of users hesitate before posting publicly, fearing judgement, trolling, or unintentionally stepping on political landmines. Posting-once as effortless as breathing-now requires the caution of a diplomat. Meanwhile, social feeds have become glossy runways dominated by influencers equipped with

ring lights, editing tools, and aesthetic precision. Algorithms worsen the fatigue by prioritising whatever is viral, extreme, or emotionally explosive. Birthday updates, dinner photos, and life milestones are sidelined in favour of sensational, engagement-hungry content. Even Meta admits that one in four users feel they "no longer see anything meaningful" on their timelines. If the emperor has no clothes, today's social feed has no soul.

Yet users have not disappeared; they have simply migrated-from public squares to private parlours. Encrypted messaging apps have become new social sanctuaries where people can rant, gossip, laugh, and overshare without fear of algorithmic punishment. WhatsApp alone handled over 100 billion messages a day in 2024. The quiet on social media is not cultural decline; it is subtle rebellion. Users are sending a message: we're tired of being the product.

If platforms want relevance again, they must rediscover user-centricity. Until then, public posting will continue to fade-not the death of social media, but its long-overdue evolution. People are not going silent; they are choosing spaces that feel human again. And in a world engineered for noise, that silence speaks the loudest.

The writer is an educator

The Pioneer
SINCE 1865

ARMY MUST REMAIN NEUTRAL IN RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

The Dharma Dhvaj hoisted at Ayodhya was ceremonially raised by the Prime Minister and temple authorities, while the Indian Army's involvement remained strictly technical, limited to operating and supporting the automated hoisting mechanism. Although no religious ritual was undertaken by the armed forces, even this narrowly defined participation underscores the importance of maintaining clear institutional boundaries.

The Army's foremost responsibility is national security, territorial integrity, and the protection of India's borders. It is not expected to participate-either directly or indirectly-in religious ceremonies, however symbolic they may appear. Any blurring of this distinction risks

establishing an unwelcome precedent, one that could invite future efforts to draw the military into religious or political displays. Such developments may erode the carefully preserved neutrality that forms the bedrock of the Army's credibility.

Senior commanders, therefore, have a crucial role in advising civil authorities firmly and respectfully, ensuring that the forces are not entrusted with duties that could be construed as religious or ideological.

The apolitical and secular character of the Indian Army has long been central to its internal cohesion, professional excellence, and the deep trust it enjoys across every region and community.

RS NARULA | PATIALA

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Preserve the Army's institutional neutrality

The Dharma Dhvaj hoisted at Ayodhya was ceremonially raised by the Prime Minister and temple authorities, while the Indian Army's involvement remained strictly technical, limited to operating and supporting the automated hoisting mechanism.

Although no religious ritual was undertaken by the armed forces, even this narrowly defined participation underscores the importance of maintaining clear institutional boundaries.

The Army's core duty is national security and border protection, not participation-direct or indirect-in religious ceremonies.

Even symbolic involvement risks setting an undesirable precedent and may draw the military into political or communal imagery, weakening the neutrality that underpins its credibility.

Senior commanders must therefore advise civil authorities clearly, ensuring the forces are not assigned tasks that could be viewed as religious or ideological. The Indian Army's secular and apolitical character is central to its cohesion, professionalism, and the trust it enjoys across all communities. Protecting this character is essential for both institutional integrity and national stability.

KIRTI WADHAWAN | KANPUR

Supreme Court reference needs clarity

The Presidential reference to the Supreme Court of India, following the April 2025 ruling in the Tamil Nadu versus Governor case, was widely viewed as an "appeal in disguise" by the Union Government. In its April judgment, a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court established timelines for the disposal of Bills submitted to Governors for assent. Tamil Nadu argued that the Governor's actions were unconstitutional and had brought the State's constitutional machinery to an unwarranted standstill. The Constitution Bench later reversed this position, clarifying that neither Governors nor the President are bound by judicially prescribed timelines. However, it observed that in exceptional circumstances involving prolonged, unexplained and indefinite inaction, the Court may issue a limited mandamus directing the Governor to act within a reasonable period.

During Constituent Assembly debates, Dr BR Ambedkar noted that the President already possesses ample authority to remove a Governor for corruption, bribery or violation of the Constitution. The recent reference offered the Supreme Court an opportunity to articulate this implicit principle more explicitly as guidance.

HARIDASAN RAJAN | KERALA

Headlights safety requires urgent action

On average, glaring headlights are direct or contributory causes of nearly 75 per cent of vehicular collisions. A driver may be temporarily blinded not only by oncoming vehicles but also by the dazzling beams of those approaching from the rear.

Although the rules clearly state that high beams may be used only when no vehicle is approaching from the opposite direction, very few drivers remain strict adherents to these guidelines. Vehicles travelling behind can also impair the vision of those ahead by using excessively bright lights within a distance of sixty metres.

It has unfortunately become a fashionable trend among several youngsters, particularly in small towns and growing cities, to equip their vehicles with ornamental and ostentatious illumination. Flickers, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) and their many variants are used freely by irresponsible drivers who seem to value style far more than safety.

Contrary to widespread belief, switching on bright lights during fog or heavy mist is dangerous. Many non-professional drivers remain unaware of proper headlight usage due to inadequate training and the careless issuance of licences.

GANAPATHI BHAT | AKOLA

Quo Vadis, Indian Economy?

The Indian economy has quadrupled since 2000 and is the fifth-largest in the world. It is characterised by rapid growth, presenting a rich and promising mixture of public and private enterprise and has a dominant service sector driven by domestic consumption

FIRST Column



MOHAN KANDA

For a country to achieve long-term stability and sustainable prosperity of an equitable nature, it is necessary for its economy to be managed soundly. Experience in other countries has shown that if a country opts for a system driven by the market alone, the danger of monopolies emerging and the concentration of wealth causing income inequalities, labour unrest and exploitation of consumers cannot be avoided. Driven by an uncontrolled profit motive, the economy may grow, but at the cost of ignoring social costs and possible market volatility causing alarming economic swings.

On the other hand, an economy entirely centrally managed can prove to be inefficient, lacking the ability to encourage innovation to flourish and limiting the space for consumer choice. Also, in the absence of direction provided by the market forces of supply and demand, the political leadership and the administration may fail to assess the needs of the country properly, leading to a situation of surpluses and deficits of important goods and services. In addition, the authorities concerned will tend to ignore the vox populi, with corruption and incompetence becoming the order of the day. What is more, such a polity can be indifferent to, if not intolerant of, the importance of the role of the media in ensuring that government policies resonate with the expectations of the people, leading to dissatisfaction and unrest.

It was the desire to find the golden mean between the two alternative forms of governance that led to the adoption, by India, of a mixed economy, which allowed for free market forces to operate without hindrance while, at the same time, ensuring that safety nets were available for those negatively impacted by growth and development.

The Indian economy has quadrupled since 2000 and is the fifth-largest in the world. It is characterised by rapid growth, presenting a rich and promising mixture of public and private enterprise and has a dominant service sector driven by domestic consumption. The country's large population has a substantial young segment, with a



THE DEBT-TO-EQUITY RATIO OF A COUNTRY IS A SIGNIFICANT INDICATOR OF FINANCIAL HEALTH AND THE ABILITY TO REPAY DEBTS

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strong presence in the IT sector, offering the significant advantage of a fit and active workforce and a consumer market capable of innovation and entrepreneurship. India also enjoys the image of being a global leader in pharmaceuticals and is often referred to as the pharmacy of the world.

In the future, the pattern and quality of the growth of the Indian economy will depend upon its ability to overcome emerging challenges such as cryptocurrencies and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Cryptocurrency, such as bitcoin, brings with it poor capability, high volatility, and a significant environmental impact. Working out solutions to address its limitations and pave the way for wider adoption is underway. So far as AI is concerned, the main fear is job displacement in low-skill sectors, the digital exclusion of rural areas and excessive reliance on foreign technology. A

focus on upskilling the workforce, improving digital infrastructure, fostering domestic AI development, and creating supportive governance frameworks will pave the way for greater innovation and inclusive growth in the future.

The flipside, however, presents many issues, such as persistent poverty and disturbing inequality. The infrastructure of the country has a long way to go before it can compare to international standards. In many sectors, outdated and obsolete technology continues to be used. Low capital formation, underemployment and unemployment, particularly in the informal sector, remain challenges to be addressed.

According to experts, some of the steps to be taken will be to build on the strengths of the economy and rectify the weaknesses, putting in place a regime of comprehensive land, labour and farm reforms and falling in line with international-

ally accepted norms of good governance. Other measures will also need to be employed, such as making the public sector undertakings leaner by shedding fat and, wherever possible, disinvesting, creating space for the private sector to enter, and promoting an ambience that fosters ease of doing business. Bridging the skill gap by investing heavily in education and vocational training, aligning workforce skills with industry requirements, focusing on generating employment, particularly in the formal sector, boosting exports, emphasising the development of rural areas to ensure balanced development, and controlling public debt will also be important steps.

The dream of a \$5 trillion economy is as much a reality as it is a challenge. Initiatives such as the 'Make in India' policy and the recently introduced uniform tax system will help in realising the estimate made by the IMF that the milestone can be reached in the next decade, with

India becoming the third-largest economy in the world by 2028.

However, apart from those mentioned earlier, many steps will need to be taken. Issues relating to the uneven distribution of wealth and incomes, addressing regional disparities and improving the quality of life of the people simultaneously with rapid growth and sustainable development will be some of them.

The debt-to-equity ratio of a country is a significant indicator of financial health and the ability to repay debts. While the ratio is about 230 per cent for Japan and 124 per cent for the USA, compared to the global average of 94 per cent for major countries, that of India is about 80 per cent, compared to the global average for emerging markets of 74 per cent. The number may seem high but is considered manageable on account of mitigating factors such as robust growth, largely domestic debt composition and ongoing fiscal consolidation efforts.

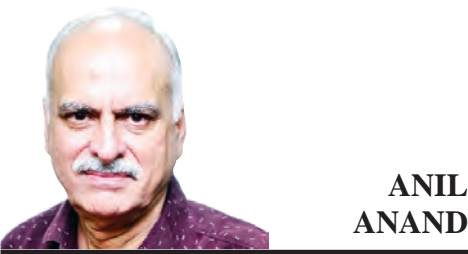
Going forward, it is also necessary to examine whether GDP growth is the best way of measuring India's economic health. While it undoubtedly reflects the total value of goods and services, there are what some experts consider superior alternatives, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), and Green GDP, which provide a more holistic view as they include factors like human well-being, social costs and environmental sustainability-elements GDP overlooks. GDP has other weaknesses, such as its inability to account for income inequality, non-monetary transactions and quality-of-life indicators, such as leisure and happiness. What is more, an increase in it can reflect the impact of events such as natural disasters, which increase expenditure without improving overall well-being.

It is felt in some quarters that real GDP is, as a matter of fact, the best measure for India to gain a clear picture of long-term trends. It also adjusts for inflation, and real GDP per capita can be used to understand average economic output per person.

All such measures only have the limited value of acting as barometers of India's economic health.

They help make course corrections in the journey towards the promised land of happiness and prosperity-the utopia she hopes to reach. However, it is the people actually enjoying what has been promised which, in the final analysis, is the real test of success.

Post-Bihar poll debacle: INDIA bloc at the crossroads facing uncertain future



ANIL ANAND

The outcome of the Bihar Assembly elections must be accepted at face value unless those alleging wrongdoing come forward with clear and irrefutable evidence to support their claims of a "managed poll outcome." Until such evidence is produced, the results stand. However, the major defeat suffered by the opposition Mahagathbandhan (MGB) — essentially the state-level expression of the INDIA alliance — does not dispel the doubts and suspicions circulating in political circles. These doubts may not be proven, but but they continue to hang in the air. What is certain, however, is that the Bihar verdict has shattered whatever remained of the opposition alliance before the polls. Most of the regional leaders who were part of the broader opposition front-such as Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, NCP (SCP) president Sharad Pawar, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, and others-had already been working at cross-purposes even before the Bihar elections were notified. Instead of cooperating with the Congress, the only national-level party within the opposition space, many of these leaders consistently targeted it, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and mutual suspicion. Congress too, with its own organisational issues and leadership decisions, contributed to this environment. The result was a fragmented alliance that never truly functioned as a coalition.

Apart from the decisive victory of the BJP-led NDA in Bihar, the other major takeaway is the bleak future of the INDIA bloc in its current form. This alliance should ideally have been preparing for the 2029 Lok Sabha elections while also organising itself for upcoming Assembly elections in important states such as West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Instead, it now finds itself at a crossroads. The question before all its constituents is whether they should continue dragging an alliance marked by distrust or dissolve it and proceed separately. Should the Congress and the regional parties walk their own paths until the political situation compels them to regroup? Or should they attempt to keep the front alive despite all internal differences?

The defeat in Bihar should serve as a wake-up

call for the entire opposition, especially the Congress. If they fail to recognise their weaknesses-most of which are self-created-and do not begin corrective action immediately, then the storm that hit them in Bihar will return repeatedly. In that case, all the rhetoric about stopping the Narendra Modi political juggernaut will remain empty talk and a futile exercise.

National Crisis

From the perspective of opposition unity and future survival, the near-total defeat in Bihar carries national-level consequences. Although the MGB was a state-specific alliance formed without the involvement of all major INDIA partners, it was still expected to reflect some degree of opposition coordination. Instead, the foundation for the current crisis was laid months before the polls, when none of the opposition parties made serious efforts to display unity against the NDA's well-organised machinery.

The NDA campaigned as a coherent team with a clear strategy. By contrast, the MGB failed to present even a basic appearance of unity. The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) began hesitating over seat-sharing terms, and Congress made what were widely viewed as unreasonable demands. Congress also resisted declaring Tejashwi Yadav as the Chief Ministerial candidate early on, which further strained ties. Matters worsened when Rahul Gandhi showed limited interest in joint campaigning and then took a two-week foreign trip during the election period. These factors made the task far easier for the Modi-Nitish Kumar alliance. The results reflect this disarray, and the crisis now confronts the opposition more intensely than ever before. A new question has emerged: whether Congress, with its repeated inability to deliver during crucial electoral moments, is becoming a liability for its partners. On the other hand, the same question applies to the regional parties that have consistently undermined Congress and Rahul Gandhi since the formation of the INDIA bloc, inadvertently helping the BJP consolidate further.

Congress is indeed a national party and has traditionally served as the pivot for any united opposition formation. Its leader, Rahul Gandhi, naturally becomes the central figure of both criticism and justification. But while questioning Congress is expected, absolving the regional leaders of their stubbornness, uncompromising positions, and refusal to cooperate would only deepen instability within the opposition and harm the national political balance.

The Way Forward

Given the divisions within both Congress and the regional parties, expecting an immediate revival of opposition unity is unrealistic. The real question is whether the parties should attempt to

rebuild the INDIA alliance or simply allow it to collapse under its own weight. The answers to these questions will shape India's political landscape in the coming years. What is evident at present is that the politics of opposition unity-intended to counter the Modi government's strength-has entered a deep phase of uncertainty. Whether this uncertainty grows or recedes depends on how Congress and the regional power centres respond. They cannot afford endless delay, because time is running out.

Congress Outlook

The biggest dilemma before Congress is whether it should contest elections independently going forward or attempt once more to rebuild the opposition coalition. This depends entirely on whether the party leadership-primarily Rahul Gandhi-is willing to undertake serious organisational reforms. Although he often speaks of strengthening the party, his actions have not yet demonstrated meaningful progress in that direction. Whether Congress is in alliance or fighting alone, its organisational weaknesses will continue to undermine it unless they are addressed head-on. It is unclear why Sonia Gandhi is not taking a stronger interest in correcting these long-standing issues. Congress needs immediate and sweeping organisational changes. It must remove ineffective leaders, challenge entrenched groups within the party, induct fresh talent, and promote leaders who understand regional dynamics. The party must also return to the social-engineering model that once worked for it, rather than alienating one community while appeasing another. This has only benefited the BJP, which has used these divisions to strengthen its Hindutva narrative. Congress should work to weaken that narrative, not indirectly reinforce it.

Rahul Gandhi does possess sincerity and integrity-rare qualities in today's politics. But such qualities alone cannot win elections. He must build a strong organisational base around them. The lack of communication within Congress ranks-from the top leadership down to the PCC level-is a major reason for its current crisis. The absence of someone like Ahmed Patel, who would listen to workers and leaders day and night, is deeply felt. His successor, K.C. Venugopal, lacks the communication skills and bandwidth to play that role. The culture of arrogance within the party has made matters worse.

For Congress to revive, Rahul Gandhi must personally improve communication with workers and state units, remain accessible, and build a system of accountability. No leader should be allowed to function without responsibility.

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Seven days in the remarkable life of Mother Teresa



FAIZAL KHAN

"I present this Mother almost as a CEO of a multinational company-relentless and ambitious," says Teona Strugar Mitevka about her new feature film based on Mother Teresa. Mitevka knows a thing or two about the Nobel Peace Prize-winning founder of the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata. She is a Macedonian, as Mother Teresa was before the famous nun became an Indian citizen. She was also born in the same town, Skopje, in the landlocked Balkan country (formerly part of Albania) in Southeast Europe where Mother Teresa was born in 1910.

Mother, Mitevka's new film screened at the 22nd Marrakech International Film Festival in Morocco this week, is set in Kolkata in 1948. Mother Teresa, a Catholic nun and then principal of St Mary's Bengali-medium school for girls in the city, is waiting for the Vatican's permission to start a new order for serving the poor. Narrated over a span of seven days in August 1948 as Mother Teresa awaits the Vatican letter, the English-language film mixes fact and fiction to reimagine her spirit and commitment to the cause she believed in. Shot in Kolkata in October last year, the film stars Noomi Rapace, the Swedish actor famous for her role as Lisbeth Salander in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, as the then 37-year-old Mother Teresa. "We chose to tell her story before she became the Mother Teresa we know today. Our Mother is thirty-seven years old, and the film follows seven days in her life," says Mitevka, who has previously made a documentary on her compatriot, called *Teresa and I* (2013), which was also shot in Kolkata.


While *Mother* shows the determination of the nun from the Loreto order in Kolkata to help the poor with a new mission, the film also raises questions about her stance on abortion, aimed at making her own life and the rights and freedom of women as relevant to the contemporary world as before.


While facts dominate the narrative of the 103-minute film, fiction is introduced to raise questions about the controversial figure of Mother Teresa, another widely known element of her popular personality. The film's main characters include a fictional Loreto nun, known only as Sister Agnieszka, who reveals to Mother Teresa during her wait for the Vatican's permission to start the Missionaries of Charity that she is pregnant with a child. Shocked by the revelation, Mother Teresa locks up




Sister Agnieszka — whom she considers her successor to the role of principal in their school-in her room and refuses to help her abort the child. Her vulnerabilities and failings as an ordinary human being come to the fore just before she creates the Missionaries of Charity, a work that would make her a global humanitarian model and lead her on the road to sainthood. "She was far from perfect, but she was truly remarkable," says Mitevka, also known for her works like the 2019 feature film *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunija*. "Mother Teresa was a mother indeed, but to millions. She was strict, harsh, a disciplinarian, yet motherly beyond our comprehension," adds Mitevka, who met all five last-surviving nuns who worked with Mother Teresa before her death in 1997. *Mother*, which opened the Orizzonti section of the Venice Film Festival in September this year, has since become a favourite at major international film festivals across the world. In the early scenes of the film, Mother Teresa is shown walking through the narrow alleys of Kolkata and distributing food and medicines to leprosy patients. "One must give an example if you want others to follow," Mother Teresa tells a nun in one scene. "Is it a crime?" she asks when questioned about her apparent lack of faith by a priest who responds to her feelings of being trapped inside the walls of the convent after sending letters to the Vatican for permission to start the Missionaries of Charity. "I have been writing these letters for the last seven years," she says. "I read Mother Teresa's letters written during 1948. She went through a tough period after the Vatican approved her decision to start the Missionaries of Charity. She was scared and doubted her decision in the initial two years," says Rapace, who delivers the role of Mother Teresa as a "rebellious woman" in a man's world who broke new ground in creating the Missionaries of Charity order.

The author is a senior journalist and a film critic

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FROM THE WORLD

USA

Manhunt on for mass shooter

Authorities in California appealed to the public for tips, even rumours, as they searched on Sunday for a suspect in the killing of three children and an adult during a mass shooting at a child's birthday party in Stockton. "It's heartbreaking," said Heather Brent, a spokesperson for the San Joaquin County sheriff's office. She said investigators believe it was a "targeted incident" at a banquet hall where 100 people or more had gathered Saturday night. No one was in custody by Sunday afternoon, and she did not elaborate on why authorities believe it was intentional or who might have been targeted. "If you have surveillance footage, if you're a local business here, if you're in the area, live in the area, or maybe you've heard rumours - please contact the sheriff's office," Brent said.

Zelenskyy meets Macron in Paris amid peace talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Paris

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday at the Elysée presidential palace in Paris, part of a flurry of diplomatic activity aimed at brokering the terms for a potential ceasefire in the nearly four-year-old war in Ukraine. Zelenskyy's visit to Paris followed a meeting between Ukrainian and US officials in Florida on Sunday, which Secretary of State Marco Rubio described as productive. The two sides have worked to make revisions to a proposed US-authored plan that was developed in negotiations between Washington and Moscow but criticized as being too weighted toward Russian demands. Those criticisms were perhaps most vehement from Ukraine's European allies who, while welcoming U.S. peace efforts, pushed back on key tenets of the plan. Ahead of his meeting with Zelenskyy on Monday, Macron's office said the two leaders would discuss conditions for a "fair and lasting peace." US President Donald Trump has since



French President Emmanuel Macron welcoming Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Elysee Palace

AP

downplayed the 28-point peace framework, which would have imposed limits on the size of Ukraine's military,

blocked the country from joining NATO and required Ukraine to give up territory, as a "concept" to be "fine-tuned."

Last week, Macron — a key ally for Ukraine who has firmly backed Kyiv and sought to counterbalance elements of

the US peace plan that are seen to favor Russia — urged Western allies to bring "rock-solid" guarantees to Ukraine in

case a ceasefire or a peace deal was to be reached.

He has endorsed deploying a "reassurance force" on land, at sea and in the air to help ensure the country's security. Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed Monday that Russian President Vladimir Putin would meet with US presidential envoy Steve Witkoff on Tuesday afternoon.

Witkoff's role in the peace efforts came under scrutiny last week following a report that he coached Putin's foreign affairs adviser on how Russia's leader should pitch Trump on the Ukraine peace plan. Both Moscow and Washington downplayed the significance of the revelations. Peskov on Monday condemned Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil infrastructure over the weekend, including an attack on an oil terminal owned by the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, CPC, and another that targeted two tankers in Turkish waters.

A major oil terminal near the port of Novorossiysk halted operations Saturday after a strike by unmanned boats damaged one of its

three mooring points, according to a statement from CPC, which owns the terminal.

This came a day after Ukrainian naval drones struck two oil tankers in the Black Sea that were reported to be part of Russia's "shadow fleet" that evade sanctions. Ukraine confirmed on Saturday it carried out the attacks. "Such attacks by Ukrainian drones on critical infrastructure facilities are an ongoing practice," Peskov said, discussing the CPC terminal strike. "It's outrageous, because we're talking about an international facility."

Meanwhile, Russia's Ministry of Defense said Russian forces had destroyed 32 Ukrainian drones overnight. The drones were shot down over 11 Russian regions, as well as the Sea of Azov, the ministry said.

An apartment block was damaged during a Ukrainian attack on the city of Kaspiysk in Russia's Dagestan region, local Gov. Sergei Melikov said.

Located on the shore of the Caspian Sea, close to Russia's border with Azerbaijan, the city is more than 1000 kilometers (620 miles) from the front line.

Starmar defends Reeves over budget claims

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Monday defended his Treasury chief against opposition claims that she misled the public and the markets about the state of the public finances before last week's budget.

Starmer said "there was no misleading" in the run-up to Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves' tax-hiking budget, which the Government hopes will raise money to reduce Government borrowing, invest in infrastructure and public services, ease the cost of living and spur elusive economic growth.

Three weeks before the budget, Reeves made a speech to prepare the public and markets for a rise in income tax rates, which would have broken a key election promise.

After an outcry among governing Labour Party lawmakers, and a better-than-expected update on the public finances, she reversed course, opting for smaller revenue-raising measures.

Opposition politicians allege that Reeves knew when she made the speech that the forecast from the independent Office for Budget Responsibility was better than expected. The Conservatives and the Scottish National Party have



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer speaking with parents and children in London

AP

asked the Financial Conduct Authority to investigate Reeves' comments and leaks to the media before the budget, and Reform UK leader Nigel Farage has urged the Government's standards adviser to probe Reeves' comments.

Reeves denies misleading the public or markets. She said Sunday that the OBR assessed before the budget that tax revenue would be 16 billion pounds (\$21 billion) less than expected because of a downgraded productivity forecast. That is a smaller budget hole than had previously been reported, leading Government critics to imply there was skulduggery by the Government. Reeves said that in her speech, she said cor-

rectly, that "the OBR downgrade has had a big impact on the public finances. And that was why I would need to ask people to contribute more."

The Government was elected in a landslide victory in July 2024 on a promise not to raise taxes on income for working people. Some of the budget's 26 billion pounds (\$34 billion) in tax hikes, largely to increase the buffer available to the Government for any future shocks, broke the spirit if not the letter of that promise.

Starmer hit back in a speech on Monday at a community centre in London, saying his Government had inherited "public finances and public services in total crisis" after 14 years of

Conservative Government. He defended the decision to raise taxes, raise the minimum wage and fund public services that will help lift children out of poverty.

"We confronted reality, we took control of our future, and Britain is now back on track," Starmer said. "Bit by bit, you will see a country that no longer feels the burden of decline."

He said the Government would push forward with two potentially risky tasks: cutting Britain's ballooning welfare bill and moving closer to the European Union. The first of those risks angering Labour members, while the second will rile pro-Brexit Conservative and Reform politicians.

President Trump invites family of slain National Guard member to White House

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Washington

US President Donald Trump on Sunday said he's invited the family of a National Guard member fatally shot last week to the White House, saying he spoke to her parents and they were "devastated."

US Army Sarah Beckstrom died after the Wednesday shooting in Washington, DC, while her seriously injured colleague, US Air Force Staff Sergeant Andrew Wolfe, remained in critical condition. The president said he's discussed a White House visit for the parents of both members of the West Virginia National Guard.

"I said, When you're ready, because that's a tough thing, come to the White House. We're going to honor Sarah," Trump told reporters. "And

likewise with Andrew, recover or not." In recent days, local vigils in West Virginia have honoured the soldiers, including one Saturday evening at Webster County High School, where Beckstrom attended classes.

"Sarah was the kind of student that teachers hoped for, she carried herself with quiet strength, a contagious smile and a positive energy that lifted people around her," said Gabriel Markle, the school's principal. "She was sweet, caring and always willing to help others."

Beckstrom, 20, and Wolfe, 24 were deployed with the West Virginia National Guard as part of Trump's aggressive crime-fighting plan that federalised the DC police force.

A 29-year-old Afghan national faces one count of first-degree murder and two counts of assault with intent to kill

while armed in the shooting, which prompted the Trump administration to halt all asylum decisions and pause issuing visas for people travelling on Afghan passports. Funeral arrangements had not been finalised for Beckstrom, according to Cathy Pettry, the owner of Dodd & Reed Funeral Home in Webster Springs. Pettry said Saturday the home has been in contact with Beckstrom's family about services.

The hometown crowd, seated in bleachers and folding chairs, lit candles as they heard from clergy and Gov. Patrick Morrisey, who said he had visited Wolfe's family earlier in the day. Wolfe, of Martinsburg, entered service in February 2019.

He had graduated from Musselman High School in 2019, according to Berkeley County Schools.

ICC vows to resist US and Russian pressure despite sanctions, threats



ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ The Hague

The president of the International Criminal Court said during the institution's annual meeting on Monday that it will not bow to pressure from the United States and Russia.

Nine staff members, including six judges and the court's chief prosecutor, have been sanctioned by US President Donald Trump for pursuing investigations into US and Israeli officials, while Moscow has issued warrants for staff in response to an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin over the war in Ukraine. "We never accept any kind of pressure," Judge Tomoko Akane told delegations from the court's 125 member States.

The sanctions have taken their toll on the court's work across a broad array of investigations at a time when the institution is juggling ever more demands on its resources. In her address last year, Akane warned that the court was being threatened by the incoming Trump administration.

Three weeks after he took office for the second time, Trump signed an executive order imposing sanctions on Prosecutor Karim Khan over investigations of Israel, a close US ally. The court has issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, for alleged war

crimes over Israel's military offensive in Gaza after the deadly October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks.

The court's weeklong meeting opened Monday. Business on the agenda includes approving its budget against a backdrop of mounting pressure and unfavourable headlines.

The ICC was established in 2002 as the world's permanent court of last resort to prosecute individuals responsible for the most heinous atrocities — war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression. The US, Israel, Russia and China are among the nations that are not members. The court only takes action when nations are unable or unwilling to prosecute those crimes on their territory. The ICC has no police force and relies on member states to execute arrest warrants.

On top of staff facing sanctions and arrest warrants, Khan has stepped down temporarily pending the outcome of an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct. He denies the allegations.

The president of the Assembly of States Parties, Paivi Kaukoranta, acknowledged the investigation into what happened between Khan and a female aide has taken longer than expected. "I am well aware that States have been frustrated with the length of this process," she said in her opening remarks.

Flood recovery efforts underway in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Padang Sidempuan

Indonesia's president told survivors of last week's devastating floods that help was arriving to those in need on Monday as Asian Governments scaled up their responses to a disaster that has left more than 1,000 dead in three countries.

Hundreds more are missing following flooding and landslides in the past

week, which killed at least 604 people in Indonesia, 366 in Sri Lanka and 176 in Thailand, authorities said.

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto pledged to rebuild infrastructure while visiting areas impacted by floods and landslides on Sumatra island that left thousands homeless and 464 people missing as of Monday. Some areas of Indonesia remained unreachable on Monday after the disaster

damaged roads and downed communications lines, with residents in impacted areas relying on aircraft delivering supplies. Flooding displaced 290,700 people in North Sumatra, West Sumatra and Aceh provinces, the National Disaster Management Agency said. Prabowo, who visited the devastated provinces of North Sumatra, West Sumatra and Aceh on Monday, said the Government's response is reaching those in need.

"We need to confront climate change effectively," Prabowo told reporters after visiting survivors in North Sumatra. "Local Governments must take a significant role in safeguarding the environment and preparing for the extreme weather conditions that will arise from future climate change." He vowed to help affected families rebuild houses that were flattened or swept away by floods. During

a meeting with displaced people under tents in West Sumatra's Padang Pariaman district, Prabowo said they would "not face the burden of this disaster alone."

Prabowo also met with hundreds of survivors who fled to a Government shelter in Aceh's Kutacane district.

Sri Lankan authorities said on Monday that rescuers are still searching for 367 missing people. About 218,000 people are housed in temporary shel-

ters after being battered in the past week's downpours that flooded homes, fields and roads and triggered landslides, primarily in the tea-growing central hill country.

In Thailand, the first batch of compensation payments is set to be distributed on Monday, beginning with 239 million baht (\$7.4 million) for 26,000 people, Government spokesperson Siripong Angkasakulkiat said.

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SHIV CONSTRUCTION

To, (CD1) SHIV CONSTRUCTION

A-6, Maya Enclave, Navi Bagh Berasiya, Bhopal (M.P) Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462001

(CD 2) Pradeep Kumar Meena

A-6, Maya Enclave, Navi Bagh Berasiya Road, Bhopal (M.P) Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462001

(CD 3) Deewan Singh Meena

A-6, Maya Enclave, Navi Bagh Berasiya Road, Bhopal (M.P) Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh - 462001

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, JABALPUR in OA/115/2020 an amount of Rs 3181691.00 (Rupees Thirty One Lakhs Eighty One Thousands Six Hundred Ninety One Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 12 % Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 28/01/2020 till realization and costs of Rs 34000 (Rupees Thirty Four Thousands Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited). 2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under. 3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing 4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 16/01/2026 at 10:30 a.m. for further proceedings. 5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay, (a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate / execution proceedings. (b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 16/10/2025

Recovery Officer,
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Jabalpur

Form No. 14 [See Regulation 33(2)]
By Regd. A/D, Dasti failing which by Publication.

OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER -I/II

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL JABALPUR

2nd and 3rd Floor, Sanchar Vikas Bhawan (BSNL Building), Near Head Post Office,
Residency Road, Jabalpur- 482001 M.P.

Show Cause To Attachment Of Immovable Property Under
Provisions Of The Second Schedule
To The Income Tax Act 1961 Read With Recovery Of
Debts & Bankruptcy Act, 1993

RC/524/201816-10-2024

BANK OF MAHARASHTRA

Versus

SIMRAN SUITS

To, (CD1) Simran Suits

E 517, Top Floor, Vitthal Market, Arera Colony, Bhopal (M.P.)-462001

(CD 2) Vijay Lilwani

70, Amarnath Colony, Kolar Road, Bhopal (M.P.)-462001

(CD3) Simran Lilwani

70, Amarnath Colony, Kolar Road, Bhopal (M.P.)-462001

Whereas the Recovery Certificate issued in OA/296/2015 passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, JABALPUR an amount of Rs 21174628.00 (Rupees Two Crore Eleven Lakhs Seventy Four Thousands Six Hundred Twenty Eight Only) along with pendente lite and future interest @ 12.00 % Simple Interest Yearly w.e.f. 05/10/2015 till realization and costs of Rs 150000 (Rupees One Lakh Fifty Thousands Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited), and whereas the said has not been paid.

2. You are directed to appear before the Recovery Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal Jabalpur on 28/01/2026 at 10.30 A.M. and to show cause why the below said property should not be attached. You are also restrained from creating any third-party interest in this property till further order(s)

PROPERTY DETAILS - 1) Residential 3 BHK Flat No. A-405 having built-up area of 1000 sq. ft., located in the Block A at the fourth floor of "The Bellaire" residential apartment constructed on land at khasra no.503/1/2/3, 503/1/1/4, 503/1/1/6, 503/1/1/5, 503/1/2/2, 503/1/1/3, 503/1/2/4, 503/1/1/3, 503/1/2/4, 503/1/1/2 admeasuring 1.408 hectares in total and situated at Village Gondermau Ward No.6 Teshil Huzur, District Bhopal (M.P.).

2) Residential 3 BHK Flat No. A-513 having built-up area of 1000 sq. ft., Located in Block A at the 5th floor of The Bellaire" residential apartment constructed on land at khasra no.503/1/2/3, 503/1/1/4, 503/1/1/6, 503/1/1/5, 503/1/2/2, 503/1/1/3, 503/1/2/4, 503/1/1/2 admeasuring 1.408 hectares in total and situated at Village Gondermau Ward No.6 Teshil Huzur, District Bhopal (M.P.)

3) Residential property along with construction thereon having Plot No. C-70 & C-71 each plot having area of 21 ft. X 45 ft. = 945 sq.ft or 87.82 sq.mtr total area 1890 sq.ft. or 175.65 sq.mtr. situated in "Rai Pink City" which is constructed on part of Kh. No. 256 area 0.960 Hec., Village Mahabadiya PH. No.31, Teshil Huzur District Bhopal (M.P.). 4) One Residential Flat No. D-43, Fourth Floor, admeasuring 56.50 sq. mtr. Situated in "Rai Pink City" Phase II which is constructed on part of Kh.No.196/1 & Kh.No.197/1, Village-Borda, Patwari Halka No.29, Vikashchand Fanda, Teshil Huzur, Dist.- Bhopal (M.P)

3. Taken notice that in default, action as per law shall be taken.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 16/10/2025.

Recovery Officer
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Jabalpur

US has benefited immensely from talented Indians: Musk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New York

The US has been an “immense beneficiary” of talent from India, SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has said, and voiced strong support for the H1B visa programme, cautioning that shutting it down would “actually be very bad” for America.

The US tech billionaire made the remarks in an interview with investor and entrepreneur Nikhil Kamath on his podcast ‘People by WTF’, released on Sunday.

“Yes, I think America has benefited immensely from talented Indians who have come to America. America has been an immense beneficiary of talent from India,” Musk said. On the H-1B visa, the Tesla CEO said, while there has been some misuse of the work visa programme, he strongly believes that it should not be shut down. “It would be accurate to say that some of the outsourcing companies have gamed the

system on the H-1B front. And we need to stop the gaming of the system. “But I’m certainly not in the school of thought that we should shut down the H-1B programme.

That’s where some on the right are. I think they don’t realise that that would actually be very bad,” Musk said. His comments come at a time when the US has launched a massive crackdown to check abuse of the H-1B visa programme, used extensively by American technology companies to employ foreign workers. Indian professionals, including technology workers and physicians, form one of the largest groups of H-1B visa holders. In September, US President Donald Trump issued a Proclamation titled ‘Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers’ as an important initial step to reform the H-1B nonimmigrant visa programme. Under the Proclamation, Trump announced a one-time fee of \$100,000 on new



H-1B visas, a move expected to impact Indian professionals seeking to work in the US.

Responding to a question on whether the US “seems to have become anti-immigration to a certain extent”, Musk said there are different schools of thought on the issue, and there is no unanimity. He, however, pointed out that under the Joe Biden administration, “it was basically a total free-

for-all, with like no border controls, which, you know, unless you’ve got border controls, you’re not a country”.

Musk alleged there was “massive” illegal immigration under Biden, which created a negative selection effect. “If there’s a massive financial incentive to come to the US illegally and get all these Government benefits, then you necessarily create a diffusion gradient for people to come to the US just as an incentive structure. I think that obviously made no sense,” he said, stressing the need for border controls.

Musk said the left wanted open borders irrespective of the situation or “if the person coming in is a criminal”, while the right believed American jobs were being taken by highly skilled workers from abroad. “I don’t know how real that is.

My direct observation is that there’s always a scarcity of talented people. So from my standpoint, I’m like, we have a lot of difficulty finding enough talented people to get these difficult tasks done, and so more talented people would be good,” he said.

Musk noted that some compa-

nies are making it more of a cost thing, “where it’s like, okay, if they can employ someone for a fraction of the cost of an American citizen, then I guess these other companies would hire people just to save costs”.

However, at his companies, the tech billionaire said, they are just trying to get the most talented people in the world. “We pay way above average, so that’s not my experience, but that’s what a lot of people do complain about,” he said.

Asked what message he had for young Indian entrepreneurs, Musk said he respected “anyone who wants to build”.

“Aim to make more than you take, be a net contributor to society. If you want to create something valuable. Pursue providing useful products and services then money will come as a natural consequence,” he said.

“Are you a value creator? That’s what really matters,” Musk said.

Israel to get Iron Beam laser defence system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Tel Aviv

A new laser interception system, known as Iron Beam, will be delivered to the Israeli military on December 30 to bolster its air defence, a senior defence ministry official announced on Monday.

“With development complete and a comprehensive testing programme that has validated the system’s capabilities, we are prepared to deliver initial operational capability to the IDF on December 30, 2025,” said Daniel Gold, Head of the Israel Ministry of Defence (IMOD) Directorate of Defence Research & Development.

“Simultaneously, we are already advancing the next-generation systems,” he added. Iron Beam is a ground-based high-power laser air defence system designed to counter aerial threats, including rockets, mortars, and UAVs. Speaking at the second International DefenseTech Summit at Tel Aviv University here, the Israeli general said that the Iron Beam laser system is expected to fundamentally change the rules of engagement on the battlefield. The system has been in development for over a decade.

“We are actively developing the next generation of technological surprises for future conflicts – across space, offensive, and defensive domains – and will operationalise them at the appropriate time,” he said. During the recent war, short-range tactical laser systems were deployed and they successfully intercepted dozens of threats.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Sandhya Kumawat D/o Omprakash Kumawat, Residing At, Gram Dongarkhedha, P.O. Ghatia, Sub Dist. Mahidpur, Dist. Ujjain, M. P.-456550 declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Sandhya Kumawat and Omprakash Kumawat in my Educational Documents. The actual name of mine and my father are Sandhya Kumawat and Omprakash Kumawat respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Sanjay Kushiwha S/o Anandilal R/o -236, Amarpuri Bhangad VTC, Bhanwarsila, P.O. Bhanwarsila, Sub District -Sawar District Indore Madhya Pradesh -453111, do hereby undertake that I Sanjay Kushiwha, want to change my name to Soumya Anandilal Kushiwha and gender as Female I, Sanjay Kushiwha henceforth by known as Soumya Anandilal Kushiwha D/o Anandilal. The above statement is made by me is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. If any legal issue arises in this regard at any stage, I will be personally responsible for the Same and the Department of Publication will not be liable for any consequences arising therefrom. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

Change of Name

I, Mohammed Rizwan S/o. Ameer Uddin H/o,21,1,Masjid Pedaran, Ghoda Nakkas, Huzur, Bhopal 462001, have changed my name from (Mohammed Rizwan) (Mo Rizwan) (Mohd Rizwan Udden) (Mohammed Rizwan Udden) to Mohammad Rizwan Uddin for all purposes by an affidavit e-stamp 01014301122025011601 sworn before Neelesh Khare Reg 55430 Public Notary dated 01-12-2025

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No.802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V.Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400069

Bhopal Branch: Office No.1, Plot No. 200, 1 St Floor, Jyoti Cineplex, M.P. Nagar, Zone-1 Bhopal-462001, (Madhya Pradesh)

Narmadapuram Branch: Khasara No.72/10, Mouza Kishanpur ward no.16, R.K.Shri tower, 2nd Floor, Itarasi Road,Near Meenakshi Square, Opp. Gala Mandi, Hoshangabad MP-461001

Damoh Branch: 1st Floor, Matra Chaya, Kilai Naka Chouraha, Balakot road, Damoh - 470661 (Madhya Pradesh) District - Damoh

Sagar Branch: 1st Floor, Sakhi Baba Matrix, Makronia Road, Sagar - 470004 (Madhya Pradesh)



Authorised Officer : Lokendra Rathore, Mobile No. 997783890

NOTICE FOR SALE OF PROPERTY UNDER PROVISIONS OF SARFAESI ACT, 2002 THROUGH PRIVATE TREATY

Whereas the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) has taken the Possession of the Secured Asset, u/s 13(4) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, And whereas the Authorized Officer had earlier issued E Auction Notices but failed to attract any successful bidders, and has now decided to sell the Secured Asset given below by way of Private Treaty. The Authorised Officer has received an offer from some interested persons in this regard for purchase of the Secured Asset. The Authorised Officer is hereby giving the Notice to the Borrowers in general, for Sale of the above said property through Private Treaty in terms of rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. The Details of the Account are as follows:

Sr. No.	Loan Code No./ Branch	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrowers	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Reserve Price (RP)	Total Outstanding Loan Amount As on 25-11-2025	Description of the Secured Asset
1.	(Loan Code No. 00600003618/ Bhopal Branch)	Ravi Grover (Borrower) Vandana Patel (Co-Borrower)	09-05-2023 & ₹ 4,02,547/-	₹ 2,00,000/-	₹ 6,99,125/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Krishna Complex Shop No. 5 Ward No 40 Krishna Complex Barkhed Road Bag Umrao Dullah Infront of Sulabh Complex, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh , 462001 Boundaries:- East - Office No. 04, West - Office No. 06, North : Property of Shri Geeta Prasad, South - Passage
2.	(Loan Code No. 05600000518/ Narmadapuram Branch)	Kailash Shankrial (Borrower) Mamta Soni (Co-Borrower)	09-05-2025 & ₹ 8,30,347/-	₹ 20,50,000/-	₹ 9,65,102/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Kasba Bareli, Ward No 05, Kingi Road, Patwari Halka Number 30/21, Ribareli, Computer Khasra Number 251/3/ 02, Tehsil Bareli, Dist Raisen, Madhya Pradesh, Boundaries:- East - House of Ramkrishna Patel And Santosh Thakur, West - Colony Road, North : House of Pastariya, South - House of Balmukund Soni
3.	(Loan Code No. 13100000134/ Damoh Branch)	Neeraj Patel (Borrower) Murlidhar Patel (Co-Borrower)	24-08-2022 & ₹ 5,53,826/-	₹ 5,52,000/-	₹ 10,34,507/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, 187 2 P O Kh No 187 2 P H No 14 Mouja Hi Rdappur Sagar Bypass Road Near HQ Ad Susheel Pandey , Damoh, Madhya Pradesh, 470661 Boundaries:- East - Land of Seller, West - Land of Seller, North : Road, South - House and Open Land of Roopnayan Patel
4.	(Loan Code No. 02300000589/ Sagar Branch)	Anil Patel (Borrower) Anita Patel (Co-Borrower)	09-05-2023 & ₹ 1,80,358/-	₹ 1,00,000/-	₹ 3,71,711/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Kh No 417 Ward No. 04 P H No 76 Mouja Gambhirliya Near Makroniya Railway Station, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, 470002 Boundaries:- East - Road, West - Land of Thakur, North : Plot of Seller, South - Plot of Seller

This is a **15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT, 2002** which is hereby given to the Borrower (s), Co-Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the above described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the **Physical Possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer, will be sold by way of Private Treaty on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis to recover the amount due to Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.,

If the Borrower(s), co-borrower(s) have any buyer who is ready to purchase the secured asset at price above the given reserve price then Borrower(s), Co-borrower(s) must intimate to AHFL one day in advance before **22.12.2025** then AHFL shall give preference to him. If Borrower(s), co-borrower(s) fails to intimate one day in advance before **22.12.2025** the AHFL will proceed with sale of property at above given reserve price. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to AHFL. The Authorised Officer/ Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third-party claims/rights/dues. The purchaser should conduct due diligence on all aspects related to the property (under sale through private treaty) to his satisfaction. The purchaser shall not be entitled to make any claim against the Authorised Officer/ Secured Creditor in this regard at a later date. **The Date of Auction is fixed for 22.12.2025**

Place : Madhya Pradesh, Date : 02.12.2025

**(Authorised Officer)
For Aadhar Housing Finance Limited**

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No.802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V.Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai- 400069

Betul Branch : Office No. - 3, 1st Floor, Rajkesri, Civil Lines, Gurudwara road, Betunganj, Betul - 480001 (Madhya Pradesh)

Guna Branch: P. H. No. - 75, Building 1st Floor, in front of Hero Showroom, Near ICICI Bank, Mahaveerpara, AB road, Guna - 473001 (Madhya Pradesh)

Bhopal Branch: Office No.1, Plot No. 200, 1 St Floor, Jyoti Cineplex, M.P. Nagar, Zone-1 Bhopal-462001,(Madhya Pradesh) District - Bhopal



E-AUCTION – SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Properties under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described Immovable property mortgaged, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “ Whatever there is” with no known encumbrances Particulars of which are given below:

S. N.	Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property	Reserve Price (RP)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (10% of RP)	Nature of possession
1	(Loan Code No. 13510000236 / Betul Branch) Shriram Eveane (Borrower) Jaywati Eveane & Himanshu Eveane (Co-Borrowers)	12-05-2025 & ₹ 12,26,629/-	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Khasra Number 520/1, Mouja Bodkhi, Patwari Halka Number 2, Tehsil Amla, Dist Betul, MP. Boundaries:- East -House Of Mehku, West - Rest Land Of Seller, North - Rest Land Of Seller, South - House Of Murali	Rs. 16,00,000/-	Rs. 1,60,000/-	Physical
2	(Loan Code No. 05810000239 / Guna Branch) Rajesh Ojha (Borrower) Rachana Ojha (Co-Borrower)	11-08-2025 & ₹ 9,19,374/-	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing, Survey 112/15(S), Village Taknera, Old Patwari Halka Number 53, New Patwari Halka Number 21, Gram Panchayat Taknera, Tehsil Guna Dist Guna, Madhya Pradesh. Boundaries:- East - Taknera Road, West - 20ft Wide, Then Land Of Seller, North - House Of Seller, South - House Of Lalaram Jatav	Rs. 12,09,600/-	Rs. 1,20,960/-	Physical
3	(Loan Code No. 05810000927 / Guna Branch) Hariom Kushiwha (Borrower) Munni Bai & Narayan Singh Kushiwah (Co-Borrowers)	11-08-2025 & ₹ 4,17,594/-	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing, S.No. 606/1/4/1, Ward No. 03, Kumbhraj, Patwari Halka Number 40, Tehsil Kumbhraj Dist Guna, Madhya Pradesh. Boundaries:- East -Land of Seller, West - Land of Haricharan Chidaar, North - Land of Seller, South - Way	Rs. 4,56,000/-	Rs. 45,600/-	Physical
4	(Loan Code No. 00610000773 / Bhopal Branch) Preetam Singh Parihar (Borrower) Khuman Singh Parihar & Monika (Co-Borrowers)	09-09-2025 & ₹ 7,70,945/-	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing, Plot No. L7 Kasturi Courtyard, Khasra No. 62/8/1/2, 62/8/2/2, 62/8/3/2, 83/8/1/2, 83/8/3/2, New Khasra No. 62/8/2/2/1, 62/8/3/2/1, 83/8/3/2/1, 83/8/1/2/1, 83/8/1/2/3, 83/8/2/2/1, 62/8/2/2/2, 62/8/3/2/2, 83/8/1/2/2, 83/8/2/2/2, 83/8/3/2/2, Ward No. 62, Village Kokta, Tehsil Huzur, Dist Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Boundaries:- East - Colony Road, West - Plot No. E-08, North - Plot No. L-07, South - Jogging Track And Boundary Wall	Rs. 14,90,400/-	Rs. 1,49,040/-	Physical

1. Last Date of Submission of DD of Earnest Money Deposit along with KYC, Tender Form and accepted Terms and conditions (Tender Documents) is **05.01.2026 within 5:00 PM** at the Branch Office address mentioned herein above or uploaded on <https://bankauctions.com>. Tenders documents received beyond last date will be considered as invalid tender and shall accordingly be rejected. No interest shall be paid on the EMD.

2. Date of Opening of the Bid/Offer (Auction Date) for Property is **06.01.2026 on https://bankauctions.com at 03:00 PM to 04:00 PM**.

3. AHFL is not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the property as mentioned above. The Property shall be auctioned on “As Is Where Is Basis”, “As Is What Is Basis” and “Whatever Is There Is Basis”.

4. The Demand Draft Should be made in favor of 'Aadhar Housing Finance Limited' Only.

5. Auction/bidding shall be only through “Online Electronic Bidding” through the website <https://bankauctions.com>. Bidders are advised to go through the website for detailed terms before taking part in the e-auction sale proceedings.

6. The intending bidders should register their names at portal M/s C 1 INDIA PVT LTD through the link <https://bankauctions.com/registration/> and get their User ID and password free of cost. Prospective bidder may avail online training on E- auction from the service provider M/s C 1 INDIA PVT LTD through the website <https://bankauctions.com>

7. For further details contact Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited, **Lokendra Rathore Contact : 997783890** Or the service provider M/s C 1 INDIA PVT LTD, **Mr. Prabhakaran, Mobile No :-91-74182-61709, E-mail: info@india.com & support@bankauctions.com, Phone No. -+917291981124/25/26** As on date, there is no order restraining and/or court injunction AHFL,the authorized Officer of AHFL from selling, alienating and/or disposing of the above immovable properties/secured assets.

8. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL), secured creditor's website i.e. www.aadharhousing.com.

9. The Bid incremental amount for auction is **Rs. 10,000/-**.

10. This newspaper publication and the data contained herein is intended for general public dissemination. Any reproduction, distribution, transmission, or republication of this content, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, whether print, digital, electronic publication in any form, e-mail or web publications, or otherwise through any mode is strictly prohibited. Any unauthorized use of the above content through any mode may result in appropriate legal action by AHFL.

**(Authorised Officer)
For Aadhar Housing Finance Limited**

Place : Madhya Pradesh, Date : 02.12.2025



CAN FIN HOMES LTD.

1st Floor, above central bank of India Gopalganj sagar- 470001 Ph: 0755 -82220456,7625013262
E-mail-sagar@canfinhomes.com, CIN No -L85110KA1987PLC008699



DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI Act) read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (Rules)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd., under SARFAESI Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3, issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrowers/guarantors listed hereunder (hereinafter referred to as the “said Borrowers”), to repay the amounts mentioned in the notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of Notice, as per details given below.

The said Notices have been returned undelivered by the postal authorities/have not been duly acknowledged by the borrowers. Hence the Company by way of abundant caution is effecting this publication of the demand notice (as per the provisions of Rule 3(1)). The undersigned has, therefore, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known address of the said Borrowers, as per the said Act.

As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to the Company by the respective parties as detailed below.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrowers/ Guarantors With Address	Date of Demand Notice*	Amount claimed As per Demand Notice*	Description of the Secured Asset	Date of NPA
1.	1. Mr. Ramnareesh Singh Thakur (Applicant) 2. Mr. Bhagwan Singh Dangl (Co-Applicant) 3. Mrs. Chandrakunwar Thakur (Co-Applicant) Address of All: Kh. No. 323/2/2, Kh. Ph. No. 70, Rani Durgawati Bai Ward, Ward No.1 Mouja Semra Bagh Makronia Sagar M.P. 470004, Boundaries:- North Land of Seller, South- Land of Seller, East - 22 Ft Wide Road, West- Land of Mourya	30/11/2025	₹ 2037605/- +interest & other charges	Kh. No. 323/2/2, Ph. No. 70, Rani Durgawati Bai Ward, Ward No.1 Mouja Semra Bagh Makronia Sagar M.P. 470004, Boundaries:- North Land of Seller, South- Land of Seller, East - 22 Ft Wide Road, West- Land of Mourya	29/11/2025

* Payable with further interest at contractual rates as agreed from the date mentioned above till date of payment.

You are hereby called upon to pay the above said amount with contracted rate of interest thereon within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the undersigned will be constrained to initiate action under SARFAESI Act to enforce the aforesaid security. Further, the attention of borrowers/guarantors is invited to provisions of Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available to them to redeem the secured assets.

**Date: 02/12/2025
Place: Sagar**

**sd/-
Authorised Officer
Can Fin Homes Ltd**

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.

Corporate Office: Unit No. 802, Natraj Rustomjee, Western Express Highway and M.V. Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400069

Biaora Branch : Guptaji Building, 1st Floor, Ward No. 07, Old AB Road, Near Axis Bank, Vishwanth Colony, Bakhapura Biaora, Dist Rajgarh - 465674 (Madhya Pradesh)



POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix IV (for immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Limited (AHFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, Demand Notice(s) issued by the Authorised Officer of the company to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) mentioned herein below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of the Section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement rules, 2002. The borrower’s attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of AHFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

S. N.	Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) (Name of the Branch)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1	(Loan Code No. 13600000291 / Biaora Branch) Ram Prasad Vishvakarma (Borrower) Kamla Bai Vishwakarma (Co-Borrower)	All that part & parcel of property bearing, Survey No. 177/1/1/1, Village Aranya, Tehsil Biaora, Dist Rajgarh, Madhya Pradesh. Boundaries:- East - Land Of Raees Bhai, West - Land Of Seller, North - Land Of Hariom Vishvakarma, South - Road To Village Aranya	09-05-2025 & ₹ 9,86,278/-	26-11-2025

**Place : Madhya Pradesh
Date : 02.12.2025**

**Authorised Officer
Aadhar Housing Finance Limited**



Canara Bank, Specialised ARM Branch, Plot no. 4, PSP Area, Near AIIMS, Saket Nagar Bhopal Tel.: 8989014648



E-AUCTION (SALE NOTICE)



Appendix-IV-A (See proviso to rule 8(6) & 6(2))

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE & IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-auction Sale Notice For Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision Rules 8(6) & 6(2) of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) & Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged / charged to the secured creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer the Canara Bank (secured creditor) will be sold on “AS IS WHERE IS BASIS, AS IS WHAT IS BASIS” & WHAT EVER THERE IS” on 22/12/2025 for recovery of bank dues to the Canara Bank (secured creditor)

Name and address of the Borrower & Guarantors	Description of Property	Demand Notice Dt. Possession Dt. Outstanding Amt.	Reserve Price EMD Amt. Bid Increment Amt.
Borrower : M/s Balaji Constructions and Land Developers Proprietor- shri Jitendra Kumar Sen Shop no.1, Plot No.D-12, Raisen Road, Bhopal 462022	(1) Residential Flat No 103 measuring 720 sqft constructed on Plot No E-14 ‘Balaji Sai Tower’ Patel Nagar, Raisen Road, Bhopal. Boundaries:- East- Open Passage, West- Plot No E-13, North-Flat No 104, South-Flat No 102. BAANKNET PROPERTY ID: CNR80304041711 Physical Possession COORDINATES: 23.251830, 77.502713	01/11/2023 05/01/2024 as on 01/12/2025	₹ 19,50,000/- ₹ 1,95,000/- ₹ 10000/-
	(2) Residential Flat No 104 measuring 720 sqft constructed on Plot No E-14 ‘Balaji Sai Tower’ Patel Nagar, Raisen Road, Bhopal. Boundaries:- East- Flat No 105, West- Plot No E-13, North- Flat No 103, South-Open Land. BAANKNET PROPERTY ID: CNR80304041711 Physical Possession COORDINATES: 23.251830, 77.502713	90,08,738.14/- + Intt. & other charges	₹ 19,50,000/- ₹ 1,95,000/- ₹ 10000/-
	(3) Residential Flat No 105 measuring 720 sqft constructed on Plot No E-14 ‘Balaji Sai Tower’ Patel Nagar, Raisen Road, Bhopal. Boundaries:- East- Plot No E-15, West- Flat No 104, North- Open area, South- stair than open space. BAANKNET PROPERTY ID: CNR800304041711 Physical Possession COORDINATES: 23.251830, 77.502713	₹ 19,50,000/- ₹ 1,95,000/- ₹ 10000/-	
Borrower : Mr. Kuber Kumar Arjaria S/o Mr. Ravindra Kumar Arjaria Address: Flat no.302, A Wing, Valencia Roadpal, Sector 16, Kalamboli Dist Raigad Mumbai	Residential Flat No B-805, situated at Centurian Sls, Block no.-B, 8th floor, Kh.no.97/1,97/2,97/3 Village Katara, Teh- Huzur Dist- Bhopal Ward no.85. Total addressing area-173.60 sq.mt. Boundaries:- East- Road, West- Open, North- Road, South - Passage, lift & Staircase. BAANKNET PROPERTY ID: CNR800121319 Symbolic Possession COORDINATES: 23.18671, 77.485099	29/01/2024 15/03/2024 as on 01/12/2025	₹ 34,10,000/- ₹ 3,41,000/- ₹ 10000/-

Last date for submission of online bids is on or before 21/12/2025 upto 5.00 p.m.

Date and Time of e-auction : 22/12/2025, 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM (With unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each)

1) The intending bidders shall deposit above mentioned Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) being 10% of the Reserve Price in E- Wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (**baanknet.com**) portal directly or by generating the Challan therein to deposit the EMD through RTGS/NEFT in the account details as mentioned in the said challan, on above mentioned date of bid submission.

2) The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD already paid), immediately on the sale being knocked down in his/her favour and the balance within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. If the successful bidder fails to pay the sale price as stated above, the deposit made by him shall be forfeited.

3) All charges for conveyance, stamp duty/GST registration charges etc, as applicable and any taxes, revenues/dues to any local authority etc shall be borne by the successful bidder only.

4) For sale proceeds of Rs. 50,00,000 (Rupees Fifty lacs) and above, the successful bidder will have to deduct TDS at the rate 1% on the Sale proceeds and submit the original receipt of TDS certificate to the Bank.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer web portal : <http://BAANKNET.com> or you may contact - Chief Manager, SPISD ARM Bhopal, Canara Bank, Plot no. 4, PSP Area, Near AIIMS, Saket Nagar Bhopal. Contact no. 8989014648, 875766078, 9755569030 9691096410, 9123403299 (BHOVAL), 7905027805 (JABALPUR AND BILASPUR), 7683068902 (RAIPUR), 9140476074 (GWALIOR), 9830130770 (INDORE), 8073562754 (BHOVAL) during office hours on any working day.

Date: 01-12-2025, Place: Bhopal

AUTHORISED OFFICER, CANARA BANK

“Kohli’s future not even a question”

AMANPREET SINGH
■ Ranchi

India batting coach Sitanshu Kotak feels speculations surrounding Virat Kohli’s impending ODI future “should not exist” given fitness, form and impact that the stalwart continues to make in 50-over cricket.

In the build-up to the three-match series, a few ‘ifs and buts’ emerged in the context of the 2027 ODI World Cup in Africa since both Kohli and Rohit Sharma play single format, raising questions whether the two mega stars are in head coach Gautam Gambhir’s scheme of things.

Leading with a note of exasperation, Kotak said he simply could not understand why Kohli’s place or longevity was being debated at all.

“I really don’t know why actually we need to look at all this,” Kotak said after India’s close 17-run win in the first ODI against South Africa here on Sunday.

“He’s batting so well. Why do we need to talk about his future? The way he’s performing, the way his fitness is — there are no questions about anything.”

Kotak said clarity around roles, real-time learning and the experience shared by senior players matter far more at this stage than long-range projections. And in that context, he insisted,



Kohli remains indispensable. “He’s just brilliant, man. As long as he keeps batting like this, there is no point talking about anything else.”

The batting coach stressed that neither the players nor the team management are thinking as far ahead as the 2027 World Cup, let alone framing discussions around senior players in those terms.

“I feel these things shouldn’t happen. They (Ro-Ko) are

brilliant, they are performing, and they are contributing to the team. For us, once the team comes and practice starts, we just enjoy. I don’t even think we are talking anything about the 2027 World Cup.”

Kotak said Kohli’s century on Sunday — the 52nd of his ODI career — was not just a reminder of his pedigree but also an example of how seamlessly he continues to shoulder responsibility in a

format he now prioritises.

“It was an outstanding knock. He batted really well, took responsibility and showed again why he is such an exceptional player,” Kotak said.

Asked about Kohli’s minor back discomfort during the innings, he added: “As much as I know, he’s fine.”

Kotak also highlighted the significance of having both Rohit Sharma and Kohli back in the XI following the Test

series defeat, saying their presence naturally lifts the group.

“They are such experienced players. The way they bat, the partnerships they build — like today (Sunday) — it makes a huge difference. They share their experience with the younger players, and that itself is a big advantage.” Reflecting on the match, Kotak said scoring runs became considerably easier for South Africa due to the heavy dew that set in during the second innings.

“With so much dew, the bowler can’t keep the ball in his hand. It skids and comes straight to the bat. If South Africa had batted second on the same surface, then 350 would definitely have been enough,” he argued, defending Indian bowlers who struggled to defend 349 and just managed to cross the line.

He reserved special praise for left-arm pacer Harshit Rana, whose early strikes in difficult conditions prevented South Africa from running away with the game.

“A lot of credit to Harshit for taking the early wickets. He was moving the ball well, hitting the right areas. With a Kookaburra ball, you get swing only for the first 2 to 5 overs, and he made the most of it. Otherwise, chasing would have been very easy for them with so much dew.” (PTI)

Once world-class players get going, difficult to stop them: Marco Jansen

AMANPREET SINGH
■ Ranchi

South Africa all-rounder Marco Jansen says stopping world-class batters like Virat Kohli becomes almost impossible once they settle in, admitting that the Indian star’s ability to extend his innings makes him one of the toughest opponents to bowl to.

Reflecting on Kohli’s match-winning century in the first ODI, Jansen said the only realistic window for a bowler is in the first few deliveries.

“When you bowl to world-class players, it’s quite difficult to get them out. I always try to get a batter in his first 10 or 15 balls. That’s when they’re still getting used to the wicket,” Jansen said.

“But once they’re in, and they get on a roll, it’s very difficult to stop them. Everyone here knows how to play — that’s why you go to plan B or C.” Kohli hit his 52nd ODI hundred on Sunday to shape India’s 17-run win that gave the hosts a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Jansen, who first bowled to Kohli as a 17-year-old net bowler during India’s 2017-18 tour of South Africa, said the challenge of bowling to one of the modern greats remains both frustrating and enjoy-



able. “It’s nice to watch him play. Growing up watching him on TV to actually bowling to him now... it’s annoying but it’s fun at the same time,” he said. “He drives well, he pulls well, cuts well, plays with his pads well. I don’t think much has changed — he’s just batting longer and longer.”

On his own batting form in the series, the tall left-hander said the presence of a settled top order has allowed him to play with freedom, even as he continues to make rapid strides as a lower-order batter in the ongoing white-ball series against India.

“It’s always nice to walk in when the top five are on a roll. I’m just watching the ball and playing it as it comes. At the moment it’s working for

me.”

Jansen said the Proteas were not too disheartened by going 0-1 down and believed they were “doing the right things” despite India’s win.

“We didn’t bowl too badly. They got early wickets, we were on the back foot, then we pulled it back. It’s just about adding the good things on top of each other like we’ve been doing in the Test squad,” he said.

He confirmed that injured players remained under medical supervision and a clearer update would be available when the squad regroup ahead of the second ODI in Raipur. Regular skipper Temba Bavuma was ‘rested’ for the Ranchi ODI and Aiden Markram led in his place. (PTI)

Nicola Pietrangeli, Italy’s accomplished tennis player, dies at 92

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Rome

Nicola Pietrangeli, the Italian tennis champion of the 1950s and 1960s whose records were only recently broken by Jannik Sinner — but remains the winningest Davis Cup player of all time — has died. He was 92.

The Italian Tennis and Badminton Federation announced Pietrangeli’s passing on



Monday, without providing a cause of death. The federation noted that Pietrangeli is the only Italian player who was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

Pietrangeli was the first Italian player to win a Grand Slam trophy, triumphing at the French Open in 1959. He defended that title a year later and his record of two Grand Slam singles titles

among Italian players wasn’t broken until Sinner won his second straight Australian Open title in 2025 to increase his total to three.

Sinner has now won four majors.

“I won \$150 for the 1960 title, which covered two months rent for my home in Rome,” Pietrangeli told the Gazzetta dello Sport in 2020.

Pietrangeli was also runner-up at Roland Garros

in 1961 and 1964, losing both finals to Spanish player Manuel Santana. He won the doubles title in Paris in 1959 with Orlando Sirola.

“In 1964 Santana and I made a bet whereby the loser would pay for dinner,” Pietrangeli said. “I honored the agreement and 10 of us went out that night, including our wives, and Manolo invited (Spanish soccer player) Luisito Suárez,”

Pietrangeli said. “I spent my entire earnings from the tournament to cover the evening.”

Pietrangeli also reached the semifinals at Wimbledon in 1960 and the quarterfinals at the Australian Open in 1957.

In Davis Cup, Pietrangeli holds the record for most total wins and most singles wins, having played 164 matches for Italy in 66 ties.

His singles record was 78-32 and his doubles record was 42-12. He also formed half of the most successful Davis Cup doubles partnership with Sirola, the pair winning 34 of their 42 matches together.

As a player, Pietrangeli led Italy to the Davis Cup final twice, losing both times away to an Australia team featuring Rod Laver and Roy Emerson.

Steyn lavishes praise on Kohli for retaining hunger on field

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Ranchi

Most sportsmen past their prime are happy to stay at home with their family and dog, but Virat Kohli at 37 still behaves like a spring chicken on the field, diving and running, like he “wants to be there,” South African pacer Dale Steyn says.

Despite retiring from T20s and Tests, Kohli has shown that his ODI game remains unimpaired. The superstar, who turned 37 recently, scored his 52nd hundred in the first one-day against South Africa on Sunday.

“When you speak to most 37 or 38-year-olds, they say they hate leaving home, their dog, their kids. But he (Virat) is in a place mentally where he’s eager to be out there playing for India. You can see it when he’s running between the wickets, fielding and diving. He’s mentally young, fresh, and wants to be here,” Steyn told JioStar on Sunday.

“He’s played over 300 ODIs in 15-16 years, so the experience is inside him.



It’s in his body and mind. Even if he arrived here after three days of rain, it wouldn’t have affected his preparation. He’s mentally strong, visualises well, and can see the ball onto the bat. That’s what the best in the world do.

“They back themselves because they’ve been out there so many times. A key thing he said is that he’s excited about playing,” Steyn added.

Following his 83rd international hundred, Kohli had spoken about his

mindset and preparation at this stage of his career.

“I have never been a believer of a lot of preparation. All my cricket has been mental. I work physically very hard, as long as my fitness levels are up and I am feeling well, it’s good,” said Kohli.

“I’ve played 300-odd ODI games and so much cricket, if you’re in touch with the game and are able to hit balls in the practice, if you bat for an hour or two in the nets, you know you’re good,” he said.

Gill set for fitness test; Hardik cleared for SMAT

KUSHAN SARKAR
■ New Delhi

India’s T20I vice-captain Shubman Gill will be reporting at Bengaluru’s Centre of Excellence on Monday for his mandatory fitness assessment protocols, which will determine his return to action for the upcoming five-match series against South Africa starting December 9.

Gill had sustained a neck injury while batting during the second day of the opening Test against South Africa in Kolkata and since then has missed the second Test and the ongoing ODI series. Since the Indian T20I squad wouldn’t have any surprises — not even minor — unless there are any injury issues, the selection committee headed by Ajit Agarkar will be waiting for Gill’s fitness report from the Sports Science team at the COE.

“Gill was administered an injection and advised 21 days of rest and rehabilitation, which included specific exercises to strengthen the muscles of the injured area. Obviously, the sports science team would go through all his mandatory fitness tests before he starts the skills training.

“Nothing can be said



unless the sports science team assesses his movements during skills training and whether he is having zero discomfort while batting,” a BCCI source privy to the developments told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

As of now, the chances of Gill’s return for SA T20Is seems to be 50-50.

Meanwhile, there is some good news for Indian fans as Hardik Pandya has got the clearance to return to the T20 format and will be



playing his first match in nearly two-and-a-half months against Punjab in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

He is also supposed to play the December 4 game between Baroda and Gujarat with national selector Pragyan Ojha in attendance during both the games to check his overall fitness before the squad is announced.

“From October 21 to November 30, Hardik didn’t even move out of the COE

and completed his full rehab and ‘Return To Play’ protocols. As of now, he has been given the all clear -- to bat and bowl in T20Is -- and he has already linked up with the Baroda team for the Punjab game. He will play on December 4 vs Gujarat and if the Indian team management doesn’t summon him earlier, then he plans to play the December 6 game against Haryana also,” a source in the know of the developments at the COE informed. (PTI)

Rohit, Dravid shaped India’s ball aggression: Ashwin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

India’s aggressive batting approach, which has brought a lot of success, is credit to former captain Rohit Sharma and ex-head coach Rahul Dravid, according to Ravichandran Ashwin.

The former Indian off-spinner said the duo not only preached a more attacking style but also led by example, triggering a shift in India’s approach in T20Is and ODIs.

“Rohit as a captain has always been laying his stamp by showing the team what he wants from it. The transitional batting that India has gone through in T20 cricket and ODI cricket — the way we bat fast — a lot of credit

UNDER ROHIT AND DRAVID, INDIA ADOPTED A MORE PROACTIVE TEMPLATE AFTER A SERIES OF DISAPPOINTING ICC CAMPAIGNS

for that goes to Rohit and Rahul bhai,” Ashwin said on his YouTube channel *Ash Ki Baat*. “They showed the way, Rahul bhai said this is how we have to play and Rohit showed the way..Paved the way and eventually it has changed the way how Indian perceived batting. Batting is not average it is purely strike rate in white ball cricket,” he added.

Under Rohit and Dravid, India adopted a more proac-

tive template after a series of disappointing ICC campaigns. The change was visible during the 2023 ODI World Cup at home, where India dominated the league stage with an attacking mindset, and later in the 2024 T20 World Cup triumph in the Caribbean and USA.

With stalwarts Rohit and Virat Kohli now featuring only in ODI cricket after stepping away from the other two formats, Ashwin urged fans to cherish their remaining time in international cricket.

“I will say one thing, how much time we have to watch and enjoy Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma bat, please let’s do it because once they are done, we could hear talks like ‘oh, what a player

he was! Please bring him back’. That doesn’t cut ice for me.

“For however long they play, let us celebrate them as long as they are playing. As I said, life moves on very fast. Time does not wait for anyone. It is very important that we realise that the time is less. So it is better that we enjoy whatever they are doing.”

Ashwin also questioned the Indian team selection after all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy’s exclusion from the playing XI in the first ODI against South Africa, despite Hardik Pandya being unavailable. Many expected Reddy, a pace-bowling all-rounder like Pandya, to slot in for the series opener on Sunday.



BCCI Secretary Shri Devajit Lon Saikia along with other dignitaries visited ACA Stadium at Umrangso, Dima Hasao, Assam

PIONEER PHOTO

DUBAI CAPITALS TO TAKE ON DESERT VIPERS IN ILT20 OPENER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Dubai

Defending champions Dubai Capitals will take on Desert Vipers — a rematch of last season’s final — in the inaugural match of International League T20 (ILT20) beginning on Tuesday, with all-rounder Gulbadin Naib saying his team is looking forward to another fruitful campaign.

The Afghanistan cricketer, who was a member of title-winning Dubai Capitals last time, added that familiarity with the conditions will help his side continue its good showing in season four as well.

“Last year we won, but we’re looking forward to another successful season. It’s a huge platform for everybody. We have got some new faces and they are very keen to do something for the team,” said Naib.

“This is a mega event, so as professionals it’s important for us to get our mindset right. We know the conditions, so we should be able to adapt. We had amazing support and we’re looking forward to more of the same,” he added.

This edition marks a new chapter in the league’s journey, with ILT20 organising its first-ever player auction and including players from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for the first time. New Zealand cricketer Lockie Ferguson, who led the Desert Vipers to the final last season — their second in the ILT20 — said a well-balanced bowling unit will help his side do well this time around as well. “We played great cricket throughout the tournament last season, so this year we’re looking to do even better. We have some new faces, so I’m excited about it. I’m looking forward to working alongside Naseem Shah, David Payne and Khuzaima Tanveer as well in a well-balanced bowling attack.

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GST CUES

As expected, after the previous month’s intensity, gross GST collections are down to their lowest level in the past 12 months. The figures for November 2025, which reflect the collections for October, were down to ₹1,70,000 crore, the lowest since November 2024. The former are up by less than a percentage point on a year-on-year basis. Compared to the October 2025 figures, which indicate the numbers for September, the figures in November this year are down by a massive ₹26,000 crore. Remember the dual impact due to cuts in tax rates, and lesser slabs, and the festive season, which included buying during Dussehra and Diwali. In late September, when the cuts were implemented, firms talked about huge demand. This may have petered off a bit in October, coupled with lower tax rates. Hence, there are three issues to contend with. First, as past figures show, GST collections are normally the lowest in the months of either November or December which, as stated above, reflect the collections for the previous months. This was true in November 2024, when the numbers dipped below ₹1,70,000 crore, and December 2023, when it was below ₹1,65,000 crore. However, the lowest numbers in 2023 were in August, when the figure fell below ₹1,60,000 crore, and February, when the numbers dipped to below ₹1,50,000 crore. There is invariably an uptake after November-December, and the figures zoom in March and April, which indicate the collections in February and March, the last two months of the fiscal year. Hence, the test of what the GST cuts imply will come in these last two months. Since 2022, discounting the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, the huge peaks in GST were in April. In April 2025, the collections were almost ₹2,37,000 crore.

Second, the hurdle this November may seem quite steep on a month-on-month basis compared to the falls in the previous years. But in November 2024, the dip was almost a percentage point, or higher. In the months of November and December 2024, the month-on-month decreases were much less than now. In terms of actual collections, the drop of ₹26,000 crore in a single month is significant. Such a steep fall has rarely been witnessed since the Covid years. Compare this to the official estimates made after the GST cuts, which indicated that on a yearly basis, the GST collections will be down by less than ₹50,000 crore. If the finance ministry’s version is correct, and higher volumes will make up for the difference in 2026-27, we still have another four months to go. If the trend continues, the actual loss to the Exchequer may be steeper than estimated.

Third, the good news about the Indian economy seems to lag the bad news. In the recent past, the quarterly numbers for GDP growth were higher-than-anticipated. A growth of eight per cent in the first half of this fiscal on top of trade disruptions, and high US tariffs, is remarkable. Juxtapose this with the GST collections figures in November, and the PMI index, which dipped. While the GDP numbers hint that manufacturing is on a high, the latter two indicate that there is trouble brewing in the secondary sector. The upbeat growth in the first half may be due to frontloading on the domestic and external fronts. Scared that the US may impose high tariffs on India, exporters boosted shipments, even as the American buyers were willing to build inventories at lower duties. Knowing that the GST cuts were on for more than a month, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi practically announced them on August 15, there was a build-up of domestic inventory to cater to the coming demand.

In such a situation, one needs to wait and watch. There is more good news in the offing. India and the US will surely sign a bilateral trade deal, but the timing will be crucial. If it happens in December 2025, manufacturing will take off, and so will a few segments in services. If it is delayed to February, industry will hurt and bleed, which will reflect in corporate earnings. The real impact of the tariffs will come from November onwards. There is therefore an urgency to finalise the deal, sooner than later. On the flip side, an agreement between the two nations will hurt new industries due to cheaper American exports. Hence, some sectors will need to brace for the negative impact. Both will imply a churn in business strategies, and the fortunes of Indian companies. This will affect stock prices. Consumers may benefit due to cheap imports, and further downward pressures on domestic prices, which may boost demand. This may help the manufacturers, and boost official revenues.

As one can see there are several ifs and buts. These factors will play out in the future, and quite unevenly. Over the next few months, even weeks, developments will guide the growth journey, and decide if the ongoing momentum is sustained, or the bad news lingers on. One cannot take anything for granted. This will be a period of higher uncertainty, and filled with doubts, compared to the past few months, when most firms, and policy-makers grappled with trade and tariff issues. The country is still perched on shifting sands.

The Pioneer



BHOPAL | TUESDAY | DECEMBER 2, 2025

BUSINESS

13

MTV’s creative destruction

For those who were teenagers, or in their early 20s, in the 1990s, Quick Gun Murugan was an iconic promotion, and ads that featured on MTV. Back in those days, the music channel was the flavor of the day for the young. Not just in terms of viewership among the young, MTV was a huge business. Sometime in the early 1990s, it generated annual revenues that were higher than \$400 million, and reached 115 million households worldwide through the cable networks.

I know in this age, when annual revenues of \$100 billion are around, \$400 million may not sound big enough. But it was big back then. Sadly, the music revolution led by MTV has come to an end. In the words of the famous economist, Joseph Schumpeter, MTV has become a victim to the ever-continuing, never-stopping capitalist and business process of creative destruction. The owner, Paramount, has announced that barring a token presence, MTV Networks will be shut down by the end of 2025. It is the end of an era.

It is a symbol of the frightening rate at which technological changes are hollowing out entire industries, leading to millions and millions in job losses. The original premise of Schumpeter’s model of capitalism was that there will be job losses as tech advances, but competition, and increased productivity will lead to the end of some industries, and the creation of new ones with higher productivity. The latter will result in more jobs, and perhaps higher wages. This theory has held through for the most part of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, for the past 150 years.

But the fear is what happens if this model of Schumpeter’s capitalism crumbles under the pressure of the ferocity and intensity of tech

change that are sweeping across the world. To begin with, the first people or the first set of businesses that may face imminent collapses, and an erasure of existence, will be the cable news networks that deliver both news and entertainment. During the 2024 US presidential elections, it was discovered that a single podcast of a celebrity, Joe Rogan, had more viewers, which was equivalent to 100 times more than the total viewership of a popular news channel that was broadcast through the usual cable route.

This is how fast and rapidly technology is decimating existing and thriving industries. Surveys by C Voter indicate that more than 70 per cent of the young, i.e., people in the age group of 18 to 30 years, have not seen, forget about reading, a newspaper or a magazine. In the last one year, more than 50 per cent have not seen a TV show on a regular TV channel, either for entertainment or news.

The world of the young is more confined to smart phones, memes, reels, and click-bait headlines, which make up for the news. So, there is a genuine possibility that by the end of this decade, not just MTV, but the traditional and the famous news networks, and entertainment networks that we have may be on their way out. Some of them are already dead. This is a real danger, and not just for the TV networks, as tech disrupts businesses across sectors.

The danger for a country like India is manifold. After all, India has a workforce of about 650 million people. No matter how much we try to avoid tech changes, it will force through the doors in the form of Artificial Intelligence, robotics, and hyper computerisation. It will stay on too. In such situations, it is difficult to

imagine how industries will survive. Many will die, and new ones created. The biggest question is whether the new ones create enough jobs.

It is a nightmare of a situation. In the tech sector, job losses are common. AI threatens, and continues to, displace more. Manufacturing is unable to create enough jobs. Hence, the question is crucial for us, and the policy-makers. But contrary to a doomsday scenario, this columnist thinks there is some comfort here. No doubt there will be enormous job losses. But let us look at the numbers, and break them down to understand the implications.

For instance, there are 50 million government jobs, and one can add another 50 million stable jobs in the private sector. Most of these may be safe, although AI can creep into government offices, as computers did in the 1990s, and the private sector will consistently juggle between humans and machines. A series of periodic labor force participation surveys indicate that more than 300 million Indians identify themselves as self-employed, which has various connotations. It can be a person running a paan shop, which sells cigarettes, snacks, biscuits, tea, and other stuff.

A self-employed person can be the owner of a small grocery store. She may be someone selling snacks, lunch, and dinner to the poor at street corners. Of course, there is an army of self-employed professionals, who work as masons, plumbers, electricians, wood workers, handicraft makers, and other occupations. These jobs are possibly not going to be in danger because no matter how rapid tech arrives in the form of AI, people will always have problems related to electricity, water, gas connections, and similar issues.

One can therefore safely assume that close to 400 million jobs in India may not be in danger of being wiped out. What about the remaining 150 million? Well, they are on the edge. However, in a low productivity, and low-income economy like India, there is no imminent danger of industries being wiped out, like it regularly happens in the US, and Europe. The challenge for both policy-makers, and employees is the same. It is obvious: New skills need to be acquired. More importantly, they need to be constantly upgraded.

Even more important, the day and age of stable 9-5 jobs, which entailed working for a few decades, and retiring with possible pensions, are decisively over. We are in the age of the gig-work economy, which is here to stay. The faster we realise this, the better it is for us. We will need to work harder, and maybe on weekends. Despite the new labour codes, our professional lives will remain unsteady, both in terms of the jobs, and incomes. We will need to specialise, yet hone the skills to beat tech improvements. AI and robots will take up the low-level, and mid-level jobs, and we may need to upgrade to jobs that involve thinking, decision-making, and abstract-thoughts. It is not the end of the world. It is a new one.

The author has worked for leading media houses, authored two books, and is now Executive Director, C Voter Foundation

The Cynical Optimist

Janus-faced Indian economy

We have a split economy. Well, let us call it a double-faced one. On the one hand, there is stupendous growth, almost eight per cent in the past two quarters. At the same time, the stock markets are stalling, with a year-to-date rise of seven per cent, with most of it happening since September, 2025. Consumer spending seems to have revived, with private consumption up in the second quarter. Yet, corporate earnings seem to be under pressure, at least across sectors. Just to add to the confusion, there are two sides to the GDP coin, one side being marked a huge plus, and other minus.

How is this possible? Either there is growth, or there is not. Either, the growth in the first half of this fiscal year was an unexpected eight per cent, or it was not. The trick, dear readers, lies in the way one looks at the coin. Some of us look at the heads, and feel good with the figures. Others look at tails, and feel dismal, or at least dismayed. The difference lies, just to use a bit of jargon, in the real and nominal GDP growth. Both are real, but only one of them is dubbed real.

India’s real economy deals with the figures that excited you in the past few days. It is about the 8.2 per cent, and 7.8 per cent, growth in the second and first quarter, respectively. It is about more than nine per cent growth in manufacturing, and more than 10 per cent in services. However, it is calculated after accounting for inflation. The rise in prices creates a skew in the sense that it gives a rosier picture if the inflation is high, and understates if the figure is in the negative. Real GDP figures adjust for these variations.

At the other end is what is called nominal growth, which includes inflation. It is obviously higher than the real growth when the price rise is positive, and lower when the opposite is true. Since the inflation figures in the recent past have come down quite dramatically, with food inflation in the negative, there is little difference between real and nominal growth figures. They differ by a margin of a per cent or two, or even lower. Compared to the 7.8 per cent and 8.2 per cent real growth in the past two quarters, the nominal growth was 8.8 per cent, and 8.7 per cent.

In effect, the nominal growth has fallen, even as the real one improved, thanks to lower inflation. As expected, the differences are minimal, one per cent and below. If one includes the January-March quarter in 2025, while the real growth was 7.4 per cent, the nominal one was 10.7 per cent, or a margin of more than three per cent. According to a media column, “In fact, nominal GDP has now clocked single-digit growth in five out of the

last six quarters.” As we said, for most of us this does not matter much. It does for others.

For policy-makers, and firms the nominal growth is more important than the real one. As experts contend, lower nominal growth puts pressures on corporate costs, and prices, which are down. These obviously push down revenues, and profits. But this is not always the case. Given the cost and revenue structures, some firms will benefit, and others lose. If the pressures on revenues are higher than on costs, it will lower the profits, and vice versa. Hence, one needs to carefully figure out what is happen-

ing to corporate earnings. This puts into context why stock prices remain subdued.

Nominal growth is crucial for the policy-makers, especially the finance minister. Key Budget targets, like the fiscal deficit, are based on percentages of nominal growth. If the latter is down, the deficit can exceed targets and estimates. “In absolute terms, nominal GDP has shrunk during the (second) quarter, and hence the numerator, that is, the deficit percentage, automatically gets bigger, putting the Government’s Budget targets under strain,” states a media column. This may explain the finance min-

istry’s urge, and hope, that private investments will surge, and help to reduce public spending. This is one of the ways to reduce expenditure, and keep a check on deficit.

Tax collections depend on nominal growth. There may or may not be a direct cause-and-effect, but there is a correlation. Lower nominal growth can depress tax revenues. In the recent past, net taxes rose by nine per cent, which mirrors the nominal growth numbers. As we mentioned earlier, the low nominal growth puts pressure on official expenditure. Combined with the downward push on official revenues, it can squeeze the Government’s finances from both ends. This will make it more difficult for the finance minister to manage the fiscal deficit. In terms of numbers, the next Budget will be crucial.

The easy way out for the finance minister is to assume higher nominal growth over the remaining two quarters of this fiscal year, as well as in 2026-27. This will boost the revenues, and expenditure can go on as assumed. It is easy as the GDP figures for the third quarter are unlikely to come in before the Budget, given that there is a lag of almost two months, or six-to-eight weeks. The next set of numbers will come in middle or late February 2026. The finance minister can re-juggle the figures later, when she presents the Budget in 2027.

However, as we mentioned in our earlier columns, both the business community, and policy-makers need to be careful. The rational exuberance about growth need not push them to take more risks, or understate risks, at least when they envisage their strategy and numbers. One will get a handle on the policy-makers’ mindset when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decides on an interest rate cut at its next policy meeting in a few days. There are pressures to cut the rate, given the high GDP growth, but the RBI, as one columnist puts it, needs to ask “why, rather than how much and when.”

Firms cannot assume higher demand, which may happen if the positive impact of GST 2.0 continues. They will need to look carefully at the changing cost structures, and revenue growths over the next 1-2 quarters. They cannot blindly invest, and hike capacities. If they do, some of them will make mistakes, and a few will blunder. Some of them will emerge as winners. But the impact will not be uniform. This is a lesson for investors too. Future earnings will not be secular.

The Pioneer

SINCE 1865

BioGas India Policy Framework: What more can be done?



CBG Growth Pathway: Opportunities and Implementation Challenges :

Compressed Biogas (CBG) has emerged as a strategic national opportunity, delivering a “triple dividend” of stronger energy security, reduced stubble burning and urban waste and the production of valuable organic manure (FOM/LFOM) that improves soil health. The Sugar Industry is central to this transition, offering a steady and high-quality feed-stock supply mainly press mud and spent wash, that supports reliable, year-round CBG production. This integrated model helps de-risk operations and positions sugar mills as natural anchor investors. Under the SATAT scheme, more than 1,200 plants have received LOIs, though only about 160 are operational so far. Addressing the implementation challenges through calibrated policy support will be important for scaling the supply chain to its full potential.

Translating LOIs into operational CBG plants remains challenging due to three factors: steady feedstock availability, reliable offtake for gas and the commercial viability of FOM. Feedstock from agricultural residue is often costly to aggregate, seasonal and difficult to transport over long distances. Industrial feedstocks such as press mud also face recovery losses when stored improperly.

For many plants located in the hinterland, moving CBG to the City Gas Distribution (CGD) network adds further logistical complexity. In addition, uncertainty in FOM offtake affects both revenue streams of a CBG project. The Department of Fertilisers (DoF) mandate for FOM procurement is still evolving, resulting in periodic unsold inventories for producers.

Policy Framework 2.0: Strategic Interventions for Decisive Scaling :

To enable large-scale CBG deployment, Policy Framework 2.0 can focus on ensuring assured markets for gas and FOM, easing financial processes, and improving infrastructure support. Industry feedback suggests the following measures can further strengthen this effort :

1. Assured offtake of CBG : To overcome the financial impact of plant underutilisation and revenue loss from gas flaring, certainty in CBG offtake is paramount. This requires expedited implementation of the Scheme for Development of Pipeline Infrastructure (DPI) to swiftly connect all new CBG plants to the City Gas Distribution (CGD) network.

Crucially, in the interim period until grid connectivity is achieved, the Government may consider ensuring producers receive payment at ex-factory price or are reimbursed for transportation costs. This dual approach



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helps ensure continuous offtake and maximizes utilisation.

2. Assured offtake of FOM To fundamentally de-risk the CBG project balance sheet, the existing DoF mandate for fertilizer companies to offtake FOM and Liquid FOM (LFOM) could be implemented with renewed emphasis.

3. Enhance MDA Support of FOM : The current MDA support of ₹1,500 per tonne does not adequately cover production economics. This support should be enhanced, with higher levels of assistance specifically for enriched and value-added

products, such as Phosphorous Rich Organic Manure (PROM) and enriched FOM/LFOM.

4. Market Expansion for MDA Eligibility (FOM and LFOM): To widen adoption and reduce unsold inventory, sales of FOM and LFOM across all states, whether in bulk or packaged form and through all dealer/retailer networks, should be fully eligible for MDA support.

5. Recognise Storage and Handling Costs of FOM and LFOM: Producers incur significant, unrecognised costs for storage, handling, drying and distribution against seasonal demand of FOM/LFOM.

These unavoidable logistical costs should be formally recognised either through incentives or within the MDA framework to ensure financial viability.

6. Streamline MDA Disbursal (FOM and LFOM) : The MDA process could be simplified. It should be linked directly with CBG production and released monthly.

A mechanism where a substantial majority share (75-80 per cent) is released upfront upon proof of CBG production, with the balance released subsequently, would provide the necessary predictability for financial stability.

7. Enhancing CFA and Streamlining Fiscal Incentives: The process for releasing CFA could be simplified, and the government can consider increasing the CFA grant limits to better de-risk project financials. The enhanced CFA should be strategically directed, utilizing the higher grants available for Solid Waste Management projects, toward capital-intensive core plant machinery and technology upgrades.

Conclusion and call to action

A collaborative effort between Government, industry and the fertiliser ecosystem can rapidly unlock the next wave of CBG growth. Clear offtake pathways, predictable incentives and timely infrastructure interventions will allow CBG plants to operate at full potential and deliver long-term benefits across energy security, waste management and soil health.

Advancements in Midstream Infrastructure: IAVL’s role in enhancing energy efficiency



In the evolving landscape of energy infrastructure, IndianOil Adani Ventures Limited (IAVL) stands as a transformative force, redefining mid-stream logistics and energy efficiency in India and beyond. As a joint venture between Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. and Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd., IAVL brings together the legacy, scale and innovation of two industry giants to deliver cutting-edge solutions in oil, gas, petrochemicals, and renewable energy.

Midstream Infrastructure: the backbone of energy logistics

Midstream infrastructure plays a pivotal role in the energy value chain, bridging the gap between upstream production and downstream consumption. It encompasses the transportation, storage and handling of crude oil, refined products, natural gas, and biofuels. IAVL has emerged as a leader in this domain, offering terminalling services, build capabilities, and integrated logistics solutions tailored to the needs of modern energy systems.

With over two million kilolitres of storage capacity and strategically located terminals across India, IAVL provides flexible business models- Independent, Exclusive, Shared Usage, and Operations & Maintenance (O&M) to suit diverse client requirements. These models are supported by world-class automation, stringent HSSE (Health, Safety, Security and Environment) protocols and a commitment to operational excellence.

Terminalling solutions

IAVL's terminalling operations are designed to meet the dynamic demands of the energy sector. From crude oil and petroleum products to aviation fuel and bulk LPG, the company handles a wide spectrum of products with precision and safety. Its key terminalling projects include Navghar Terminal, Common User Terminal - Raipur, Goa Terminal and BOOT Paradip equipped with automated dispatch mechanisms, and multimodal connectivity via rail, road, and pipeline.

Additionally, two major projects are under construction i.e. Paradip: Numaligarh Refinery Limited – Crude Storage terminal and IOCL Panipat - finished products storage Tankfarm. NRL project is on the verge of completion and shall be operational soon. IAVL facilities are equipped to handle multiple products and multiple receipt and dispatch modes.

IAVL's in-house Build Services Division complements its terminalling expertise by offering end-to-end infrastructure solutions. From design and



engineering to procurement, construction, and commissioning, the company ensures that every project is optimised for energy efficiency and operational sustainability.

Compressed Biogas: A green energy breakthrough

One of IAVL's most impactful contributions to energy efficiency is its pioneering work in Compressed Biogas (CBG). Recognising the potential of waste-to-energy solutions, IAVL has developed biogas plants that convert organic waste into clean fuel. The Namakkal Biogas Plant in Tamil Nadu exemplifies this commitment by processing 1,20,000 tonnes of poultry and farm waste annually. This facility utilises agri and poultry waste and enriches the local economy and ecology through a sustainable, circular model. The plant carries out enrichment, compression and bottling of biogas, generating 10 tons of Compressed Biogas (BioCNG) per day.

Additionally, it produces 10,000 tons of organic manure annually, marketed under the brand name Ayswaryam, which is free from chemicals and used to enhance soil fertility in agriculture.

The generated CBG is supplied to industrial, transport, and cooking segments, supporting India's clean energy transition and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The biogas plant enjoys a sustainable and a symbiotic relation with the local economy and ecology. It exemplifies IAVL's commitment to alternate fuels and aligns with national initiatives to promote CBG for transportation.

Sustainability and ESG Commitment

At the heart of IAVL's operations lies a robust Environmental, Social and Governance framework. The company's approach is anchored in the values of Care, Commitment, and Trust, driving sustainable practices across all business verticals.

Environmental Stewardship

- Renewable Energy: IAVL has adapted solar, and biogas as part of its renewable energy portfolio.
- Conservation Initiatives: Activities like tree plantation and cleanliness drives help minimise environmental footprints.
- Waste-to-Energy: Biogas plants con-

tribute to circular economy goals by converting organic waste into fuel and fertiliser.

Social Responsibility

- Safety Culture: Comprehensive training and incident prevention programs foster a safe working environment.
- Diversity and Inclusion: IAVL promotes an inclusive workplace that values all employees.
- Community Engagement: CSR initiatives focus on health, education and environmental well-being in local communities.

IAVL's management systems are designed to align business goals with stakeholder interests, reinforcing its reputation as a responsible corporate citizen.

Strategic partnerships and global vision

IAVL's strength lies in its strategic partnerships. The backing of Indian Oil Corporation and Adani Ports provides access to vast networks, technical expertise, and financial robustness. This enables IAVL to scale its operations and innovate continuously. The company's vision is to lead the energy infrastructure space globally-combining global best practices with local relevance. By adopting sustainable technologies and efficient logistics models, IAVL aims to be the preferred partner for energy companies, governments, and communities.

Future Outlook: driving energy transition

As the world transitions towards cleaner energy, midstream infrastructure must evolve to support new fuels, decentralised systems, and digital integration. IAVL is well-positioned to lead this transformation through smart terminals, green logistics, and collaborative innovation. With a legacy of excellence and a forward-looking approach, IAVL continues to redefine energy infrastructure in India and globally. Its focus on energy efficiency, renewable integration, and stakeholder value makes it a cornerstone of the country's sustainable development journey.

Author is a chief operating officer at joint venture company of Indian Oil Corporation Limited and Adani Ports and SEZ

India’s latest GDP surge: A quarter that quietly answers the ‘dead economy’ club



India's latest quarterly GDP figures—clocking in at a robust 7 per cent + range according to Government estimates — have once again delivered a polite but firm reminder to global pessimists: rumors of India's economic demise have been greatly exaggerated.

At a time when advanced economies are flirting with recession and emerging markets are dodging geopolitical curveballs, India has not only kept its growth engine humming but has added a bit of turbocharge.

A defining driver of this momentum is the government's unrelenting push on infrastructure.

Public capital expenditure has grown by over 30 per cent year-on-year in recent budgets, and the results are showing.

Highways stretching across states, new airports, record railway modernisation, port capacity upgrades and the expansion of freight corridors have collectively injected life into construction, logistics, and ancillary industries.

In an era where global supply chains behave like temperamental teenagers — unpredictable, emotional, and easily disrupted — India's domestic capex cycle has served as the stabilizing adult in the room.

The manufacturing sector, too, delivered a commendable performance this quarter. Manufacturing GVA growth remained strong, supported by the electronics, auto, and pharmaceuticals sectors.

With PLI schemes worth over ₹2 lakh crore nudging firms to ramp up production and global supply-chain diversification working in



India's favor, factories finally seem to be running with purpose and not just during ministerial visits.

Capacity utilisation has edged above 74 per cent, and easing commodity prices have offered much-needed relief for industrial players.

And then, there's the impact of GST reforms. While critics once claimed GST would kneecap India's economy, the recent GST rate rationalisations — cutting rates on essential and mass-consumption items — have helped support consumption at a time when global inflation was squeezing wallets.

With monthly GST collections averaging around ₹1.6–1.7 lakh crore, the system is not only stabilising but thriving. Lower rates on select goods have encouraged compliance, broadened the base and boosted consumer sentiment. In short: fewer tax slabs, more tax paid — an equation that critics still find harder to understand than quantum physics.

These strong quarterly GDP numbers are likely to push India's annual growth trajectory comfortably above earlier forecasts.

With industry and services ticking upward and government capex continuing its steady march, the full-year growth rate could remain in the 6.8–7.2 per cent zone. That's not just healthy — by global standards, that's practically athletic.

The timing is also geopolitically convenient. As the US revisits tariff policies (yet again), India's economic resilience provides a cushion.

A stronger domestic economy allows India to bargain from a place of confidence, not compulsion. Manufacturing strength helps position India as a credible alternative in global supply chains — something the US is increasingly keen on.

And strong growth plus robust tax collections ensure India doesn't enter trade negotiations looking like the weaker party in need of tariff

mercy. Critics who predicted collapse are now left explaining why a “dead economy” keeps posting some of the world's highest growth figures. Perhaps the economy didn't read their reports. Perhaps it simply doesn't speak fluent pessimism.

Overall, this quarter's GDP data does more than highlight economic strength — it underscores strategic maturity.

Infrastructure spending has delivered a growth spine, manufacturing revival has added muscle, GST rationalisation has improved circulation, and geopolitical agility has kept the entire organism healthy.

India's economy isn't just alive — it's stretching, jogging and occasionally sprinting. And for those still preparing obituaries for it, this quarter offers a gentle suggestion: it might be time to update the draft.

Author is a Founder and Director, Build India Foundation (Public Policy Expert)

Power, mining, manufacturing drag IIP to low of 0.4% in Oct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

India's industrial production growth slowed to an over one-year low of 0.4 per cent in October this year due to poor showing by power, mining and manufacturing sectors, according to official data released on Monday. Factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), expanded by 3.7 per cent in October 2024.

The previous low was recorded as flat growth in September 2024. The National Statistics Office (NSO) revised the industrial production growth to 4.6 per cent for September 2025 from the provisional estimate of 4 per cent released last month.

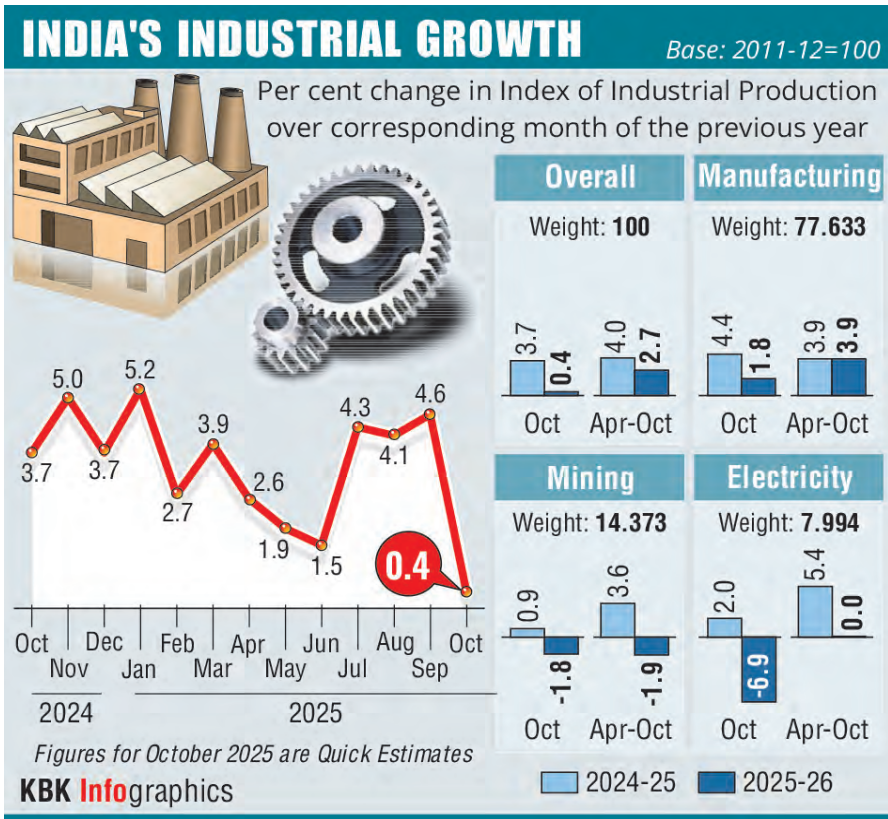
The latest NSO data showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth decelerated to 1.8 per cent in October 2025 from

4.4 per cent in the year-ago month. Mining production contracted by 1.8 per cent against a growth of 0.9 per cent recorded a year ago.

Power output contracted by 6.9 per cent in October 2025 compared to a 2 per cent expansion in the year-ago period.

During the April-October period of FY26, the country's industrial production growth decelerated by 2.7 per cent from 4 per cent in the same period a year ago. Within the manufacturing sector, 9 out of 23 industry groups have recorded positive year-on-year growth in October 2025.

As per the use-based classification, the capital goods segment grew 2.4 per cent in October 2025, down from 2.9 per cent in the year-ago period. Consumer durables (or white goods production) contracted 0.5 per cent during the reporting month compared to a 5.5 per cent growth in October 2024.



PROSPECT



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the 'Mama Bazar' at Kothiatoli in Nagaon, creating a dedicated marketplace for women SHGs to sell their produce and strengthen their livelihoods



Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma at the 1st North East India Organic Week cum Buyer — Seller Meet and the 4th World Organic Youth Summit in Shillong

National Gita chanting finals held at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* with 178 participants



In the presence of Swami Swaroopananda, the Global Head of Chinmaya Mission, 178 state-level finalists from 16 states across India gathered at Chinmaya Vibhooti near Pune on 29 and 30 November for the National finals of the Chinmaya Gita Chanting Competition.

The event was also part of the year-long celebrations leading up to the Chinmaya *Amrit Mahotsav* next year, which will mark 75 years of Chinmaya Mission's service to communities worldwide.

The campus resonated with the chanting of *Bhagavad Gita* verses by children – continuing a tradition initiated by Swami Chinmayananda in the early 1980s. Children competed in six categories based on age and the number of verses assigned. The competition remained inclusive, with this year's finalists also including children with disabilities who had qualified at the state level. The judging panel featured *Swamins* and *Brahmacharins* trained in Vedanta at Chinmaya Mission. Each year, one chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita* is selected for the competition, and children receive learning aids to help them chant with confidence. This year's competition focused on Chapter 15 – *Purushottama Yoga*, which reveals the eternal nature of the Self and our supreme connection with the Divine.

IRFC to provide ₹10 crore CSR support to train 1,275 youths

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Patna

The Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD) today signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), a Navratna Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Railways, for an employment — linked skill development initiative at the newly established BIPARD Skill Park, Patna.

Under this collaboration,



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ii.	Aseptic Packaging	1.30 Crore
iii.	Different Milk Products	
2.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy	
a)	Rate Contract of advertisement material.	Annual
b)	Supply of aluminium foil for 450g/500g, 1kg, 5kg & 15 kg Matka.	Annual
c)	Dismantling and Auction of old LT substation (with allied old accessories), old 250 KVA DG set and unused old aluminium cables.	01 Job
3.	For Verka Ferozepur Dairy	
	Hiring of insulated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products in Ferozepur Milk Shed area.	Annual/ 3.8 to 04 MT -02 Vehicles 2.3 to 2.5 MT -03 Vehicles 1.5 MT- 03 Vehicles
4.	For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy	
	Hiring of vehicle for supply of LN2 gas and A.I. activities.	01 No.
5.	For Verka Amritsar Dairy	
	Hiring of insulated single portion road milk tankers (capacity-10000 Litrs) for transportation of milk from BMC/MCC to Verka Amritsar Dairy.	Two years/ 15 No's
6.	For Verka Ludhiana Dairy	
a)	Outsourcing the activity for :-	
i.	Housekeeping (Sanitation & cleaning) and horticulture work.	Annual
ii.	Preparation and serving of food, tea in staff canteen and cleaning of canteen and utensils etc.	Annual
iii.	Security at Milk Plant Ludhiana and it's Milk chilling centre.	Annual
b)	Hiring of white butter approx. 2000 MT for Verka Ludhiana Dairy including transportation through refrigerator vehicles from Verka Ludhiana Dairy to hired cold store and vice versa.	Annual

NOTE:

1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e eproc.punjab.gov.in.

2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

1018/12/2025-26/5596

General Manager (Purchase)

SIM-binding to bolster national security: COAI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

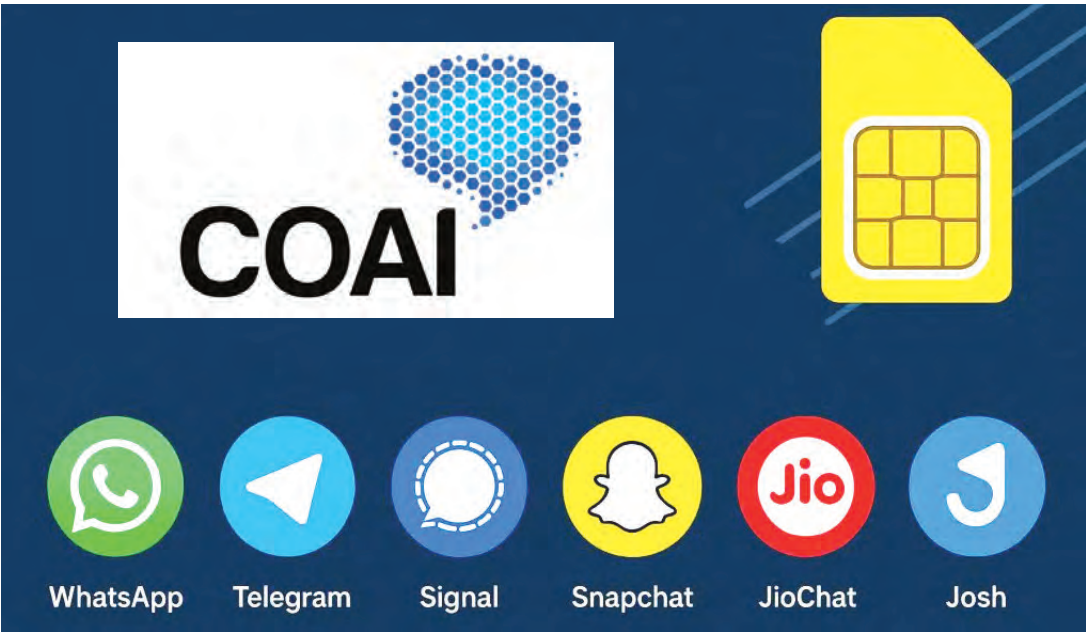
Industry body COAI on Monday said Telecom Department's move mandating that messaging apps like WhatsApp will work only with an active SIM would bolster national security and safeguard citizens, and pledged telecom operators' commitment to supporting seamless implementation of the latest directive.

Such continuous linkage ensures complete accountability and traceability for any activity undertaken by the SIM card and its associated communication app, "closing long-persistent gaps that have enabled anonymity and misuse", COAI said in a statement.

"COAI welcomes and commends the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for taking a landmark step towards bolstering national security and safeguarding our citizens, by mandating SIM-binding for devices for app-based communication services," SP Kochhar, Director General of COAI, said in a statement.

The comment from the apex body, whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, comes in the backdrop of directions by the Government that would ensure app-based communication services, the likes of WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram and others, are continuously linked to a user's active SIM card.

All players providing app-based



communication services in India have been asked to submit compliance reports to the DoT within 120 days from the issue of the directions (that came on November 28). The department warned that failure to comply with norms will attract action under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, the Telecom Cyber Security Rules and other applicable laws.

The directive would impact how users access services of messaging apps, including WhatsApp, telegram, signal, arattai, snapchat, sharechat, jiochat, josh, in India, since it means that these messag-

ing services would only work if the SIM is present and active in the user's device.

"COAI congratulates the Department of Communications, Government of India, on introducing this first in the world regulatory measure, wherein app-based communication services have been directed to be bound with the SIM for safety and consistency measures," the association said.

COAI said it has been strongly advocating for binding communication apps with mobile SIMs for strengthening national security and cyber fraud prevention and

believes that this is a much-needed initiative in ensuring consumer trust, accountability, traceability and further alignment with evolving regulatory frameworks.

"At present, app-based communication services link to a subscriber's mobile SIM card only once during initial installation and verification. Thereafter, these applications continue to function even if the SIM is removed, replaced or deactivated — creating significant scope for fraud," COAI noted.

The new directive mandates that all relevant communication apps ensure continuous linkage between the application and the SIM/phone number used for registration, thereby creating a more accountable digital environment by curbing anonymous misuse and protecting users in the online space, it further said. COAI firmly believes that this mechanism will significantly reduce spam and fraudulent communications perpetrated through these platforms and help mitigate financial fraud.

"Telecom operators stand fully committed to supporting seamless implementation of this directive," COAI said.

Telecom operators, said COAI, have already instituted a very wide spectrum of initiatives to curb spam and fraudulent communication on SMSs and calls.

COAI urged DoT to recommend similar adherence to measures on app-based communication services too, so as to ensure maximum possible mitigation of risks for subscribers across all communication channels.

"Moreover, COAI urges DoT to engage with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to ensure that for all financial transactions, the primary factor of authentication should mandatorily be through SMS OTP, which continues to remain the most secure, operator verified channel with guaranteed traceability," it said, adding that this will create a consistent and secure authentication framework across the financial ecosystem, reducing the risk of fraud and reinforcing consumer trust.

Indian Army flags off national integration tour 2025 from Churachandpur

TONY DAS
■ Kohima, Nagaland

A National Integration Tour (NIT) 2025 comprising 20 students and three teachers from Churachandpur District of Manipur was flagged off on 29 Nov 2025 by the Indian Army. The initiative aims to foster unity, broaden exposure, and strengthen national harmony among the youth. The tour, scheduled from 30 Nov to 12 Dec 2025, will travel to Aizawl and onward to Delhi, Lansdowne (Uttarand Dehradun).

In Delhi, the students are scheduled to visit *Rashtrapati Bhavan*, India Gate, the National War Memorial, Qutub Minar, Nehru Planetarium, Connaught Place and Delhi Haat, thereby gaining valuable insights into India's cultural heritage and democratic institutions. These



engagements are designed to deepen their understanding of the nation's rich socio-cultural landscape.

At Lansdowne, the Garhwal Rifles Regimental Centre will host the students, offering them an opportunity to witness regimental traditions, interact

Meet the Geelu monster: Huggies' new way to talk about baby comfort

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal/New Delhi

Huggies, the baby care brand from Kimberly-Clark, has launched a new national campaign built around a playful yet meaningful character — the Geelu Monster. This quirky mascot takes on an overlooked issue for many parents: the lingering wetness on a baby's skin before a diaper fully absorbs moisture.

With this campaign, Huggies adopts a fresh storytelling format to reinforce its positioning as India's Fastest Absorbing Diaper.

The idea emerged from extensive conversations with mothers who admitted they were often unaware of how long their baby's skin stayed damp — or assumed their

current diapers offered similar performance.

The Geelu Monster personifies that moment of unseen discomfort, turning an invisible concern into a relatable symbol.

At the heart of the campaign lies the claim "Absorbs in 9 seconds," reflecting Huggies' promise of quick absorption and all-day dryness.

The figure performed strongly in consumer testing, with parents finding it both credible and easy to recall.

Shweta Vig, Marketing Director at Kimberly-Clark India, described the Geelu Monster as more than a creative gimmick.

"The Geelu Monster helps shine a light on a problem parents don't always see," she said.

Over 2.04 lakh pvt companies closed down in last 5 years: Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Government on Monday said 2,04,268 private companies have closed down during the last five years. These companies have been shut down on account of amalgamation, conversion, dissolution and struck off from the records under the Companies Act, 2013.

According to data provided in a written reply by Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Harsh Malhotra to Lok Sabha, 20,365 private companies were closed down in 2024-25 while the count was at 21,181 and 83,452 in 2023-24 and 2022-23, respectively.

The number of shuttered private companies stood at 64,054 in 2021-22 and 15,216 in 2020-21. To a query on whether employees of the closed down private companies have been rehabilitated, the minister said there is no proposal before the Government.

Meanwhile, as many as 1,85,350 companies have been removed from the official records in five financial years starting from 2021-2022, with 8,648 entities struck off till July 16 this fiscal. Generally, under the Companies Act, 2013, entities can be removed from the official records if they are not carrying out business activities for long or companies can also seek voluntary removal after fulfilling various regulatory requirements.

To queries about shell companies and whether they are being used for



money laundering activities, Malhotra, in another written reply, said that the term 'shell company' is not defined in the Companies Act, 2013. Providing details in another written reply, the minister said a total of 1,85,350 companies have been struck off during the period from 2021-22 to the current financial year till July 16.

Out of the total, the maximum of 82,125 companies were struck off from the records in 2022-23, also the fiscal when the corporate affairs ministry had carried out a strike-off drive to weed out companies that have not been carrying out business activities for a long time.

On whether the Government proposes to strengthen inter-agency coordination with Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax Department for monitoring of activities such as shell companies being used for money laundering activi-

ties, the minister replied in the affirmative. "Whenever such instances are reported, the same are shared with other Government agencies for monitoring such activities," he said.

Meanwhile, Malhotra also said it is the stated policy of the Government to gradually phase out exemptions and deductions while rationalising tax rates to create a simple, transparent and equitable tax regime instead of providing region-specific tax incentives. "Moreover, the Government has undertaken several reforms to promote investment and ease of doing business, including substantial reductions in corporate tax rates for both existing and new domestic companies," he said.

The minister was responding to a question on whether the Government proposes to formulate any policy to provide tax exemption or incentives to companies for setting up industries in backward and rural areas.

BRIEFLY

YUVRAJ, AHLAWAT, GANDAS TO LEAD STRONG FIELD AT JAIPUR



Domestic regulars, including Yuvraj Sandhu, Veer Ahlawat and Manu Gandas, will vie for honours when the ₹1 crore Jaipur Open golf tournament begins at the Rambagh Golf Club on Tuesday.

The Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI) event will feature a field of 126 professionals.

The tournament boasts several leading Indian names such as PGTI Ranking leader Yuvraj Sandhu, Shaurya Bhattacharya, Arjun Prasad, Veer Ahlawat, Manu Gandas, Om Prakash Chouhan, Angad Cheema, Khalin Joshi and Ajeetesh Sandhu. Among the prominent foreign challengers are Bangladesh's Jamal Hossain, Badal Hossain, Md Akbar Hossain and Md Somrat Sikdar, along with Stepan Danek of the Czech Republic, Italy's Federico Zucchetti, Nepal's Subash Tamang and Uganda's Joshua Seale.

Jaipur-based professionals in the field include Prakhar Asawa, Vishal Singh, Girraj Singh Khadka, Abhyudaya Rawat, Rishi Raj Singh Rathore and Hemendra Choudhary.

The Pro-Am event played on Sunday was won by the team led by professional Shamim Khan with a nett score of 52.6. The amateurs on the team were Rajendra Jakhar, Shankar Prashar and Ankur Thakur.

AJAX GAME ABANDONED BECAUSE OF FIREWORKS



Ajax has apologised after its Dutch league game against Groningen was halted and later abandoned Sunday because of supporters igniting fireworks and flares behind one of the goals.

"Ajax considers what happened in the stadium this evening to be utterly outrageous," the club said in a statement.

The Eredivisie game will now be played on Tuesday without fans, Ajax said.

Referee Bas Nijhuis led the players off the field at Ajax's Johan Cruyff Arena within five minutes of the start. A later attempt to play the game also quickly failed after more fireworks. The match was officially abandoned at 0-0.

Avani, Aditi Ashok finish tied 11th in Spain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Malaga (Spain)

Indian golfers Avani Prashanth and Aditi Ashok carded 1-under 71 each to finish tied 11th at the season-ending Andalucia Costa del Sol Open de España.

Among the other Indians, Hitaashee Bakshi (69) was T-43, Pranavi Urs (73) was T-47, and Diksha Dagar (75) was T-71. France's Nastasia Nadaud stormed to victory, firing a 66 (-6) to win the event by four shots on the Ladies European Tour (LET).

Avani and Aditi played in the same group on the final day and carded 71 each. Avani had four birdies against three bogeys, and Aditi had three



birdies against two bogeys. Both of them bogeyed the 18th and final hole, or else would have got into the top-10. Nadaud, 21, started the day in third place, five shots behind overnight leader

Trichat Cheenglab and found birdies early in her round at Real Guadalhorce Club de Golf. Nadaud made birdies on the first and third holes before an eagle on the fourth, and she made a further birdie

on the fifth to go to the top of the leaderboard.

After the turn, the Frenchwoman rolled in three birdies on the trot on holes 10, 11 and 12 before dropping a shot on the 13th and 16th



holes. However, Nadaud went to the 18th hole with a four-shot lead and rolled in her par to seal her win, her maiden LET title, with a score of 16-under-par. Nadaud has been working with LET player

Michele Thomson as her caddie since the start of September, and she credits her with improving her confidence in her game.

Australia's Kirsten Rudgeley ended the week in solo second place after a final round of 69 (-3) in Malaga.

Four players finished in a share of third place with Australia's Kelsey Bennett, Germany's Olivia Cowan, Norway's Dorteia Forbrigg and France's Perrine Delacour all on 11-under-par.

In the LET Order of Merit, Singapore's Shannon Tan ended the year as number one, ahead of England's Rhodes, with Nadaud jumping from ninth to third in the rankings.

Delhi CM attends inaugural ceremony of IPBL

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday attended the grand inaugural ceremony of the Indian Pickleball League (IPBL) and said this distinctive initiative marks a significant step towards promoting new sports in the country, expanding the sporting culture among the youth, and connecting players with a broader platform.

Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. It is played on a badminton-sized court using a plastic ball and solid paddles similar to rackets. The sport can be played in singles or doubles. It was invented in 1965 in the United States as a recreational activity.



Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at the inaugural season of the IPBL held at the Indira Gandhi Arena-IG Indoor Stadium in New Delhi

The Chief Minister said the Indian Pickleball League is not merely a competition, but a significant endeavour to make India's growing sports ecosystem even more dynamic and robust. Calling it a major opportunity for young people, she said that such events provide new

and talented players with recognition, encouragement, and the pathway to progress.

Appreciating the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she said the Prime Minister has transformed sports into a symbol of India's new national culture and youthful energy.

His consistent guidance and encouragement have led to unprecedented enthusiasm, participation, and commitment towards sports across the country making the Indian sports ecosystem stronger and more vibrant than ever before.

The CM further said India has always been a nation of sports, and embracing new sporting disciplines has long been part of our culture. She added that the Government will integrate this league, launched by the Times Group, into Delhi's schools, sporting events, and youth programmes so that this sport can become exciting and popular among all.

The Chief Minister extended her best wishes to all players participating in the competition.

Women's hockey chief coach, Harendra Singh resigns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Indian women's hockey team chief coach Harendra Singh on Monday resigned from the post with immediate effect, citing "personal reasons".

According to sources, Harendra sent an email to Hockey India informing the apex body that he is resigning with immediate effect.

Dutch tactician Sjoerd Marijne, who was head coach of the side that finished fourth at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021, could return as the chief coach, according to sources.

Marijne had resigned as head coach of the women's hockey team in August 2021.

Harendra, who previously coached the United States men's hockey team, had assumed the post of chief coach in April 2024.

Before that, he had coached India's junior men's team, which won the World Cup in 2016 in Lucknow.

The Indian women's team's performance has been disappointing over the past year. The team recorded just two wins in 16 matches in the FIH Pro League 2024-25 and failed to qualify for the next season.



Samra hopeful shooting will be back when India hosts CWG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Jaipur

Olympian Sift Kaur Samra is confident that shooting will be included as a discipline when India hosts the Commonwealth Games in 2030 and will significantly add to the country's overall medal tally. Shooting was discontinued as a medal event for both the 2022 Birmingham and 2026 Glasgow editions of the Commonwealth Games, but as hosts, the Indian shooters will get a chance to showcase their talent and secure a bagful of medals in front of their home crowd.

"I am thrilled that India is hosting the Commonwealth Games, and I am sure shooting will be included as an event. This is a fantastic opportunity for our national shooters to shine and bring home

medals. "I am also hoping that the event will lead to improved sports infrastructure, making it easier for aspiring athletes to learn and train," Sift told SAI Media on Sunday. "The Commonwealth Games will have a significant impact on our sports culture. When people come and watch our players compete in the stadium, they will be inspired to take up sports, and it will definitely trigger a sports mindset in our country," the 24-year-old added.

Sift won an individual silver and a bronze medal in the 50m rifle 3 position at the ongoing Khelo India University Games for Guru Nanak Dev University at the Jagatpura Shooting Range here.

Earlier this season, Sift maintained her dominance at the continental level by clinching her fourth consecutive Asian Championship gold in the 50m



rifle 3 position in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, this August.

After ending her KIUG campaign on an impressive note, the rifle shooter's focus now is on the ISSF World Cup Final in Doha, Qatar, scheduled from December 4 to 9.

"This year, I have participated

in three World Cups, winning two individual medals and narrowly missing out on one. I have also won an individual gold medal at the Asian Championships. Currently, I am focused on the World Cup Final in Doha, which is scheduled to take

place later this year," she said.

"After that, my target is winning a medal at the Asian Games next year, but I also have my sights set on the Olympics. I usually plan short-term goals, and I'm working towards achieving them one step at a time." Sift, who has been a regular participant in various Khelo India Games since 2020, said that it is an excellent platform for individuals who want to take up sports as a professional career.

"I am constantly a part of Khelo India Games right from the very first edition of University Games in 2020... The Khelo India University Games is an excellent platform for athletes who take up sports later in life, particularly during their college years. It provides them a chance to showcase their talent and test their performance against others.

Red Bull voices regret over claims Antonelli let Lando Norris pass him

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Milton Keynes (England)

Red Bull expressed regret on Monday following "clearly incorrect" comments alleging that Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli had let Lando Norris past at the Qatar Grand Prix, influencing the Formula 1 title fight.

Standings leader Norris was in fifth place behind Antonelli toward the end of Sunday's race when the Italian slid wide, and Norris overtook him for fourth place. That allowed the McLaren driver to stay 12 points in front of Red Bull's Max Verstappen ahead of the season finale this week in Abu Dhabi.

Verstappen's race engineer, Gianpiero Lambiase, suggested to the Dutch



four-time champion over the radio that it seemed Antonelli had let Norris pass him, and Red Bull adviser Helmut Marko claimed Antonelli "waved him by" in comments to Sky Sport Germany.

"Comments made before the end of and immediately after the Qatar GP, suggesting that Mercedes driver

Kimi Antonelli had deliberately allowed Lando Norris to overtake him, are clearly incorrect," Red Bull posted on social media Monday.

"Replay footage shows Antonelli momentarily losing control of his car, thus allowing Norris to pass him. We sincerely regret that this has led to Kimi receiving online abuse."

Salah has to prove his worth again at Liverpool after being dropped by Arne Slot

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ London

The warning signs were there for Mohamed Salah. His form wasn't great. pundits were starting to get on his back. Fixtures were coming thick and fast for Liverpool. Plus, manager Arne Slot clearly needed to switch things up amid the team's worst run of results in more than 70 years. And so, Salah was dropped. Indeed, he didn't even come off the bench in the crisis-averting 2-0 win at West Ham in the Premier League on Sunday.

Cue hysteria, and maybe some over-reaction. Questions about whether this was the beginning of the end for Salah at Liverpool might be premature. The trip to West Ham came in the

middle of a run of five matches in 15 days for Liverpool. Missing out on the middle one of those — against one of the worst teams in the league — was hardly big a deal, even if it was the first time in 19 months that Salah began as a substitute in a Premier League game.

"Mo has had an unbelievable career here at this club and will have a very good future at this club because he's such a special player," Slot said.

"Four games in 10 days, with only 14 to 15 outfield players available for us, then you have to decide once in a while to make a certain lineup and you try to pick the best lineup for every single game." Expect Salah to be back in the team when Liverpool hosts Sunderland

on Wednesday in a rare midweek round of matches in England's top flight.

However, it does put some pressure on the 33-year-old Egyptian to start delivering, given he has just four goals so far in league play.

And it won't be long before he heads to the Africa Cup of Nations. That might be more of an acid test for Slot: If, in Salah's absence, Liverpool stumbles on a formula that improves results, what does the Dutch coach do then?

There's no doubt Liverpool is already looking to the future with the signings of Florian Wirtz (22), Hugo Ekitike (23) and Alexander Isak (26). And in Isak, who scored the opener against West Ham, Slot now has an out-and-out striker who should eventually ease the



burden on Salah. But Salah is a club great who has supreme fitness and drive, and spearheaded Liverpool's charge to the league title

last season. Don't be surprised if he becomes Liverpool's go-to attacker once again when Liverpool gets through this tough spell,

which saw it lose eight of its previous 11 matches heading into the West Ham game.

"He has been so important for this club," Slot said, "and will be important for this club in the future." Key midweek matchups Arsenal has drawn back-to-back away games in the league but still has a five-point lead heading into a home match against Brentford.

Second-place Manchester City visits Fulham, while Chelsea — a point further back — is at Leeds.

Players to watch Viktor Gyokeres made his return for Arsenal after four weeks out in the 1-1 draw at Chelsea on Sunday and will be pushing for a start up front. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has plenty of options in attack now, though, with Mikel

Merino having filled in effectively during Gyokeres' recent absence and Gabriel Jesus also fit again after nearly a year out because of ACL damage.

Erling Haaland hasn't scored in any of his last three games ahead of Man City's trip to Fulham, and suddenly has an unlikely challenger for the Golden Boot award.

That is Igor Thiago, Brentford's Brazilian striker who has nine goals in his last eight league games and is on 11 for the season — three behind Haaland.

Out of action Chelsea will be without midfield enforcer Moises Caicedo for its match at Leeds as he starts a suspension following his straight red card against Arsenal. With Romeo Lavia also currently sidelined, Reece James may

have to continue in an unfamiliar role at the base of the midfield.

Crystal Palace midfielder Ismaila Sarr went off injured early in the 2-1 loss at Manchester United and manager Oliver Glasner said the Senegal international might only return after the African Cup. Crystal Palace is at Burnley on Wednesday.

Off the field Pressure is building on Tottenham manager Thomas Frank after three straight losses over the past week, including a big one in the derby against Arsenal and most recently at home to Fulham. Discontent has been heard among supporters, some of whom were targeted by Frank after the Fulham game for jeering goalkeeper Guglielmo Vicario for some mistakes.