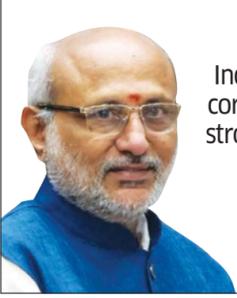


GREAT OFFERS!



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**PAGE 5 NATION**  
India-US travel corridor reflects stronger ties: VP



**PAGE 7 LAW & JUSTICE**  
Supreme Court upholds NCLAT order on attachment under Benami Act

**PAGE 10: BUSINESS**  
Parents help Gen Z with jobs



**PAGE 12 GLOBAL**  
4 years on, Putin has not broken Ukrainians: Zelenskyy



**PAGE 15 SPORTS**  
AIU bans Indian runner Pooja Aatmaram for 3 years



**PIONEER IN SHORT**

**DGCA TO TIGHTEN SAFETY NORMS**

Aviation watchdog Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday announced a slew of safety measures for non-scheduled flight operators, including public disclosure of aircraft maintenance history and a safety ranking mechanism, in the wake of recent plane crashes. A day after a plane, operated by a non-scheduled operator (NSOP), crashed in Jharkhand, killing seven people onboard, DGCA held a meeting with all such operators. The meeting was held to "address a recent surge in aviation incidents and emphasised the critical need for an increased focus on safety across the sector," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a statement. Sending out a strong warning, the regulator said accountable managers and senior leadership of NSOPs would be held personally responsible for systemic non-compliances and stressed that "safety lapses cannot simply be blamed on pilots". Apart from the requirement of public disclosure of critical safety information, including aircraft age and maintenance history, DGCA said there would be a safety ranking of the NSOPs.

## Canada Govt moves to revoke Tahawwur Rana's citizenship

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Canadian Government has initiated proceedings to revoke the citizenship of Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key accused in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, in a move that comes just days before Prime Minister Mark Carney's scheduled visit to India on February 26.

Rana, a Pakistan-born businessman, is currently in custody in India, where he faces trial in connection with the 26/11 attacks carried out by the Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The coordinated assault on Mumbai in November 2008 left more than 160 people dead and strained India-Pakistan relations for years.

According to a report by Global News, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has formally notified Rana of its intention to strip him of the Canadian citizenship he acquired in 2001. He had moved to Canada in 1997 and later



became a naturalised citizen.

Notably, the revocation effort is not directly tied to terrorism charges. Instead, Canadian authorities allege that Rana obtained citizenship through misrepresentation.

In its notice, the IRCC stated that Rana provided inaccurate information about his residency history when applying for citizenship in 2000. He reportedly claimed to have lived in Ottawa and Toronto for four years prior to his application, declaring only

a brief six-day absence from Canada during that period.

However, an investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police allegedly found that Rana had spent much of that time in Chicago, where he owned properties and operated several businesses, including an immigration consultancy and a grocery store.

Officials have described the alleged discrepancies as a "serious and deliberate deception," arguing that the

omissions led authorities to believe he met Canada's residency requirements when he may not have qualified.

In a letter dated May 31, 2024, the IRCC informed Rana that the alleged misrepresentation may have influenced the decision to grant him citizenship.

The case has been referred to the Federal Court of Canada, which will determine whether Rana's citizenship was obtained through fraud, false representation, or the concealment of material facts. Rana's legal team has contested the revocation, claiming the process is unfair and violates his rights. During a recent hearing, Government lawyers sought permission to withhold certain information on national security grounds.

A spokesperson for the immigration department said citizenship revocation in cases of misrepresentation is rare but necessary to maintain the integrity of Canada's immigration system.

**BENGAL SIR**

## SC allows deployment of judicial officers from Jharkhand, Odisha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed the deployment of West Bengal civil judges, in addition to 250 district judges, and the requisitioning of judicial officers from Jharkhand and Odisha to handle 80 lakh claims and objections of those facing deletion from the electoral roll in the ongoing SIR exercise in the State.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi took note of a February 22 letter of Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Sujoy Paul that even if 250 district judges deployed in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise will take around 80 days to deal with the claims and objections of those put under logical discrepancy and unmapped categories.

The logical discrepancies in progeny linking with the 2002 voter list include instances of a mismatch in



the parent's name and the age difference between a voter and his/her parent being less than 15 years or more than 50 years.

While issuing a slew of fresh directions, CJI Kant took note of the fact that even if each judicial officer deals with 250 claims and objections per day, the exercise will take around 80 days to conclude. The deadline for West Bengal SIR is February 28. The bench permitted

Chief Justice Paul to deploy civil judges from the senior and junior divisions with a minimum three-year experience to verify the claims and objections filed by the voters.

It asked the Calcutta High Court chief justice to request his Jharkhand and Odisha counterparts for requisitioning of judicial officers of similar ranks to deal with the situation.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

**The ByStander**



## India sees three aviation emergencies in 24 hours

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India witnessed three separate aviation emergencies within 24 hours: a fatal air ambulance crash in Jharkhand, an engine scare mid-air on a Delhi-Leh commercial flight, and a helicopter crash-landing in the Andaman Sea. While one incident ended in tragedy, swift responses in the other two ensured no loss of life.

**Delhi-Leh Flight Returns After Mid-Air Engine Alert**

In a separate incident on Tuesday morning, a Leh-bound SpiceJet flight returned to Delhi shortly after takeoff following a reported technical snag.

The Boeing 737 aircraft, operating as SG121 with around 150 passengers and crew on board, reportedly experienced sparks and flames from one of its engines mid-air. As a precautionary measure, the pilots decided to abort the climb and head back to the

national Capital. Standard operating procedures for engine malfunction were activated at Delhi airport, and the aircraft landed safely. No injuries were reported. Airline officials indicated that the return was prompted by a suspected engine-related issue. The aircraft has been grounded for inspection.

**Pawan Hans Helicopter Ditches Near Mayabunder**

Hours later, a helicopter operated by Pawan Hans made an emergency landing in the sea near Mayabunder in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The helicopter had taken off from Port Blair and was attempting to land when it reportedly ditched into the sea about 300 metres short of the runway at approximately 9:30 am.

The aircraft was carrying two crew members and five passengers. Authorities confirmed that all seven occupants were rescued safely, with no injuries reported.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

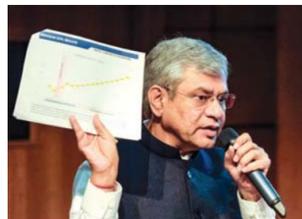


## Cabinet approves renaming of Kerala as Keralam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved a proposal of the Kerala Government to change the name of the State to Keralam, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at its first meeting held at Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, approved the proposal for altering the name of the State of Kerala as 'Keralam', Vaishnaw said. After approval of the Union Cabinet, the President of India will refer a Bill, namely the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to the State Legislative



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressing a Cabinet briefing in New Delhi

Assembly of Kerala for expressing its views under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India.

After receipt of the views of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, the

Government of India will obtain the recommendation of the President for the introduction of the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026, to alter the name of Kerala as 'Keralam' in Parliament, an official release said.

The Legislative Assembly of Kerala passed a resolution on June 24, 2024, to alter the name of Kerala to 'Keralam'.

Thereafter, the Kerala Government requested the Central Government to take necessary steps to amend the First Schedule to the Constitution by altering the name of 'Kerala' to 'Keralam' according to Article 3 of the Constitution.

Article 3 of the Constitution provides for the alteration of the names of existing States.

CONTINUED ON >> P4



## Infant twins among 6 killed in Meerut house fire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Meerut (UP)

A devastating accident shook Meerut after a suspected short circuit triggered a massive blaze inside a house in the Lisadi Gate area, killing six members of an extended family, including two four-month-old twin sisters, and three children aged 4 and 12.

According to officials, the blaze at Iqbal Ahmad's residence on Monday night spread rapidly when most male members of the family were out to offer Ramzan *namaz*, leaving little time for the others to escape.

Police said the family was into tailoring and the online garment business, for which a large quantity of cloth was stored on the ground floor of the three-storey house, causing the fire to spread rapidly.

## AI protest: IYC chief sent to 4-day custody

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Hours after his arrest, a city court on Tuesday remanded Indian Youth Congress (IYC) national president Uday Bhanu Chib to four days' police custody in connection with the shirtless protest at Bharat Mandapam during the AI Impact Summit on February 20. Chib was arrested after about 15 hours of questioning at the Tilak Marg police station in connection with the shirtless protest at the AI Summit meet.

According to police sources, Chib did not cooperate during questioning and



IYC national president Uday Bhanu Chib taken into police custody

tried to mislead the investigators. They said they have sufficient evidence against him.

Judicial Magistrate Ravi allowed four days of police

custody to question Chib, after the Investigating Officer (IO) sought seven days of custodial interrogation. "The application of the IO is partly allowed. The accused is

remanded to police custody for four days commencing from today till February 28 (inclusive). On expiry of the said period, the IO shall produce the accused before the concerned court or the concerned duty magistrate, along with a detailed remand report," the court said.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## Seva Teerth begins its journey with a Sankalp for common man

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

The new PMO complex — Seva Teerth — on Tuesday adopted a resolution titled 'Seva Sankalp Resolution' with a motive and responsibility to serve 1.4 billion citizens of Bharat. According to the resolution passed in the first Cabinet meeting at Seva Teerth, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is a new beginning in India's development journey, and every decision taken in the new building will be inspired by a spirit and sentiment of *Nagrik Devo Bhava* and simplifying the life of the last person in the country.

"The Union Cabinet reiterates its resolve that every

decision taken in these premises will be inspired by the sentiment of 'Nagrik Devo Bhava'. This place will not be a centre for the display of power, but rather a centre for the empowerment of every Indian," the resolution read. "We reaffirm that, in line with our vision, we will further strengthen the governance model that is transparent, aware, and sensitive to the emotions of citizens," it said.

According to the resolution, work culture at Seva Teerth will be guided by the spirit of the fundamental ethos of the Constitution, and every decision will be accountable to the aspirations of the people. This meeting and this building



are a direct expression of the reconstruction of New India, according to the 'Seva Sankalp' resolution.

"With this auspicious beginning, we welcome that future

whose foundation has been laid by centuries of effort. After Independence, for so many decades, Governments operated from the Prime Minister's Office in South

Block, preserving the legacy and envisioning the future. We envisioned an India whose thought is indigenous, whose form is modern, and whose capability is boundless. Today, Seva Teerth is the embodied manifestation of that very vision, which will enhance India's pride as the Mother of Democracy," it said.

The Cabinet also remembered the history of the complex's location, which was the site of the temporary barracks from the British era. The resolution said that before colonial rule, India was a nation recognised both for its material grandeur and for its human values.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

## After 10-year delay, Najafgarh drain corridor project gets green light

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

After almost 10 years of delay, the Rekha Government gave the financial nod to the construction of Najafgarh drain corridor project connecting Delhi and Gurugram to boost connectivity in outer Delhi.

A 61-kilometre road with 7 meters width will be built along the Najafgarh Drain with an estimated Budget of ₹453.95 crore. The Expenditure and Finance Committee (EFC), headed by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, on Tuesday approved a proposal to this



effect. The expressway is expected to provide major relief from traffic congestion for millions of commuters, particularly those travelling to and from West and South-West Delhi. This

new corridor will act as a swift, high-capacity alternative transit route running parallel to UER-II (Urban Extension Road-II) and Ring Road.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

CM Rekha lays foundation stone for 49 projects worth ₹264 cr

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday laid foundation stones for 49 projects worth ₹264 crore in Mundka, saying her Government is bringing the villages neglected so far into the mainstream of development.

dard of living for the general public," she said. "The Delhi Government has initiated development works worth ₹1,600 crore in the rural areas of Delhi in the past one year," the Chief Minister said, addressing a gathering in Mundka.



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta (center) laying the foundation stone for 49 projects worth ₹264 crore in Mundka, Delhi. She is surrounded by officials and community members.

extensive expansion of roads, drinking water supply, sewerage, education, healthcare, and other basic amenities in rural Delhi. A budget allocation of ₹1,000 crore has been made specifically for village development to ensure planned and accelerated progress.

farmers will directly benefit, issues related to land consolidation will be addressed, and a proposed growth centre spanning 900 hectares of land will be developed. The Chief Minister said that once these projects are completed, the Mundka Assembly constituency will witness smoother connectivity, access to clean drinking water, improved sewerage systems, and strengthened education and healthcare facilities, leading to a marked improvement in residents' quality of life.

and even projects worth one or two crore rupees were not approved. Villagers had to struggle for roads, water, and sewer connections, and the doors of the Chief Minister's Office remained closed. Today, however, the situation has changed. He stated that in the very first year under the leadership of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, a ₹1,000 crore fund has been sanctioned for rural Delhi.

Speaker announces solar expansion, political leadership programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta, marking one year of his tenure on Tuesday, announced a slew of initiatives for the House, including expanding the solar power project by 300 KW, increasing green cover by 20 per cent, introducing a 'Best MLA Award' and launching a political leadership programme.



Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta speaking at a podium during his one-year anniversary address.

the upcoming Budget, said an Assembly secretariat statement. A prestigious one-year political leadership programme to mentor future youth leaders is also in the pipeline, it said.

Implementation of an audit para management system (APMS) for real-time monitoring of CAG audits and action taken notes from departments, and a dedicated annual health check-up of MLAs, were other initiatives, added the statement. Outlining future priorities, the Speaker announced plans to significantly expand solar energy capacity, introduce a diploma/certificate programme in political leadership for youth, and modernise the Assembly library with advanced technology, making it accessible to researchers and the general public alike.

Parvesh Verma inaugurates green waste processing plant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE New Delhi

Delhi's Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma on Tuesday inaugurated the Capital's first-ever green waste processing plant. Developed by the PWD, the plant will process horticulture waste generated along PWD roads and convert it into compost for reuse in landscaping and plantation work.

She added that over the past year, the Government has embraced the resolve of Antyodaya and undertaken extensive expansion of roads, drinking water supply, sewerage, education, healthcare, and other basic amenities in rural Delhi. A budget allocation of ₹1,000 crore has been made specifically for village development to ensure planned and accelerated progress.



Delhi's Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma inaugurating the Capital's first-ever green waste processing plant. He is seen operating a shredder machine.

Under the initiative, six green waste plants have already been developed, while six more will be constructed in the next phase. The Government's long-term plan is to establish at least one such facility in every district to ensure efficient and localised waste management. The compost produced at these facilities will be used by the horticulture department for maintaining central verges, roadside plantations, and gardens maintained by PWD.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Siva Ram Rai Son of Sube Rai, Resident of House No. B-144, Karan Vihar Part-4, Kirari Suleman Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110086, has disowned my Son Santosh Ray due to personal reasons and misconduct. I have severed all relations with him and disowned him from all movable and immovable properties and from inheritance absolutely and forever. I shall not be responsible for any acts, deeds, debts, or liabilities incurred by him henceforth. Any person dealing with him/her shall do so at his/her own risk and responsibility. Sanjay Maurya (Advocate)

PUBLIC NOTICE: Known to all that my client known to all that my client Smt. Sumitra Devi owner of the First Floor, Area 1215 Sq. Ft., Plot No. B-3-A, Kharsa No. 12/11/1, 'Shyam Kunj', B-Block, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110071, and My Client Purchase aforesaid property from Smt. Nisha Nareish Kumar dated 08.07.2024. Now My Client wants to sell aforesaid property. It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right, in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 08 days of this publication. For AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Court, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75, M-9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE: Known to all that my client known to all that my client Smt. Sumitra Devi owner of the First Floor, Area 1215 Sq. Ft., Plot No. B-3-A, Kharsa No. 12/11/1, 'Shyam Kunj', B-Block, Najafgarh, New Delhi-110071, and My Client Purchase aforesaid property from Smt. Nisha Nareish Kumar dated 08.07.2024. Now My Client wants to sell aforesaid property. It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right, in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 08 days of this publication. For AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION Ch. No. 760, Dwarka Court, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75, M-9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE: This is to inform the public that my clients intends to purchase a DDA Residential Flat No. 7394, Third Floor, Sector-D, Pocket-7, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi from Mrs. Ambalika Nandy and Ms. Kritika Nandy (present owner by virtue of Conveyance Deed dated 12.01.2026) who had lost/misplaced Original Fifth and Final Demand Letter dated 30.06.1989 and Allocation Letter dated 16.07.1984, NOC for water & electric connection dated 16.10.1989 and Possession Letter dated 16.10.1989 in the name of Sri Santosh Kumar Nandy and my clients are purchasing the said flat from the said present owner. If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall inform within 15 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, then my clients shall presume that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear. Karnail Singh, (Advocate) K-8, Basement, Jungpura Extension New Delhi. Contact No. 9811163363 & 9953683363.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER: HEALTH & EDUCATION P.W.(H&E) DEPT., CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3. No. CE/TB-II(H&E)/36/2025/09 Press Notice (National Competitive Bidding) (Assam State Tertiary Healthcare Augmentation (ASTHA) Project Funded by ADB) The Chief Engineer (Health & Education), P.W.(H&E) Dept., Chandmari, Guwahati-03, on behalf of the Governor of Assam (India) invites fresh Bids online e-tenders in Single Stago: Two Envelope Bidding procedure (Eligibility and Financial) on Design-Build basis from eligible contractor for the following work: Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in. (Organization Name- Public Works Health & Education Department-Externally Aided Project) Table with columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Bid Value (Rs.), Bid Security (Rs.), Time of completion. Includes notes on bidding process and contact information for the Chief Engineer.

PUBLIC NOTICE: To be known to all that my client, SH. ABID PARVEZ SHAW S/o Mohidin Shaw R/O B-37, West Friends Colony, South Delhi, Delhi-110065, Allottee/Purchaser of DDA Industrial Plot No. E-46, Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi, Vide File No.FI.12(54)2002/CE. The original documents i.e. Allotment-Cum-Demand Letter, Handing Over Possession, 14.03.01, and Possession Slip, Noe For Construction and Form-C of the above said Shop have been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/ LR No. 112326/2026 dated 18/02/2025 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at 14/03/01 who is/are in favour of Mr. Aman Sharma S/o Mr. Deepak Sharma R/O House # 1, Street # 1, 11th Floor, Tower-F, Gulshan Vivante, Plot No. GH-07A, Sector-137, Noida (U.P.) Mr. Deepak Sharma was expired on dated 18/10/2025. That Late Deepak Sharma was executed a registered WILL in favour of Mr. Aman Sharma S/o Mr. Deepak Sharma R/O House # 1, Street # 1, Bataala Road, Pawan Nagar, Amritsar, Punjab-143001. If anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Group Housing Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. Aman Sharma

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL EDUCATION, ASSAM SIXMILE, KHANAPARA, GUWAHATI-22 Website: dme.assam.gov.in, E-mail: dmeassam@gmail.com No. e. DME/PG/2025/687431/19 ADMISSION NOTICE Admission into vacant Post Graduate Seats in Government Medical Colleges of Assam and B.B.C.I., Guwahati under Assam State Quota after completion of Stray Round of Online Counselling for session 2025 This is for information of all concerned that the provisional select list of candidate after the Stray round online counselling for admission into vacant Post Graduate seats in the Government Medical Colleges of Assam and B.B.C.I., Guwahati under Assam State Quota for session 2025, has already been published in the official website www.dme.assam.gov.in All provisionally selected candidates are hereby directed to report to the office of the Principals of the respective Colleges with following terms and conditions on 27th to 28th February, 2026 for admission, failing which his/her allotment shall be cancelled. 1. All admissions shall be provisional and will be subject to fulfilment of all the requisite eligibility criteria as per the "Medical Colleges of Assam (Regulation of Admission into Post Graduate Degree and Diploma Courses) Rules, 2021 (Amendment upto date)". 2. Candidates must bring all relevant documents in original along with Admission and Counselling fees etc. at the time of Admission. 3. Candidates shall have to deposit the original documents as specified in the "Medical Colleges of Assam (Regulation of Admission into Post Graduate Degree and Diploma Courses) Rules, 2021 (Amendment upto date)". 4. After admission all candidates including State Health Services Quota shall execute a duly registered agreement on a non-judicial stamp paper of the value of Rs.100/- (Rupees one hundred) only as per the "Medical Colleges of Assam (Regulation of Admission into Post Graduate Degree and Diploma Courses) Rules, 2021 (Amendment upto date)" within 2 (two) weeks from the date of admission. 5. A candidate, who furnishes false information/ declaration, his/her admission is liable to be cancelled at any time and proceeding shall be drawn against such candidates under appropriate law including professional conduct etiquette and ethics of National Medical Commission's Regulation. Candidates are directed to visit the official website of this Directorate, www.dme.assam.gov.in regularly for further information & notices. DIPR/D/PIO/917/25-Feb-26 DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL EDUCATION, ASSAM

IN THE COURT OF SH. HEM SINGH, LD. DJ-01, EAST, KKD, COURTS DELHI SANDIP SIL 21, Uma Das Lane, Kolkata, West Bengal-700016 Verses PETITIONER Table with columns: R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, R-6, R-7, R-8, R-9, R-10. Includes names of petitioners and respondents, addresses, and case details.

PUBLIC NOTICE: This is to inform to all concern that Mr. Aman Sharma S/o Mr. Deepak Sharma & Late Deepak Sharma R/O Mr. Kundan Lal Sharma R/O House # 1, Street # 1, Bataala Road, Pawan Nagar, Amritsar, Punjab 143001 who is/are the original allottee/owner of property No. Flat No. F-111, 11th Floor, Tower-F, Gulshan Vivante, Plot No. GH-07A, Sector-137, Noida (U.P.) Mr. Deepak Sharma was expired on dated 18/10/2025. That Late Deepak Sharma was executed a registered WILL in favour of Mr. Aman Sharma S/o Mr. Deepak Sharma R/O House # 1, Street # 1, Bataala Road, Pawan Nagar, Amritsar, Punjab-143001. If anyone has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection alongwith the sufficient proof in the Group Housing Department of the Noida Authority within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice. Aman Sharma

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236 E-Tender Notice Online bids are invited through the e-tendering process for procurement of the following services/items through the E-Procurement portal of the Government of Punjab. Last date for submission of online bids of following tender's is 11-03-2026 1) Pediatric Ultrasound Simulator 2) Laparoscopy Simulator Note:- Tender Document can be downloaded from http://eproc.punjab.gov.in and www.bfuh.s.ac.in Registrar 3108/12/2025-26/8661 Dated CHD :- 24/02/2026

## CM extends PM-JAY to include widows, disability pensioners

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Rekha Gupta Government on Tuesday took a historic and transformative decision in the field of health security in the national Capital as widow pension beneficiaries and persons with disabilities receiving Government pensions have now been brought under the ambit of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).

Their families will also be eligible to avail benefits under the scheme, said a Delhi Government press release. The Chief Minister said that this decision will

bring direct and meaningful change to the lives of lakhs of needy families. The decision was taken during a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Chief Minister. Providing details, CM informed that approximately 3,96,615 widow pension beneficiaries and around 1,31,515 beneficiaries under the disability pension scheme will directly benefit.

She reiterated that the government is firmly committed to ensuring that no poor, vulnerable or needy citizen of Delhi is deprived of medical treatment due to financial constraints. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is the

country's largest health protection scheme, and the Delhi Government has taken a significant step to make it more effective and inclusive.

The Chief Minister further stated that following this decision, approximately 5.5 lakh additional families will come under a robust health security cover.

These families will be in addition to those already covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Household (PRS) categories, senior citizens above 70 years of age, Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers, Anganwadi workers and helpers.



She added that the decision is a strong step towards realising the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas." Through Ayushman Bharat, the Prime Minister has ensured health security for crores of poor families across the country, and the Delhi Government remains committed to extending the benefits of the scheme to every eligible individual in the capital.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the government's objective is clear: no eligible citizen should be deprived of quality and affordable health-care services. She informed

that 7,23,707 Ayushman cards have been issued in Delhi so far, including 2,74,620 cards to senior citizens. For effective implementation of the scheme in the Capital, a network of 208 hospitals has been empanelled, comprising 156 private and 53 Government hospitals.

Through the State Health Agency (SHA) in Delhi, more than 29,120 beneficiaries have received treatment under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) to date. She said this is not merely an administrative decision but a commitment linked to the health and dignity of every needy family in Delhi.

## Delhi Metro to paint 200 pillars with public art

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Turning concrete into canvas, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has drawn up a plan to integrate large-scale public art into its transport infrastructure, beginning with artwork on 200 metro pillars across the national Capital in the first phase.

DMRC has also invited non-governmental organisations and art-based institutions to take part in the initiative, allowing the artworks to serve not just as visual enhancements but also as platforms to spread awareness on social, civic and environmental issues, an official said.

The move is expected to provide a platform for cre-



ative expression while aligning with broader civic and environmental messages, he added.

The initiative, aimed at enhancing the commuter experience and improving the visual character of urban spaces, will see metro pillars at selected locations transformed into canvases showcasing themes drawn from

nature, culture and social awareness, according to an official.

He said that around 200 pillars for artwork have been proposed and around 50 have already been completed earlier, while work on the remaining pillars is underway and is expected to expand gradually across the entire Delhi Metro network.

The project is designed to blend art seamlessly with public transport facilities, creating a more pleasant and engaging environment for daily commuters, the official said.

The artworks feature stylised representations of flowers, birds, animals and other natural elements inspired by India's rich biodiversity, while maintaining visual continuity along metro corridors, he said and added that each pillar, however, is conceived as an independent artistic element, allowing for diversity within a cohesive design framework.

As part of its broader policy to promote heritage, art and culture at metro stations and along metro infrastructure, DMRC allows the display of artworks in design-

nated areas, primarily within secure zones, subject to operational and safety considerations, he said.

The policy encourages both long-term static displays and short-duration exhibitions, depending on the nature of the artwork and location, the official said.

He said such initiatives have, in the past, included handicrafts, photographs, paintings and sculptures displayed at various metro stations, helping bring art closer to the public in everyday spaces. With the pillar artwork project, DMRC aims to further strengthen the role of public transport infrastructure as a medium for cultural expression while continuing to prioritise commuter convenience and safety, the official added.

## Teenager killed in cricket brawl in Tilak Nagar, 3 juveniles held

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

A neighbourhood cricket game turned deadly in west Delhi's Tilak Nagar after a 15-year-old boy allegedly had his neck broken in a violent confrontation with three juveniles.

The incident took place on Monday evening following an argument over a cricket match in a local park.

According to police, a verbal altercation first broke out between the victim and a 12-year-old boy at the game.

"The argument escalated into a scuffle. The 12-year-old later went home and informed his cousins, aged 17



and 13. The three then allegedly went looking for the victim," a senior police officer said.

At around 7.22 pm, the three confronted the teenager in the area. A fight ensued during which the boy sustained injuries to his neck and head and fell unconscious. He was rushed to Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital by family members

and locals, where doctors declared him dead.

An FIR was registered at Tilak Nagar Police Station, and all three juveniles were apprehended. The victim, Nishant, is survived by both his parents and three brothers. His father works as a tea vendor in the locality.

The boy's mother, Jyoti, said the assault was far more brutal than a routine fight among children. "They broke my son's neck. Which children don't fight? But they killed him. When we went to the police station, no one listened to us. Instead, they beat us and detained some of our relatives," she said. The boy's aunt, Rachna, also alleged police apathy.

## Namo Bharat ridership jumps 70% on first weekday

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Ridership on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Namo Bharat corridor recorded a nearly 70 per cent jump over average daily figures, crossing the one-lakh mark on the first full weekday of operations after the launch of the remaining sections of India's first Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS).

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), in a statement, said the Begumpal station in Meerut emerged as the busiest on the corridor, followed by Anand Vihar and Ghaziabad. It said that the corridor had been recording an average daily ridership of around 60,000 so far, making Monday's footfall the highest-ever single-day figure since operations began.



The underground Begumpal station, located in Meerut's central market and business district, saw sustained commuter movement through the day as it offers both Namo Bharat and Meerut Metro services, the NCRTC stated and added that its central location and interchange facilities helped it quickly establish itself as a

key mobility hub for the city. According to the statement, the Ghaziabad station witnessed heavy commuter movement due to its strategic position on the corridor and its foot overbridge link with Shaheed Sthal station on the Delhi Metro's Red Line.

Newly opened stations such as Sarai Kale Khan, Shatabdi Nagar and

Modipuram recorded encouraging ridership from the first weekday itself, reflecting quick adoption by surrounding areas, it stated, and added that New Ashok Nagar, which was operational earlier, continued to maintain steady passenger flow.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the entire 82-km Delhi-Meerut Namo Bharat corridor, including the remaining sections of the RRTS — the 5-km stretch between Sarai Kale Khan and New Ashok Nagar in Delhi and the 21-km section between Meerut South and Modipuram in Uttar Pradesh.

Designed for a top speed of 180 kmph, the Namo Bharat system is aimed at providing faster regional connectivity between Delhi and major urban centres such as Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Modinagar and Meerut.

## LG approves 272 posts for Revenue Department

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved 272 additional posts in the Revenue Department of the Delhi Government, in view of the administrative reorganisation leading to a rise in the number of districts and subdivisions.

The newly sanctioned posts include two district magistrates (DMs), two ADMs, eight SDMs, six sub-registrars, 16 tehsildars/SOs, 22 naib tehsildars, 42 each of senior assistants and junior assistants and 52 MTS and several posts in the accounts, planning, DSS and steno cadres. Before the creation of 2 new districts, there were 1553 sanctioned posts in 11 districts of the Revenue Department. After the cre-



ation of 272 posts, the total sanctioned posts in 13 districts have gone up to 1825.

In December last year, the Delhi government reorganised districts, raising their numbers from 11 to 13. The number of subdivisions also increased from 22 earlier to 39. Delhi Government vide cabinet decision no. 3280 dated 11.12.2025, had

approved the reorganisation of revenue districts in GNCTD from 11 to 13 districts, along with a corresponding increase in subdivisions (from 33 to 39) and the establishment of 39 sub-registrar offices, making revenue districts co-terminus with MCD zones/NDMC/Cantonment Board. The reorganisation

has been finalised and mapped in accordance with the Cabinet approval and is aligned with the direction of the Deregulation Cell, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), as well as the Government of India's Ease of Living mandate.

These responsibilities include expanded judicial and administrative workloads under BNSS, 2023, intensified field-level operations for land record management, disaster management work, election duties, public welfare schemes, issuance of certificates; and year-round festival management, they said.

Saxena's nod for these additional posts in the Revenue Department will strengthen field-level administration, reduce staff shortages, and improve service delivery to citizens.

## LG Saxena slams Youth Congress AI summit protest as 'malicious'

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday told a Congress delegation that the "shirtless" demonstration by its youth wing at the AI Summit was "ill-conceived and malicious" when it met him to complain about the arrest of Indian Youth Congress (IYC) leaders in connection with the incident.

A delegation of the Congress Party, comprising party treasurer Ajay Maken, Delhi Congress President Devendra Yadav and other leaders, called on the LG and presented a memorandum to him on the recent police action against Youth Congress leaders.

The LG office in a post on



X said, "Lt Governor, while receiving the memorandum, told the delegation categorically that, without prejudice to the legal merits of the case, the act of the Youth Congress volunteers was prima facie aimed at derogating the nation, on an occasion where an extremely important and topical international event was underway."

The LG also underlined

that the AI Summit was not being hosted by any individual or a political party, but by India as a nation. The "undignified protest" at the venue of the summit was "ill-conceived, malicious" and amounted to jeopardising our national image on the international fora, said the post.

The representation by Congress leaders claimed that the IYC demonstration was "symbolic and political" in nature and did not involve violence, damage to property or threat to public safety. The Congress leaders urged that enforcement action in matters involving political dissent should be guided by proportionality and constitutional protection of free expression, said a Delhi Congress statement.

## Father arrested for using minor sons to rob tourists

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

A man allegedly engaged his two sons, 13 and 15 years of age, to pickpocket foreign tourists in the crowded Jama Masjid market, keeping the stolen goods in his possession to avoid suspicion, an official said on Tuesday.

According to police, the accused would position his children in crowded marketplaces to identify and discreetly remove cash and valuables from bags of foreign tourists and shoppers.

The stolen property would then be handed over to the father, who retained possession to protect the minors while distancing himself from the thefts, police said.

"The case came to light after an e-FIR was registered

at Jama Masjid police station on January 15 on the complaint of a citizen of Uzbekistan, who had come to India for his minor daughter's cancer surgery in Gurugram," the officer said.

According to the complainant, he was carrying USD 7,200 in a sling bag during a visit to the Jama Masjid market with his family for sightseeing and shopping. The cash was stolen amid the crowd.

"A team was formed which analysed CCTV footage from multiple cameras installed in and around the market. Two juveniles — siblings aged 13 and 15 years, residents of New Seelampur — were identified and apprehended," the officer said. During investigation, police found that they were acting at the behest of their father, who was later arrested.

## Six new air quality monitoring stations activated in Capital

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Six new Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) have been activated in the national Capital, taking the total number of such facilities in Delhi to 46, the highest in the country, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

The new posts have been set up at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indira Gandhi National Open University, ISRO Earth Station near Malcha Mahal in the Central Ridge area, Delhi Cantonment, Commonwealth Sports Complex and Netaji Subhash University of Technology (West Campus). The stations are stream-



ing real-time air quality data on the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) website, and their full integration with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) network is expected within a week, the statement said.

Delhi Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said the addition of the

new stations would strengthen data-driven action to tackle pollution.

"These new stations mark a leap in data-driven action against pollution. Live data already empowers targeted interventions, and CPCB integration will ensure seamless city-wide insights," he said.

According to the statement, data from the new stations will also be used to study the impact of pollution on flora and fauna and support environmental planning.

Sirsa said the Government has also launched the 'Vayu Rakshak' drive with 100 enforcement personnel and plans to install 14 more monitoring stations to strengthen year-round vigilance against pollution.

## Delhi zoo to get tiger, send white tigress to Patna to strengthen breeding

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The National Zoological Park (NZP) will receive a tiger from Patna Zoo and will send a white tigress along with several other species under an animal exchange scheme aimed at promoting breeding.

According to Delhi Zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar (IFS), the exchange has been designed to address both

breeding requirements and the need to diversify species within the zoo.

He said the zoo will receive four gharials, four grey wolves - two males and two females - and two barn owls from Patna Zoo in March. In return, the zoo will send a group of animals that includes Sangai deer (also known as Manipur deer), a tigress, painted storks, white pelicans, and black bucks.



Explaining the rationale behind the exchange, Kumar said the zoo currently has only one female wolf, which limits the scope for a sustainable breeding programme.

"The main objective of this exchange is to develop a healthy breeding environment and also to add more species to our collection," he said.

Kumar said that NZP currently houses 13 tigers and cubs. Of these, seven are

Royal Bengal tigers, and six are white tigers.

He said the number of female tigers is higher, while most of the males are old, as at present, there are only four male tigers.

On the aquatic side, Kumar said the zoo will receive four gharials, which will be added to its existing group of three. "We will get four gharials to our existing fleet of three to increase our gharial numbers for visitors," he added.

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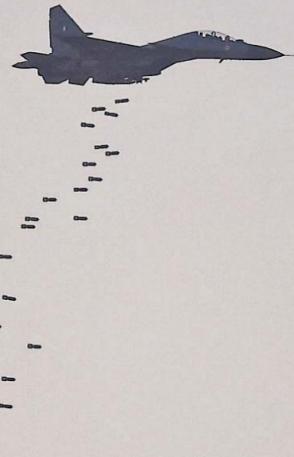
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## IN FOCUS



Indian Air Force's Sukhoi Su-30MKI during the Exercise Vayushakti-26 at Chandan Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer PTI

# Yogi invites Singapore's Global Indian Schools to Lucknow

**GURDIP SINGH**  
Singapore

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has invited Singapore-based Global India International School (GIIS) group to set up its model in Lucknow.

The visiting Chief Minister appreciated GIIS as a school modelled on the values of Excellence and Skills upgradation.

He invited the school group to set up its model in Lucknow during his address to the Indian diaspora.

Yogi observed this and encouraged GIIS to continue on this path and bring this excellence to Lucknow.

"We are humbled by his invitation and will definitely take steps in the right direction," said Atul



CM Yogi Adityanath meets Mapletree Regional Chief Executive Officer, Logistics Development-Asia Pacific Ng Kiat and others in Singapore PTI

Temurnikar, chairman and co-founder of the Global Schools Group, the parent of GIIS and 64 international campuses across major Asian capital cities as well as the United Kingdom.

"GIIS has always been an innovative organisation where the student is the focal point. Our goal is to

bring the best education to every child, and an up-and-coming Uttar Pradesh can be our next step in that direction," Temurnikar on Tuesday.

The Group, which has 64 international campuses, hosted the Chief Minister Adityanath at its One World International School campus

for dialogue and interaction with the Indian diaspora on Monday evening.

Temurnikar noted that it was a meaningful dialogue on the State's expanding investment landscape after hosting 1,500 Indians based in Singapore at the interaction. "Uttar Pradesh has a promising future under his leadership, which is evident from the state's strong focus on infrastructure, industry, and governance.

It is presenting significant opportunities for global collaboration, he said.

"The success of this evening (interaction) reflects the growing interest within the Indian diaspora in contributing to India's economic growth and long-term development," added Temurnikar. (PTI)

# TERI's 25th WSDS to focus on sustainable transformations



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is set to commence the silver jubilee edition of its flagship event, the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS), on Wednesday at the Taj Palace.

Under the theme "Transformations: Vision, Voices, and Values for Sustainable Development," the three-day summit marks 25 years of the Global South's leading platform for climate action and sustainability. The inaugural address will be delivered by Bharat Jagdeo, Vice President of Guyana, alongside Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhopender Yadav.

The summit arrives at a critical juncture, following the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement, which highlighted the urgent need for a 43 per cent reduction in global emissions by 2030.

A major highlight of this edition is the HIM-CONNECT Expo, an initiative by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Scheduled for February 26-27, the expo aims to bridge the gap between laborato-

ry research and market-ready solutions for the fragile Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).

The exhibition will feature 24 innovators from premier institutions, including IITs and CSIR laboratories.

Showcased technologies will range from landslide prediction systems and solar heating to climate-resilient vernacular housing and waste upcycling, providing scalable pathways for mountain ecosystem adaptation.

To commemorate the milestone, TERI will launch an archival pocketbook titled "World Sustainable Development Summit (2001-2026): 25 Editions of Driving Ambition and Action on Sustainable Development."

The publication chronicles the summit's evolution from its inception to its current role in shaping global climate discourse.

High-level plenary sessions will cover clean energy acceleration, green manufacturing, and the "Climate Finance Imperative." The summit will conclude on February 27 with a valedictory session titled "Reflections, Resurgence, and Resolve," aimed at turning high-level dialogue into tangible delivery for a low-carbon future.

# BJP-CPI(M) understanding helped Kerala get new name: Mamata

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday alleged that an "understanding" between the BJP and the CPI(M) helped Kerala get a new name, while accusing the Centre of repeatedly ignoring her Government's proposals to name the State 'Bangla'.

Her remarks came after the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared the proposal to alter the name of Kerala to Keralam.

Congratulating the people of Kerala on the development, Banerjee said in a state-



ment that the names of several States have been changed once such proposals were endorsed by the respective State Governments.

"However, the same has not been the case with West Bengal," she said, alleging that the Centre is not approving the proposal since "they

are anti-Bengali". The Trinamool Congress supreme alleged that an understanding between the CPI(M), the ruling party of the southern state, and the BJP helped Kerala in getting the new name.

"Kerala has been renamed since there is an alliance growing between the BJP

and the CPI(M). The alliance is no longer unwritten after today. Why will Bengal always face deprivation? One day, you (BJP) will not be in power. We will get the name changed," she said in the statement. Banerjee said her Government had passed resolutions in the State Assembly twice seeking to rename West Bengal.

The Assembly in August 2016 passed a resolution to change the name to Bengal in English, Bangla in Bengali and Bangal in Hindi.

The Centre, however, turned down the proposal in 2017, objecting to having separate names in three languages.

# LG VK Saxena relieves IPS officer for posting at FSSAI

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinay Kumar Saxena has relieved Additional Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Devash Kumar Mahla from his posting to enable him to join as Director in the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on deputation, according to an order.

The order, dated February 23, said the LG has approved the relieving of Mahla from Delhi Police to take up the new assignment under

foreign service terms.

"The Lt Governor, Delhi is pleased to relieve Devash Kumar Mahla, IPS (AGMUT: 2012) from GNCTD/Delhi Police with immediate effect to enable the officer to join as Director, FSSAI on deputation basis under foreign service terms for an initial period of one year from the date of assumption of charge," the order stated.

The deputation is in compliance with a communication issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on January 30, it added.

# Keralam will manifest Kerala's heritage with all its authenticity: Shah

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said that renaming Kerala to Keralam will manifest the State's heritage with all its authenticity and uphold its pride.

Hailing the decision taken by the Union Cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, Shah, in a message posted on X, congratulated the people of 'Keralam'. "Heartiest congratulations to the people of



Keralam. The Union Cabinet's decision under the leadership of Modiji to rename Kerala as 'Keralam' is a significant step towards fulfilling the long-standing demand of the people of the state. The name 'Keralam'

will manifest the State's heritage with all its authenticity and uphold its pride," he said.

The decision, which comes ahead of the assembly elections in the state, was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Modi at its first meeting held at Seva Teerth, the new PMO complex.

The Kerala assembly elections are due in April this year, with the tenure of the 140-member current assembly ending on May 23.

# ECI, State poll panels resolve to synergise laws on local body, LS polls

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
New Delhi

The Election Commission of India (ECI) and the various state poll panels on Tuesday resolved to work together to synergise laws relating to local body polls with those relating to Parliament and State legislature elections.

A declaration adopted at a conference of the Election Commission and State poll panels here stated that "in national and constitutional interest, EC suggested to work out mutually acceptable mechanisms and legally

viable frameworks to synergise with all SECs across the country for all possible election processes, including the sharing of ECINET, EVMs, and electoral rolls."

It stated that the EC and State Election Commissions will work together to "synergise" the laws relating to the elections to panchayats and municipal bodies with those relating to the elections to Parliament and State legislatures.

Lok Sabha and state assembly polls — termed direct elections where voters elect their representatives — are



Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar PTI

governed by the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and 1951 and relevant rules. The participants

also agreed that the preparation of pure electoral rolls is the bedrock of democracy and that the transparent

conduct of elections in an efficient manner strengthens democracy. Addressing the gathering, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said that in national interest and constitutional synergies, the EC and state election commissions (SECs) should work together, keeping the elector in mind.

While the EC is mandated to hold elections to the posts of the President of India, the Vice President, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state legislative assemblies and state legislative councils, SECs hold panchayat and municipal polls.

## FROM PAGE - 1

# Cabinet approves renaming of Kerala...

According to Article 3, Parliament may by law alter the name of any State. Further proviso to Article 3 States that no Bill for the purpose shall be introduced in either House of Parliament except on the recommendation of the president and unless where the proposal contained in the Bill affects the area, boundaries or name of any of the States, the Bill has been referred by the president to the legislature of that state for expressing its views thereon within such period as may be specified in the reference or within such further period as the president may allow and the period so specified or allowed has expired.

The matter regarding the alteration of the name Kerala as Keralam was considered in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India and with the approval of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the draft note for the Cabinet for the alteration of name of Kerala as Keralam was circulated to the Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice for their comments. The Department of Legal Affairs and Legislative Department, Ministry of Law and Justice, have concurred with the proposal for the alteration of the name of Kerala to 'Keralam'.

# SC allows deployment of judicial officers...

The bench said, "The judicial officers involved in the exercise will do the verification of claims and objections with respect to documents referred to in (a) notification dated October 24, 2025, declaring the commencement of SIR in WB read with the June 24, 2025, notification, the order passed by this Court on September 8, 2025 whereby Aadhaar card was allowed to be accepted and order passed by this court on January 19, 2026 whereby Maadhyamik (Class X) admit card and Maadhyamik pass certificate was also allowed to be submitted."

"We direct that all such documents, whether submitted electronically or physically, on or before the cut-off date of February 14, 2026, will be considered," the bench said, adding that it will be the responsibility of the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) to satisfy the judicial officers of the documents referred.

The top court also allowed the ECI to publish the final electoral roll on February 28, and clarified that the poll panel can issue supplementary lists as the verification process proceeds.

It exercised plenary powers under Article 142 to enlist voters in the supplementary electoral rolls to be part of the February 28 final list published by the poll panel.

During the hearing, advocate Ashwini Upadhyay told the bench that the use of fake Aadhaar cards was rampant and most cases of fake Aadhaar cards across the country were from Bengal. Upadhyay submitted, "It is practically seen throughout the country, most of Aadhaar is made in border districts. If the court can add one line to control the usage of fake documents... whenever there are Bangladeshis or Rohingyas detained by the police, the Aadhaar is from Bengal. This is the practical situation."

CJI Kant told him, "The matter may require a deeper probe. But this is not the timing. Let us be misunderstood by anyone, let the right atmosphere and environment come."

Justice Bagchi told the council, "You make a representation to the Union of India to amend the Representation of the People Act... This cannot be a discussion in our forum always.

# India sees three aviation emergencies in 24 hours

Officials described the episode as a "short landing incident" and said further investigations are underway to ascertain the technical or operational factors involved.

**Seven Killed In Air Ambulance Crash In Jharkhand**  
Meanwhile, on Monday evening, a medical evacuation flight operated by Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd crashed in Jharkhand's Chatra district, killing all seven people on board.

The aircraft had taken off from Ranchi at 7:11 pm en route to Delhi. According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the crew established contact with Kolkata Air Traffic Control and later sought a route deviation due to adverse weather conditions. Around 7:34 pm, communication and radar contact were lost.

Preliminary findings suggest a thunderstorm may have contributed to the crash. Rescue teams recovered all seven occupants from the wreckage near Simariya, with no survivors.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has launched a detailed probe to ascertain the exact cause of the crash.

**A Mixed 24 Hours For Aviation Safety**  
The back-to-back emergencies have drawn attention to aviation safety protocols, particularly in challenging weather conditions and remote terrains. While the Jharkhand air ambulance crash underscores the risks associated with

medical evacuation flights during adverse weather, the swift and precautionary responses in the Delhi and Andaman incidents helped avert further tragedy. Investigations are ongoing in all three cases, with regulatory authorities expected to examine weather data, aircraft maintenance records, and cockpit communication to piece together the sequence of events.

For now, the nation mourns seven lives lost, even as two potential disasters were narrowly avoided.

# AI protest: IYC chief sent to 4-day custody

The court also "expressly" recorded Chib's right to meet his counsel during interrogation according to Section 38 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), but clarified that such a meeting could not hamper the legitimate needs of investigation. The provision says, "When any person is arrested and interrogated by the police, he shall be entitled to meet an advocate of his choice during interrogation, though not throughout interrogation."

The magistrate said that the advocate's presence would be permitted at such intervals as reasonably fixed by the IO, but not throughout the interrogation and not in a manner that directly interfered with questioning.

The arrest memo alleged that Chib was the "main conspirator and mastermind of the incident of unlawful assembly" during the summit, where "anti-national slogans were raised" by the co-accused, who also tried to "incite a riot-like situation". "You (Chib), in conspiracy with Shree Krishna Hari, Kundan Yadav, Narsimha Yadav, Ajay Kumar Yadav, etc, obstructed and assaulted the police officials on their duty. Further, during interrogation, you have not cooperated and also not disclosed the name of the co-accused persons who have fled from the spot."

"Nor have you disclosed the source of printing of T-shirts which other co-accused conspirators have used during the protest. The investigation of the case is yet pending, and for the proper investigation of the case, you are being arrested in the case," said the memo.

Youth Congress has defended the protest, saying it was peaceful and aimed at drawing attention to a "compromised" prime minister. "Our message was clear, our slogan was clear, that the prime minister is compromised. In the past few days, in various places in the country, we organised protests, but there was a lathi-charge on our workers," said Youth Congress's national general secretary Sheh Narayan Ojha.

# After 10-year delay, Najafgarh drain...

Sharing details of the project after the EFC meeting, the Chief Minister said that a 5.94 km two-lane road will be constructed on the left bank from Jhatikra Bridge to Chhawla Bridge. From Chhawla to Basaidarapur, roads will be developed along both sides of the drain over a length of 27.415 km, totalling 54.83 km across both banks. The total developed length of the corridor will be 60.77 km.

"The Government aims to grant the necessary administrative approvals by March 2026, complete the tendering process by April 2026, and commence construction by May 2026. The project is targeted for completion by November 2027," she said. Irrigation and Flood Control Minister Pravesh Sahib Singh Verma and senior officials of PWD, Flood and Irrigation, Finance and Planning Department were also present at the committee meeting held at the Delhi Secretariat. The corridor will provide interconnectivity with major roads, including Outer Ring Road, Inner Ring Road, Shivaji Marg, Pankha Road, UER-II (connecting to NH-9 Rohtak Road), Najafgarh Road and other key routes. At Basaidarapur, it will link with the Inner Ring Road; at Keshopur with the Outer Ring Road; at Vikaspuri with Pankha Road; at Kakrola with Najafgarh Road; and at Dhulsiras with UER-II, enabling direct access to the airport and the Dwarka Expressway.

The project will connect rural and urban areas from Dhansa to Basaidarapur, benefiting Uttam Nagar, Vikaspuri, Najafgarh, Bijwasan, Chhawla, Goyla Dairy, Dwarka, Baprola, Nilothi, Paschim Vihar, Rajouri Garden and IGI Airport, among others. It will also strengthen connectivity to Gurugram Sectors 104 and 110, further enhancing links between Delhi and Haryana. Villages connected to the Dwarka Expressway, including Galibpur, Rawta Mor, Daurala, Jhuljhuli, Sarangpur, Dhansa, Ghummanhera, Shikarpur, Jhatikra, Kanganheri and Chhawla, will benefit from improved access. The project will also help safeguard Government land along the drain corridor. The project has already received approval from the concerned technical committee and the Flood Control Board. Following the committee's clearance, further formalities will now be completed. Under the project, a paved road approximately 61 km long and 7 metres wide will be constructed along the Najafgarh drain. Separate tracks will be developed for walking, jogging and cycling. A new bridge will be constructed near the Dwarka Metro Depot to facil-

itate smoother movement. "The project marks a historic step towards a sustainable, green and well-planned transport system in Delhi, enhancing ease of traffic movement, strengthening environmental protection and promoting integrated urban-rural development," she added.

# Seva Teerth begins its journey...

It said that the concept of Seva Teerth is formed from the confluence of both these ideals. "For us, constitutional values are the expression of that moral commitment which connects governance with the dignity, equality, and justice of every citizen. The work culture of 'Seva Teerth' will be guided by this very spirit, where every policy will be in accordance with the fundamental ethos of the Constitution and every decision will be accountable to the aspirations of the people," the resolution read.

The 'Seva Teerth' is the answer to the need for governance infrastructure that promotes dynamism instead of stagnation, dedication instead of indifference, and solutions instead of doubt, the cabinet resolved.

The decisions taken in recent years under Modi's leadership have brought new clarity to the purpose of governance and strengthened public trust in governance, the resolution read. It said that in the past decade, by lifting more than 25 crores of citizens out of poverty, the country has achieved what was once considered impossible.

Through Ayushman Bharat, the nation achieved the distinction of connecting crores of people to health security, and the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana ensured food security for nearly 80 crores of citizens, bringing an end to the scourge of hunger, it said.

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the construction of more than 12 crores toilets provided crores of families and women with a life of dignity. The construction of more than 40 million houses granted shelter to crores of families. In rural areas, through the Jal Jeevan Mission, access to drinking water has been provided to approximately 16 crores of citizens, the resolution read.

The Union Cabinet views these transformations as a continuous journey of reforms. With the mantra of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance,' reforms such as GST, DBT, and Digital India have made governance more transparent, more efficient, and more citizen-centric, it read.

The Cabinet said it takes a firm resolve that with the new energy of 'Seva Teerth' and the rapid pace of the 'Reform Express'.

## Students must leave Iran before panic strikes: Farooq



Ruling National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday asked students from Jammu and Kashmir studying in Iran to leave that country immediately, as it would be difficult to evacuate them after the airspace closure.

## Minister presents ₹1.72 lakh crore Chhattisgarh Budget

Chhattisgarh Finance Minister OP Choudhary on Tuesday presented the annual Budget of ₹1.72 lakh crore for the financial year 2026-27 in the State Assembly, saying it is focused on inclusive growth, accelerating infrastructure and boosting investment. The Government will launch the Rani Durgavati Scheme under which girls will receive ₹1.5 lakh on attaining 18 years of age, he said.



## Money lost in IDFC Bank fraud recovered: CM Saini



Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini informed the State Assembly that the Government had recovered nearly ₹556 crore owed to it in the IDFC First Bank case. "Nearly ₹556 crore, including nearly ₹22 crore in interest, came back within 24 hours," Saini said.

## 'Detailed plans for Maharana Pratap tourism circuit ready'

Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister and Tourism Minister Diya Kumari informed the Assembly on Tuesday that a detailed project report (DPR) worth ₹275.68 crore has been prepared for implementing the Maharana Pratap Tourist Circuit Development Scheme and development works will commence after financial approval is received.



# India-US travel corridor reflects stronger ties: VP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Tuesday said the travel corridor between India and the United States reflects not only growing economic engagement but also deep people-to-people ties rooted in shared values, entrepreneurial spirit and a vibrant diaspora.

"Tourism is more than an industry. It is a bridge between the cultures and a global economic opportunity and a powerful instrument of soft diplomacy," he said. The VP noted that travellers today seek experiences, authenticity, sustainability, culture, heritage, wellness and meaningful connections.

"This presents an extraordinary opportunity for both our nations to collaborate in building resilient and responsible tourism ecosystems," he said.

During the event, USISPF launched its report titled "State of India's Tourism (2026)", which was formally

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Vice President CP Radhakrishnan gives an address during the Tourism Leadership Summit 2026, organised by US-India Partnership Forum in New Delhi

presented to the vice president by Union Minister for Tourism and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

The summit, organised at the USISPF office here,

brought together policymakers, industry leaders and key stakeholders to deliberate on the future of India's tourism sector. While on the other hand Vice President on

Tuesday said migration is a global phenomenon driven by economic aspirations and stressed the importance of preserving identity, culture and traditions of states

where the trend is prevalent. Interacting with members of a youth delegation from West Bengal's Darjeeling, who called on Radhakrishnan here, he highlighted the need for sustainable tourism and batted for environmentally responsible development to strengthen regional economies.

The members of the delegation posed questions on outmigration, sustainable tourism, disaster resilience, and sports infrastructure.

Referring to the vulnerability of hilly regions, the vice president underlined the importance of enhanced disaster preparedness, improved infrastructure and coordinated efforts, including initiatives such as the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

## PM Modi should scrap anti-farmer trade deal with US: Rahul Gandhi



Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi addresses the 'Kisan Mahachaupal' farmers' rally in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Bhopal

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should scrap the Indo-US trade deal, which he described as being against the interests of Indian farmers.

Addressing the 'Kisan Mahachaupal' farmers' rally in Bhopal, Gandhi likened the interim trade deal to an arrow piercing the hearts of Indian farmers.

"After the US Supreme Court ruling on the trade deal, I challenge PM Modi to scrap it...but he won't be able to do so," the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said.

"The Indo-US trade deal is against the interests of our farmers and was done by PM Modi under the pressure of US President Donald Trump because of Epstein files and to save industrialist Adani," he alleged.

The Congress leader also accused PM Modi of agreeing

to sign the Indo-US trade deal without taking Union ministers Rajnath Singh (Defence), Shivraj Singh Chouhan (Agriculture) and Nitin Gadkari (Road Transport and Highways) into confidence.

"This is not a deal, but an arrow struck in the hearts of the country's farmers," Gandhi said.

He also alleged that through the trade deal, the PM has compromised the interests of India's agriculture, data, textile and import sectors.

Gandhi said he was not allowed to speak in the Lok Sabha after the President's address.

On former Army chief Gen MM Naravane's memoir, the Congress leader said the decision to go to war is political, and not a military one.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, who was also present at the event, said the PM was coward, and added that the Indo-US trade deal shows the Government's surrender.

## CPI welcomes renaming of Kerala, calls it intrinsic to the Malayalam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The Communist Party of India (CPI) on Tuesday congratulated the "people of Kerala" as the Union Cabinet accepted the proposal to officially rename the State of Kerala.

In a statement, the CPI said the decision represented the "culmination of a longstanding and democratic demand of the people of Kerala, rooted in the state's linguistic heritage and collective self-respect."

"The name Keralam is intrinsic to the Malayalam language and reflects the civilisational continuity and cultural identity of the

within the state, cutting across sections and reflecting the popular will of the people," it said.

"The Party places on record the consistent and principled efforts of the Left Democratic Front (LDF), which spearheaded this demand both within the state and at the national level.

The LDF Government's initiative in formally moving the Assembly resolution and pursuing the matter with the Union Government demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding Kerala's linguistic and cultural identity within the constitutional framework," the statement read.

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The LDF Government's initiative in formally moving the Assembly resolution and pursuing the matter with the Union Government demonstrates its commitment to safeguarding Kerala's linguistic and cultural identity within the constitutional framework," the statement read.

## Tharoor's witty take on Keralam replacing Kerala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor had a witty take on Kerala's name change on Tuesday, asking what happens now to the terms "Keralite" and "Keralan" for the "denizens" of the new "Keralam".

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the proposal for altering the name of Kerala to Keralam.

After approval of the Union Cabinet, the president of India will refer a Bill, namely the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 to the State Legislative Assembly of Kerala for expressing its views under the proviso to Article 3 of the Constitution of India.

After receipt of the views of the State Legislative Assembly of Kerala, the Government of India will take further action and the recommendation of the president will be obtained for the introduction of the



Congress MP Shashi Tharoor addresses the gathering during the 9th International Spice Conference (ISC 2026) in Kochi, Tuesday

Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 for alteration of Kerala as Keralam in Parliament.

Ahead of the Cabinet decision announcement, Tharoor said, "All to the good, no doubt, but a small linguistic question for the Anglophones among us: what happens now to the terms 'Keralite' and 'Keralan' for the denizens of the new 'Keralam'?"

## Rahul mastermind of AI summit incident: BJP



BJP's national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday alleged that Rahul Gandhi was the "mastermind" of the Congress youth wing's "naked protest" at the AI Impact Summit last week and asserted that the long arm of the law will soon reach the "rogue" person who organised the "anarchic incident" to defame India from behind the scenes. This came after a Delhi court sent Indian Youth Congress (IYC) president Uday Bhanu Chib to a four-day police custody in connection with the "shirtless protest" at the AI Impact Summit venue.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters, the party's national spokesperson, Gaurav Bhatia, alleged that the Congress youth wing had staged the protest at the summit at the behest of Gandhi.

"Rahul Gandhi is the mastermind, rather a super mastermind, of such an anarchic incident. The naked protest held by Congress youth wing president and others

at the behest of Rahul Gandhi tarnished the image of India," he said.

"There is not much difference between Rahul Gandhi and those who are 'lampat, goonday and mawaali (rogue, hooligans, ruffians)", the BJP leader added.

Bhatia said Gandhi might have been thinking that he is above the law but the "long arm of the law will soon reach the person who tried to defame the country, no matter who he is."

"In police custody, Uday will tell the truth and take the name. We will also be waiting to know where the link is established. It will be made public and the entire country will come to know," he said.

Last Friday, a group of Congress youth wing workers held a dramatic shirtless protest at an exhibition hall during the AI Impact Summit at the Bharat Mandapam, walking around holding T-shirts with slogans against the Government and the India-US trade deal printed on them, before being whisked away by security personnel present at the venue.

## Better late than never: SriLankan Airlines puts safety first amid expansion

ASHOKE RAJ  
New Delhi

At a time when India and the wider world have witnessed a spike in air crashes and aviation-related incidents, SriLankan Airlines is reinforcing a clear message: safety comes before schedules. Embracing what it calls a "better late than never" approach, the national carrier of Sri Lanka says operational delays are a small price to pay for uncompromised passenger safety.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* on the sidelines of the airline's Gujarat route announcement in New Delhi, Airlines Commercial Head Dimuthu Tennakoon emphasised that safety remains non-negotiable. "We do not compromise on safety concerns. We understand that delays can be inconvenient, but safety always

comes first," he said. As 2026 unfolds, SriLankan Airlines is preparing to scale up its weekly services across India. The carrier currently operates in nine Indian cities — Chennai, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli.

Soon, Ahmedabad will join as the airline's tenth Indian destination, marking a significant step in strengthening connectivity between the two neighbours.

With the addition of Ahmedabad, the airline will serve six of India's eight major metropolitan hubs. The move is expected to diversify its India portfolio, improve route economics through steady year-round demand, and capitalise on deep-rooted cultural and commercial ties. The airline projects that these



SriLankan Airlines Commercial Head Dimuthu Tennakoon

initiatives could boost Indian passenger traffic across its network by up to 12 percent this year.

India remains SriLankan Airlines' single largest market, contributing nearly 30 percent of total passenger traffic and 23 percent of overall tourist arrivals to the island nation. The airline plans targeted strategic initiatives to further enhance connectivity and reinforce bilateral ties. Colombo continues to function

as a critical transit hub, with nearly 30 percent of Indian travellers connecting onward via Colombo. From there, passengers gain seamless access to destinations across the Middle East, Maldives, Far East, Europe and Australia through the airline's own services and codeshare partnerships.

The airline is positioning itself as a preferred choice for Indian travellers flying for leisure, business, trade, family visits and destination events, including weddings.

SriLankan Airlines works closely with the Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau and the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority to align aviation growth with national tourism ambitions. Their joint promotional efforts highlight Sri Lanka's appeal to Indian travellers — from beaches and wildlife to wellness

retreats, cuisine, festivals and spiritual heritage. A recent highlight is the airline's award-winning Ramayana Trail campaign, inspired by the ancient Indian epic Ramayana. The initiative invites travellers to explore legendary sites across Sri Lanka associated with the epic's narrative, tapping into shared mythology and emotional connect between the two nations.

While aggressive route expansion and passenger growth remain key objectives for 2026, SriLankan Airlines maintains that operational discipline and safety oversight will anchor its strategy.

In an era of heightened scrutiny on aviation safety, the airline's "better late than never" philosophy signals a deliberate choice — that in the skies, caution outweighs convenience.

## Govt set to launch HPV vaccination against cancer for girls aged 14

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

In a major step towards eliminating preventable cancers among women, the Union Government will soon launch a nationwide human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme targeting girls aged 14 years, official sources said on Tuesday.

According to sources, the programme will use a single-shot Gardasil, a quadrivalent HPV vaccine, that provides protection against HPV types 16 and 18, which cause cervical cancer, as well as types 6 and 11. The drive would be a special vaccination campaign and not under the Government's Universal Immunisation Programme. It is in line with the World Health Organisation recom-

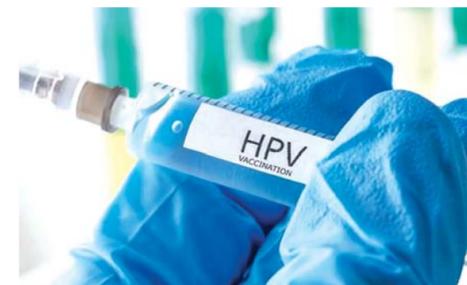
mendations, which identify HPV vaccination as a central pillar of the Global Strategy to Eliminate Cervical Cancer.

"Strong global and Indian scientific evidence confirms that a single dose provides robust and durable protection when administered to girls in the recommended age group," an official source said. The nationwide programme will target girls aged 14 years, an age at which the HPV vaccine offers maximum preventive benefit, well before potential exposure to the virus.

In the open market, quadrivalent Gardasil-4 is a two-dose vaccine — each costing ₹3,927 — for girls below 15 years. For those above 15 years, three doses of the vaccine are required. Gardasil-4 vaccine is manu-

factured by MSD India.

"Vaccination under the national programme will be voluntary and free of cost, ensuring equitable access across socio-economic groups. By prioritising prevention at the right age, the programme is expected to provide lifelong protection and significantly reduce the



future burden of cervical cancer in the country," the source said. The vaccine has an excellent safety record, supported by more than 500 million doses administered globally since its introduction in 2006. Widespread vaccination has led to substantial reductions in HPV infection, precancerous lesions, and

cervical cancer incidence in several countries.

Once the vaccination programme is launched, India will join 160 countries that have introduced HPV vaccination in their national immunisation schedules. According to the source, over 90 countries are implementing single-dose HPV vaccination schedules, the source said.

HPV vaccines are among the most extensively studied vaccines worldwide, with evidence demonstrating 93 to 100 per cent effectiveness in preventing cervical cancer caused by vaccine-covered HPV types. "The upcoming nationwide rollout (of the vaccination programme) is a significant milestone towards achieving the vision of 'Swastha Nari', ensuring that prevention, protection,

and equity form the foundation of women's healthcare in the country," an official source said.

According to data, cervical cancer remains the second most common cancer among women in India, with nearly 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths reported annually. Scientific evidence establishes that almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV), particularly HPV types 16 and 18, which together account for more than 80 per cent of cervical cancer cases in India.

Despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening, cervical cancer continues to impose a heavy burden on women and families.

## States Focus

# Bomb threats across courts in Bengal disrupt work



### SHAH ON THREE DAY BIHAR VISIT FROM WEDNESDAY

Union Home Minister Amit Shah is scheduled to visit Bihar on Wednesday for a three-day trip of the Seemanchal region, which is situated in the State's northeast, shares borders with West Bengal and Nepal, and has a sizeable minority population, a top official said on Tuesday.

According to Vinay Kumar, the State police chief, officials of various departments will be briefed by the home minister, during the visit, on steps needed for effective border management.



### VP VISIT: ELABORATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN KASHMIR

Security has been beefed up across Kashmir ahead of Vice President C P Radhakrishnan's maiden visit to the Valley on February 26, officials said on Tuesday.

The vice president is scheduled to attend the 21st convocation of the University of Kashmir.

Authorities have put in place a comprehensive, multi-layered security grid, particularly around the university campus in the Hazratbal area of the city and other vital installations, officials said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Kolkata

Judicial work was disrupted on Tuesday, as several courts in West Bengal received bomb threats, throwing security personnel into a tizzy and prompting search operations and evacuation in court premises, officials said.

The city sessions court, CJM (Bankshall) court and sub-divisional courts at Asansol and Durgapur in Paschim Bardhaman district received bomb threats over email in the morning, a senior police officer said.

However, no explosive material was found during the search operations in

courts, he said. The city sessions court and the CJM (Bankshall) court were vacated, and Kolkata Police bomb squad personnel accompanied by sniffer dogs checked the entire premises, the officer said.

Similar operations were carried out at other courts in the State.

Asked if the simultaneous bomb threats in courts were linked to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being carried out by judicial officers, CEO Manoj Agarwal said it was up to the State police to conduct an inquiry and find out the culprits.

"I think the police are



People gather outside the Asansol District Court, after it received a bomb threat email in West Bengal on Tuesday

already probing the bomb threats, and whether it is linked to any ongoing election-related exercise in the courts," Agarwal said.

Chief Secretary Nandini Chakravorty said a probe has been initiated to ascertain the source of the threat mails, and whether one individual or a group is involved.

Chakravorty, who was accompanied by DGP Piyush Pandey and Kolkata Commissioner of Police Supratim Sarkar, told reporters in the State secretariat that the West Bengal Government is committed to provide security to judicial officers and others involved in the SIR process.

## Air ambulance crash: Deceased bodies handed over to family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Ranchi

The grief and pain of family members of seven people, who died in an air ambulance crash near Simaria in Jharkhand's Chatra district, were palpable on Tuesday afternoon, as the bodies were handed over to them after post-mortem examination.

The Beechcraft C90 air ambulance, operated by Redbird Airways Pvt Ltd, was en route to Delhi from Ranchi when it crashed on Monday evening in the Bariatu Panchayat area of Simaria, located deep inside a forest, killing all seven onboard, including two pilots.

The post-mortem was conducted at Sadar Hospital in Chatra.

"The bodies have been handed over to family



Wrecked remains of the Beechcraft C90 air ambulance after it crashed on Monday, resulting in the death of seven people, near Simaria in Jharkhand's Chatra district

members after the autopsy," a health department official told PTI. The aircraft took off from Ranchi airport at 7.11 pm and went missing around 7.30 pm. It lost contact with the air traffic control about 20 minutes after departure, another official said.

Ranchi airport director Vinod Kumar said inclement

weather could be a possible reason behind the crash, though the exact cause would be ascertained after a detailed probe. The deceased have been identified as Captain Vikas Bhagat, Captain Savrajdeep Singh, Sanjay Kumar, Dr Vikas Kumar Gupta, Sachin Kumar Mishra, Archana Devi and Dhuru Kumar.

As the bodies were handed over to family members, many turned inconsolable, expressing shock and disbelief.

Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar and Chief Minister Hemant Soren expressed grief over the incident, and said the State Government will provide all possible support to the affected families.

"Since receiving the news last night of the heart-wrenching incident involving the air ambulance... the district administration, along with the State Government, has been fully engaged in addressing it. In this tragic event, we have lost a total of seven of our own, including brave pilots, leaving me deeply anguished and stunned," Soren said in a post on X.

## Top Maoist leader Devuji surrenders in Telangana

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Hyderabad

Top Maoist commander and the key "strategist" of the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit, Thippiri Tirupati, also known as Devuji, surrendered before the Telangana police on Tuesday, after spending over four decades of underground life, police said.

Devuji, a key Central Committee member of the proscribed organisation and the politburo member of the

"Due to health reasons, I have decided to give up my underground life and join the mainstream, not for my personal life. I have decided to work on people's problems within the legal framework. That means I will continue my political life. I will take the decades of the philosophy which I believed in, as guidance to work henceforth," he said.

Devuji is a native of Korutla town, Jagtial district. His father Venkata Narsaiah



was a farmer. He has an elder sister Leela and two younger brothers (Gangadhar, Venkat). Devuji, married Arike Jaini @ Srujana in January 1991. She was a party member in Perimeli Dalam when she married Devuji. She was elevated to the rank of Regional Committee Member (RCM) and died in 2020 in an "exchange of fire" in Kasansur forest area of Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra.

After completing his early education in private and government schools, he moved to Korutla for his intermediate studies. There, he was drawn into the fold of radical activism and joined the Radical Students' Union (RSU).

Maoist party, along with another central committee member Malla Raji Reddy, formally surrendered in the presence of State DGP B Shivadhar Reddy.

Besides Devuji and Raji Reddy, two other ultras — Bade Chokka Rao @ Jagan and Nune Narasimha Reddy @ Ganganna also laid down their arms, Reddy said.

The DGP said Devuji was supposed to be elected as Secretary of the CPI (Maoist) in a Central Committee meeting of the party's politburo, which never took place.

Replying to the query, Devuji said he surrendered due to health issues and vowed to continue his political career within "legal framework".

## Nitish loses cool inside Assembly over Opposition's guns and bullets jibe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Patna

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar lost his composure inside the state assembly on Tuesday when opposition members created a ruckus alleging that his government was ruling the state with the help of "guns and bullets".

The 76-year-old leader, who stood up to admonish the unruly members, also had a slip of tongue, as he underscored the brute majority enjoyed by the NDA, saying "our strength is two thousand and two".

The BJP-led coalition, which includes Kumar's JD(U) and a few smaller parties, had swept the Bihar assembly polls last year, bagging 202 seats of the 243-strong House.

Trouble began soon after the House assembled at 11 am, with RJD MLA Kumar Sarvajet registering a protest against the police's baton charge on village 'chowkidars' (watchmen) here a day ago when they were staging a demonstration to press the demand for a hike in stipends.

"The 'chowkidars' who were demanding a hike in their pay are very much employees of the Home department. Yet, they were treated in a deplorable fashion yesterday," alleged Sarvajet.

Several other MLAs of the opposition party also raised a slogan: "bandook goli ki sarkar nahin chalegi" (will not allow a rule by brute force, with the help of guns and bullets).

This provoked Kumar, the



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar arrives at the Assembly during the Budget session in Patna on Tuesday

longest serving CM of the state, who heads the JD(U) and has had a couple of short-lived alliances with the RJD in the past.

He shouted: "Do not talk rubbish. This government will run without any hiccups. Just look at us. We are two thousand and two. And just look at how many of you have been left now."

Kumar was apparently referring to the RJD's drubbing in the last assembly polls when it returned with a tally of 25, one of its worst ever performances.

When RJD leader Bhai Virendra reminded the JD(U) supremo of their two short-lived alliances in the last one decade, Kumar shot back: "Yes, and you people always indulged in mischief, a reason why I pulled out never to return".

The CM also reminded the opposition party, which was unseated from power by the NDA helmed by him in 2005, that "You did nothing worthwhile during the period you were in power... Law and order had been so abysmal that people feared getting out of their homes after 5 pm. So you better not talk nonsense."

Amid the heated exchange, some of the opposition MLAs trooped into the well, briefly plunging the House into turmoil.

The agitated members got pacified after Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary rose to interject and said, "We will call representatives of various associations of chowkidars for talks. Their demands will be looked into, and appropriate action will be taken."

## TMC, BJP hail SC order on SIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Kolkata

The Trinamool Congress and BJP both hailed the Supreme Court's Tuesday order allowing the Calcutta High Court Chief Justice to deploy judicial officers from neighbouring Jharkhand and Odisha to deal with claims and objections in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal.

The TMC blamed the Election Commission's "arrogant attitude" for such a situation, while the BJP accused TMC of deliberately plotting to stall SIR by delaying the process from the outset.



Describing the SC order as another resounding victory for "Bengal's Maa-Mati-Manush" in the Supreme Court, the TMC said in a post on X handle, "the EC's arrogant stranglehold on Bengal's SIR process has been decisively snapped."

The TMC claimed Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee "demanded and fought for

tooth and nail" to safeguard people's rights to cast vote, and "the SC has now taken the reins, stripping the ECI of its unchecked discretion."

The TMC said, "The apex court has authorised the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court to deputise additional officers of the rank of Civil Judges with at least three years' experience."

## 21 custodial deaths recorded in Rajasthan in past two years: Govt tells Assembly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Jaipur

The Rajasthan Government on Tuesday informed the assembly that 21 cases of deaths in police custody were reported in the State between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2025.

In a written reply to a question by MLA Shanti Dhariwal, the Government said it recorded 21 custodial deaths during the two-year period. The details of the action taken in the cases were also given.

Responding to a related query on action taken in such cases, the Government said in all instances of



deaths in police custody, cases were registered and both judicial and administrative inquiries were ordered.

According to the data, eight custodial deaths were recorded in 2024, whereas 13 such deaths occurred in the year 2025. The

Government informed the House that a probe was pending in nine cases, all occurring in 2025.

The Government said the judicial inquiry ordered in all cases where the investigation was complete, found no negligence by police staff except in one case, where a departmental inquiry was recommended. All deaths occurred either due to natural causes or by suicide.

Custodial deaths remain a sensitive issue, often drawing scrutiny from courts and human rights bodies, with mandatory judicial probes required under existing legal provisions.

## BKI backed module involved in firing incidents busted, 2 held



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Chandigarh

Punjab Police on Tuesday claimed to have busted a module, backed by proscribed outfit Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), with the arrest of two persons involved in firing incidents linked to extortion.

Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said two persons have been arrested, and a pistol along with magazines and eight cartridges, was seized from them. The accused have been identified as Sukhwinder Singh alias Sunny and Rawal, from SBS Nagar. Preliminary investigation reveals that the accused were acting on the directions of foreign-based handlers Gopi Nawashehria, Jassi Kulam, and Sushant Chopra, who are associated with the BKI, said Yadav in a post on X.

Investigation revealed that the accused allegedly fired gunshots twice at the residence of a travel agent in the Garhshankar area to extort money.

## Metroman Sreedharan announces revised details of proposed high-speed rail project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Malappuram (Kerala)

Technocrat E Sreedharan on Tuesday unveiled revised details of a proposed high-speed railway line project connecting the southern and northern parts of the State, weeks after opening an office here for the same.

The revised alignment of the 465-km corridor from Thiruvananthapuram to Kannur includes Pathanamthitta district, which was not part of the earlier route plan, he told a press conference at Ponnani.



Metro Man E Sreedharan

Stating that it is a Government of India project, E Sreedharan, fondly called the Metroman, said that prior government sanction is not required before starting work on such projects.

He also claimed that if the BJP comes to power in Kerala,

work on the proposed project would begin within three months and be completed within four and a half years.

"If the BJP wins power in Kerala, I can assure you on behalf of Rajeev Chandrasekhar (BJP State chief) that the work will start within three months. It will be completed within four and a half years. It will then be handed over directly to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)," the veteran added.

He said the proposed rail line will originate from Thiruvananthapuram Central and pass through an under-

ground tunnel to the airport before proceeding to Varkala, Kollam, Kottarakkara, Pathanamthitta, Thiruvalla, Kottayam, Vaikom, Ernakulam, Nedumbassery, Thrissur, Pattambi, Malappuram, Karipur, Kozhikode, Koyilandy, Vadakara, Thalassery, and Kannur.

The travel time from Thiruvananthapuram to Kannur is estimated at three hours and 20 minutes, he said. Of the total 465 km length, 440 km will be elevated, which is the most economical method of construction, he added.

## Centre sanctions 5,000 homes for displaced in Manipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has approved the construction of 5,000 houses for the rehabilitation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Manipur, officials said.

The approval was given by the minister following a meeting with Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh in the national Capital on Monday evening.

The State's two deputy chief ministers, Nemcha



Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan approved the construction of five thousand new houses for the rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons in Manipur under PMAY-G

Kipgen and Losii Dikho, accompanied Khemchand in the meeting.

According to the officials, the houses will be constructed under Pradhan Mantri

Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) in the Financial Year 2025-26 to rehabilitate the internally displaced persons affected by the law and order crisis.



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## Order Order

### Court issues NBW, attachment notices against Bhojpuri singer Antara



A court here on Tuesday issued a non-bailable warrant and an attachment notice against Bhojpuri singer Antara Singh alias Priyanka and an event management company owner in a case related to alleged casteist abuse and criminal intimidation, an official said.

Government counsel Shashank Shekhar Katayayan said the action was taken after the accused failed to appear before the court in connection with an incident reported around 22 months ago. According to the complaint lodged by Rajendra Kumar, a resident of Bahura village under Robertsganj Police Station area, he had paid ₹1.70 lakh in advance to book a 'Devi Jagran' programme on April 18, 2024, through Vikas Kumar, an event organiser. Katayayan said the complainant alleged that Singh came to Robertsganj on the scheduled date but left without performing. When Rajendra Kumar sought a refund and asked for reasons, the organiser allegedly used casteist slurs and threatened him.

The police registered a case on court directions against Antara Singh and Vikas Kumar and initiated proceedings, he said. Special Judge (SC/ST Act) Abid Shameem issued the non-bailable warrant and attachment notice against the accused and directed the Sonbhadra superintendent of police to take necessary action. The next hearing is scheduled for March 14, the counsel added.

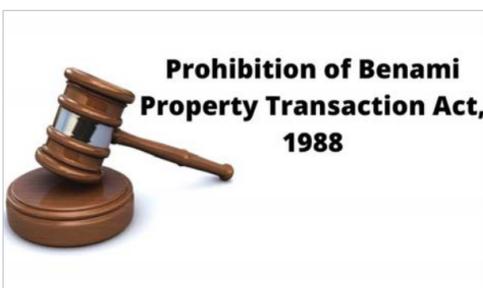


## SC upholds NCLAT order on attachment under Benami Act

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld an order of NCLAT that said that attachment under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988 (Benami Act) can be challenged only before authorities provided under that act. A bench of justices PS Narasimha and Atul Chandurkar dismissed an appeal challenging the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) judgement and imposed costs of ₹5 lakh each on the petitioners.

"We are of the opinion that the appellants could not have challenged the attachment order passed under the Benami Act before the statutory authorities under the



Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. We have no doubt in our mind that such invocation is not bonafide and is actually intended to circumvent and interdict the procedures contemplated under the Benami Act. "Further, filing of appeal before NCLAT, despite the finding that the appropriate forum is not NCLAT, but the

statutory authorities under the Benami Act, leaves no doubt that it is a complete abuse of the process.

The appellants have taken the precious time of the NCLAT, NCLAT and also of this Court when the position of law is amply clear and there was no doubt whatsoever about the availability of the statutory

remedies under the Benami Act," the bench said.

The top court directed that the amount shall be deposited with the Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association within four weeks from today.

The judgement came on appeals challenging order passed by the NCLAT, Chennai bench which declined to interfere with the decision of the National Company Law Tribunal.

The NCLAT had refused to adjudicate the liquidators' applications challenging the provisional attachment orders passed by the authorities under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988, holding that the NCLAT lacks jurisdiction to entertain such challenges.

## Encroachers on railway land in Haldwani have no right to be there: SC



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said encroachers of railway land in Haldwani in Uttarakhand do not have a vested legal right to be there, indicating that over 5,000 families will have to vacate the disputed land for the proposed expansion project. A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi noted that the dispute over the land has traversed different courts and observed that the stalemate over encroached railway land cannot be allowed to continue endlessly.

The Bench directed the Centre and the State authorities to ascertain the eligibility of families residing in the area for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). The top court directed the Nainital Collector, Haldwani sub-division officer and other officials including members of the district-level legal service authority to visit the area and set up a camp to assist the families occupying the land to fill the forms and formalities for taking benefit of the scheme.

The bench said the court will appreciate if the applications by eligible families for the PMAY scheme are filled by March 31.

The bench directed the Collector and the secretary of the state legal service authority to file a status report. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioners who are residents of the area, submitted that they have been staying in the area which falls in and around the Haldwani railway station for over four to five decades.

He said that the State Government had earlier said that they would regularise the area but nothing was done.

Justice Bagchi said, "It is a public land or to say it is railway land, a fact which is not in dispute. You are actually getting a concession for being there."

"You cannot claim it as a right to be there. You are getting a concession because the authorities slept over the illegalities for years."

Bhushan said that for the expansion project not all land was required and the railways can take only whatever was required or shift the project.

CJ Kant said that the court cannot ask the railways to shift the project as it is for the experts to do so. Senior advocate Collin Gonsalves, appearing for the petitioners, said there are several religious places in the area and people need resettlement before being displaced.

## Don't view all organ donors with scepticism, says HC; directs DME to permit transplant

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Chennai

The Madras High Court has directed the Directorate of Medical Education and Research here not to view all organ donors with scepticism, and directed it to grant permission for transplantation to a stage 5 chronic kidney disease patient with the organ donated by the brother of his maternal aunt's husband.

Justice P T Asha held that "it would be unpragmatic to assess organ donation between nonrelatives on arithmetical scales or view them with scepticism."

Hearing petitions from a patient suffering from chronic kidney disease stage V and his donor, seeking a direction to the authorisation committee of DME to grant approval for organ transplant, the court said the donor is the brother of the patient's maternal aunt's husband and he had come forward to offer his organ. "It's not to be forgotten that some com-



passionate individuals are willing to selflessly donate their organs to give a new lease of life to a family member or friend. So, it would be unpragmatic to assess every donation between nonrelatives on arithmetical scales or view them with scepticism in such summary proceedings," the Bench observed in the

recent order. It said that saving a life was important. Justice Asha held that the rejection by the Authorisation Committee was arbitrary and baseless, and directed the Committee to grant permission for transplantation in accordance with law within a period of 3 weeks from the date of receipt of the copy of the order.

## CMO messages to officials: Kerala HC raises privacy concerns

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Kochi

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday observed that the emails and messages allegedly sent by the CMO to officials highlighting the achievements of the State Government constituted an intrusion of privacy. Justice Bechu Kurian Thomas made the oral observation while hearing a plea by Dr Rasheed Ahammed, an associate professor at a college in Malappuram, and Anil Kumar KM, a clerical assistant at the Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram, who claimed that sending such messages amounts to an election campaign.

The court, however, did not issue an interim order as the State Government undertook not to send similar messages till February 27, the next date of hearing in the matter.

The Bench issued notice to the State Government and



the Kerala State Information Technology Mission seeking their stand on the petition by February 27.

The State Government told the court that the messages were not sent by the CMO. The Government lawyer said that the mes-

sages were disbursed by the data principal which in this case was the Kerala State Information Technology Mission.

The court also asked the Government to explain how it accessed the phone number data of the

Government employees who were getting the messages. The petitioners claimed to be aggrieved by a bulk messaging campaign from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), allegedly targeting State Government employees and others

receiving salaries and benefits under various schemes on the eve of the Assembly elections.

According to them, the messages were sent by accessing private data provided for intimating the credit of monthly salary and benefits.

"This is nothing but an election campaign, resulting in intrusion into the right to privacy of citizens by the state without their consent, by accessing the private data of Government employees and others who have given their details for crediting their monthly salary in the Service and Payroll Administrative Repository for Kerala (SPARK)," the petition had stated.

SPARK is an e-governance initiative under the Finance Department of Kerala, operational since 2007, aimed at digitalising HR-related services and salary data of Government employees.

## Superstar not above law, HC reminds Ranveer Singh



**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bengaluru

In a relief to Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday directed police not to take any coercive steps against him in a case related to allegedly mocking a local deity. Hearing his petition seeking

quashing of an FIR for allegedly mocking the deity of coastal Karnataka during an event in Goa, the bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna gave the direction to the Bengaluru police.

The bench also reprimanded the actor for his behaviour and said hurting religious sentiments will not be toler-

ated. It directed him to cooperate with the investigation. "Superstr is not above law," the judge observed.

During the Filmfare Awards event in Goa, Singh imitated actor-director Rishab Shetty's role showing him under the 'Avesham' of Goddess Chavundi in "Kantara Chapter-1".

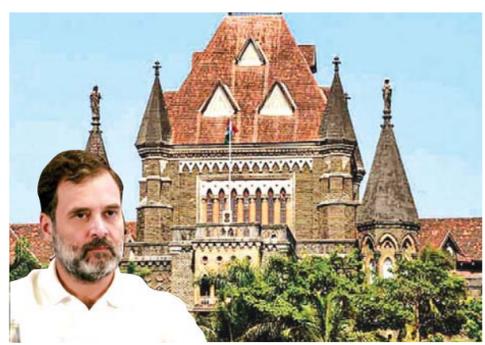
## Remarks on PM Modi: Bombay HC reserves order on Rahul's plea against defamation plaint

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Mumbai

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday reserved orders on a petition filed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi seeking quashing of a defamation complaint over his alleged remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A single bench of Justice N R Borkar heard the plea and closed it for orders.

The defamation plaint was lodged against Gandhi before a magistrate's court



in Girgaon in August 2019 by Mahesh Hukumchand Shrishrimal, a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

According to the complainant, Gandhi had made defamatory statements against PM Modi at a rally in Rajasthan in September 2018.

The magistrate's court had issued a summons to Gandhi, who challenged it in the High Court, terming the complaint frivolous and vexatious, which deserved to be quashed.

## Sambhal temple-mosque row: UP court sets March 24 for next hearing

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Lucknow

A court in Chandausi on Tuesday fixed March 24 as the next date of hearing in the ongoing Shahi Jama Masjid-Harihar Temple dispute. The matter came up before Civil Judge (Senior Division) Aditya Singh. However, the hearing was deferred in view of a stay order issued by the Supreme Court.

Speaking to reporters, Shahi Jama Masjid counsel Shakeel Ahmed Warsi said the case was listed for hearing on Tuesday but was postponed due to the apex court's stay.

"Now the hearing will be held on March 24," he said. The Muslim side has challenged the maintainability of the case in the Allahabad High Court. On May 19, the high court upheld the trial court's order permitting a court-monitored survey of the site and directed that proceedings continue. Hindu side counsel Shri



Gopal Sharma told reporters that since there is a stay order from the Supreme Court in this matter, the trial court cannot issue any orders, due to which the next date was given.

The dispute dates back to November 19 last year, when Hindu petitioners, including advocates Hari

Shankar Jain and Vishnu Shankar Jain, filed a suit in the Sambhal district court claiming the mosque was built over a pre-existing temple.

A court-ordered survey was conducted on the same day - November 19 - followed by another on November 24. The second

survey led to significant unrest in Sambhal, leaving four people dead and 29 police personnel injured.

Police booked SP MP Ziur Rahman Barq and mosque committee head Zafar Ali in connection with the violence, besides registering an FIR against 2,750 unidentified people.

**PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY**  
E-TENDER CALL NOTICE  
No:CE/PHD(M)/ACCTS-16/25/55 Dt: 17/02/2026  
Name of the work: Operational work of pump houses at different locations (BHC, Sector-04, Sector-21) in & around Paradip Port on job contact basis under P.H. Division for the year 2026-28 (Two years). Estimated cost: Rs.1,06,66,233.30/-. Last date & time of submission: 10.03.2026 up to 17.30 Hrs. Refer our website for details: [eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app](http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app)  
Sd/- Executive Engineer, PHD (M), Paradip Port Authority  
PPA/PR/70/2025-2026 dt. 23.02.2026

**Invitation For Bids (IFB)**  
The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Assam Skill University Project (ASUP) cum Registrar, Assam Skill University (ASU) ("the Purchaser") invites online bid from eligible bidders for the below mentioned Package at Assam Skill University:

#	Package No.	Package Name	Date of Publication		Deadline for Submission	
			Date	Time	Time	Time
1	GS02/ASU/MF/024	Hardware and Software for Applied Management Labs	24 February 2026	24 March 2026	14:00	Hours (IST)

Interested bidders may download and submit their bids electronically using the e-Procurement portal <https://assamtenders.gov.in/>.

Sd/-  
CEO, ASUP cum Registrar, ASU



## Editor's TAKE

### India unveils its first anti-terror doctrine

By stressing preventive strategies such as de-radicalisation and community engagement, the doctrine reflects a more nuanced response to terrorism

India has been at the receiving end when it comes to terrorism and armed challenges from within and without. From cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir to bomb blasts in metros to the Mumbai terror attacks, India has endured enough. It has led to severe loss of property and lives, not to mention the trauma and fear experienced by common citizens.

Now, with the unveiling of its first comprehensive anti-terror doctrine, PRAHAAR, India is resetting its strategy to deal with terrorism. The policy seeks to bring coherence and strategic direction to India's counter-terror efforts.

PRAHAAR maps the full spectrum of risks confronting India: cross-border terrorism, cyber-attacks, drone intrusions, radicalisation, terror financing through crypto channels, and potential attacks using CBRNED (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive and Digital) materials.

The doctrine is a clear break from the past, as it does not rely only on operational aspects but also focuses on nipping threats in the bud by addressing the issues that lead to terrorism and help terror networks find new recruits. It also mentions that terrorism has no religion or ethnic identity. It thereby emphasises community engagement and strategies to de-radicalise, which may go a long way in containing the menace of terrorism. It rightly acknowledges that the country has long faced "sponsored terrorism" from across the border, including threats from global outfits such as Al-Qaeda. The PRAHAAR doctrine perhaps should have come earlier.

For decades, India's counter-terror approach has been reactive and based on particular incidents rather than viewing the threat in totality. Besides, terrorism, like other challenges, has grown in sophistication and is now technology-driven rather than confined to bullets and bombs.

Terrorists now use sophisticated technologies such as encrypted messaging apps, the dark web and cryptocurrency wallets to obliterate their footprints, making them difficult to identify, let alone apprehend. Of late, drones are being used to drop arms and narcotics across borders, particularly in sensitive regions such as Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Terror networks are now collaborating with other outfits, smugglers and criminals to execute their operations.

In such a scenario, the country needed a doctrine that integrates land, sea, air and digital domains to deal effectively with terrorism. PRAHAAR also recognises that legal robustness is as crucial as operational capability. By recommending the involvement of legal experts from the stage of FIR registration to prosecution, it attempts to plug the chronic gap between arrests and convictions. Equally notable is the policy's emphasis on prevention. Radicalisation is addressed through graded police responses, de-radicalisation programmes, prison reforms, and engagement with community leaders, moderate preachers and NGOs. This shift is commendable; however, the effectiveness of this approach will depend on the manner in which it is implemented. Moreover, dedicated teams and adequate funding will be needed to make it an effective shield in practice, not just on paper.

## PM Modi's inauguration strategy

By publicly linking promise to completion, the Prime Minister converts reputational risk into bureaucratic pressure, tightening the loop between announcement and delivery in a state long accustomed to fragmentation



VIDHU SHEKHAR

PM Modi's inauguration streak is well known. He inaugurates frequently and across scales, from railway stations and highways to housing clusters and redevelopment projects. Critics argue that this risks voter fatigue. More than that, it magnifies political exposure. When a Prime Minister associates himself with hundreds of projects, the likelihood that a single defect, delay or quality failure will reverberate nationally increases. Why concentrate reputational risk at the very top?

### Defying political risk

In most political systems, leaders minimise exposure. They reserve landmark projects for themselves and delegate most other ribbon cuttings. They preserve distance from granular execution and retain plausible deniability. Narendra Modi appears to do the opposite.

The branding explanation is obvious: permanent campaigning, credit consolidation. Yet this reading is incomplete because it treats inaugurations as spectacle rather than as incentive design. The deeper question is structural. If exposure carries asymmetric downside, why persist? Why repeatedly link the highest office to assets whose execution cannot be personally supervised? The answer lies in his economics of governance.

### A state built on diffused responsibility

India's execution challenge has rarely been a shortage of announcements. There has been a shortage of disciplined completion. Projects pass through ministries, state governments, regulators, public sector undertakings, consultants and contractors. Responsibility is widely distributed. Coordination is layered.

This constraint intensified as public capital expenditure expanded at a scale India had not previously attempted. Infrastructure spending as a share of GDP doubled over the past decade. In nominal terms, annual infrastructure outlays multiplied several times over.

The Economic Survey estimates the infrastructure investment multiplier at roughly 2.5 to 3. Every rupee of public capex can generate multiple rupees of output over time. But that multiplier fires only if the asset functions. Sanctioned funds do not produce growth. Completed infrastructure does. When allocations grow at this pace, the binding constraint shifts decisively from funding to execution. The Prime Minister cannot inspect every foundation or audit every tender file. He cannot eliminate discretion across thousands of decision nodes. But he must ensure that



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The writer is an Associate Professor at SPJIMR, Mumbai. He holds a PhD from IIM Calcutta, an MBA from IIM Calcutta, and a B.Tech (H) from IIT Kharagpur

dailypioneer @TheDailyPioneer vidhushshekhar

rising public investment translates into functioning assets. In such a system, incentives must be deliberately engineered.

### Taking political risk to make administrative pressure

Frequent Prime Minister-level inaugurations alter the payoff matrix inside the state. A project inaugurated quietly by a lower authority remains locally bounded. When the Prime Minister inaugurates the project, it carries national salience. If quality falters or timelines slip, scrutiny widens. Media attention intensifies. Opposition attention intensifies. The expected cost of negligence rises.

Here, the strategy becomes clear. Political risk is not being avoided. It is rather concentrated. By attaching his office to a broad set of assets, the Prime Minister raises his own reputational exposure. That exposure becomes leverage. Officers and contractors internalise that failure will not remain buried in administrative silence.

The inauguration functions as a public commitment device, compressing accountability in a system long accustomed to diffused responsibility. There is also a time-binding dimension. Modi has repeatedly stated that he intends to inaugurate the projects whose foundation stones he lays.

In many political systems, foundation ceremonies generate immediate credit, while delays are quietly absorbed by future administrations. Linking the foundation to the inauguration narrows that escape route. The benefit of promising is no longer detached from the cost of delivering. Files move differently when completion is tied to visible expectation.

This visibility strategy is supported by institutional architecture. The PRAGATI platform, launched in 2015, institutionalised direct Prime Ministerial review of major infrastructure projects, bringing together central secretaries and state chief secretaries in a structured digital forum. As of 2026, PRAGATI has reviewed projects

worth over ₹85 lakh crore and resolved nearly 3,000 systemic bottlenecks. Complementing this, PM GatiShakti integrates geospatial data layers across ministries and states to reduce planning friction and coordination delays. These platforms constitute the administrative backbone that makes exposure credible rather than symbolic. The empirical record reflects this combination of fiscal scale and monitoring discipline. Highway construction accelerated sharply over the past decade. Rail electrification expanded to cover nearly the entire broad-gauge network. Metro networks multiplied across cities. Airport and port capacity rose while turnaround times fell. Train accident-related deaths declined significantly compared to the previous decade. These gains occurred alongside a massive expansion in project volume. The deeper contrast emerges when viewed historically. In the previous investment cycle, rising project pipelines coincided with stalled assets, banking stress and what was widely described as policy paralysis. Scale exposed institutional weakness.

In the current cycle, the project pipeline is far larger, yet a systemic execution freeze has not re-emerged at a comparable magnitude. Time overruns persist. Land acquisition and environmental constraints remain binding. But the system has absorbed scale without collapsing into gridlock. Visibility can compress the construction phase slack. It cannot repeal geography or regulatory complexity. Yet the absence of systemic paralysis under unprecedented infrastructure expansion is not trivial. It suggests that execution elasticity has improved.

### The long game of centralised accountability

Most leaders hedge exposure and retain distance from granular delivery. This model centralises credit and, inevitably, centralises blame.

By publicly committing to inaugurate what he initiates, the Prime Minister narrows his own room for retreat. That is a calculated wager that concentrated accountability strengthens delivery discipline.

Overexposure fatigue remains a political hazard. Governance, however, is not only about applause cycles. It is about incentive alignment within large institutions. In a vast federal state where coordination failure once diluted outcomes, pressure is scarce capital. Concentrated visibility creates pressure.

The economics of PM Modi's extensive inauguration streak is therefore not about ribbon cutting. It is about risk concentration as a tool of discipline. By accepting exposure, the Prime Minister tightens the loop between promise and delivery. Whether this model ultimately embeds higher standards beyond individual leadership will determine its durability. But the structural principle is clear.

In large systems, outcomes follow incentives. And incentives sharpen when someone at the top chooses to be seen.



## Mastering fortune through thoughts and actions



RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

### 2ND OPINION

We all have good days and bad days. What amounts to a good day for one person may equate to someone else's bad day. When a person says that he is having bad days, what he generally means is either that some people are criticising him bitterly without fault on his part and are accusing him without any basis, or that whatever role he plays and whatever job he does turns into a complete failure and he flops. He does his best and yet success eludes or evades him. He loves some people and has good wishes for them, yet these people get estranged from him or turn into his enemies or rivals. He has not done any bad act and yet his mind is empty of peace and he feels that happiness is totally missing from his heart.

Those very people whom he had helped in their dire need have now turned their backs on him and show not even

a little concern for his well-being. There is no one even to encourage him or at least to utter a word of sympathy. On the other hand, they unashamedly point to his shortcomings, hit hard at his weaknesses and try to open or scratch his wounds. A person who is having good days, when people easily help him, appreciate his work and qualities and like or love him, feels that there is happiness in relationships. He has stamina and good health and does not have to beg money from anyone but is fairly comfortable. He feels that people do not misbehave with him and that he generally meets success whatever the venture he embarks upon.

History is full of examples of kings becoming beggars or of ordinary men ascending to thrones. But what we need to remember is that the shift in our fortunes or the change in our days is brought about by the change that took place in the past in the quality of our own actions.

The change in days, some say, is due to a change in our stars, but even stars in the sky change due to the actions of souls which are also the stars now on earth. Remember, the whole of nature is influenced by our own actions and, therefore, we are the makers of our own fortune. We determine our own destiny.

So, basically, bad days are those days when a person has bad thoughts or does bad actions, and good days are those when a person thinks good and does good.

We should also keep in mind, during days of stress and strain or tests and tribulations, that these difficult days will also change because nothing in this world stays forever.

Since our bad days are a consequence of our actions, we cannot run away from them but must bear with them, whether happily or with a heavy heart. We have to adopt a posture, a strategy, a line of action or a plan to remain as unaffected as we possibly can.

There is no use cursing our stars or accusing people of having left us or caused misery to us. On the other hand, we should take lessons from these hard tests and consider them as exercises in self-development or opportunities for crisis management. Also, when anyone is having good days, he should not boast of his wisdom, achievements, knowledge or circle of friends, because one never knows when one will be hauled up on live coals.

So, let us not be proud to the point of boasting, bragging or praising ourselves. Instead, we must always keep in mind that whether our days are good or bad, we should always be good in our actions, our state of mind, our dealings and relations with others, our attitudes and our response to various situations. If we follow this process, we can turn even bad days into good ones. So, let us stop thinking about good or bad days and become masters of our own fortune.

The writer is a spiritual teacher and popular columnist



## PICTALK



A traffic police personnel signals a wooden tram built during World War II to mark the 153rd anniversary of the Calcutta tram service in Kolkata.

PHOTO: PTI

## DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

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## CARING FOR ALL BEINGS DURING HARSH SUMMER MONTHS

With the approach of summer, thoughtful preparation becomes essential to face rising temperatures responsibly. Extreme heat often leads to dehydration, heatstroke, power shortages and water scarcity. Families can take simple precautions such as storing clean drinking water, wearing light cotton clothing and avoiding outdoor work during peak afternoon hours. Children and the elderly require special attention, as they are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.

Keeping homes well ventilated, using curtains to block direct sunlight and planting trees around houses can naturally reduce indoor temperatures. Community authorities must ensure uninterrupted water

supply, repair public taps and create shaded waiting areas in markets and at bus stops. Summer care should also extend beyond human needs.

Birds, stray dogs, cattle and other animals suffer silently when ponds dry up and shade becomes scarce.

Placing small bowls of water on balconies, terraces and outside homes can make a meaningful difference. Providing shaded resting spaces for pets and cattle, and avoiding the burning of waste in open areas, can reduce environmental stress. Farmers can dig small water pits near fields to support wildlife.

A compassionate approach during summer protects not only people but every living being sharing our environment.

SM JEEVA | CHENNAI

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Kohli: India's big match pillar

Cricket is a team game where performance defines success. India-Pakistan matches always generate intense interest, drawing massive crowds and celebrity attention.

In the 2017 Champions Trophy final, expectations were high as India faced Pakistan, with many believing the outcome was predictable. Traditionally, India has enjoyed dominance in such high-pressure contests, mastering the art of winning crucial matches over decades. However, India's Super Eight performance was disappointing, with unexpected defeats against South Africa, West Indies and Zimbabwe. The team's inconsistency exposed a lack of application in key moments. Kohli has often delivered when it mattered most, combining elegance with aggression through remarkable stroke play and authoritative boundaries. His ability to perform under pressure remains invaluable.

Alongside him, Ravichandran Ashwin's composed bowling and tactical intelligence have provided stability in challenging situations.

Moments of brilliance from players like Kohli define great teams. His leadership and performance continue to remind fans why champions rise strongest during testing times.

JAYANTHY SUBRAMANIAM | MUMBAI

### Discipline must replace harshness

Apropos the report "Teacher beats 32 students with a bamboo stick", it is unfortunate that some members of this noble profession are mired in controversy. Although the teacher has been arrested, the incident raises serious concerns about changing professional standards. Students are young and may not always behave perfectly. However, teachers are expected to maintain patience and uphold professional ethics. In earlier times, teachers commanded natural respect because they disciplined students with fairness and concern for their welfare.

Today, generational differences and pressures have altered classroom dynamics. Some younger teachers may lack the tolerance required to guide energetic students. Yet, resorting to physical punishment cannot be justified under any circumstances.

There are many effective methods of discipline based on understanding, counselling, and structured engagement. Teachers must be trained in these approaches through regular government programmes.

The dignity of the teaching profession lies in guidance, not punishment. Even today, many educators remain widely respected because they inspire rather than intimidate.

GANAPATHI BHAT | AKOLA

### PRAHAAR boosts security framework

The Government of India has unveiled its first National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy, named PRAHAAR. This initiative arrives at a critical moment when the nation faces evolving security threats. The policy recognises terrorism across multiple domains, including cyber, land, maritime, aerial, and sleeper cell networks. The need for such a comprehensive strategy became particularly evident after the Pahalgam terror attack in 2025.

Sponsored terrorists, extremist groups, criminal hackers, and global outfits such as IS and Al-Qaeda continue to threaten India's sovereignty, citizens, economy, and critical infrastructure.

For years, India required a unified approach to counter these diverse challenges. The PRAHAAR framework aims to strengthen preparedness and coordination across security agencies.

While the policy has come later than expected, its introduction is nonetheless significant. It promises to enhance India's strategic capabilities in addressing terrorism from all fronts.

By integrating intelligence, technology, and operational response, PRAHAAR is expected to provide greater resilience against emerging threats.

KIRTI WADHAWAN | KANPUR



## Eating with sense: Old lessons for new times

Today, emerging research in nutrition and chronobiology increasingly echoes this insight, showing that meal timing, portion size and eating patterns deeply affect metabolism and overall health. This convergence invites us to revisit the Indian knowledge tradition, particularly Ayurveda, to understand its timeless guidance on the art and science of eating well

**FIRST**  
**Column**



**VINAYAK RAJAT BHAT**

Long before modern nutrition science, Caraka, the great Indian physician, reminded us that life stands on three simple pillars—ahara (food), svapna (sleep), and brahmacharya (self-discipline and the pursuit of knowledge). If any one of these is neglected, balance is lost. Among the three, food holds a special place, because it shapes the body every single day. What we eat, when we eat, and how we eat quietly influence our energy, mood, and long-term health. Interestingly, modern research is beginning to say much the same thing. A recent study by R Davis and others (2022) explains that eating at the wrong times can disturb the body's natural internal clock, affecting the way food is processed and stored. Many such studies now warn us that unhealthy eating practices can slowly disrupt the body from within. Food, therefore, is not merely a daily routine or a source of pleasure—it is a science that deserves care and awareness. In this article, we turn to the Indian Knowledge tradition to see what it has to say about food, eating habits, and the art of living well.

Healthy eating, according to the Indian Knowledge tradition, depends on *desa* (region), *kala* (time or season), and *prakriti* (one's natural constitution). This means that what suits one person may not suit another. Yet, alongside these individual considerations, there are some simple and universal principles of eating that anyone can follow in daily life. One such principle is beautifully expressed in a verse from Ksemakutuhala od Ksamedra, a 16th-century text:

*madhuram adhuramadau madhyato mlaikabhavah katukatukamathante tiktatiktam tathaiva,*

*yadi suhapharinamam vanchasi tvam hi rajan tyaja khalajanasangam bhojanam ma kadacit.*

Addressing a king, the verse explains that food should be eaten in a certain order—sweet tastes at the beginning, sour in the middle, and pungent and bitter towards the end. The poet draws a striking contrast: the company of a wicked person may begin sweetly but ends in bitterness, and therefore should be avoided; food, on the other hand, should



**AYURVEDA RECOMMENDS BEGINNING THE MEAL WITH SOMETHING SWEET. THIS IS WHY, IN MANY PARTS OF INDIA, THE FIRST ITEM SERVED DURING A TRADITIONAL MEAL IS A SWEET**

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never be abandoned if it follows this very pattern.

This naturally raises a question—why should sweet foods be eaten first? Ayurveda offers a clear explanation. When a person is hungry, pitta, or digestive fire, is already strong. If sour, pungent, or spicy tastes are taken at this stage, pitta can become excessive. Sweet taste, however, has a calming effect and helps settle the digestive fire gently. If pitta is aggravated repeatedly, it may lead to problems such as acidity or gastritis, and in severe cases, serious health complications.

To avoid this, Ayurveda recommends beginning the meal with something sweet. This is why, in many parts of India, the first item served during a traditional meal is a sweet. Until recently, and even today in several regions, it has been customary to welcome a guest returning from long travel with jaggery or a sweet—everyday practice quietly guided by deep dietary wisdom. Again this is a general norm. It might change based on the region, time/season or compendium of an individual.

### When should we eat?

Ayurveda offers a simple yet practical answer: one should eat only when genuinely hungry. Hunger is seen as a sign that the digestive system is ready to

receive food. Along with this, Ayurveda also gives clear time-based guidelines to help maintain balance.

A classical verse explains this idea: *yamamadhye na bhoktavyam yamayugmam na langhayet, yamamadhye rasodvego yugmetite balaksayah.*

In simple terms, the text advises that one should not eat again within about three hours of a meal, nor should one remain hungry for more than six hours. Eating too soon after a meal disturbs the digestive process, while waiting too long weakens the body and drains energy. For example, if someone eats a full lunch and then snacks again within an hour or two out of habit rather than hunger, the digestion of the earlier meal is interrupted.

On the other hand, skipping meals for long hours—such as working through the day without eating until late evening—often leads to fatigue, irritability, and low energy. Interestingly, modern nutrition science supports this balanced approach. Research in the field of chrononutrition shows that meal timing and regular eating intervals play a significant role in metabolism and overall health. Eating in alignment with the body's internal biological clock, rather than grazing frequently or delaying meals for long periods, has been linked to better digestion, improved

metabolic function, and healthier weight regulation. In this way, contemporary research quietly echoes Ayurveda's long-standing advice: good health depends not only on what we eat, but also on when and how regularly we eat.

### How much should we eat?

Before answering how much to eat, Ayurveda first asks us to understand the nature of food. Broadly, food is classified into two types—guru (heavy) and laghu (light).

Guru foods are those that take longer to digest. They tend to cause a feeling of heaviness, increase bodily waste, but are also nourishing, strengthening, and growth-promoting when taken properly. Laghu foods, on the other hand, are light and easy to digest. They help reduce excess weight and even support healing, such as recovery from wounds or illness.

With this understanding, Vagbhata, the author of the *Astanga-hridaya*, gives a clear and practical guideline: *matrasi sarvakalam syat matra hyagneh pravartika, matra dravyanyapeksante gurunyapi laghunyapi.* In simple words, one should always eat in the right quantity, because proper

quantity keeps the digestive fire functioning well. Whether food is heavy or light, it becomes beneficial only when eaten in moderation. Ayurveda further explains what this moderation looks like in practice. Heavy foods should be eaten only to about half one's capacity, while light foods should not be eaten to the point of complete fullness. Eating too little weakens the body, reduces vitality, and can disturb vata, leading to various health problems. On the other hand, eating too much—regardless of the type of food—can aggravate all bodily imbalances and burden digestion.

Contemporary studies on portion size and digestion show that consistently overeating, even of "healthy" foods, strains the digestive system and is linked to problems such as obesity, insulin resistance, and chronic inflammation. On the other hand, eating very small portions or skipping meals for long periods can lead to fatigue, nutrient deficiencies, and loss of muscle mass.

Research on mindful and portion-controlled eating also shows better digestion, improved metabolic health, and greater satiety when people stop eating before they feel completely full—remarkably similar to the Ayurvedic advice given centuries ago. Repeated overeating, Ayurveda warns, leads to indigestion, which it considers the root cause of many diseases. The lesson is simple and timeless: good health depends not only on what we eat, but also on how much we eat—and knowing when to stop.

### Conclusion

The ideas presented here offer only a small glimpse into the vast and nuanced understanding of food found in the Indian Knowledge Systems tradition. Ayurveda does not view eating as a mechanical act or a set of rigid rules, but as a thoughtful practice guided by time, place, individual nature, and moderation. From what we eat, to when and how much we eat, these principles quietly emphasise balance, awareness, and respect for the body's natural rhythms. While modern research is now beginning to rediscover many of these insights, centuries-old Ayurvedic wisdom reminds us that healthy living often lies in simple, mindful choices. What has been shared here is only a beginning—an invitation to explore a much larger tradition where food is understood not just as nourishment, but as a foundation of life itself.



SINCE 1865

## Ease of doing business in the alcobev sector: A key revenue lever for states



**ABHISHEK JHA**



**KRISHNA V GIRI**

The fiscal health of states remains a cornerstone for achieving sustained and inclusive economic growth and is central to realising the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Among states' own tax revenues, excise duty emerges as the third-largest source, contributing nearly 17 per cent, after State GST and sales tax. This underscores the critical importance of efficient revenue mobilisation and optimisation at the state level. Persistent fiscal deficits compel states to rely on borrowings to finance expenditure. In FY25, states on average have budgeted borrowings amounting to 27.2 per cent of GSDP, reflecting continuing fiscal pressures.

In this context, assessing the gross fiscal deficit as a proportion of GSDP becomes particularly pertinent, as it highlights the structural challenges confronting state finances. Against this backdrop, optimising revenue from the alcohol and beverage (alcobev) sector, which includes IMFL (Indian Made Foreign Liquor) and beer, becomes indispensable for strengthening state finances and improving fiscal sustainability. India's alcoholic beverages industry sits at the intersection of politics, public health and public finance, but rarely at the intersection of reform. State excise on liquor is the third-largest source of own-tax revenue for states, and in several of them, alcohol accounts for more than a fifth of total tax collections. Yet, ease of doing business in this sector is an afterthought, constrained by archaic depot infrastructure, opaque pricing and regulatory fragmentation that treats each state as a separate country.

Alcohol is constitutionally a state subject, granting states full control over licensing, taxation and distribution. For the industry, this translates into operating across multiple and fragmented regulatory regimes. Given the relatively inelastic nature of alcohol demand, many states have relied heavily on frequent excise duty hikes to shore up revenues. However, these increases are often not accompanied by revisions in ex-distillery prices or trade margins, compressing manufacturers' share to around 16-20 per cent of the retail price, while states appropriate nearly 80 per cent. While fiscally expedient in the short term, this skewed structure undermines long-term investment. Most large states operate a State Beverages Corporation (SBC) that monopolises wholesale distribution, controlling depots, logistics and supplies to retail vends. In theory, this

model improves tax control and reduces leakage; in practice, many SBC depots are decades old, with limited covered storage, rudimentary inventory management and very low truck-handling capacity. Day-long waiting times for unloading are common during peak seasons, locking up working capital in goods that are physically in the state but not available for sale.

Because unloading at the depot is a bigger bottleneck than loading at the distillery or bottling plant, unions and local associations often charge a premium for unloading services, denting margins. Where freight and handling charges are not transparently benchmarked or competitively tendered, these costs can easily exceed what a modern private warehouse would pay for faster, technology-enabled operations.

### Basic ease-of-doing-business reform

Time-bound service standards at depots (maximum turnaround time per truck, with monitoring and penalties for breach).

Modernisation of depots with palletisation, dock levellers, handheld scanners and warehouse management systems. Competitive contracting of loading/unloading services through e-tenders, with clear ceilings on depot handling charges and prohibition of exclusive union monopolies.

Some states have experimented with limited private-sector participation in logistics, but there is no systematic benchmarking of depot performance or public reporting of turnaround times.

Despite the centrality of excise to state finances, very few states run regular, institutionalised price-revision committees that consider cost inflation, compliance costs and tax buoyancy in a transparent way. Instead, excise duties and fees are tweaked frequently, often at the time of the state budget, while ex-distillery prices and trade margins are kept frozen for long stretches, eroding profitability. This asymmetry encourages short-term behaviour: companies aggressively chase volume in high-tax states without commensurate investment in responsible retailing or brand building, while states focus on headline revenue rather than long-term elasticity, illicit trade or tourism potential.

### MRP changes, labels and extra neutral alcohol

Ease of doing business in alcobev is not only about tax rates; it is also about the micro-frictions that accumulate along the way. Frequent changes to label requirements, sticker formats or cap engravings, without adequate transition windows, can render existing inventory unsaleable overnight. This is particularly damaging in a supply chain where product moves from distillery to depot to retail over weeks, and where the manufacturer's margin is already thin.

States may adopt a minimum implementation window for packaging or MRP-related changes—say three months—combined with digital

approvals so that old and new stock can coexist during a defined phase-out period.

A few progressive states have started digitised excise portals for label approvals, production permissions and duty payments, significantly cutting down manual file movement. Scaling such systems across the board, with standard APIs for integration with company ERPs, would reduce disputes and speed up reconciliation.

There is a need for new AI-based technology to streamline this end-to-end supply chain, rather than relying on age-old ERP systems which primarily focus on inventory management.

ENA policy is another neglected area. Recent clarifications that ENA used for beverage alcohol is outside GST from November 2024 simplify the tax structure but also highlight the need for clear state-level rules on ENA reusability and disposal. Where finished goods or ENA become unsaleable due to regulatory or market reasons, states should spell out protocols for denaturing, industrial diversion or safe destruction, rather than leaving companies in a grey zone that invites litigation or informal settlements.

### Cleaning up belt outlets

Retail design in many states has evolved unevenly, resulting in dense "belt" clusters of liquor outlets and large underserved areas. This distortion encourages informal coordination between eateries and select vends, diversion of stock, and the proliferation of local belt brands and illicit liquor—posing serious public health risks, fuelling corruption and leading to avoidable fatalities.

Technology and AI can address these challenges through blockchain traceability, IoT logistics monitoring, anomaly detection and digital excise stamps, enabling real-time supply chain visibility and curbing ENA diversion, counterfeit liquor and illegal retail outlets.

AI-powered predictive analytics and automated compliance audits can further shift excise enforcement from reactive policing to proactive, risk-based regulation, improving transparency, public safety and revenue integrity.

Equally important is a regulatory approach that respects transition windows for MRPs and labels, clearly defines ENA usage and disposal norms, and uses data to rationalise retail outlet placement. Evidence from reform-oriented states shows that simplifying procedures and improving governance can enhance efficiency without compromising revenue. With demand largely inelastic and the state already the primary beneficiary of alcohol sales, the focus must shift from extracting higher taxes to restoring efficiency, transparency and accountability in the system.

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## Anganwadis: Need to keep it above votebank politics



**SWAPNA MAJUMDAR**

On the morning of February 2, 2026, Kanchan Bai Meghwal arrived early at the anganwadi centre (AWC) in Neemuch district's Ranpur village in Madhya Pradesh. Her self-help group, of which she was president, was in charge of preparing midday meals for the children at the AWC and it was her turn to cook that day.

While working, she saw a swarm of bees heading towards the children. Instinctively, Meghwal rushed out and shielded the children with tarpaulin sheets while positioning herself in front of them and facing the brunt of the attack. While this courageous act saved 20 children, the innumerable bee stings she suffered in the process proved fatal.

Some months prior to this incident, in the neighbouring state of Odisha, the engagement of Sharmistha Sethy, a Dalit woman, as anganwadi helper at the AWC in the state's Nuagaon village in Kendrapada district enraged upper-caste communities to such an extent that they stopped sending their children there. They did not want their children to eat meals prepared by a Dalit woman. Even pregnant and lactating women, who also visit the anganwadi for their take-home rations, refused to go. Sethy's plight was spotlighted after newspapers reported the reason for the three-month boycott of the anganwadi centre. It required the matter to be raised in Parliament, mediation by state departments, and a minister to eat the meal prepared by Sethy at the anganwadi before matters could be resolved. Last week, the children returned to the AWC.

Incidentally, Meghwal also belonged to the Dalit community. Is this fact important? Yes, because had Meghwal seen herself only as a Dalit and an untouchable, she may have thought twice before sacrificing her life for the children. Had she done so, she would probably have been alive today. Maybe she should have. As the sole breadwinner of the family, her act of selflessness left her paralysed husband and her young children rudderless.

However, thanks to the media attention Meghwal's case received, the state government announced financial assistance of ₹4 lakh to her kin and an undertaking to bear the expenses of her children's education. Now, it remains to be seen whether all these promises are met once the media glare fades.

Unfortunately, cases of caste discrimination like the one in Odisha are not the first of their kind.



Caste prejudice is entrenched across the length and breadth of India. A 2012 study by the Institute of Human Development found that caste prejudices in Bihar's villages were adversely affecting children in anganwadis.

Last year, upper-caste families stopped their children from going to the AWC in Bidar, Karnataka, to protest against the appointment of Milana Bai, a Dalit helper. Instead of resolving the issue, the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) asked Milana Bai to look for another job. It was only after district officials intervened that the impasse was somehow resolved. Anganwadi centres are part of the Ministry of Women and Child Development's flagship Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). There are about 14 lakh AWCs across the country, with the implementation of ICDS, including recruitment of anganwadi workers and helpers, resting with states.

Recognising the important role AWCs play in the cognitive and nutritional development of a child, the central government increased investments to modernise AWCs in the country to become 'Saksham Anganwadis' by incorporating technology to make them 'smart'.

Under the Mission Saksham Anganwadi & Poshan 2.0 initiative, the government has allocated ₹21,960 crore for 2025-26 to make anganwadi centres digitally smart but has not, in parallel, given equal priority to eliminating caste prejudices that undermine the purpose of AWCs. Crucial to combating caste-based injustices is strengthening the implementation of anti-discrimination laws and policies, such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, and ensuring timely justice for victims of caste-based discrimination. But implementation is, more often than not, weak. Casteism is so inextricably intertwined with all spheres of life, including politics, that it is more rewarding to exploit caste loyalties for electoral gains than to double efforts to end it.

Anganwadis lay the foundation for the physical, psychological and emotional development of the child and must be kept above vote-bank and caste politics.



SINCE 1865

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First, he fought with the trustees, who opposed him, or his loyalists. He won that war in a handsome manner, acting shrewdly and smartly, despite making legal blunders on the way. After he got control of the Tata Trusts, which are majority owners in Tata Sons, he unleashed his whip against the latter's chairman, N Chandrasekaran, who ironically had supported him. Like the late Ratan Tata, his successor, Noel Tata, has decided to take on entrenched and powerful insiders. Ratan won those battles, and became the absolute emperor. Noel, who was invariably treated as an underdog, wants to repeat history. Hence, it is not surprising that the boardroom battles within Tata Sons, which is the parent for the group, have become a matter of public speculation. Like in the case of the trusts, this is not about individuals, or a company, or even the sprawling salt-to-software, steel-to-seeds empire. It is about the impact on India Inc, and the Indian economy.

The issue under the microscope is about Chandrasekaran's new stint, as his current one expires in 2027, and his reappointment in Tata Sons requires a special board resolution to exempt him from the company's retirement policies after the age of 65. He turns 63 this June. But he will cross 65, if appointed for five years beginning 2027. During the battle for the trusts, as Chandrasekaran tacitly supported Noel, it was thought that the former's reappointment will be a breeze, and a given. No one was likely to oppose it, especially as he was handpicked by Ratan in 2017, after yet another corporate battle between the Tata and Mistry family. Possibly, this is a bone of contention now. Noel needs to decide if he wants to continue with Ratan's appointee, who has gained respect in the corporate circles, or get his own man (or woman). It is a tricky decision, and needs trickier and twisted maneuvers.

According to some media reports, Noel has kept four conditions for the reappointment. One, a promise that Tata Sons will not be publicly listed. Two, Tata Sons needs to remain debt free in the future. Three, the cash reserves and coffers need to be full, and not emptied via excessive capex, especially in risky ventures and investments. Finally, the huge losses from past acquisitions, like Air India and Big Basket, need to be curtailed, reduced, or eliminated. Each of these have a legacy, and goes back to Ratan's tenure in some way or the other. The issue of listing was foremost in Ratan's mind, and hung over him like a sword. Somehow, he escaped the bullet. In fact, he made Tata Sons debt free to escape the clutches of the central bank's rule that dictated a listing. For years, Tata Group firms gave high dividends to fill up Tata Sons' coffers. Tata Sons gave higher dividends to help the trusts fulfil their philanthropic work. Ratan's tussle with Cyrus Mistry was mainly about the losses incurred by acquisitions during the former's tenure.

Noel's reasons are a bit different, but linked to Ratan's legacy. The former wants to avoid listing because there will be additional pressures on the operations and decision-making due to the entry of large, institutional, high net-worth, and even public shareholding. They may wish to delink the connections with Tata Trusts for corporate governance reasons. This will dilute Noel's powers. Debt-free mindset is the same as Ratan to avoid any confrontation with the central bank. Cash reserves are critical to fund Tata Trusts' works. There are mismatches and issues related to what the trusts earn from Tata Sons due to their large shareholding, and what they spend. Losses from new acquisitions, especially those which were due to emotional, sentimental, or egoistic reasons are a bane of contention. In the past, a professional-insider, Mistry accused a family member, Ratan, of loss-making European takeovers in steel and auto sectors. Now, a family member, Noel, accuses Chandrasekaran, a professional-insider (Ratan treated him as a family member), of making the same mistakes with deep holes like Air India, largely because it was started by Tata patriarch, JRD.

At present, the issue about reappointment of Tata Sons' chairman hangs in a balance. Most board members, except Noel, and his trusted loyalist, Venu Srinivasan, a Tata Trust appointee, support the chairman. They contend that the listing will be decided by the laws, the decision to fill up cash reserves depends on the group firms, and losses are normal in greenfield projects. One of the board members, who is head of the reappointment committee, says that the losses have been provided for. Although one is not sure since Tata Sons has enacted new rules, and changed old ones after Noel came into the picture, the Tata Trusts' board appointees have a veto power, which may or may not come into play for a special reappointment resolution. In addition, Chandrasekaran does not wish to do anything that may anger Noel. This is why he did not listen to the board members who wanted to put the issue to vote, and instead deferred the discussion. Publicly, he maintains that Tata Sons and Tata Trusts need to work together, in unison, in the spirit of the Tata legacy. Privately, he does not want a public war, as was the case between the various trustees.



# US Court dismantles tariffs?

In this first part, we analyse the spirit behind tariff laws

OUR TAKE

The US President Donald Trump did many things right, and followed the letter of the law. According to the Supreme Court's order, he declared a national emergency, as was required under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), which he used to impose tariffs against nations. He did define the "unusual and extraordinary" foreign threat to national security, foreign policy, and economy. This was in the form of narcotic smuggling, and looming bilateral trade deficits. He then imposed different tariffs to deal with each of them.

However, he got the spirit of the wrong. As the Court explains, the US Constitution gives the power to impose and collect taxes and duties, which tariffs are, to the legislature or Congress. This power, Article 1, Section 8, appears "first" and, according to one of the framers, Alexander Hamilton, is the "most important of the authorities proposed to be conferred upon the Union." Hence, the power to impose tariffs was with the Congress for two reasons. One, the nation would depend on them for revenues for a long time. Two, the framers wanted the Congress "alone... access to the pockets of the people."

This may explain why, during IEEPA's "half-century of existence," no president has ever invoked it to impose any tariffs, even limited ones, "let alone tariffs of this magnitude and scope." In contrast, the presidents have used IEEPA for non-tax purposes. When they needed to introduce new taxes, they used other laws, but never IEEPA. This "lack of historical precedent... coupled with the breadth of authority... is a telling indication" that the tariffs (under IEEPA) extend beyond the President's 'legitimate reach.' Trump simply does not have the powers to go ahead with tariffs without Congress' formal nod.

More importantly, the scope and expanse of

the tariffs is "extravagant" by any measure." This is evident from the earlier "boast" that its political and economic consequences are "astounding." According to the official projections, the tariffs that Trump imposed would reduce the national deficit by \$4 trillion, and global deals influenced by them might be worth \$15 trillion. The Court quoted the president, who had said that the tariffs could determine whether America remains rich or poor, a distinction that "hangs in the balance" at present. Tariffs was indeed a high-stakes drama enacted on the global stage.

Hence, any reasonable and rational interpreter cannot imagine that the Congress, while making IEEPA, wished to "paw" such a big-time policy call... off to another branch (executive)." This explains why when it comes to the other laws, whenever the Congress has indeed delegated the tariff-making powers to the executive, it has done so in explicit terms, and subject to "strict limits."

While it has included the word 'duty' in the laws, it has capped the amounts and durations. The word duty, tax, or tariff, as will be discussed in the second part of this analysis, do not find a mention in the clauses of IEEPA.

In addition, the Congress in other laws laid down a process before the tariffs were declared by the executive. These included investigations, public hearings, recommendations and findings of reports, consultations with the relevant nations and interested parties, and publication of the findings. Thus, the claim by Trump that the spirit of the law allows him to declare unilateral tariffs without consultations or debates seems facile and empty. Neither the framers of the Constitution nor those who wrote the laws, and passed them, wanted a president to wake

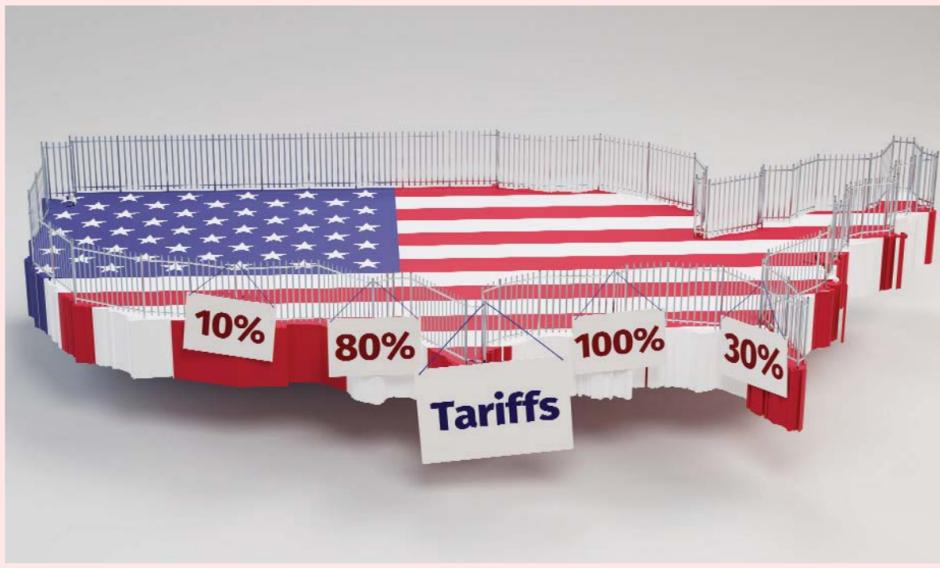
up in the morning, and impose tariffs via a post on social media. Of course, the government lawyers argued that the spirit of the IEEPA is expansive, and its letters and words need to be "construed" or interpreted broadly and widely. Since the law deals with major problems such as national security, foreign policy, and the economy, there can be no doubt that it envisaged the delegation of major powers to the president. Even those "for which there may be a 'colourable textual basis.'" In other words, even if the letters and words were hazy, opaque, or questionable, the intent may be read into them.

However, the Supreme Court rejected this logic and rationale. In fact, it turned the argument on its head, which surprised and shocked the government lawyers. The Court stated that it is precisely in such cases, where broad and major issues are involved that "we should be alert to claims that sweeping delegations, particularly delegations of core (tax-making) congressional powers, lurk in ambiguous statutory texts." In legal jargon, "There is no major questions exception to the major questions doctrine." When the issue is about 'major questions' related to the nation, as Trump argues, the Court cannot allow non-existent and non-written major exceptions to the law, as the president wants.

Thus, the onus in such cases, and in the interpretation of such laws (like IEEPA), is on the president, or the person who claims an exception, to "justify his extraordinary assertion of the power to impose tariffs." The individual needs to pinpoint specifics that prove that the lawmakers (Congress) wished to transfer such wide-ranging powers to another entity. In the IEEPA case, the Supreme Court was categorical. "He (president Trump) cannot (justify the exception)." Only what is written in the law will stand. What remains unwritten, but may be hinted in a complicit fashion, or via wider interpretation, will fall.

If one puts aside the need for specifics, either in terms of letters or words, and special written authority, and gives a president expansive powers, it will derail the workings of the nation. The president will be "unconstrained" by any process or procedures, and "free to issue a dizzying array of modifications at will." A mere declaration of an emergency is enough. Nothing else is required by way of proof or evidence. The only way to stop this will be a "veto-proof majority in Congress." While this was easier in the past, when congressional majorities were enormous, it is almost-impossible now that the differences between majority and minority are thin.

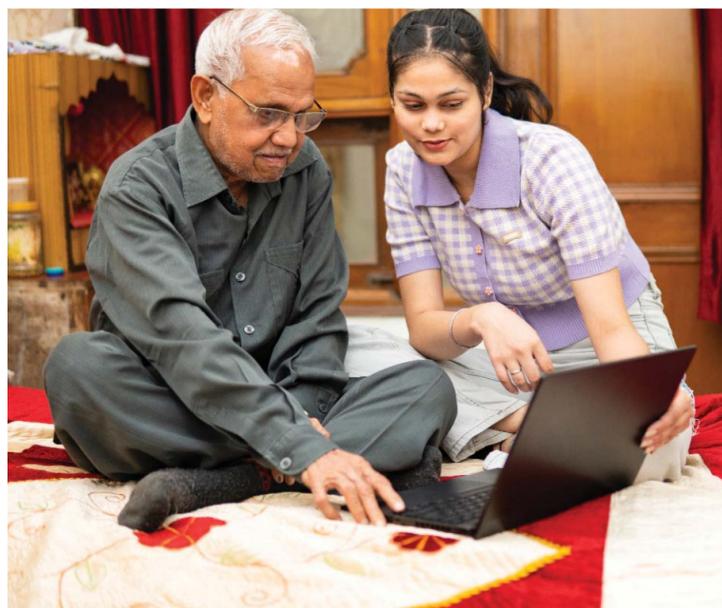
Obviously, such a view, as the president demands, is unacceptable. If accepted, it will represent a "transformative expansion" of the president's control over tariffs. Through this means, he will have a complete and influential authority over the economy. There will be an explicit transfer of tax-making powers from the Congress to the president, from the legislature, the law-making body, to executive, the implementer. The so-called separation of powers will be destroyed.



## A Recruiter's Insights

# Parents help Gen Z with jobs

Youngsters are dependent on elders to write CVs, select jobs



of Gen Z became job seekers after the pandemic. Thus, they are first-hand witnesses to their parents, and others around them, losing jobs, having their salaries slashed, or not getting the requisite bonuses and increments. This creates a sense of fear, doubts, even loathing among the youngsters. In addition, they have matured in an age of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which crept up, and then disrupted the workplaces in the past few years. This leads to more uncertainty about the future of jobs and, hence, the right selection becomes crucial to ensure that those jobs are not replaced by AI.

On the other hand, one can blame the trends to 'helicopter-parenting,' or times when the parents are obsessed about the future of their children, and feel the need to aggressively, yet passively, involve themselves in the decisions. The lack of genuine friends, not just online contacts, followers, and acquaintances, which leads to the earlier-

mentioned phenomenon of less social interaction plays a role. There are no mentors, and guides to offer mature advice, and parents are the closest things Gen Z can access, especially if they stay with them. The environment is closed, and includes siblings, parents, and elders.

However, if one looks for counterintuitive reasons, and out-of-the-box reasons, one can surmise that Gen Z, more than others, recognise the expanse of fake news, half-baked truths, and falsehoods. Given the dearth of friends, and other external mentors, they need to depend on someone who is credible, loyal, knowledgeable, and give good advice. This can come from parents. Recruiters lie, and so do employers. In every generation, employees are taken for a ride, either on salaries, responsibilities, or working hours. Gen Z is more careful. It avoids the risk that it knows lurks around every corner. It knows the value of truth.

In another way, jobs have expanded, at least in urban areas. Gen Z has gone beyond professional jobs like engineering, medicine, finance, marketing, and law, and seek to enter less-known 'gig' and creative areas. Gen Z knows that the sector or segment is not important. One can earn decent money if one is good, even as a cook, blogger (vlogger), and social media influencer (fashion, movies, and other skills). However, the contours of these new jobs are still evolving, and the youngsters need help to navigate these little-known spaces. They can only learn so much from search engines and AI tools.

At the same time, most jobs are turning out to be contractual, as gig workers, freelance, and even in small-time start-ups. Here, job negotiations are trickier and more opaque than in normal full-time ones. There are no standards and systems, as in established firms. Contracts may be less detailed, and open-ended. CVs need to be tuned to excite funders, and recruiters, especially in work-from-home cases. For such jobs, the requirements can be drastically different. For example, sticking to deadlines may be more important than the number of hours.

According to a media report that reported the survey, "Each generation enters the workplace under scrutiny. Baby boomers were called rigid. Millennials were labelled entitled. Now Gen Z faces questions about resilience and independence. Yet, perhaps, what we are witnessing is not weakness, but adaptation. In a volatile economy, collaboration (between children and parents) has become a survival skill. Family, once confined to the personal sphere, now spills into professional terrain. The recruiter's phone ringing with a parent on the line may seem unusual. But it reflects a broader cultural truth: The boundaries between home and work are shifting." As they will.

The deeper issue is not whether parents should be involved. It is about whether the relationship is consensual, and acceptable to the children. If there is comfort in the interaction, if parents are substitutes for mentors, gurus, and guides, who were earlier friends, teachers, and respected acquaintances, there is nothing wrong. But if the parents are professional crutches, and instruments of dependence due to insecurities, there may be a problem. It is up to Gen Z.

## Markets slumps over 1% as IT stocks crumble; Sensex plunges 1,000 pts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai

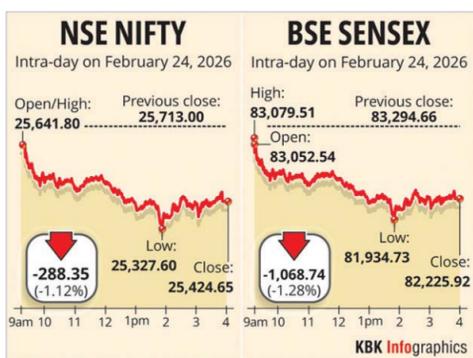
Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Tuesday, dragged down by heavy losses in IT stocks amid concerns over artificial intelligence-led disruption and renewed trade-related uncertainties.

Rising global crude prices amid escalating US-Iran tensions and sluggish global cues also hit investor sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex plummeted 1,068.74 points, or 1.28 per cent, to settle at 82,225.92. During the day, the benchmark plunged 1,359.93 points, or 1.63 per cent, to hit an intraday low of 81,934.73.

The 50-share NSE Nifty fell 288.35 points, or 1.12 per cent, to close at 25,424.65. In the intraday session, it depreciated by 385.4 points, or 1.49 per cent, to hit a low of 25,327.60.

"Domestic markets registered a sharp decline, led by significant weakness in IT stocks amid renewed global concerns over AI-driven disruption and margin pressures for traditional service providers," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit



Investments Ltd, said.

Global trade and tariff worries resurfaced as well, with additional pressure arising from Trump's warnings on trade deals and reports of possible national-security tariffs, he added.

Tech Mahindra emerged as the biggest laggard, declining by 6.6 per cent, followed by HCL Technologies, Eterna, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro, Trent, Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank, Bharat Electronics Ltd and ICICI Bank. On the other hand, NTPC, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Steel, PowerGrid, Titan, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, and

Sun Pharmaceuticals were among the gainers.

Broader indices also ended in the negative territory, with the BSE Smallcap Select Index falling 0.68 per cent, while the Midcap Select Index slipped 0.54 per cent.

Nair further said that realty stocks also came under strain on expectations that prolonged stress in the IT sector could weigh on real estate demand and valuations.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Shanghai's SSE Composite Index and Japan's Nikkei 225 benchmark ended higher, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng closed in red territory.

European stock markets were trading lower in mid-session deals, with Germany's DAX, London's FTSE 100 and Paris' CAC 40 trading down up to 0.27 per cent.

"Meanwhile, escalating US-Iran tensions, marked by embassy staff evacuations and Iran's warnings of wider regional escalation, intensified risk aversion. Overall, markets remain highly sensitive to geopolitical risks and sector-specific pressures, driving investors toward defensive, domestically focused segments," Nair said.

The US equity market ended nearly 2 per cent lower on Monday. Brent Crude, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.22 per cent to \$71.66 per barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹3,483.70 crore on Monday, while domestic institutional investors were net sellers of stocks worth ₹1,292.24 crore, according to exchange data.

On Monday, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 479.95 points to settle at 83,294.66, while the NSE Nifty advanced 141.75 points to close at 25,713.

## Uniform 15% tariff would benefit some Asia-Pacific economies: Moody's Analytics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

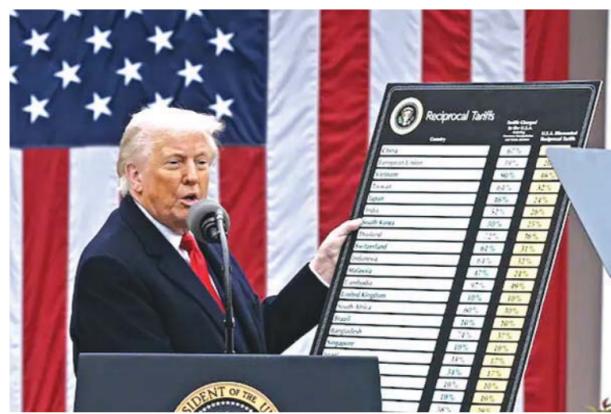
A uniform 15 per cent tariff, announced by US President Donald Trump, would benefit some Asia-Pacific economies that have faced much steeper country-specific levies, including China and much of Southeast Asia, Moody's Analytics said on Tuesday.

But it will have a small impact on countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (China), where the base rate is already 15 per cent, it said in a statement.

"There is a lot of uncertainty, but we do know a few things. A uniform 15 per cent tariff would benefit some Asia-Pacific economies that have faced much steeper country-specific levies," it said.

The US Supreme Court last week ruled against the Trump administration's country-specific tariffs after which Trump imposed 10 per cent tariffs on all countries for 150 days. He has also announced to increase it to 15 per cent. However, no order or proclamation has been issued so far in this regard.

"The court ruling also raises questions about the recent trade deals made with India and Indonesia. Key details such as the timeline for India to wind down purchases of Russian oil and the volume of tariff-free textile exports from Indonesia have yet to be finalised. India has delayed plans to send a delegation to Washington," it



said. It added that the court ruling limits Washington's ability to impose country-specific tariffs, which in turn limits its leverage in trade negotiations, including in high-stakes exchanges such as the meeting between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in a little over a month.

"We expect Trump to find other legal routes to raise tariffs, and we wouldn't be surprised if US tariffs end up close to where they sat before Friday. Some Governments may slow-walk ratification of trade deals with the US, but we think they are unlikely to quit altogether for fear of inviting more punitive tariffs," it said.

Even in a best-case scenario, where tariffs eventually settle below the rates in place before February 20, there will be plenty of trade uncertainty and logistical mess, it said, adding that firms may seek compensation for tariffs already paid — a process that could prove highly contentious and time-consuming.

"We may also see a fresh round of front-loading; if US importers treat the ruling as a temporary reprieve, they could rush shipments before tariff walls rise again. In short, the decision may offer momentary relief, but business and policymakers would be wise to keep the champagne on ice," it said.

## AI transition to be painful for IT industry as it involves humans: HCLTech CEO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai

Amid widespread concerns on jobs and the relevance of the nearly \$300 billion India IT services sector, a key industry leader on Tuesday said the current transition will be "painful" because it involves humans.

HCL Technologies Managing Director and Chief Executive C Vijayakumar, however, said this is not the time to write an obituary for the industry, underlining that the ability to manage complex enterprise technology architectures and domain understanding will ensure its relevance.

Recounting how the industry navigated changes like the opportunities after the Y2K in the past,

Vijayakumar said the industry will have to reinvent, and added that investor concerns on IT stocks are "overblown".

"I would say this transition (brought by AI) is different from the other transitions. Its going to be painful because it really involves people," the CEO of the third largest Indian IT services company said while speaking at industry lobby grouping Nasscom's NTLF event here.

It can be recalled that a lot of tech companies globally, and also some in India have opted to sack people as AI models automate work and do it a lot more efficiently.

Vijayakumar said the IT services companies deal with a lot of complexities and the context in which they operate will make them



HCL Technologies Managing Director and Chief Executive C Vijayakumar

relevant. This is the biggest inflection point for the Indian IT sector and an opportunity to completely re-imagine the sector over the next 5-10 years, he said. Stressing that the industry has a "promising road ahead", Vijayakumar pointed out that while Anthropic's Claude will be very good at coding — just 30 per cent of software development involves coding.

Demand for specialised skills will grow in the future, he said, adding that people will have to focus on doing innovative and higher order work. Later, he told reporters that there is a need for reskilling and ensuring how the same person can deliver up to four times efficiencies using AI tools.

About strides announced by

Anthropic in streamlining COBOL Code overnight, Vijayakumar hinted that COBOL conversion is one part of the wider modernisation work of the 50-year-old mainframe, hinting that there will be opportunities.

He said software as a service (SaaS) companies, who reported high growths in the last few years by charging more from clients, will be the ones who stand to face some challenges going forward as they are not able to realise the same prices.

Vijayakumar also suggested that the hyperscalers who invest very high sums of money in setting up infrastructure, may find it challenging going ahead as revenues they book will not be high enough to justify the investments.

## India FY26 tech revenues grow 6.1%, says Nasscom



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai

Despite geopolitics-inducing volatilities and changes in the landscape due to artificial intelligence platforms, the Indian tech sector is set to notch up a 6.1 per cent revenue growth in FY26 to \$315 billion, Nasscom said on Tuesday.

The industry's lobby grouping said it was able to add jobs in FY26, with 1.35 lakh new additions to take the overall number of direct employees to 59.5 lakh as against 58.15 lakh at the end of FY25.

The industry had added 1.33 lakh jobs on a net basis in FY25, which is set to grow to 1.35 lakh in FY26. The growth in net additions at 2,000 is one of the slowest in many years.

Its President Rajesh Nambiar said there is a non-linearity between job growth at 2.3 per cent, and revenue growth at 6.1 per cent, but expressed satisfaction at the industry continuing to be a net employee generator.

Nasscom said even as the tech landscape undergoes changes, it expects employee additions to continue going ahead as well.

The body said over 20 lakh of the 59.5 lakh employees have been upskilled in AI, which includes up to 3 lakh

on advanced AI skills. In the strategic review of the ongoing fiscal year, Nasscom estimated the overall AI revenues at \$10-12 billion in FY26, while Nambiar said not all companies report AI revenue.

The grouping also upwardly reviewed its FY25 revenue to \$297 billion from the \$282.6 billion estimate given in the review ahead of the end of the fiscal-year in February last year.

Speaking of the industry-wide trends and reasons behind the revenue growth in FY26, Nambiar acknowledged the headwinds witnessed by the industry but added that the "reality" is that technology spends continue to grow, albeit in newer areas, which were not traditional.

The core IT services revenues are expected to grow to \$149 billion in FY26 from \$143 billion in FY25, while the same for business process management will increase to \$59 billion from \$55 billion last fiscal year, software products are set to go to \$23 billion in FY26 from \$21 billion in FY25.

Engineering, research and development revenues are set to grow to \$63 billion from \$59 billion, while the hardware companies' revenues are set to grow to \$21 billion from \$19 billion in the last fiscal year.

## Cabinet clears civil enclave at Srinagar airport for ₹1,677 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved the expansion of the civil enclave at the Srinagar International Airport at an estimated cost of ₹1,677 crore. The expansion of the civil enclave will mark a major milestone in strengthening aviation infrastructure and connectivity in the Kashmir Valley. Generally, a civil enclave refers to the area allotted at an airport belonging to any armed force for commercial flights.

"The project scope also

73.18 acres, will feature a state-of-the-art terminal building spanning 71,500 square meters, including 20,659 square meters of existing structure. The terminal building will be designed to serve 2,900 passengers during peak hours and an annual capacity of 10 million passengers per annum (MPPA).

"The expanded apron will accommodate 15 aircraft parking bays, including 1 wide-body (Code E) (9 existing and 6 proposed), while the 3,658m x 45m runway continues to be operated by the IAF. The project will

## Cabinet approves three railway projects covering eight districts in four States

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday approved three Railway ministry projects with a total cost of approximately 9,072 crore.

The three projects include the doubling of the Gondia-Jabalpur section and the laying of the third and fourth lines between Purnakh-Kiul and Gamharia-Chandil sections.

The Government said that these projects covering eight districts across Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand will increase the existing network of the Indian Railways by about 307 km.

"The proposed multi-tracking project will enhance connectivity to approximately 5,407 villages which have a population of about 98 lakhs," an official statement



said. It added, "The increased line capacity will significantly enhance mobility, resulting in improved operational efficiency and service reliability for Indian Railways. These multi-tracking proposals are poised to streamline operations and alleviate congestion."

The Railway ministry said the projects are in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a new India which will make people of the region 'Atmanirbhar' by way of comprehensive

development in the area which will enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities.

Outlining the benefits, the statement said, "The projects are planned on PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan with focus on enhancing multi-modal connectivity and logistic efficiency through integrated planning and stakeholder consultations. These projects will provide seamless connectivity for the movement of people, goods and

services." It added, "The proposed capacity enhancement will improve rail connectivity to several prominent tourist destinations across the country, including Kachnar Shiv Temple (Jabalpur), Kanha National Park (Balaghat), Gangulpara Dam and Waterfall, Pench National Park, Dhuandhar waterfall, Bargi Dam, Gomji-Somji temple, Chandil Dam, Dalma Hill Top, Hesakocho Waterfall, Rajjama Ghati, Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, etc."

Since these projects are on essential routes for transportation of commodities such as coal, steel, iron ore, cement, ballast and stone chips, fly ash, fertilisers, limestone, manganese, dolomite, foodgrains, POL etc, the Ministry said that the capacity augmentation works will result in additional freight traffic of magnitude 52 MTPA (Million Tonnes Per Annum).

## Average pay hike across sectors projected at 9.1% in 2026: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai

Employees across sectors are expected to get a salary hike of 9.1 per cent on average in 2026, slightly higher than the increment of 8.9 per cent received last year, a survey said on Tuesday.

The projected 9.1 per cent salary increase reflects a slight uptick from the actual 8.9 per cent hike recorded in 2025, which signals sustained salary movement, said global professional services firm AON, citing its 'Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2025-26 India'.

The latest survey, the 32nd edition, is based on an analysis of data from more than 1,400 organisations across



45 industries in the country. The projected salary hikes will vary depending on industries, it said. The workforce in the real estate and infrastructure sectors is expected to get the maximum pay hike of 10.2 per cent on average, followed by those working in non-banking

financial companies (NBFCs) at 10.1 per cent, it said.

Employees in the automotive and vehicle manufacturing sectors are expected to get a hike of 9.9 per cent, while those in engineering design services could expect an increment of 9.9 per cent.

## India's GDP likely to register over 8% growth in Sept-Dec: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The Indian economy is expected to record a growth rate closer to 8.1 per cent in the September-December quarter under the revised series with the new base year of 2022-23, a report said on Tuesday.

The country witnessed a growth rate of 8 per cent in the first half of the ongoing financial year ending in March 2026.

According to the first advance estimate of the National Statistics Office (NSO) last month, real GDP has been estimated to grow by 7.4 per cent in FY 2025-26 against the growth rate of 6.5 per cent in the previous financial year.



The second advance estimates of GDP for FY26, incorporating additional data and revisions, are scheduled to be released on February 27. So, all the previous quarterly numbers of the first quarter and the second quarter are expected to change with the change in base year to 2022-23. "High-frequency activity data indicates resilient eco-

nom activity in 3QFY26. Rural consumption remains strong, driven by positive signals from farm and non-farm activity. Supported by fiscal stimulus, urban consumption shows a consistent uptick since the last festive season," a report from State Bank of India's Economic Research Department said.

FROM THE WORLD

CHINA  
Siberian tigers put on fasting

Nearly 200 Siberian tigers at an animal park in China have been put on a rotational "intermittent fasting programme" following excessive feeding by tourists during the just-concluded Chinese New Year holidays. The intermittent fasting of the big cats at the Siberian Tiger Park in Heilongjiang province is aimed at improving the health of the animals, the state-run Global Times reported on Monday, quoting park officials. The park witnessed a massive influx of tourists during the holiday season, accompanied by increased feeding activity, which officials said necessitated corrective dietary measures. In a public notice, the park said it is implementing the rotational fasting programme till March 31 to safeguard the health and welfare of the tigers.

UK  
Apologise for racial slur

London, Feb 24 (AP) The British Academy Film Awards and BBC apologised Monday for a racial slur that was broadcast during Sunday's show while two stars of the film "Sinners" were onstage. The Tourette syndrome campaigner who shouted the slur said he was "deeply mortified" and what he said was "not a reflection of my personal beliefs." The highly offensive word could be heard as "Sinners" stars Michael B. Jordan and Delroy Lindo, who are both Black, were presenting the award for best visual effects during Sunday's ceremony.

# 4 years on, Putin has not broken Ukrainians: Zelenskyy

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was defiant despite the devastating toll — insisting that Russia has not "broken Ukrainians" nor triumphed in the war.

Zelenskyy said his country has withstood the onslaught by Russia's bigger and better-equipped army, which over the past year of fighting captured just 0.79 per cent of Ukraine's territory, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank. "Looking back at the beginning of the invasion and reflecting on today, we have every right to say: we have defended our independence, we have not lost our statehood," Zelenskyy said on social media, adding that Russian President Vladimir Putin has "not achieved his goals." "He has not broken Ukrainians; he has not won this war," Zelenskyy said.



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen is welcomed by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his wife Olena Zelenska before a service at St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, Ukraine

war of attrition enters its fifth year, a US-led diplomatic push to end Europe's biggest armed conflict since World War II appears no closer to finding compromises that might make a peace deal possible. Negotiations are stuck on what happens to the Donbas, eastern Ukraine's industrial heartland, which Russian forces mostly occupy but have failed to seize completely, and the terms of a postwar security arrangement that Kyiv is demanding to deter any future Russian invasion. The number of soldiers killed, injured or missing on both sides could reach 2 million by spring, with Russia sustaining the largest number of troop deaths for any major power in any conflict since World War II, a report last month from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies estimated.

Talks are no closer to peace

However, as the corrosive

war of attrition enters its fifth year, a US-led diplomatic push to end Europe's biggest armed conflict since World War II appears no closer to finding compromises that might make a peace deal possible.

EUROPEAN OFFICIALS VISIT UKRAINE

Kyiv: More than a dozen senior European officials arrived in the Ukrainian capital on Tuesday in a show of support on the fourth anniversary of Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine — a grim anniversary in a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and put European leaders on edge about the scale of Moscow's ambitions on the continent. European leaders see their countries' own security at stake in Ukraine amid concerns about Putin's wider goals and has demanded its leaders be consulted in the ongoing US-brokered talks. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz wrote on X that "for four years, every day and every night has been a nightmare for the Ukrainians — and not just for them, but for us all. Because war is back in Europe." "We will only end it by being strong together, because the fate of Ukraine is our fate," he added. The war has drawn in countries far beyond Ukraine, giving the conflict a global dimension, and threatened to worsen shortages, hunger and political instability in developing countries. While NATO countries have come to Ukraine's aid, Russia has been helped by North Korea, which has sent troops and artillery shells; Iran, which has provided drone technology; and China, which the US and analysts say has provided machine tools and chips.

# Australia begins sweeping public inquiry probing antisemitism

ROD MCGUIRK  
Melbourne

A wide-ranging federal inquiry began on Tuesday into a rise in antisemitism across Australia before two gunmen believed to be inspired by the Islamic State group allegedly killed 15 people at a Sydney Jewish festival in December.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced last month that Australia's most powerful form of public inquiry, known as a royal commission, would investigate the Dec. 14 massacre at



Royal Commissioner Virginia Bell

Bondi Beach. Alleged shooter Sajid Naveed was shot dead by police. His son, Naveed Akram, faces charges including committing a terrorist act, 15 counts of murder and 40 counts of attempted

murder. He has entered no pleas. Royal Commissioner Virginia Bell, who heads the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, said she did not want evidence that she heard to prejudice Akram's criminal trial.

"One might expect a royal commission set up to inquire into an attack would lead evidence of it and of the heroism of those who sort to confront the shooters and of those who ran toward the gunfire to offer medical assistance to the wounded," Bell said in an opening address.

"The trial of that individual (Akram) will be the occasion to lead evidence of the attack. This commission must do its work without risking any prejudice to that criminal proceeding," she added. Royal commissions, which can imprison witnesses who refuse to cooperate, often request time extensions as more evidence is discovered.

Bell is the sole commissioner. As well as lawyers, the commission's staff include analysts, researchers and other office workers, according to Richard Lancaster,

who leads a team of lawyers in his role as the Senior Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission. Lancaster's job is to manage the investigation's direction, present Bell with evidence and question witnesses.

Completing her report by the deadline of the massacre's first anniversary is a "matter of critical importance," Bell said. "This imposes a tight time frame and it's going to impose limitations on how the commission approaches its terms of reference," the retired high court judge said.

# Ex-PM Imran taken to hospital for treatment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Islamabad

Pakistan's incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan on early Tuesday was taken from jail to a hospital here for treatment of an eye ailment and later shifted back, officials said.

Khan was diagnosed last month with right central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) affecting his vision. He was brought to the Pakistan



Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) for a second dose of anti-VEGF intravitreal injection, a doctor at the hospital said.

# Peter Mandelson released on bail in Epstein probe

PAN PYLAS AND JILL LAWLESS  
London

Police in Britain said Peter Mandelson, the former UK ambassador to the United States, has been released on bail after he was arrested in a misconduct probe stemming from his ties to the late Jeffrey Epstein.

It came days after a friendship with Epstein landed the former Prince Andrew in police custody. A Metropolitan Police spokesperson said in a statement issued just after 2 am. Tuesday: "A 72-year-old man arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office has been released on bail pending further investigation. The man was not named, in keeping with British police practice, but the suspect in the case previously was identified as the former diplomat, who is 72."

Mandelson was filmed being led from his London home to a car by plainclothes officers on Monday afternoon. Both Mandelson and Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the former Prince Andrew, are suspected of improperly passing UK Government infor-



mation to the disgraced US financier, and the high-profile British arrests are some of the most dramatic fallout from the trove of more than 3 million pages of Epstein-related documents released last month by the US Justice Department. Claims of leaked Government information Police are investigating Mandelson over claims he passed sensitive Government information to Epstein a decade and a half ago. He does not face allegations of sexual misconduct. His arrest came four days after Mountbatten-Windsor was arrested in a separate case on suspicion of a similar offense related to his friendship with Epstein.

# Lebanese urges Hezbollah to avoid US-Iran conflict

JAMEY KEATEN  
Geneva

The Lebanese Government has urged the Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah not to get involved if any fighting erupts between the United States and Iran, the Lebanese foreign minister said on Tuesday, expressing concerns about a new possible conflict with Israel.

Speaking to a small group of journalists in Geneva, Yousef Rajji said Lebanese officials had been warned that in the event of another Israel-Hezbollah war, Israel would strike harder against civilian infrastructure across Lebanon than in the previous round of fighting.

The appeal comes amid growing concerns that the US might carry out new strikes against Iran. Iran held annual military drills with Russia on Thursday as a second US aircraft carrier drew closer to the Middle East.

Both the US and Iran have signalled they are prepared for war if talks on Tehran's nuclear program fizzle out. Rajji said Lebanese authorities had appealed to Hezbollah, which has fought several wars with Israel, most recently in 2024, not to respond in any way that could trigger "bad situations" for Lebanese civilians.

"Lebanon has received signs that the Israelis could strike civilian infrastructure and maybe the airport" in Beirut, Rajji said in Geneva, where he was attending a Human Rights Council session.

During the last Israel-



Hezbollah war in 2024, the airport was not hit and remained operational throughout the conflict. In a month-long war between the two in 2006, Israel struck the Beirut airport.

Many Lebanese civilians have been killed, wounded or displaced in previous rounds of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah.

Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel a day after the militant Palestinian group Hamas attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023, triggering the war in Gaza. After months of low-level fighting, the conflict escalated into a full-scale war in September 2024, when Israel launched a bombardment that killed much of Hezbollah's leadership, followed by a ground invasion, severely weakening Hezbollah before a US-brokered ceasefire nominally halted the fighting.

Israel has continued to launch near-daily strikes in Lebanon since the November 2024 ceasefire, which it says aims to stop Hezbollah from rebuilding.

**noida** New Okhla Industrial Development Authority  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)  
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors / firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website [www.noidaauthorityonline.in](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.in) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S. No.	Job No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	27/GM/DGM/SM(WC-10)/2025-26	Strengthening of road (C/o Service road both side along Hindon Pusta road and other mise, work on 45.00 mtr. wide road Under Metro Line along Sector-146 to 147), Noida.	97.31
2	30/GM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	D/o & M/o Village (Providing & Laying of C.C. on damage roads & repair of drains at different location in Village Nalgarha), Noida.	62.99
3	65/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2023-24	Construction of balance service road of 75.00 wide road in between sector-150 & 149, Noida.	78.23
4	22/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-2026	M/o Road (Repairing of CC Road at Jhuggi Jhopri Punerwas Yojana Sector-122), Noida.	63.44
5	24/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-2026	M/o Road (Painting, Repairing of Central Verge and Footpath and Relaying of Tiles on Footpath on MP-3 road from Sector-71 to Hindon Bridge), Noida.	46.10
6	27/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-2026	M/o Drain (M/o MP-3 Drain from Sector-71 to Parthala Chowk), Noida.	65.73
7	29/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-2026	Development of Sector-117 (Improvement of road side Patris and repair of drain at different location in Sector-117), Noida.	37.75
8	30/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-2026	M/o Road (Re-Construction of footpath and other Mise, work on 24.00 mtr. wide road in front of Mahadev Apartment in Sector-73), Noida.	97.01
9	31/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-2026	External Development of Sector-75, 76, 77, 78 and 79 (Maintenance work on Parties and other Maintenance on 30.00 mtr. and 45.00 mtr. wide road near Vedvan Park in Sector-78), Noida.	37.85
10	36/DGM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2025-26	D/o Expressway (M/o Bus Shelter on Noida-Greater-Noida Expressway from Ch. 0.00Km to 10.00 Km) Noida	49.60
11	37/DGM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2025-26	M/o Road (Construction of Divider/Barricading barrier on Accident prone Locations in WC-9 Area) Noida	81.97
12	31/DGM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2025-26	D/o Village (M/o Road Providing and Laying of C.C Pavement C/o Drain and Cover of drain, jaal work in Village Main Road Baratghar and Different Gali in Village-Bakhtawarpur) Noida.	56.27

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 11.03.2026 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened / downloaded on dated 12.03.2026 at 11.00 AM.

**B) Re-Tender Work:**

S. No.	Job No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
13	13/DGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2025-26	M/o Road (R/o Patch Work in WC-10 area), Noida.	79.96
14	16/GM/SM(WC-6)/2025-26	M/o Road (Repair of Patch work, Painting and other Misc. work on Sector-51, 52, 71 and 72 Underpass, Road between Sector-74, 75, 76, 77 (North Eye Road), Road between Sector-74, 75, 74-117 and Road between Sector-78, 79, 101), Noida.	69.35
15	24/DGM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2025-26	D/o Village (C/o C.C. Road in 5% Abadi and Buddha Park Main road, fixing of MS Jaal at different location in Village Sultanpur, Sector-128), Noida.	44.32

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 06.03.2026 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened / downloaded on dated 09.03.2026 at 11.00 AM.

General Manager (Civil), NOIDA

**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**BSES BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi**  
**TENDER NOTICE** Date: 25.02.2026  
Sealed tenders under two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) are invited for following jobs from all the bidders.

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Estimated Cost (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/26-27/FK/CR/AL/1331	RENEWAL OF GROUP TERM LIFE & OTHER RELATED INSURANCE POLICIES FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF BRPL FOR FY : 2026-27	4.35 Crore	10.03.2026 15:00 HRS	10.03.2026 15:30 HRS
CMC/BR/26-27/FK/CR/AL/1332	RENEWAL OF VARIOUS GENERAL INSURANCE POLICIES IN BRPL FOR FY : 2026-27	18.11 Crore	10.03.2026 15:00 HRS	10.03.2026 15:30 HRS

For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc. please visit our website [www.bsesdelhi.com](http://www.bsesdelhi.com)

Head (Contracts & Materials)

Regd. Off. : BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No. : U40109DL2001PLC111527  
Telephone No. : +91 11 4910 7235 | Website : www.bsesdelhi.com

**Baba Farid University of Health Science**  
Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151203 Ph. 01639-256232, 256236

**E-Tender Notice**  
Online bids are invited through the e-tendering portal of the Government of Punjab. Last date for submission of online bids of following tender's is 11-03-2026  
1) Digital Physiography (Single Channel) 2) Digital Physiography (Three Channel) 3) Laparocator. 4) Supply and Installation of Physiotherapy Equipment for Goidwal.  
Last date for submission of online bids of following tender's is 19-03-2026  
1) Purchase of Indian & Foreign Journals.  
Note:- Tender Document can be downloaded from <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> and [www.bfufs.ac.in](http://www.bfufs.ac.in)

REGISTRAR  
1576/12/2025-26/8685 Dated CHD :- 24/02/2026

**कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, कोरबा ( छत्तीसगढ़ )**  
**ई-प्रोक्वैरमेंट आरएफपी सूचना**  
क्र. 1495/ज.प./2026 दिनांक : 19.02.2026  
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु शोड्यूल अनुसार लमसम दरों पर E-tendering के माध्यम से आर.एफ.पी. आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)	निविदा खलने की अंतिम तिथि (T. No.)
1	Construction, Testing, Commissioning of all the Components of Improvement to Korba Water Supply Scheme with 03 Months Trial Run and 09 Months O & M. (DMF Fund) (1st Call)	2943.87	18.03.2026 (T. No. 185944)

उपरोक्त कार्यों की आरएफपी की जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वैरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से खोलने के बाद जा सकती है, साथ ही निगम के वेब साइट [www.korbamunicipal.in](http://www.korbamunicipal.in) एवं [www.korba.urbanecg.gov.in](http://www.korba.urbanecg.gov.in) पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

॥ स्वच्छ भारत निर्माण में योगदान दें ॥  
अधीक्षण अभियंता  
नगर पालिक निगम कोरबा ( छत्तीसगढ़ )

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Known to all that my client Sh. Manish Kumar Mahajan owner of the Second Floor, Property No. 166/L1, Area 55 Sq. Yds., Mustali No. 18, Killa No. 9, Nanhey Park, In Block-B, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, and My Client Purchase addressad property from Sh. Surinder Mehra vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will Dated 06.12.2025, Now My Client wants to sell addressad property. It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 08 days of this publication.

**AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION**  
Ch. No. 760 / Dwarika Court Sector-10, Dwarika, New Delhi-75  
Mobile : 9899013918

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
It is for general information that I, Umesh Kumar Jindal S/o Late Shri Tilk Chand Jindal R/o D-120, Vivek Vihar, Delhi-110095 have lost my original Transfer Deed of Plot No. D-52, Chander Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.201011, Which was Executed By Shri Om Prakash Mehta And Shri Gyan Prakash Mehta in favour of Shri Santosh Goyal vide Book No. 1, Vol No. 396, on pages 32-34, serial No. 577 and musanna No. 578, Dated 25.06.1986 in the office of S.R. Dadr, U.P. Finder pls Contact: 9654439742 and if anybody or financial institutions have objection, he/she may contact within 10 (Ten) days from this publication of this notice and thereafter no claim whatsoever shall be entertained in the future.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement system**  
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	7726719A	CHECK RAIL ASSEMBLY FOR LEVEL CROSSING AS PER RDSO	4272 SET	18-03-26
02	77269027	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR 10MM THICK CGRSP	3401112 NOS	23-03-26
03	19255046A	MACHINE ROOM BLOWER INCLUDING MOTOR	186 NOS	23-03-26
04	77269037	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR 10MM THICK CGRSP	114000 NOS	06-04-26
05	77269022	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR GALVANIZED PLATE SCREW	146130 NOS	13-04-26

NOTE-1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.

Tender Notice No. 89/2025-2026 Dated : 24.02.2026 626/2026

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot**  
Ph: 01639-256232, 256236

**VACANCIES**  
Advt. No. BFU-26/04  
Online applications are invited w.e.f 27/02/2026 to 19.03.2026 from eligible candidates through University website i.e. [www.bfufs.ac.in](http://www.bfufs.ac.in) for the recruitment to the posts of Staff Nurse-200 under Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot. For Application form, fee, specially wise detail of posts, Category wise distribution and other terms & conditions, visit University website: [www.bfufs.ac.in](http://www.bfufs.ac.in)  
Note: For updates please visit University website regularly.  
Application Fee (non-refundable) will be charged as under:-  
All Categories except SC Category Rs. 2360/- (Fee Rs. 2000+ GST Rs. 360 @ 18%)  
For SC Category Rs. 1180/- (Fee Rs. 1000+GST Rs. 180 @ 18%)

Sd/-  
REGISTRAR  
3108/12/2025-26/8692 Dated CHD :- 24/02/2026

**The Pioneer Classified**

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, SHAISTA, W/O MATLOOB HUSAIN, resident of Flat No-613, Golf Vista Apartment, Alfa-2, Greater Noida-201306 Uttar Pradesh India, have changed my name from SHAISTA to SHAISTA KHANAM. Henceforth I shall be known as SHAISTA KHANAM for all future purposes. PD(357)C I, BHUPENDER SINGH alias PAPPU S/o Ram Singh R/o H. No.-80, Dugchari Malakpur, District: Saharanpur, State: Uttar Pradesh- 247554, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as BHUPENDER SINGH. PD(358)C I, Imran Malik S/o Aleemuddeen R/o RC-882, Deepak Vihar, Khora Colony, Ghaziabad U.P.-201309 hereby solemnly affirm and declare that the actual name of my father and mother is Aleemuddeen and Sayra Bano instead of Alimuddin Malik and Saira Malik. Both the name refer's to same person's. PD(359)C

## Sudanese paramilitary forces kill 28 in Darfur

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Cairo

An attack by the Sudanese paramilitary forces (RSF) on a stronghold of a Darfur tribal leader left at least 28 people dead, a doctors group said on Tuesday.

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces rampaged through the town of Misteriha in North Darfur province, according to the Sudan Doctors Network, which tracks the country's ongoing war.

The town is a stronghold of Arab tribal leader Musa Hilal who also hails from the Rizeigat Arab tribe as the majority of the members of the paramilitary RSF. At least 39 people, including 10



women, were wounded in the attack, the medical group said. Sudan's war erupted in 2023 after tensions between the Sudanese army and the rival RSF escalated into fighting that began in Khartoum and spread nationwide, killing thousands, triggering mass displacement, disease outbreaks, and severe food insecurity.

Aid workers were frequently targeted. The medical group said RSF shelling hit the town's healthcare centre on Monday, after which the RSF fighters assaulted medical staff and detained at least one of them. The paramilitaries began their offensive on the town over the weekend with drone strikes that hit Hilal's guesthouse.

The RSF launched a major ground offensive and took over the town.

The seizure of Misteriha has asserted RSF control of Darfur. However, it risks escalating tribal tensions in an area long known for violence and war.

Attack came four months after the RSF overran el

Fasher, the provincial capital of North Darfur after 18 months of siege.

The paramilitaries killed more than 6,000 people between October 25 and October 27 in the city. The attack was marked by atrocities that UN-backed experts said bore "the hallmarks of genocide." The war has created the world's largest humanitarian crisis, with over 14 million forced to flee their homes. It has fueled disease outbreaks and pushed parts of the country into famine that still spreads as fighting shows no sign of abating.

The latest report by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification earlier this month warned that

severe acute malnutrition, the most dangerous and deadly form of malnutrition, is expected to increase to 800,000 cases, up 4 per cent from 2025.

Aid groups have long struggled to meet the growing needs of displaced people across the country and called for a ceasefire to secure aid delivery to remote areas in Darfur and Kordofan — another hotbed in the war.

"The main thing that needs to happen is, of course, a ceasefire," said Zia Salik, interim UK director of Islamic Relief, an aid group working in Sudan. "Ultimately, that is what's causing the pain and the difficulty for all of the civilians that are caught in the crosshairs."

## Ousted President Yoon appeals life sentence for martial law



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Seoul

South Korea's jailed former president, Yoon Suk Yeol, has appealed his life sentence for rebellion over his brief imposition of martial law in December 2024, his lawyers said on Tuesday.

The conservative leader, who faces multiple trials over his power grab, expressed defiance following his conviction at the Seoul Central District Court last week. He called the decision illogical, said his actions were "solely for the sake of the nation and our people," and accused the judge of being biased against him.

In a text message, Yoon's lawyers said they aimed to address the supposed "errors in fact-finding and

misinterpretations of the law" contained in last Thursday's ruling. The case will now be sent to a specialized panel at a Seoul High Court established under a law passed in December to handle cases involving rebellion, treason and foreign subversion. "We will never be silent about what we view as an excessive indictment by a special prosecutor, the contradictory judgment rendered by the lower court based on that premise, and its political circumstances," Yoon's legal team said.

Yoon's martial law decree, announced late at night on Dec. 3, 2024, lasted about six hours until a quorum of lawmakers broke through a blockade of heavily armed soldiers and police at the National Assembly.

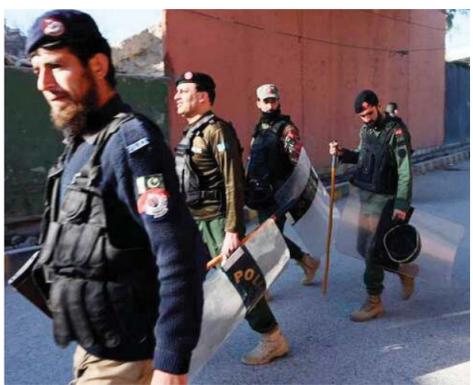
## Militants kill six policemen in Pakistan's KPK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Peshawar

At least six policemen were killed and one other was injured in a militant attack on a police van in Kohat district of Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province on Tuesday, local police said.

District Police Officer Kohat said the attack occurred on Shakardara Road, where assailants ambushed the police vehicle, resulting in multiple casualties.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Wahid Mehmood and two gunners were initially reported killed, while four personnel sustained injuries and were rushed to the hospital. Three of the injured



officials later succumbed to injuries, raising the death toll to six. Police officials said the

attackers also torched the police van after the assault and fled the scene. A heavy contingent of

police was deployed to the area, and a search operation was launched to track down the perpetrators.

Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Afridi strongly condemned the attack and sought a detailed report from the Inspector General of Police.

Termining the incident "extremely tragic," the chief minister described the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police as the first line of defence against terrorism.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi also strongly condemned the attack on police saying that the law and order situation in KP's southern districts had deteriorated significantly.

## Nepal poll results to be out within 24 hours: ACEC

SHIRISH B PRADHAN  
Kathmandu

Nepal's Acting Chief Election Commissioner (ACEC) Ram Prasad Bhandari said the results of the elections scheduled for March 5 will be published within 24 hours of collecting the ballot boxes.

A total of 18.9 million eligible voters will exercise their franchise to elect 275 members of the House of Representatives (HoR).

While 165 lawmakers will be elected through direct voting, 110 will be elected under the proportional voting system that allows for the representation of minorities and smaller parties in the parliament.

The Election Commission plans to begin vote counting immediately after the ballot boxes are collected, Bhandari told a private news agency.

He said while it may take one or two days to declare the results under the proportional representation system, the outcomes of the direct voting or first-past-the-post (FPTP) system will be announced within 24 hours of ballot collection.

The proportional representation (PR) system is used to elect 110 of the 275 members of the HoR based on the total votes received by political parties nationwide.

Voters cast a separate ballot for a party, and seats are allocated in proportion to each party's share of votes. Parties must ensure inclusion of women and



Ram Prasad Bhandari

marginalised groups such as dalits, janajatis, madhesis and minorities in their PR candidate lists. This system aims to make parliament more representative of Nepal's social and ethnic diversity.

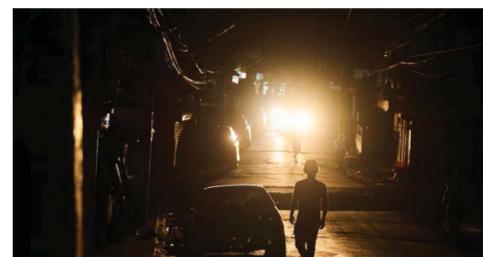
Election Commission spokesperson Narayan Prasad Bhattarai said the dispatch of ballot papers to areas outside the Kathmandu Valley has already been completed.

He said the distribution of ballot papers to some constituencies in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur districts will be completed by Tuesday night.

Polling will be held from 7 am to 5 pm on March 5.

The Commission has allowed political parties and candidates to campaign from February 16 to March 2. The silence period, during which no campaign activities will be permitted, will begin at midnight on March 2. The Nepal-India border will be sealed 72 hours before voting starts, officials said. (PTI)

## Dominican Republic hit by country-wide blackout



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Santo Domingo

The Dominican Republic was briefly hit by a country-wide blackout Monday in the second such outage in the past three months, triggering concerns about the stability of the Caribbean nation's power grid. Monday's blackout snarled traffic, disrupted public transportation and forced some businesses to close as crews scrambled to restore power. The country's main power plants abruptly stopped supplying energy before noon, causing all other plants to shut down, according to the state-owned

Dominican Electricity Transmission Company. But by mid-afternoon, the system was operating at nearly 30 per cent of its capacity, Energy Minister Joel Santos said. "Essential services such as hospitals, drinking water systems, mass transit and airports are operating with their backup systems," he said. Santos said that the failure was caused by a trip in a transmission line switch, which caused the system to go into protection mode. A massive blackout that hit the Dominican Republic last November was blamed on human error during line maintenance work.

## French spat with US ambassador

JOHN LEICESTER  
Paris

France's spat with the US ambassador to Paris took another turn on Tuesday with the French foreign minister saying the top US diplomat in France must respond to a summons and won't have access to French Government officials until he complies.

French authorities had summoned Ambassador Charles Kushner — the father of US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and

## Gunmen in military uniforms storm a rural Ecuador property, killing 7

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Quito (Ecuador)

Armed men in military uniforms Monday broke into a rural property in western Ecuador, killing at least seven people, police said.

It was the latest in a wave of drug-related violence that has led to soaring homicide rates in the South American nation.

Ecuadorian police said the attack took place early in the morning when a dozen people disguised as soldiers and carrying weapons stormed a seaside property in Manabi and riddled the victims with



bullets, including three adult brothers.

Ecuador's homicide rate has quintupled since 2020, with the South American nation registering its highest homicide rate in

recent history last year - when there were 50 homicides per every 100,000 residents, according to the Interior Ministry.

The spike in violent crime comes as drug gangs from Mexico and Colombia and their local allies fight over the control of drug-trafficking routes and ports that are used to ship cocaine toward the United States.

In January, Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa declared a state of emergency in seven provinces, enabling police to search homes without warrants and the military to patrol urban areas.

## Democrats call for Govt to refund billions in Trump tariff money

JOSH BOAK  
Washington

A trio of Senate Democrats is calling for the Government to start refunding roughly \$175 billion in tariff revenues that the Supreme Court ruled were collected because of an illegal set of orders by President Donald Trump.

Senate Ron Wyden of Oregon, Ed Markey of Massachusetts and Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire are unveiling a bill on Monday that would require US Customs and Border Protection to issue refunds over the course of 180 days and pay interest on the refunded amount.

The measure would prioritise refunds to small busi-



Senate Ron Wyden of Oregon

nesses and encourages importers, wholesalers and large companies to pass the refunds on to their customers." Trump's illegal tax scheme has already done lasting damage to American families, small businesses and manufacturers who have been hammered by wave after wave of new

Trump tariffs," said Wyden, stressing that the "crucial first step" to fixing the problem begins with "putting money back in the pockets of small businesses and manufacturers as soon as possible."

The bill is unlikely to become law, but it reveals how Democrats are starting

to apply public pressure on a Trump administration that has shown little interest in trying to return tariff revenues after the Supreme Court announced its 6-3 ruling on Friday.

Because of the ruling, going into November's midterm elections for control of Congress, Democrats have begun telling the public that Trump illegally raised taxes and now refuses to repay the money back to the American people.

Shaheen said that repairing any of the damage caused by the tariffs in the form of higher prices starts with "President Trump refunding the illegally collected tariff taxes that Americans were forced to pay." Markey stressed that small business

tend to have "little to no resources" and a "refund process can be extremely difficult and time consuming" for companies.

The Trump administration has asserted that its hands are tied, because any refunds should be the responsibility of further litigation in court.

Asked if Trump thought Congress should play a role in providing refunds, White House spokesman Kush Desai said, "President Trump used tariffs to actually deliver where Democrats could only talk, so naturally Democrats are rolling up their sleeves to undermine President Trump and the American people — pathetic but unsurprising."

The Democrats' message could put Republicans on the defensive as they try to

explain why the Government isn't proactively seeking to return the money. GOP lawmakers had planned to try to preserve their House and Senate majorities by running on the income tax cuts that Trump signed into law last year, saying that tax refunds this year would help families.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told CNN that it's "bad framing" to raise the question of refunds because the Supreme Court ruling did not address the issue. The administration's position is that any refunds will be decided by lawsuits winding their way through the legal system, rather than by a president who has repeatedly stressed to voters that he has the ability to act with speed and resolve. (AP)

## Mexican cartel clashes threaten FIFA World Cup tourism

MEGAN JANETSKY  
Tapalpa (Mexico)

Maria Dolores Aguirre's family corner store has lived off tourism that has flowed into her charming cobblestoned town of Tapalpa, tucked away in the mountains of Jalisco state.

That was until gunshots erupted and helicopters flew overhead as the Mexican army killed the country's most powerful drug lord, just a few kilometers from her home.

Now, the 50-year-old Aguirre worries that the bloodshed will deal a blow to her livelihood and change towns like hers. It is something many in the western



Mexican state are grappling with, from its Pacific Ocean beaches to its Capital Guadalajara that will host matches in June for the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

"It's going to affect us. It's collateral damage," Aguirre said. "The Government is going to have to have a lot of

security... The entire world just saw what happened and, of course, people are going to think twice about coming."

Fighting between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and Mexican security forces raged on in a number of states Monday, fuelling

operation to capture the cartel leader and applauded Mexico's army for taking down a man who was one of the most wanted criminals in both countries.

The US State Department had offered a reward of up to \$15 million for information leading to the arrest of "El Mencho".

The death of Oseguera Cervantes came as Mexico's Government has stepped up its offensive against cartels in an effort to meet demands by US President Donald Trump to crack down on criminal groups, threatening to impose more tariffs or take unilateral military action if the country does not show results. (AP)

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## Pak condemns Israel's plan to form a regional alliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Islamabad

Pakistan's Senate on Tuesday passed a resolution to strongly condemn Israel's plan to forge a regional alliance of several countries, claiming it targets a few nations.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu talked about his vision of a "hexagon" of alliances in and around the region. The resolution moved in the House by Palwasha Khan of Pakistan Peoples Party deplored the "continued provocative steps and statements by the Israeli leadership that threatened



the regional and international peace and stability, including the latest statement about forming alliances" against a few nations in the region. It condemned the Israeli forces' "blatant disregard of international law, the UN charter, relevant UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as well as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice."

## Sri Lankan Navy arrests 12 Indian fishermen for alleged poaching



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Colombo

Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 12 Indian fishermen and seized their boat for allegedly poaching in the island nation's waters, an official statement said on Tuesday.

Sri Lanka's North Central Naval Command on Sunday spotted a group of Indian fishing boats engaging in illegal fishing, trespassing into Sri Lankan waters, a statement issued by the Sri Lankan Navy said.

"During an operation conducted in the dark hours of 22 Feb 26, the Sri Lanka Navy seized 1 Indian fishing boat and apprehended 12 Indian fishermen while they were poaching in Sri Lankan waters, in the sea area south of Mannar", it added.

The seized boat and the arrested fishermen were handed over to the Fisheries Inspector of Dikovita for onward legal proceedings, the Navy said.

Fishermen from both countries are arrested frequently for inadvertently trespassing into each other's waters.



## PROSPECT

### Madhav Nair appointed IBA Honorary Secretary



Madhav Nair felicitated by SBI chairman and IBA chairman CS Setty (left) and IBA CEO AK Goel (right)

In a significant development for the Indian banking sector, Madhav Nair, the CEO of the Bank of Bahrain & Kuwait (India), has been elected as the Honorary Secretary of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) for the year 2026. Beyond his primary role as Honorary Secretary, the IBA has entrusted Nair with several key administrative and advisory portfolios to steer the industry through contemporary challenges. Most notably, he has been nominated as the Chairman of the Standing Committee for Environment, Social & Governance (ESG). Furthermore, his expertise will be utilised in the regulatory sphere as he takes on the role of Alternate Chairman of the Standing Committee for Legal Compliance & Operations.

### India's Twin Triumph wins Ironman 70.3 championship

India marked a proud moment on the global endurance sports map as twin siblings Vidhi Gupta and Vaibhav Gupta etched their names in history by successfully completing the prestigious Iron man 70.3. What made the feat even more extraordinary was that the twins crossed the finish line alongside their father, Manish Gupta, turning the race into a powerful story of family, perseverance, and shared ambition. Held in the scenic yet demanding terrain of Muscat, the championship is regarded as one of the toughest endurance events in the region, drawing elite triathletes from across the world. Completing the race places the Guptas among a select group of Indian athletes who have conquered the Half Ironman format on an international stage. By finishing the race, Vidhi and Vaibhav Gupta emerged as among the youngest twin siblings from India to complete this globally recognised endurance challenge. More importantly, doing so alongside their father underscored a rare and inspiring example of cross-generational fitness, discipline, and shared commitment to sport.

### Army conducts awareness drive in Assam school



and the disciplined lifestyle offered by the Armed Forces. According to a spokesperson, the primary objective was to motivate young minds to embrace a path of leadership and selfless service to the nation. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from both the student body and faculty members. An interactive Q&A session followed the lecture, where students actively sought guidance on physical and academic preparation for the recruitment process. Reaffirming their commitment to civil-military outreach, the Red Shield Gunners emphasised that such initiatives are vital for strengthening the bond between the Indian Army and the local community, while fostering a sense of pride and honour in serving the country.

**Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar**  
Tender Notice

The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:

Sr. No.	Reference No.	Item	Quantity	Closing date & Time
1	GNDU/Gen/06/2026	Supply of various Type of Photocopier Paper	6150 ream	17-03-2026 at 5:00 P.M.

For details log onto: [www.eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in)  
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.  
2426/12/2025-26/8676 Dated CHD :- 24/02/2026

## Tata Sons Board defers decision on N Chandrasekaran's third term

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Mumbai

The board of Tata Sons on Tuesday deferred a decision on the re-appointment of Natarajan Chandrasekaran for a third term as Chairman, according to sources, signalling potential differences within the holding company of the conglomerate. The board at its meeting here did not take any call on extending Chandrasekaran's term beyond the current one ending in February 2027.

While no official statement was issued immediately following the meeting, sources said Noel Tata, Chairman of Tata Trusts, which owns 66 per cent in Tata Sons, raised concerns about losses in certain group companies. Sources said Noel Tata was also not in favour of the listing of Tata Sons and wanted a written commitment.

Chandrasekaran, 62, received backing of several



N Chandrasekaran & Noel Tata

board members who felt the losses at one group company should not eclipse the group's overall performance or the chair's contribution over the years. Some directors called for a vote, but Chandrasekaran urged a deferral.

Following Ratan Tata's death in 2024, his half-brother Noel Tata was appointed Chairman of Tata Trusts, the

principal shareholder of Tata Sons. Tata Trusts holds a 66 per cent stake in Tata Sons, giving it decisive influence over key strategic and governance decisions at the apex holding company of the Tata Group.

Tata Sons, in turn, oversees a portfolio of around 30 operating companies spanning various sectors, such as consumer goods, automobiles,

information technology and aviation. Major group entities include Jaguar Land Rover, Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Motors and Air India.

The ownership structure places Tata Trusts at the centre of governance for the diversified conglomerate, with Tata Sons functioning as the principal investment holding and promoter entity for group companies.

## Indian airlines expected to reduce losses: ICRA



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Mumbai

Indian airlines are expected to reduce losses to an estimated ₹11,000-12,000 crore next fiscal from a projected ₹17,000-18,000 crore this financial year, ratings agency ICRA said on Tuesday, even as it maintained a "stable outlook" for the domestic aviation industry.

ICRA also estimates the domestic air passenger traffic to grow by 6-8 per cent and touch 175-179 million passengers in

FY2026-27. ICRA, in December 2025, had revised its domestic air passenger growth estimates to 0-3 per cent for the current financial year from 4-6 per cent envisaged earlier.

The international air passenger traffic growth for Indian carriers is expected to remain relatively stronger, aided by low base effect, expanding e-visa/visa-on-arrival coverage, and the Central Government's focus on developing theme-based and iconic tourist destinations, the ratings agency said.

## Vitopia 2026 ends on a grand note at VIT-AP University



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Amaravati

The Annual Sports and Cultural Festival, Vitopia 2026, concluded on a spectacular note at VIT-AP University, marking the successful culmination of four days filled with vibrant competitions, energetic performances, and enthusiastic student participation.

The four-day extravaganza brought together students from across the campus to celebrate talent, teamwork, and creativity. On the final day, February 24, 2026, participants in various cultural competitions geared up for their concluding performances, showcasing exceptional skill and passion across

multiple artistic disciplines. The Pro-Show held on the evening of February 23, 2026, witnessed electrifying performances by renowned artists including Darshan Raval, Makka Band, and Teri Miko, who captivated the audience with their dynamic stage presence and musical brilliance.

Continuing the celebrations, the Pro-Show on February 24, 2026, featured an exciting line-up including the classical musical duo Mohana Sisters, the energetic Pineapple Express, popular performer DJ Prithvi Sai, and Band Circles, promising a grand musical extravaganza for attendees.

Apart from cultural and musical events, students

enthusiastically participated in a variety of fun-filled carnival games, including Pillow Fight, Sack Race, Whisper Challenge, Musical Chairs, Balloon Burst, Archery, and Ring Toss, adding excitement and joy to the festive atmosphere.

The event was graced by the Vice-Chancellor (I/C) of VIT-AP University, Dr Parulmohi Varman; Registrar Dr Jagadish Chandra Mudiganti; Dr S Gopikrishnan (Vitopia Convener); Dr Khadeer Pasha (Deputy Director of Student Welfare); and Dr Ramachandra Rao (Director of Physical Education), along with faculty members, students, special invitees, distinguished guests, and staff.

## Awareness programme on cyber fraud conducted at Bank of India, New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

With cyber and digital frauds increasingly targeting senior citizens, Bank of India, New Delhi on 21 January 2026 conducted an awareness programme on fraud and risk mitigation for its staff members including branch heads of 82 branches, business vertical Head viz RBC, SMECC, SMEUC to strengthen the capacity of its field functionaries to prevent, detect and report fraudulent activities.

The programme held at New Delhi was addressed by Field General Manager, New Delhi Shri Lokesh Krishna. He discussed on common fraud patterns encountered at the field level and the precautions to be taken to avoid them.

In addition, Shri Vasu Dev, General Manager from the Fraud Risk Management Department, Head Office, Mumbai, who was present specifically for the programme, addressed the participants. He highlighted key aspects of various types of operational, cyber and digital frauds.

Special attention was given



to cyber frauds affecting senior citizens across the country, including cases related to so-called digital arrests, KYC updation through APK files and clicking on unauthorised links. Participants were sensitised about early warning signals, due diligence practices and the need for strict adherence to established guidelines and standard operating procedures.

He advised bank staff to actively sensitise senior citizens about such frauds and to inform them about using the

national cybercrime helpline number 1930.

Bank staff to actively sensitise senior citizens about such frauds and to inform them about using the national cybercrime helpline number 1930 in case of any fraudulent incident. He also briefed participants about the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre, an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs aimed at preventing, detecting, investigating and prosecuting cybercrimes in a coordinated manner.

## Biofuels, Circular Economy and Conscious Capitalism: Scaling Pathways for Viksit Bharat and Net Zero



ANANDAJIT GOSWAMI DR PRAGATI CHAUHAN

India's sustainability journey hinges on transforming waste into wealth, and biofuels are emerging as the linchpin of this transition. With millions of tonnes of food waste and agricultural residues generated annually, the opportunity to embed circularity into energy systems is immense. Instead of allowing organic waste to rot in landfills and release methane, initiatives like Manav Rachna's Centre for Peace & Sustainability SORT project show how discarded food can be redirected into aerobic composting systems. Here, waste is broken down in oxygen-rich conditions to produce nutrient-rich compost that replenishes soils and reduces methane emissions. This nutrient recovery loop makes sustainability tangible on campuses and scalable across communities, complementing energy-focused pathways elsewhere.

**Biomass: India's untapped energy reservoir**  
India generates an enormous amount of agricultural residue each year — about 750 million tonnes of biomass, of which nearly 228 million tonnes are surplus and available for energy use. Added to this is the 65-

78 million tonnes of food waste produced annually, making waste streams one of the country's most powerful resources for clean energy. Instead of being burned or dumped, these residues can be transformed through anaerobic digestion, pyrolysis, and advanced 2G biorefineries. The outputs are diverse: bio-CNG, bio-oil, and biogas, with a nationwide potential of around 60 cubic meters per person. Unlike fossil fuels that drain resources, biofuel systems regenerate. The leftover digestate enriches soils as fertilizer, while lignin — the tough woody fiber in plants — is converted into biochemicals. This regenerative cycle reduces dependence on imports and could cut 717 lakh tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions through E2O fuel blending.

**Closing the carbon loop**  
Biorefineries take this further by integrating biogenic CO<sub>2</sub> capture. India's carbohydrate-rich biomass can be processed into fuels while simultaneously recycling emissions into bio-methanol, creating a closed carbon loop. In simple terms, the carbon released during production is captured and reused, turning emissions back into energy.

This innovation directly addresses India's 75% reliance on fossil fuels, supports the target of 50% renewable energy by 2047, and mitigates stubble burning — a major environmental challenge. What was once seen as waste or liability becomes an economic asset, powering rural livelihoods and strengthening national energy security.

**Bioeconomy engine for growth**  
Biofuels are more than an environmental solution — they are also

a driver of economic growth. By turning residues and waste into energy, India is building a circular bioeconomy that uplifts rural communities. First-generation fuels from crops are being scaled alongside second-generation fuels from residues, ensuring diversity and resilience. Energy crops grown on unused lands add further security, while advances in biotechnology make production more efficient and affordable. Global partnerships add momentum. Brazil's success with sugarcane ethanol and US innovations in biotechnology offer valuable lessons for India's public-private collaborations under national biofuel programs. By learning from these models, India can accelerate commercialisation while keeping systems resilient and locally grounded.

Digital tools amplify these efforts. Artificial intelligence helps forecast residue availability, IoT devices monitor digesters in real time, and blockchain ensures transparent supply chains. These innovations improve collection and processing of waste, while flex-fuel vehicles and upgraded infrastructure make biofuels practical for everyday use. Together, they foster a bioeconomy that is not only sustainable but also technologically advanced and socially inclusive.

The biofuel revolution creates new income streams for farmers, shifting surplus bagasse, straw, and waste from liabilities to assets sold to bio-CNG plants, diversifying livelihoods beyond volatile grain markets. This marks a profound

transition from traditional financial capitalism-focused solely on profit maximisation to conscious capitalism, where enterprises prioritise stakeholder welfare alongside returns, generating not just financial gains but enduring social capital. Employment ripples across collection, processing, and biorefineries, mirroring biogas villages' success in fostering local energy systems, job resilience, and community cohesion.

Climate finance into rural economies while building trust through transparent, verifiable sustainability. India could adapt RenovaBio for its E20/E30 blending and 2G biofuels, using CBI-like credits to fund farmer incomes from waste sales, attract ESG funds, and scale circular bioeconomy loops-shifting to conscious capitalism. At Manav Rachna, this philosophy is embedded in practice: through the Centre for Peace & Sustainability, we ensure that every initiative balance profit, people, and planet by linking residues to farmer-centric value chains, embedding circularity into campus operations, and extending impact into communities. Transparent dashboards track both environmental and social returns, education empowers students to see business as a force for dignity and resilience, and partnerships are structured to share value fairly. By aligning projects with ESG frameworks, we attract climate finance that flows directly into rural economies,

making sustainability not just about reducing carbon footprints but about redefining capitalism itself-anchoring growth in stakeholder welfare, resilience, and shared prosperity.

**Scaling for Net-Zero**  
To achieve its Net Zero Goal by 2070, India must scale biofuel pathways through coordinated action. Policy mandates, R&D in lignin valorisation, and campus-to-farm pilots are essential. The SORT initiative offers a replicable prototype: by embedding circularity into everyday operations, it demonstrates how waste can be transformed into compost, fostering responsibility among students and communities. When scaled nationally, such models catalyse systemic change and show how sustainability can be lived, not just taught.

The roadmap is clear: tap food waste and agricultural residues, industrialise biofuel production, integrate digital tools, and align farmer incomes with ESG frameworks under conscious capitalism. This values-driven approach-balancing profit with stakeholder welfare-positions biofuels as a force for social capital and shared prosperity. By doing so, India evolves from a consumer of sustainability solutions to a global leader in circular bioeconomy, ensuring energy security, equitable growth, and climate resilience as the backbone of Viksit Bharat.

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### BRIEFLY

#### Para-swimming workshop launched in Delhi



A three-day para-swimming coaching workshop, supported by the Australian High Commission, was launched on Monday. To be held at the Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Swimming Complex, experts and coaches will exchange ideas on how Indian para-swimming can be improved and taken to the next level during the workshop. The three-day workshop will also be held at the Lakshmi Bai National Institute of Physical Education (LNPE) in Gwalior. Paralympic Committee of India president Devendra Jhajharia presented Australian High Commissioner Philip Green with a shawl during the inauguration ceremony. Describing the initiative as his brainchild, Green said Australia was keen to share its expertise in para sports with India. "We are delighted to bring the expertise to India for the advancement of para swimming. Australia and India's association has mostly been about cricket, but as India takes a natural leap towards hosting global sporting events, Australia wants to remain a partner," Green said.

#### Prague Chess Festival: Gukesh eyes his first success of the year



After an early exit from the World Cup and an underwhelming performance at the Tata Steel Masters, world champion D Gukesh would be eyeing a turnaround when he spearheads India's challenge in the Prague International Chess Festival starting here on Wednesday. Seeded second in a young elite field, Gukesh will have his task cut out against the likes of top-seeded German Vincent Keymer and Uzbek Nodirbek Abdusattorov, who are both currently performing better than him if results in the past few events are anything to go by. Keymer, ranked fourth globally in live ratings, is just ahead of Abdusattorov, while Gukesh, ranked 10th, is the highest-rated Indian. It wasn't too long ago when there were as many as three Indians in the top 10, but Arjun Erigaisi and R Praggnanandhaa have both dropped down recently, allowing Gukesh, who has been consistent if not at his best, to be the new India number one in live rankings. Giving Gukesh company as a fellow Indian will be defending champion Aravindh Chithambaram. This is the event that gave the Chennai-based player his first big breakthrough. Abdusattorov, fresh from his maiden triumph at the Tata Steel Masters, will be the people's favourite to add another title while Keymer can be relied upon to give everyone a run for their money. Hans Niemann of the USA is another player everyone will have to gun for, as he has proved his detractors wrong time and again. Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran is also there, trying to carve a niche for himself in top-level chess, while Dutch Grandmaster Jorden van Foreest would go in as Mr Consistent despite his low appearance in strong tournaments.

#### Everyone has to fight for place in team: Women's hockey coach Marijne

MONA PARTHSARATHI  
New Delhi

Past laurels will not guarantee selection, and players, irrespective of their stature, will have to fight for their spot in a potentially make-or-break year for the Indian women's hockey team, its new coach Sjoerd Marijne has asserted.

The Indian women's team is going through a difficult phase. It failed to qualify for the Paris Olympics in 2024, an unexpected low after having achieved a historic fourth-place finish in the Tokyo Games under Marijne's guidance. The side also failed to qualify for the FIH Pro League last year and could not find a



place in the World Cup through the Asia Cup route. Marijne, who quit due to personal reasons after the 2021 Olympics, was brought back early this year following the removal of Harendra Singh due to poor results. The team is now looking to

## Ranji Trophy final: J&K reach 284/2 on Day 1

MOHIT KANDHARI  
Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir's batters delivered a dream performance in their maiden Ranji Trophy final, racing to a commanding 284 for 2 by stumps on Day 1 against eight-time champions Karnataka at the picturesque Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) Hubballi Cricket Ground.

After captain Paras Dogra won the toss and elected to bat first, the underdogs seized control from the outset, frustrating Karnataka's vaunted bowling lineup throughout the day. Openers Qamran Iqbal and Yawer Hassan provided a solid platform before Yawer

fell for a well-compiled 88 to Prasidh Krishna, who also accounted for the other wicket.

The standout performer was Shubham Pundir, whose unbeaten 117 off 221 balls anchored the innings with composure and class. Featuring 12 boundaries and two sixes, Pundir's ton was a masterclass in concentration and shot selection on a pitch offering good bounce and carry. He forged a crucial 139-run partnership with Yawer before teaming up with Abdul Samad (unbeaten 52 off 67 balls) to accelerate in the final session.

The duo's unbroken stand pushed J&K past the 250-run mark comfortably, with the



Jammu and Kashmir's Shubham Pundir celebrates his century during the first day of the Ranji Trophy 2025-26 final cricket match between Karnataka and Jammu & Kashmir at KSCA Cricket Stadium in Hubballi, Karnataka. PTI

visitors ending the day at a strong 284/2 after 87 overs at a steady run rate of 3.26.

Karnataka's bowlers, including Prasidh Krishna (2/36), Vidyadhar Patil,

Vijaykumar Vyshak, and spinners Shreyas Gopal and others, toiled hard but found little assistance, managing only sporadic breakthroughs as the J&K top order capitalised on favourable batting conditions.

Member BCCI Sub Committee JKCA Brig (Retd) Anil Gupta, in a post on X, said Day 1 was dominated by Jammu and Kashmir against a strong Karnataka. Our top order came good at the time it mattered. 2 centuries stand speaks volumes of the excellent batting. Very well played. Yawer missed the century; Pundir proved his class. Samad is hungry. Carry on."

One concern for the Jammu and Kashmir side

would be the injury to their skipper, Paras Dogra, who was hit in the final session of the day.

He was forced to leave the field and was replaced by Abdul Samad. The change did not slow the momentum as Samad looked in sublime touch from the outset. He quickly reached a half-century for himself and remained unbeaten at the close of play alongside Pundir to further strengthen the team total. With two full days of batting still potentially ahead, J&K will aim to pile on more runs on Day 2 and put further pressure on the hosts. For Karnataka, the challenge is clear: they must break this partnership early tomorrow

## Argentine clubs on strike from March 5

DEBORA REY  
Buenos Aires

Argentina clubs have agreed to strike from March 5-8 in protest against what they consider judicial persecution of Argentine Football Association president Claudio Tapia.

The strike announcement on Monday came after a judge summoned Tapia to testify on March 5 in a case where he is accused of misappropriating social security contributions.

The investigation stems from a complaint filed by the government's Customs Revenue and Control Agency (ARCA). The professional league's executive committee resolved by unanimous



decision to suspend all first division matches and other league games March 5-8 "in protest against the complaint filed by ARCA," the AFA announced in a statement.

Last Friday, Judge Diego Amarante issued a travel ban against Tapia and summoned four other officials to

Pablo Tovigginio, general secretary Cristian Malaspina, general director Gustavo Lorenzo, and former Racing Club president Victor Blanco, who held a position at the organisation during the period under investigation.

According to the tax authority's complaint, the AFA allegedly failed to deposit the withheld amounts within 30 calendar days of the due date, which led to the issuance and notification of the corresponding debt notices by the tax collection agency.

The AFA denied the debt and stated in a press release on Monday that "the voluntary payment of these tax obligations was made prior to their due date." (AP)

## AIU bans Indian runner Pooja Aatmaram for 3 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

Indian long-distance runner Pooja Aatmaram had made a nervous dash away from her chaperone ahead of a scheduled in-competition dope test last year, revealed the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) as it handed her a reduced three-year ban for early admission of guilt.

The 30-year-old Pooja, who mostly competes in the 5000m and 10,000m events, had finished third in the Indian Grand Prix 2 in 2024 while representing Rajasthan, which remains her most noteworthy performance.

She was picked out for a dope test after winning the Indian Oil WNC Navy Half Marathon in Mumbai on November 23 last year. "The



athlete was verbally notified of her selection for testing immediately after she had finished the race by a Doping Control Officer (DCO) and a lead DCO. The athlete failed to sign the Doping Control Form (DCF) at the time of notification," the AIU said in its detailed judgement. "Following the verbal notification, the athlete was accompanied by a chaperone from the finish line

heading towards the Doping Control Station (DCS). During this time the athlete ran away from the chaperone and into a crowd.

"The Chaperone tried to locate the Athlete and immediately reported that the Athlete had run away and disappeared into the crowd after verbal notification of her selection for Testing to the DCO, who subsequently informed the Race Director," it added. The race director then attempted to contact her over the phone, but the AIU said she did not respond to any of those calls.

"The lead DCO also attempted to reach the athlete by telephone, without success. No sample was ultimately collected from the athlete." Describing the chain of events that led to her

escape, the AIU said the DCO and the Chaperone described Pooja as "exhausted and sweating" after the race. She picked up a water bottle from a stand near the finish line while being accompanied by the chaperone before running away.

"The athlete proceeded towards the DCS with the chaperone, who repeatedly checked that she remained within their sight due to the crowded conditions. The athlete appeared nervous and looked around," the AIU report stated. "Before reaching the DCS, the athlete ran away from the chaperone and in the opposite direction of the DCS. The chaperone ran after her but lost sight of her in the crowd and, despite searching the area, was unable to locate the athlete."

## No Mourinho and Prestianni for Benfica in Champions League

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Madrid

There won't be another confrontation between Vinicius Junior and Gianluca Prestianni in the Champions League this week.

Real Madrid and Benfica will meet at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on Wednesday but UEFA banned Prestianni from the game on Monday following accusations he racially abused Vinicius in the first leg of the knockout round last week.

Madrid won 1-0 in Lisbon after Vinicius scored in the second half. But when the Brazil forward celebrated by the Benfica corner flag and upset the local fans and players, the game was halted



for nearly 10 minutes. Prestianni confronted Vinicius, who accused the Argentine of calling him "monkey." Prestianni denied racially insulting Vinicius.

The anti-racism protocol was activated but no further action was taken during the match as there was no evi-

dence against Prestianni, who covered his mouth with his shirt while talking to Vinicius. The Madrid forward was shown a yellow card after his celebration.

UEFA said the one-match suspension of Prestianni from its control, ethics and disciplinary body was related

to discriminatory behavior.

"This is without prejudice to any ruling that the UEFA disciplinary bodies may subsequently make following the conclusion of the ongoing investigation and its respective submission to the UEFA disciplinary bodies," it said in a statement.

Benfica said in a statement that it lamented that Prestianni was suspended while the investigation was underway. It said it would appeal UEFA's suspension.

Portuguese media said Prestianni was expected to travel to Madrid with the squad. Prestianni did not play in Benfica's 3-0 win over AVS on Saturday in the Portuguese league because of a yellow card suspension, but he was expected to be on

the field along with Vinicius during Wednesday's match at the Bernabeu.

Vinicius scored Madrid's goal in a 2-1 loss at Osasuna on Saturday in La Liga. **Mourinho out** Missing for Benfica on Wednesday will be coach Jose Mourinho, who was sent off late in the first leg for complaining to the referee. The former Madrid coach criticized Vinicius for celebrating his goal by the Benfica flag.

Benfica said Mourinho was not going to attend the pre-game news conference on Tuesday, with his assistant taking over. Mourinho said Saturday it was a "tough week" for everyone at Benfica. He declined to comment when asked if he regretted his criticism of Vinicius.

## Questions over EFI's role in facilitating duty exemption for Arjuna awardee

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

The conduct of the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) has come under scrutiny after it facilitated customs duty exemption for Arjuna awardee Major General Deep Ahlawat to import a competition horse, despite his status as a pension-drawing former athlete who is no longer active in the sport.

Under the Arjuna Award pension scheme, recipients are required to submit an undertaking affirming that they are not active competitors. Major General Ahlawat, a retired equestrian rider and Arjuna awardee, is cur-

rently availing the pension. Documents accessed by PTI show that on June 26, EFI wrote to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade seeking issuance of the necessary import licence with suitable duty concessions to facilitate the import of six horses from Germany, the UK, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Denmark, Belgium and Hungary. The federation stated in the letter that the move would help in the growth of equestrian sport in India and improve standards to win medals at international events. On September 9, 2025, EFI again wrote to the Sports Ministry that Major General Ahlawat would



Arjuna awardee Major General Deep Ahlawat FILE PHOTO

import two horses for training and participation in various events and that a

duty exemption was required for one. The federation requested

the ministry to issue a Customs Duty Exemption Certificate (CDEC) so that the consignment could be released at the earliest. The horse imported is a warmblood named Lovely Miss Moneypenny. The sequence of communications has raised a larger question over EFI's decision-making process. Facilitation of a competition horse import with duty concessions appears at variance with the pension undertaking that requires an awardee to step away from active sport.

While applying for a pension, the applicant has to give an undertaking that he/she has "retired from the active sports career". Lt Col

MM Rahman, who as EFI Joint Secretary recommended Ahlawat for the import of horses, said they followed the EFI SOP while taking the decision. "The import has been done in accordance with the provisions of the SOP issued by EFI on the import of sporting horses," Rahman told PTI. However, the SOP does not mention if a retired athlete can be recommended for importing a sports horse, and that too with duty exemption.

When this was pointed out to Rahman, he replied, "He can also import for his son (Major Yashdeep Ahlawat), who is an active rider." However, the SOP does not say that a retired athlete can import a horse for his family.

## Fiji taking rugby to UK



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Cardiff

Fiji will be based 16,000 kilometres (10,000 miles) from home for the inaugural Rugby Nations Championship in July.

Fiji is staging matches outside of its own country during the tournament but will be considered the home team when it faces Wales, England and Scotland on their

turf. The Fijians confirmed on Monday they have organised games against Wales at Cardiff City Stadium on July 4, England at Liverpool's Hill Dickinson Stadium on July 11, and Scotland at Murrayfield on July 18. Fiji is relieving opponents from trekking to the Pacific islands while at the same time trying to maximise revenue at bigger stadiums.

## Brook's brilliance powers England to T20 World Cup semis

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Pallekele (Sri Lanka)

Skipper Harry Brook played the most defining innings of his T20 career, smashing a 51-ball 100 to propel England into the semi-finals of the T20 World Cup with a narrow two-wicket victory over Pakistan.

Chasing a target of 165 on a slightly difficult surface, England were 35 for 3 and then 58 for 4 before Brook almost singlehandedly carried them through with the two-time champions winning it with five balls to spare.

Brook's innings was not only his best individual score in T20s but also the highest by an England skipper in the history of the T20 World Cups. England

have now reached their fifth straight T20 World Cup semi-final and first to qualify in the current edition.

Brook, batting at No. 3 for the first time, showed admirable cricketing smarts during an innings that had 10 fours and four sixes as he picked his battles with precision.

He did not take any undue risks against Usman Tariq (2/31 in 4 overs) and stood tall even as Shaheen Shah Afridi (4/30) wreaked havoc in his opening spell, during which he claimed three wickets.

Brook completed his maiden T20I century with a six and a chipped boundary over mid-off before getting bowled trying to go for third big hit against Afridi. By then, he had ensured a last



four berth for England and received a warm handshake from the Pakistan pacer.

The hallmark of Brook's innings was how he attacked spinners Saim Ayub, Mohammed Nawaz and Shadab Ahmed. The footwork — both front and back, was immaculate and he made full use of the big ground, running 13 twos after pushing the ball to the vacant areas in the deep.

Brook teed off with a 17-run over off left-arm spinner Nawaz which included a six and couple of boundaries. The shot of the match certainly will be the inside out slash that sailed over cover and point. The turn of wrist was deliberate and the shot breathtaking.

While mystery spinner Tariq

got Tom Banton, Pakistan skipper Salman Ali suddenly got Shadab Ahmed back into the attack whom Brook promptly dispatched down the ground.

Tariq came for his second spell and once again got rid of Sam Curran, England were 103 for 5 but Brook found an able ally in Will Jacks (28 off 23 balls) as they added 52 in 5.1 overs.

The match as a contest was over in Tariq's final over when he bowled one bad half tracker which was pulled over square leg fence and got a boundary off the next ball putting the bowler on his haunches.

Once Brook fell, Nawaz got Jofra Archer pulled the first ball off Salman Mirza's final over for a boundary to take England into

the last four stage.

Agha's captaincy left a lot to be desired as a spinner like Saim Ayub would have troubled tail-enders way more.

Earlier, Sahibzada Farhan continued his fine form with yet another half-century as Pakistan scored a competitive 164 for 9 on a sluggish surface.

Farhan scored 63 off 45 balls, and his knock was laced with seven fours and two sixes against the English spinners, who were on target for the better part of the Pakistan innings.

Left-arm spinner Liam Dawson was the pick of the England bowlers with 3 for 24 and also he didn't let Pakistan reach the 175-run target with back-to-back breakthroughs in the 18th over.

## Sri Lanka seek course correction in must win game against New Zealand

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Colombo

Sri Lanka will need to improve their batting against slower bowlers when they take on New Zealand in a must-win Super Eight game of the T20 World Cup on Wednesday.

The home team batters failed to chase a below par 147 against England on a slow turner in Pallekele. The pitches in Sri Lanka have been tougher for batting compared to co-hosts India and the trend is likely to continue at the Premadasa where bigger boundaries make six-hitting difficult.

Some of the shot selection was questioned following the heavy loss in the Super Eight opener and Sri Lanka will need to learn from their mistakes.

"It's a T20 game, so obviously you come into a game, so you are looking to score as many runs as you can. So when the ball is not coming on to the bat, it's easier said than done," Sri Lanka's Indian batting coach Vikram Rathour reflected on the side's poor performance.

"Are there better



led by Pathum Nissanka, left-arm spinner Dunith Wellalage has been impressive with the ball. To be fair, even the pacers have delivered thus far in the competition.

New Zealand, who had to share a point with Pakistan following the wash-out at Premadasa, too have good spinners in their ranks including captain Mitchell Santner.

With rain unlikely, both teams would be pushing for their first win of the Super Eight stage.

New Zealand's opening duo of Finn Allen and Tim Seifert showed ominous form during the league stage and would be looking to extend that run.

More runs are expected from the bat of Rachin Ravindra who got a much-needed fifty in his previous innings against Canada.

While batting has been

## Zimbabwe coach wary of India blitzkrieg

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Mumbai

Zimbabwe head coach Justin Sammons is expecting India to come out all guns blazing in their Super Eight clash of the T20 World Cup on Thursday but he believes his underdog team would be ready after the hard lessons learnt from a heavy loss to the West Indies here.

Zimbabwe were thrashed by 107 runs by the Caribbean outfit, which posted the second highest total of the tournament history, 254/6, in their Super Eight match here on Monday.

Sammons is quite sure that India too will come hard at them in Chennai after being handed an 83-run defeat by South Africa.

"We know the way India is going to come out and it's going to be very similar to the way West Indies approached their innings. They're (India)



not going to hold back," Sammons said after the match.

"There will be good learnings from that and how we deal with that, under pressure in the moment, how do we stay calm and just think on our feet and also just try and change things up a little bit, disrupt the rhythm of the batters," he added.

Acknowledging the mistakes made during the West Indies game, Sammons said his side, especially the bowling unit, was guilty of being "predictable."

## It was a mistake: Bucknor regrets wrong decision against Sachin Tendulkar

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ New Delhi

More than two decades after making what was then widely seen as a "dreadful" decision against Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, legendary umpire Steve Bucknor has finally expressed regrets and accepted that "it was a mistake."

Bucknor, who retired in 2009, was one of the most respected umpires in world cricket for over two decades.

However, he did a make a few contentious calls involving Tendulkar, the most shocking being an LBW dismissal during an India-Australia Test match at Brisbane's Gabba 22 years ago.

In an interview with the West Indies Cricket Umpires' Association, when Bucknor was asked about one of the most difficult decisions he had to live with as an umpire, he said, "Giving Sachin Tendulkar out leg before

wicket, and it's a matter of knowing that it was a mistake, but until this day, every day, people talk about it.

"Why did I give him out? Was he out and so on? But then in life, mistakes happen. I have accepted that it was a mistake, and life goes on."

In that match at Gabba in the 2003-04 series, Tendulkar was given out LBW by Bucknor following a loud appeal from Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie and his teammates.

Batting on 3, Tendulkar had attempted to leave the ball, which struck him high on the pads, but Bucknor was convinced by the Australian appeal.

Television replays later confirmed the ball was clearly going over the stumps. In the commentary box, the late Tony Greig had referred to it as "a dreadful" decision and he was not the only one who thought that way at the time.

## Australia to tour SA for 3 test matches, 3 one-day internationals

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
■ Melbourne

Australia will play three test matches preceded by three one-day cricket internationals in South Africa in September and October.

The tests will be the first between the countries since South Africa won the World Test Championship over Australia at Lord's last June. It was the Proteas' first major cricket trophy in 37 years.

Cricket Australia said Tuesday that the one-day



matches will be played on September 24 in Durban, September 27 at Johannesburg and a day-night match at Potchefstroom on September 30.

After a two-day warmup match at Potchefstroom on October 3-4, the first test begins October 9 at Durban.

The series will continue with tests beginning October 18 at Gqeberha — formerly Port Elizabeth — and the final match from October.

## Australia's six-wicket win over India in opening Women's ODI

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Brisbane

Australia outplayed reigning world champions India in all departments to pick up a comfortable six-wicket win in the first Women's ODI here on Tuesday.

India put up an ordinary performance with the bat to be bowled out for 214 despite solid fifties from Smriti Mandhana (58 off 68) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (53 off 84).

Australia chased down the modest target with little difficulty following fifties from skipper Alyssa Healy (50 off 70), who is in the middle of her farewell series, and Beth Mooney (76 off 79).

Spinner Ashlee Gardner was the standout bowler

for the home team, returning figures of three for 33 in seven overs.

The multi-format series is now locked at 2-2 with India winning the preceding T20 series 2-1. Following the three-match ODI series, a one off Test will be played in Perth at the end of which Healy will call time on her career.

Despite a drought-ending ICC title in November, the Harmanpreet Kaur-led side still remains a work in progress and doesn't have the aura of the all-conquering Australian side.

The positive for India with the ball was the performance of left-arm spinner Shree Charani, who was rewarded with wickets of Phoebe Litchfield and



Georgia Voll in successive balls in the 11th over. India had won the toss

and opted to bat at the Allan Border Field. With Kim Garth and Ellyse

Perry out of the three-match series due to injuries, pacers Megan Schutt and Lucy

Hamilton were called up to the Australian side at the 11th hour.

Megan took just two balls to strike, trapping Pratika Rawal in front with a sharp inswinger in the first over of the match.

It was Rawal's national comeback from the ankle injury she suffered during India's triumphant campaign at the ODI World Cup at home last year.

Batting at number three for the first time, Shafali Verma did not get any rhythm in her short stay in the middle. She eventually offered a straight catch back to Darcie Brown.

Mandhana began with a string of streaky boundaries past the slip cordon before producing a series of exqui-

ite drives off the pace bowlers. The Australian spinners, however, maintained the pressure in the middle overs as Gardner had Jemimah Rodrigues caught behind with a full ball that straightened a fraction to take the outside edge.

After Mandhana and Deepti Sharma fell to the sweep shot, Harmanpreet took time to stabilise the innings. She too, however, fell to the sweep shot in the deep off Gardner.

Kashvee Gautam (43 off 44) took the total past 200 and impressed with her six-hitting ability in an otherwise disappointing batting performance from the visitors. She hit three sixes in total, including a straight one over long-on off Megan.

## FIH Pro League: India go down 3-4 in shootout after 1-1 draw against Spain

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■ Hobart

India's dismal run in the FIH Men's Pro League saw them go down 3-4 in a shootout against Spain after a tense 1-1 draw in regulation time here on Tuesday.

Despite holding a 1-0 advantage until the 59th minute, courtesy a brilliant strike from Maninder Singh, India conceded a late equaliser when Spain's Bruno Font found the net to take the match into shootout.

Spain started strongly, control-



ling early possession and testing the Indian defence. They won their first penalty corner in the fourth minute, but the drag-flick was comfortably saved by Indian goalkeeper Mohith.

Spain thought they had taken the lead in the eighth minute, but Jose Basterra's goal was disallowed. Shrugging off the pressure, India earned a penalty corner in the 14th minute, but Amit Rohidas's drag-flick was denied by Spanish goalkeeper Luis Calzado, keeping the first quarter goalless.

The breakthrough arrived in the 19th minute. Skipper Hardik Singh dispossessed a Spanish player, turned brilliantly, and set up Maninder, who smashed a tomahawk into the net to give India a 1-0 lead.

Spain immediately responded by winning a penalty corner, but Pepe Cunill's shot was saved by Suraj Karkera.

Karkera pulled off another stunning save moments later to deny Basterra. Striker Abhishek also came close after a superb dribble, but failed as India held on to their

slender 1-0 lead at halftime.

In the third quarter, Spain pressed high while India looked to absorb the pressure.

Spain's persistence earned them back-to-back penalty corners, both expertly saved by Mohith.

As the quarter wound down, Spain was reduced to 10 men following a green card for Fortunio. India nearly capitalised on the advantage in the 44th minute, but Calzado made a tight save against Jugraj Singh's penalty corner strike.