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Inclusive growth vital for Viksit Bharat, says VP Radhakrishnan



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No tussle at all with judiciary over appointment of judges: Law Minister

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India's Ancient Wisdom of Mixed-Crops and Inter-Crops Farming



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Japan rejects China's militarism charge, questions Beijing's military build-up



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Sooryavanshi truly special: Tendulkar



CBSE breaks silence on OSM row

Allegations surrounding vendors, tender norms and digital infrastructure have widened the controversy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) broke its silence on the ongoing controversy around the On-Screen Marking (OSM) on Sunday. The board in a statement on X said on Sunday that they are closely monitoring vulnerabilities identified in the OSM portal of its service provider after concerns were flagged in the public domain.

"We have been closely monitoring the vulnerabilities in the OnMark portal of our service provider that are being flagged in the public domain," the board posted on X. The CBSE said an expert team of cybersecurity professionals from various Government agencies and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) has been working over the past few days to strengthen



Students appearing for CBSE board examinations. Representative image

en the system's security infrastructure.

The controversy surrounding CBSE's digital evaluation ecosystem intensified after 19-year-old Nisarga Adhikary

claimed he discovered security vulnerabilities that allegedly exposed examination-related files online. Adhikary alleged that a CBSE-linked cloud storage system was

improperly configured, allowing users to access and browse files without authentication.

According to his claims, scanned answer sheets, question papers and other

examination-related materials could potentially be viewed through the exposed storage setup. He also alleged that multiple institutions were using the same infrastructure.

The CBSE got into more trouble as after Adhikary's claims a blog post by a Class 12 student from Ranchi in Jharkhand, Sidhant, published his findings reviewing tender documents of the OSM vendors.

Sidhant's blog, titled *How CBSE rewrote rules to favour Coempt EduTeck*, alleges that the board systematically modified eligibility and technical requirements across three successive tender rounds in a manner that benefited the eventual winning vendor, Hyderabad-based Coempt EduTeck Private Limited. The company has denied any wrongdoing, as has the CBSE.

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Saket collapse toll rises to six

KHUSHI MEHROTRA
New Delhi

On Sunday, the death toll from a commercial building collapse in South Delhi climbed to six as the rescue operations concluded. The building, situated on Western Marg near Saket Metro station, collapsed on Saturday evening. It housed a coaching institute, cafes, and offices. At the time of the collapse, construction work was reportedly underway on its upper floor. Eight people were pulled out of the rubble, of whom six succumbed to their injuries.

"A total of six people have died," Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Anant Mittal said. The deceased were identified as Ravi (24), Kapil (28), Nalin Ray (23), Alok (age not specified), Parvati (35), and Ekta (24).

Parvati owned a tin-shed canteen adjoining the collapsed building, which was



Debris of the three-storey commercial building that collapsed on Saturday evening in New Delhi

frequently visited by students preparing for medical entrance examinations. Officials said much of the building's debris fell onto this canteen, resulting in her death.

Following the collapse, an FIR was registered under relevant sections, including culpable homicide, and investigation teams were constituted to examine the

circumstances, officials said. The police said that among the injured and deceased were individuals preparing for the Foreign Medical Graduate examination. The area is a hotspot for coaching centres catering to students seeking admission to medical and engineering programmes abroad.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

The ByStander



UP appoints full-time DGP after four years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh Government on Sunday appointed Rajeev Krishna as full-time Director General of Police (DGP), officials said.

Krishna, a 1991-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer and a native of Gautam Buddha Nagar district, has been the acting



Rajeev Krishna, IPS

DGP of the state since May 31 last year.

The order regarding the appointment of the DGP was issued by Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad.

The state has not had a permanent DGP since Mukul Goel was removed from the post in May 2022. The state has seen a series of acting DGPs, including DS Chauhan, RK Vishwakarma, Vijaya Kumar, Prashant Kumar and Krishna.

Krishna is a graduate in electronics and communication. He began his professional career in the state police as a trainee IPS officer in Prayagraj, and subsequently served as additional superintendent of police in Bareilly, Kanpur and Aligarh. He has also held the posts of superintendent of police and senior superintendent of police in various districts.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Nepal pushes fresh border talks

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister of Nepal Balendra Shah has revealed that his country has discussed the India border dispute with the British Government, suggesting that formal negotiations involving historical boundary records may be necessary to resolve the longstanding territorial issue.

Addressing the House of Representatives on Sunday, Shah said Nepal and India are considering holding official talks on disputed territories, including Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. He noted that discussions have also taken place with the British



Prime Minister of Nepal Balendra Shah

Government, whose colonial-era maps and agreements remain relevant to the border question.

"There has been talk of holding table talks on the land issue," Shah told lawmakers. "We have also discussed this with the British Government. Table talks need to happen on this matter."

The Prime Minister said the Indian Government has responded to Nepal's communication regarding the disputed areas and that diplomatic efforts are ongoing to find a mutually acceptable solution.

In a notable remark, Shah also claimed that the border issue is not entirely one-sided, stating that Nepal has encroached on Indian territory.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

PM Modi hosts key BJP meeting ahead of major polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

A high-level meeting of the BJP's top leadership, including Union Ministers and party president Nitin Nabin, was held at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence on Sunday evening. The meeting included Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, JP Nadda, Chief Ministers Devendra Fadnavis and Bhupendra Patel, and party's organisation incharge BL Santosh and general secretary Arun Singh among other leaders.

Sources said the meeting focused on various issues including Rajya Sabha (RS)



FILE PHOTO

polls, the impending elections to several Legislative Councils (LC) and Assembly polls scheduled next year for Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

Sources said members also discussed upon and strategised on securing an advantage over the Opposition in the high-

stakes RS polls, particularly in light of the recent defeat of women's reservation bill. The States where Rajya Sabha polls are due were told to submit list of suitable candidates along with the existing retiring members this month. No names were discussed for the RS elections sources confirmed.

Elections for 24 RS seats spread across 10 States are set to take place on June 18. The vacancies arose due to the retirement of sitting lawmakers from the Upper House, between June 21 and July 19. The last date of filing nominations for RS elections is on June 8.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Trump says US, Iran close to a "very good deal"

SAGAR KULKARNI
Washington

President Donald Trump has said the US and Iran are close to a "very good deal," but if Washington does not get what it wants, then it will "end it in a different way."

Trump's remarks came during an interview to his daughter-in-law Lara Trump, which was telecast on Fox News on Saturday night.

"We're close to a very good deal. If you're going to be in a hurry, you're not going to make a good deal, and slowly but surely, we're getting what we want - and if we don't get what we want, we're going to end it in a different way," Trump said.



Cargo ships sitting at anchor in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran

Trump said the Iranians are "good negotiators," but argued that the United States now holds "all the cards" because Iran has been "militarily defeated."

"But we're close to a very good deal. If we can make it, good. Otherwise we just start up with the Department of War as we call it," the US

President said. Trump said the Iranians had stated they were not developing a nuclear weapon, but he countered by asking what if they bought one.

"I said, well what happens if you buy a nuclear weapon? So now it says we will not develop or in any way pur-

chase a military weapon. That's a big difference," he said.

The American leader insisted that the US has "significant leverage" over Iran, as their navy and air force were "completely destroyed". However, he said, the US has not fully dismantled Iran's military because some of the leadership was more moderate.

Trump said the US had targeted Iran's more extreme elements and key leadership.

The US President held a meeting with his top cabinet colleagues and officers of the armed forces in the situation room on Friday but it concluded without any clarity

CONTINUED ON >> P4

BJP clears Cabinet expansion in West Bengal and Assam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Kolkata/Guwahati

The new BJP-led Governments in West Bengal and Assam are all set to expand their Council of Ministers after getting a go-ahead from the central BJP leadership on Sunday.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari announced that 35 ministers will be sworn in on Monday as part of the expansion of his Cabinet, while Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said his ministry would be expanded with the swearing in of new ministers on June 5.



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari

Adhikari said Governor RN Ravi will administer the oath at 11 am at the Lok Bhavan.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

TMC MP ALLEGES MOB ATTACK

New Delhi: TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee on Sunday alleged that he suffered head injuries after being mobbed by BJP supporters in front of a police station in Hooghly district. The incident occurred when he visited the Chanditala police station to submit a memorandum protesting the arrest of TMC workers. The incident came a day after TMC national general secretary and MP Abhishek Banerjee was attacked by locals during his visit to Sonarpur.

Kohli, bowlers give RCB second IPL title win, beat GT by 5 wickets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Ahmedabad

It was a night dotted with chilling certainty.

Royal Challengers Bengaluru translated their domination from Day 1 of this IPL into a second successive title, and Virat Kohli anchored that five-wicket romp over Gujarat Titans with a patented chase masterclass of unbeaten 75 here on Sunday.

If the Titans' innings of 155 for eight was filled with trepidation, Royal Challengers' 161 for five in 18 overs was full of intent and confidence. And those words are forever entwined with Kohli's batting and the latest evidence was his 42-ball unbeaten innings.

As he has done throughout his career, the batting super star strode out with an unflinching desire to take his side home.

That purpose was evident in his dismantling of Kagiso Rabada with a sequence of 4, 6, 4, 4, right after his opening partner Venkatesh Iyer handed the South African a similar punishment in the second over that yielded 18 runs.

Kohli and Venkatesh added 62 runs in just 4.3 overs to rain even on the distant dreams of the Titans.

Once Rabada was nullified in three straight overs of his, the Titans did not have enough ammunition in the Power Play, in which RCB amassed 70 for two, to make an impact.



The dismissal of Venkatesh and Devdutt Padikkal followed by the quick departure of skipper Rajat Patidar and Krunal Pandya saw RCB slipping to 91 for four.

But amid this little cavern of chaos, Kohli stood firm like a fort, stopping GT's advances, and the 37-year-old reached his fifth fifty of the season with pulled four off pacer Arshad Khan. Tim David (24, 17b) produced a mini storm that eased the pressure on Kohli, who survived a scare as Shubman Gill's catch off Arshad was found to have bumped on the grass in the umpire's review.

The champion batter soon so befittingly fetched the winning moment for RCB with

a six off Arshad. The thundering shot also transformed the RCB dugout into a school children's after examination party.

Patidar, who joined MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma as the only captain to have successfully defended an IPL title, shed his usual stoic face, breaking into a wide grin.

Others around him rushed to the field to gather around Kohli, the beating heart of his franchise since 2008.

But before Kohli put on display his undimmed abilities in white ball format, RCB bowlers exploited a slow pitch to perfection, restricting a lethargic Gujarat Titans to a sub-par 155 for eight.

CONTINUED ON >> P4



Chief Minister lays foundation for Ayurvedic college in Shujalpur



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday launched the state's annual "College Chalo Abhiyan" and formally inaugurated the admission process for higher education institutions, while unveiling and laying foundation stones for development projects worth Rs 388 crore in Shujalpur, Shajapur district.

Addressing a public gathering, the Chief Minister said Madhya Pradesh continues to progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and highlighted the state's achievements in education, healthcare and infrastructure. He noted that while Madhya Pradesh had only five medical colleges at the time of its formation, seven new medical colleges have been added in the last two years alone.

During the programme, Yadav performed the groundbreaking ceremony for an

Ayurvedic College and Hospital costing Rs 70 crore and a 50-bed AYUSH Hospital to be developed at a cost of Rs 14.37 crore. He also inaugurated 43 development projects and dedicated four Sandipani schools built at a cost of Rs 122 crore, along with four new Primary Health Centres worth Rs 14.58 crore.

The Chief Minister said the state has achieved a record wheat procurement this year, with farmers receiving Rs 2,625 per quintal, and reiterated the government's commitment to fulfilling promises made under the Farmer Welfare Year initiative. He also highlighted welfare measures aimed at supporting farmers, youth, women and economically weaker sections.

Higher Education Minister Inder Singh Parmar said the day marked a significant milestone for education and AYUSH healthcare in the state. He announced that Madhya Pradesh is moving ahead with plans to establish

several new Ayurvedic colleges and a Government Homeopathic College in Ujjain.

The Chief Minister also announced a series of local development projects for Shujalpur, including road infrastructure upgrades, a new college in Akodia, a bypass road at Gaulana, police housing facilities and additional police force deployment. He later held a 1.5-km roadshow in Shujalpur, receiving a warm welcome from residents and social organisations.

Highlighting the government's focus on expanding educational opportunities, Yadav urged students to take full advantage of the admission campaign and pursue higher education to contribute to the state's growth. He said investments in education, healthcare and infrastructure are aimed at creating better opportunities for the younger generation while ensuring balanced regional development.

First phase of Census completed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has successfully completed the first phase of the Census 2027 exercise, with the fieldwork for House Listing Operations (HLO) and Housing Census concluding on May 30 within the stipulated timeline.

The month-long exercise began on May 1 and covered every part of the state through a technology-driven and fully digital process. Enumerators conducted door-to-door surveys using a mobile application to collect responses to 33 notified questions related to housing conditions, household amenities and assets.

The entire operation was monitored through a dedicated digital portal to ensure accuracy, transparency and timely execution. Prior to the field survey, citizens were also given the option of self-enumeration between April

16 and April 30. More than 700,000 families voluntarily submitted their details online during this period.

The large-scale exercise was carried out across all 55 districts, 425 urban local bodies, 449 tehsils and 54,923 villages in the state. More than 137,000 house-listing blocks were covered by over 144,000 enumerators and supervisors, while around 15,000 personnel were kept in reserve.

Officials credited the successful completion of the phase to the coordinated efforts of field staff, district administrations and public participation. Media and social media platforms also played a significant role in creating awareness about the exercise.

The next and most crucial phase, Population Enumeration, is scheduled to be conducted in February 2027.



Members of the Prajapita Brahma Kumari Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya or Brahmakumaris during an awareness rally on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, at Narmadapuram Road in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Chhatarpur man severs genital organ with axe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chhatarpur

A 42-year-old man from Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district suffered serious injuries after allegedly severing part of his genital organ with an axe, claiming he wanted to rid himself of sexual desire.

The incident occurred on Saturday morning in the Maharajpur police station area, about 20 kilometres from the district headquarters. The injured man, identified as Rammilan Yadav, reportedly carried out the act near a well located close to his agricultural field.

According to family members, Yadav called his cousin after sustaining the injury, following which he was rushed to the Primary Health Centre in Maharajpur. Given

the severity of his condition, doctors referred him to the district hospital for advanced treatment.

A video circulating on social media purportedly shows Yadav explaining the reason behind his action. In the video, he claims he was troubled by feelings of lust and anger and decided to take the extreme step in an attempt to renounce worldly desires. He further stated that he now wishes to dedicate his life to prayer, social service and the welfare of the nation.

District Hospital official Dr Rajesh Mishra said the patient was admitted to the emergency ward with severe injuries. He confirmed that the man had suffered a partial severing of his genital organ and is currently undergoing treatment. Family members said Yadav

Civic body seals illegal kulfi unit, imposes Rs 10K fine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday took action against an illegally operated kulfi manufacturing unit in the Bhabhbhada area, imposing a fine of Rs 10,000 and sealing the premises.

The action was carried out by the Health Department team of Zone 21 during an inspection conducted as part of an ongoing campaign to monitor food and beverage manufacturing, storage and sale units across the city.

During the inspection, officials found an unauthorised kulfi factory operating from a shed-like structure located between a madrasa and a mosque near Bhabhbhada Square. The unit was allegedly being run without proper authorisation and was found to be functioning under unhygienic conditions.

Municipal officials reported that the premises were heavily contaminated and that the utensils and equipment used for preparing kulfi were unclean. The inspection team observed multiple violations of prescribed sanitation and public health norms.

Acting on the findings, the civic body initiated action against the operator, identified as Shakeel Khan, recovered a penalty of Rs 10,000 and sealed the facility. Utensils and other materials used in the manufacture of kulfi were also seized.

runs a Ram Leela troupe and lives with his wife, son and two daughters. His wife has reportedly been suffering from paralysis for a long time, and the family has been facing financial hardships. One of his daughters is scheduled to get married later this month.

Maharajpur police station in-charge D.K. Singh said no formal complaint has been received in the matter so far. Police said further action, if required, will be taken based on facts that emerge during inquiry.

Doctors said the patient's condition remains under close observation, and further medical procedures may be required depending on his recovery and response to treatment. Authorities are also assessing his mental and emotional state as part of the ongoing medical evaluation.



Students come out after appearing in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA) in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

CareerNext focuses on future-ready skills

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The second day of the two-day mega career guidance programme, "CareerNext - Career Discovery Industry Boot Camp," organised jointly by Scope Global Skills University (SGSU) and Rabindranath Tagore University (RNTU), featured an inspiring address by renowned motivational speaker and business coach Dr. Ujjwal Patni. His session, titled "Dream Career to Dream Life," focused on success, self-confidence, personality development and career planning for students.

Addressing a large gathering of students and academicians, Dr. Patni encouraged young people to adopt the habit of a "daily self-audit" by reflecting each day on one achievement they are proud of and one mistake they should avoid repeating. He

said this simple practice helps build self-discipline and promotes continuous personal growth.

Explaining the concept of an "extra mindset," he urged students to develop additional skills and capabilities that distinguish them from others. He also highlighted the importance of the "one percent better" principle, stressing that lasting success is achieved through small but consistent improvements rather than dramatic changes.

Dr. Patni advised students not to limit themselves to academic studies alone. He emphasized the need to focus equally on skill development, networking, industry exposure and cultivating a positive mindset. According to him, the modern employment landscape increasingly values practical knowledge and industry-integrated learning

T Raja reacts to event cancellation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

over purely theoretical education.

Sharing his personal journey, Dr. Patni said he was an average student during his school years but transformed his life through continuous learning and self-improvement. He encouraged students to believe in their potential and pursue their goals with determination. Highlighting the growing influence of artificial intelligence, he said the future belongs to specialists. He noted that in the AI era, individuals must continuously upgrade their skills and strive to become experts in their chosen fields to remain competitive.

The programme was attended by SGSU Chancellor Dr. Siddharth Chaturvedi, Vice-Chancellor Dr. Vijay Singh, Registrar Dr. Suresh Kumar Sinha and RNTU Pro Vice-Chancellor Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Gupta, among others.

Bhopal: A proposed religious gathering in Bhopal on Sunday was cancelled after police denied permission for the event. Following the cancellation, Telangana MLA T. Raja Singh expressed strong displeasure and made controversial remarks targeting a particular community. He also claimed that some individuals were taking credit for the event's cancellation and warned that they would receive a response "in their own language."

Singh said he would respect the decisions of the government, judiciary and police administration and would not stage any protest. Meanwhile, a complaint has been filed at Talaiya police station over alleged objectionable social media posts related to the event.

Class 12 student dies after allegedly consuming sulphas

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

A 17-year-old student died after allegedly consuming aluminium phosphide (sulphas) in Bhopal's Gunga police station area following a dispute with her father over mobile phone usage, police said on Sunday.

According to police, the deceased, identified as Khushi Kushwaha, was a resident of Ratua village and the eldest among three siblings. She had recently passed her Class 12 examinations with first division marks and was preparing to take admission to a private college in Bhanpur for higher studies.

Family members told investigators that Khushi was using her mobile phone late on Saturday night when her father reportedly reprimanded her. Upset by the scolding, she allegedly went to the bathroom and consumed sulphas.

A short while later, her condition began to deteriorate. When questioned by family members, she reportedly disclosed that she had ingested the poisonous substance. Relatives immediately rushed her to a hospital for treatment.

Doctors initiated emergency medical care, but her condition remained critical. She succumbed during treatment in the early hours of Sunday.

After receiving information about the incident, police reached the hospital and completed the necessary legal formalities. Following a post-mortem examination, the body was handed over to the family.

Gunga police have registered a case and launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident. Officials said statements of family members and other relevant evidence are being examined as part of the probe.

The tragic incident has left the family and local community in shock, particularly as the teenager had recently achieved academic success and was preparing to begin the next phase of her education.

Police officials said investigators are also examining whether the teenager had access to the pesticide at home and are verifying the sequence of events leading up to the incident. The exact cause of death will be confirmed after the post-mortem and forensic reports are received.

Charvi wins national para chess title

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ujjain

Charvi Mehta, one of Madhya Pradesh's leading para chess players, clinched the women's title at the 6th National Para Chess Championship held at IPS Academy, Indore, ending the long-standing dominance of players from southern India in the category.

Competing against top para chess players from across the country, Charvi delivered a series of impressive performances to secure the gold medal in the tournament, which was conducted from May 27 to 30 under FIDE rules in a nine-round Swiss-system format.

A Class XI student of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Ujjain, Charvi competes in the wheelchair category and is already a three-time national champion. She is also the first chess player from Madhya Pradesh to represent India at the Asian Games.

Charvi has earned international recognition as well, winning medals in Classical, Rapid and Blitz formats at the 24th World Individual Chess Championship. At the Asian Para Games in China, she narrowly missed a podium finish, securing fourth place in both chess formats.

Five held as police uncover interstate drug network

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mandsaur

In one of the biggest anti-narcotics operations in recent months, Mandsaur Police have busted an interstate drug trafficking network and seized 20 kg of brown sugar (smack). Five alleged members of the syndicate have been arrested, while one accused remains absconding.

The operation was carried out under the ongoing statewide campaign against narcotics launched by the Police Headquarters. Acting on a specific intelligence input received on May 31, a special team was constituted under the direction of Superintendent of Police Vinod Kumar Meena to track the movement of suspected traffickers.

The team, led by New Abadi police station in-charge Kuldeep Singh Rathore and supervised by Additional Superintendent of Police Tersingh Baghel and CSP Jitendra Singh Bhaskar, intercepted and searched suspicious vehicles during the operation. Police recovered 20 kg of brown sugar from the possession of the accused and registered a case under Sections 8,

21 and 29 of the NDPS Act at New Abadi police station.

During the action, officers also seized two vehicles allegedly used for transporting the contraband—a Suzuki S-Cross and a Hyundai Creta—with a combined estimated value of Rs 33 lakh. Seven mobile phones worth around Rs 2.5 lakh were also recovered from the accused.

Those arrested have been identified as Hemant Verma (50) and Mona Sen (48), both residents of Indore; Rahul Meena (36), Subhash alias Pintu Nahar (46), and Jitendra alias Karu Meena (35), all residents of Pratapgarh district in Rajasthan. The absconding accused has been identified as Aziz alias Ejaz of Pratapgarh.

Preliminary investigations suggest the accused were actively involved in an interstate narcotics network. Police are now examining the syndicate's supply chain, financial transactions and possible links with other traffickers operating across state borders. Officials said the seized mobile phones are being subjected to technical and cyber forensic analysis to identify additional suspects and uncover the full extent of the network.

Singhar seeks justice for Akanksha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar on Sunday spoke with the family of Akanksha Chaturvedi, the Mauganj student whose death has been linked by the Congress to the alleged NEEET paper leak controversy, and announced financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh on behalf of the Congress Legislature Party.

Expressing condolences, Singhar said the tragedy was not merely the loss of a daughter but a reflection of the growing despair and loss of trust among students affected by irregularities in competitive examinations.

According to a statement issued by the Congress, Singhar interacted with the bereaved family through Madhya Pradesh Youth Congress president Yash Ghonghria and assured them of the party's support during the difficult time.

He alleged that Akanksha's death highlighted the deep frustration among students arising from the alleged NEEET paper leak and failures in the education system. Singhar said the incident represented the anguish of lakhs of young aspirants whose faith in the fairness of examinations had been shaken.

Indore water crisis: CM seeks immediate relief measures

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Indore

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday reviewed the water supply situation in Indore and directed officials to take immediate and effective measures to address the ongoing water crisis affecting several parts of the city.

During a high-level meeting at the Divisional Commissioner's office, the Chief Minister instructed authorities to conduct daily reviews of water supply operations through a 24x7 water control room and ensure continuous monitoring of the situation. He emphasized that areas facing acute shortages should be given priority under a special water distribution plan to provide timely relief to residents.

Yadav directed officials to eliminate disparities in water supply timings and ensure equitable distribution across all localities. He also stressed the need to make adequate water available in government colleges, hostels and other residential institutions, particularly those housing students.

Expressing concern over water theft and the unauthorised

use of motor pumps to draw water from supply lines, the Chief Minister ordered a special enforcement drive and called for strict action against violators.

To improve efficiency, he instructed officials to ensure the full utilisation of the city's major water storage tanks and closely monitor both municipal and private water tankers on a real-time basis. He also directed authorities to promptly repair pipeline leakages and minimise distribution losses to prevent wastage of precious water resources.

The Chief Minister said senior officials from Bhopal had already visited Indore to assess the situation and would be deputed again if required. He further directed officials to maintain regular coordination with public representatives and citizen groups and submit periodic reports on the water supply situation to the Chief Minister's Office.

During the meeting, Divisional Commissioner Dr. Sudam Khade and Municipal Commissioner Kshitij Singhal briefed the Chief Minister on the current water distribution system and measures being taken to address shortages.



Rain brings relief as heatwave retreats across MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

After days of intense heat and scorching temperatures during the peak Nautapa period, large parts of Madhya Pradesh witnessed much-needed relief as strong winds, thunderstorms and widespread rainfall swept across the state late Saturday night and continued into Sunday. The change in weather significantly brought down temperatures and ended heatwave conditions in several districts.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), more than 20 districts recorded rainfall, while dust storms and gusty winds reaching speeds of up to 60 kmph were reported in several regions, including Bhopal, Vidisha, Raisen,

Sagar, Narsinghpur, Jabalpur, Damoh, Khandwa, Betul, Chhindwara, Seoni, Ujjain, Indore, Dhar, Ratlam and Mandasaur. The sudden weather activity disrupted power supply in parts of Bhopal, where strong dust-laden winds uprooted trees and affected normal life for a brief period.

Meteorologists said the pre-monsoon activity has provided substantial relief from the severe heatwave that had gripped central India over the past several weeks. The weather department has not issued any heatwave warning for Madhya Pradesh for the next four days, indicating a temporary respite from extreme temperatures. Recent IMD forecasts had warned of above-normal heatwave conditions across central India during the summer season.

Weather scientist Arun Sharma said temperatures have dropped sharply in several districts. Areas such as Nowgong in Chhatarpur district, Niwari and Tikamgarh recorded a decline of up to 12 degrees Celsius in daytime temperatures due to cloud cover, rain and strong winds. The fall in temperatures has brought considerable relief to residents who had been enduring temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius for several days.

The IMD has forecast continued weather activity across Madhya Pradesh over the next three days. On June 1, districts including Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Morena, Datia, Rajgarh, Neemuch, Mandasaur, Ratlam, Ujjain, Khargone, Khandwa, Harda, Betul, Raisen, Narsinghpur, Chhindwara,

Seoni, Balaghat, Mandla, Panna and Chhatarpur are likely to witness thunderstorms, rainfall and strong winds.

Similar conditions are expected on June 2 and June 3 across western, central and southern districts, including Dhar, Alirajpur, Barwani, Burhanpur, Dewas, Sehore, Pandhurna, Dindori and Balaghat. In some places, lightning activity and isolated hailstorms may also occur.

Meteorologists attribute the changing weather pattern to advancing monsoon systems and favourable atmospheric conditions developing over the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. According to the IMD, the southwest monsoon has already progressed further over parts of the Arabian Sea, Lakshadweep region and the Bay of Bengal, and conditions

remain favourable for its continued advance.

If the current pattern persists, the monsoon is expected to reach Madhya Pradesh around June 15, which is close to its normal arrival period in the state. Historically, the southwest monsoon enters Madhya Pradesh in mid-June and remains the primary source of rainfall for agriculture, reservoirs and groundwater recharge.

The recent spell of rain has also raised hopes among farmers preparing for the upcoming kharif sowing season. However, weather experts have advised caution, noting that while pre-monsoon showers provide temporary relief, long-range forecasts continue to indicate the possibility of below-normal monsoon rainfall in parts of the country due to emerging El Niño conditions.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav listens to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popular programme "Mann Ki Baat" in Shujalpur of Shajapur district, Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. Pioneer photo



Members of Gayatri family take out an awareness rally on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day, at Kolar locality in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

Narmada-Kshipra pipeline bursts near Mhow

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Indore

A major section of the Narmada-Kshipra pipeline burst near Bherughat in Mhow on Sunday morning, triggering panic in the area as a massive water jet shot nearly 150 feet into the air and inundated nearby properties.

The incident occurred around 7.30 am in the Indore-Khandwa Road. Residents reported hearing a loud explosion-like sound before a powerful fountain of water erupted from the pipeline, reaching almost the height of nearby high-tension power lines.

Local residents Vijay Kohli and Sugandh Bai Kohli said floodwaters quickly entered their homes, damaging household goods, food grains and

other belongings. Several items were washed away, causing substantial losses. The force of the water also reportedly hurled large stones towards nearby houses, damaging tin roofs and structures.

A temporary house belonging to a forest department watchman was swept away by the strong current, while a tin shed at a roadside eatery near Bheru Baba Temple was also damaged.

Residents said the affected pipeline is part of the Narmada-Kshipra project that supplies water from Omkareshwar to Ujjain. Water continued gushing out for nearly an hour before the supply was shut off around 8.30 am.

Locals alleged that leakage complaints had been reported to authorities several days earlier, but no repair work

was undertaken. They have demanded an inquiry into the incident and compensation for the losses suffered.

Meanwhile, the pipeline disruption intensified water supply problems in several areas of Indore. Residents of Tapti Parisar near Treasure Fantasy staged a protest outside the Municipal Corporation's water control office at Bijalpur, alleging inadequate water supply and demanding immediate restoration of services.

The water crisis also triggered political controversy, with Congress leaders accusing party functionaries of obstructing efforts to arrange tanker water supply in affected localities. The dispute prompted public criticism and threats of resignation by local party leaders.

Ex-judge questioned over CCTV footage removal in Twisha death case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the death of actress Twisha Sharma, has intensified its questioning of former district and sessions judge Giribala Singh, focusing on allegations related to possible tampering of the crime scene, handling of CCTV footage and preservation of digital evidence.

According to sources, Singh, who is currently in CBI custody, has complained of anxiety and uneasiness during questioning. Investigators, however, have continued the interrogation, with a woman DSP leading the exercise.

Sources said the agency sought Singh's response to

the allegations mentioned in the FIR and asked why her role in the case should be viewed as limited despite serious accusations levelled by the complainant's family. Investigators also questioned the handling of material available in the case diary, witness statements and allegations made by the deceased's relatives.

During the interrogation, Singh reportedly denied all allegations and maintained that Twisha Sharma may have taken the extreme step due to depression following a miscarriage. However, investigators confronted her with witness statements alleging harassment and cruelty towards the actress.

The CBI also referred to injuries noted in the post-mortem report and sought

an explanation regarding the alleged ante-mortem injury marks found on the body. Investigators questioned whether family members were present at the time and why the injuries did not appear consistent with normal handling of a body after death. Sources said Singh did not provide clear answers to several of these questions.

Digital evidence has emerged as a key focus of the investigation. The agency is examining WhatsApp chats, electronic records and CCTV footage to understand the nature of Twisha Sharma's relationship with her in-laws and to probe allegations of mental and physical harassment.

Investigators also questioned Singh regarding dis-

cussions surrounding Twisha's pregnancy and allegations that pressure had been exerted on her.

The agency further sought an explanation for delays in joining the investigation despite multiple notices and asked whether there had been any attempt to withhold documents, communication records or other evidence. Singh has denied any tampering with or concealment of evidence.

One of the key lines of questioning reportedly concerned CCTV footage from a parlour.

The CBI asked who had sent three lawyers seen extracting the footage and whether the exercise was intended to preserve evidence or interfere with digital records.

Shivraj highlights SVANidhi benefits

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Vidisha

Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday interacted with street vendors in Vidisha and met beneficiaries of the Prime Minister's SVANidhi Scheme.

He said the initiative has helped small traders break free from moneylenders and high-interest loans while strengthening their livelihoods. Chouhan announced that special public welfare camps will be organised in June to connect eligible beneficiaries with government schemes. He also informed that cancer screening and consultation camps will be held at Vidisha Medical College on June 6 and 7 to provide early detection and healthcare support.

STF seizes cough syrup worth Rs 50L in Bhopal crackdown

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

The Special Task Force (STF) has carried out another major operation against the illegal trade of narcotic substances in Bhopal, seizing cough syrup worth approximately Rs 50 lakh from the Mubarakpur Airport Road area.

The raid was conducted during the intervening night of May 30 and 31 based on information obtained from accused arrested in an earlier crackdown in the Gandhinagar area.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs, STF teams raided a hideout in Mubarakpur and recovered a large stock of cough syrup containing restricted and narcotic ingredients. Officials said the seized consignment included Off-Cuff and Onnex brands, which are commonly misused as intoxicants.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the stock was being stored for illegal distribution in Bhopal and surrounding areas. The recovered material has been seized, and samples have been sent for laboratory examination to determine the composition and quantity of narcotic substances present.

Officials said efforts are underway to identify individuals linked to the operation and trace the wider network involved in the illegal trade. Searches are also being conducted to locate other suspects connected to the racket.

Tree conservation focus during project review

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ujjain

Collector Roshan Kumar Singh on Sunday conducted a comprehensive inspection of several major infrastructure and cultural projects underway in the city and directed officials to ensure timely completion of works while prioritising environmental conservation and construction quality.

During the visit, the Collector reviewed the progress of the under-construction Geeta Bhawan Auditorium near Science College on Dewas Road, the upgradation of the Vikram Kirti Mandir Museum, the upcoming Reptile Park near the planetarium and the Veer Bharat Museum being developed at Kothi Palace.

After assessing the status of the projects, Singh instructed

officials to protect all existing trees within the project areas and ensure that development activities do not adversely affect the green cover. Emphasising the importance of sustainable development, he directed departments not to cut any trees during construction and to utilise available open spaces for plantation drives.

The Collector said environmental preservation should remain an integral part of every development project and called for efforts to enhance the aesthetic and ecological value of public spaces through extensive greenery.

He also stressed the need to maintain high construction standards and ensure that all works are completed within the stipulated timelines.

Officials were directed to regularly monitor progress and address any issues that could delay project execution.

Municipal Commissioner Abhilash Mishra accompanied the Collector during the inspection and reviewed the ongoing works with officials from the concerned departments.

The projects form part of Ujjain's broader infrastructure and heritage development initiatives aimed at strengthening public amenities, preserving cultural assets and enhancing the city's appeal as a major tourism and pilgrimage destination. With several key projects progressing simultaneously, the administration is focusing on creating modern facilities while maintaining the city's environmental and cultural character.

CM hits back at Jitu Patwari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday launched a sharp attack on Madhya Pradesh Congress president Jitu Patwari, responding to the latter's recent remark referring to him as "Mohan Lal Abhinandan Yadav."

Addressing a public gathering in Shujalpur, Yadav hit back by saying, "Yes, I am Abhinandan Lal, while you are Tapori Lal," drawing applause from supporters.

The Chief Minister accused the Congress of opposing development initiatives despite the state's rapid progress. He claimed that the opposition party was unable to acknowledge the gov-

ernment's achievements and continued to criticise developmental works being carried out across Madhya Pradesh.

Targeting Patwari's leadership, Yadav said he had never seen a state Congress president under whose tenure a Lok Sabha candidate from Indore withdrew from the election race. He alleged that the Congress was struggling to find suitable candidates and was facing a steady decline in public support.

The Chief Minister further remarked that a leader who could not retain his own Assembly seat and lost by a margin of around 40,000 votes was now heading the state Congress unit.

CM unveils drone surveillance system

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Indore

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday inaugurated the District Drone Unit and launched the Indore Traffic Saathi mobile application at the DRP Line in Indore, marking a major step towards technology-driven governance and modern policing in Madhya Pradesh.

The Chief Minister inducted 18 advanced drones and 10 new police vehicles into the Indore Police fleet. He said the drones would act as the police's "third eye," strengthening law and order management, traffic monitoring and

surveillance capabilities across the city.

Responding to demands from public representatives, Yadav also announced the establishment of three new police stations in Indore and assured that shortages in police manpower would be addressed in a phased manner. He said the state government is recruiting 22,500 personnel annually in the police department and is also setting up police bands in every district.

Highlighting the role of technology in governance, the Chief Minister said innovations such as the District Drone Unit and Traffic Saathi app would

enhance administrative efficiency and improve citizen services. The app will help motorists locate parking facilities more conveniently, while drones will assist police in crowd management, traffic regulation and crime surveillance.

Police Commissioner Santosh Kumar Singh said the drones can monitor an area of up to two kilometres and have already been deployed during major events such as Rang Panchami processions and security arrangements at Bhojshala. He added that Indore Police have also distributed 4,370 helmets free of cost as part of road safety initiatives.

Chhindwara village set to become a stargazer's paradise

UMESH NIGAM ■ Bhopal

Tucked away in the hills of Tamia block in Chhindwara district, a small village is on the verge of a remarkable transformation.

Using advanced telescopes, the team observed planets and stars in the night sky and confirmed that the village offers exceptional conditions for astronomical observation. Many villagers experienced the wonder of viewing celestial bodies through a telescope for the very first time, an experience they described with great joy and enthusiasm.

An astro village, also known as an astronomy village, is a specialised tourism centre where visitors are given the opportunity to experience the depths of space through the study of astronomy, star gazing and exploration of the universe. Unlike ordinary

Dhusavani, interacting with local villagers, surveying the terrain and assessing the star gazing potential of the location.

The tranquil, forested environment of Tamia's hills makes Dhusavani a near-perfect candidate for this purpose. The homestays that will host visiting tourists are managed and operated by local villagers themselves, ensuring that the community remains at the centre of the tourism model.

Collector Harendra Narayan confirmed that work on tourism development in the district is progressing actively. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is developing Dhusavani as a rural tourism village under its gram pary-

tourist destinations, astro villages are deliberately situated away from urban centres, industrial zones, noise and light pollution, making them ideal for observing the night sky in its full natural splendour.

The economic dimension of the project is significant. The astro village model is designed to generate employment for local adivasi and rural residents by enabling them to earn income through homestays, guided experiences and tourism services within their own village.

As tourist footfall increases following the astro village designation, homestay book-

ings are expected to rise, directly benefiting village families. The Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board is providing subsidy support for homestay development, with five homestays currently operational in Dhusavani and three more under construction.

In the near future, an astro park will also be developed in the village, where tourists will be able to camp in open elevated areas and observe the clear sky, the Milky Way and star clusters.

The concept of integrating astrology and space science with rural tourism is rapidly gaining popularity in the region, and Dhusavani's selection signals Madhya Pradesh's intent to position itself as a destination for experiential and scientific tourism alongside its established natural and cultural attractions.



Sadhus and Saints during a sit-in protest against the cow slaughter, at Ambedkar Ground in Bhopal on Sunday. Pioneer photo

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र Bank of Maharashtra भारत सरकार का उद्यम		Zonal Office: Wright Town, Jabalpur 482001 Tele - Phone : 0761-2480065 E-mail: cmrecovery_jab@mahabank.co.in	HEAD OFFICE: Lokmangal, 1501, Shivajinagar, Pune-5
POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule - 8 (1)] (For Immovable Property)			
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (2) of Section 13 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002 issued Demand Notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.			
Name & Address of Borrower's and Guarantor	Outstanding Amount as on Notice	Description Of Property (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date
Branch : Rewa Mr. Vidyakant Dwivedi (Borrower) Mr. Vikas Dwivedi (Guarantor)	Rs. 959527/- (Rupees Nine Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Seven only) + Unapplied interest thereon and other charges and expenses w.e.f 13.03.2026	All piece and parcel of land and construction thereon at Khasara no. 716/2/1/4 Rakwa 0.008 Hect.i.e. 20'40=880 sq.ft. (GF=880 sq.ft and FF=880 sq.ft.) Situated at Mauza Tighara, PH Tighara, Tehsil, Huzar Dist. Rewa, (M.P.). Bounded as: North: Remaining land of seller, South: 22 feet wide proposed street with nali, East: Remaining land of seller, West: Remaining land of seller. Owner of Property: Mr. Vidyakant Dwivedi Asses ID: 200085635503	13.03.2026 29.05.2026 Symbolic Possession
The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of Maharashtra for an amount hereinabove mentioned. The details of the properties mortgaged to the Bank and taken possession by the Bank are as above. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.			
Place: Rewa, Date : 01.06.2026			
Chief Manager & Authorized Officer, Bank of Maharashtra			

India-Bangladesh border talks in Delhi next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

India and Bangladesh are expected to hold their bi-annual DG-level border talks in Delhi next week, the first such meeting after the BNP government took charge in Dhaka early this year.

Issues related to border fencing, attacks on BSF personnel, checking infiltration and cross-border crimes and handing over of illegal Bangladeshi migrants are likely to be part of the agenda for the talks, sources said. A delegation of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) led by its Director General (DG) Maj Gen Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui is expected to be in the national capital between June 8 and 11 for the talks with their counterpart Border Security Force (BSF).

The Indian side will be led by BSF DG Praveen Kumar. India shares a 4,096 km-long international border with Bangladesh, out of which about 860 km remains unfenced, including 174.51 km of the "not feasible for fencing" gap. Officials told PTI that the



BSF-BGB DG-level talks are to be held between June 8-11 at a BSF base in Delhi.

They said that issues related to cross-border crimes and mutual cooperation are expected to be the crux of discussions, as the agenda of talks between the two countries, by and large, remains the same.

A joint record of discussions will be signed between the two sides on June 11, they said.

Sources in the security establishment noted that this will be the first top-level border meeting between the two forces after the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was elected to power in February this year.

The last meeting between the two sides was held in Dhaka in August 2025, when an interim government

headed by Muhammad Yunus was in power in Bangladesh.

The forthcoming meeting assumes significance as the Modi government, through the public speeches of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has underlined that India will not allow illegal infiltration of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas.

The government asserted that all such people who were present in the country will face a graded 3D action of 'detect, delete and deport'.

More than half of the over 4,000 km India-Bangladesh border is shared by the state of West Bengal (2,216.7 km) where a new BJP government led by Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari has taken charge recently.

Adhikari too has reiterated the Union government's 3D approach against illegal infil-

trators present in the state, even as his government has handed over large tracts of land to the BSF for the erection of a strong fence.

According to government data of August 2025, a total of 1,647.69 km of the 2,216 km border in West Bengal has been fenced and out of this, 112.78 km cannot be fenced as it is non-feasible due to geographical features like water bodies and the Sunderbans mangrove area. A total of 456.22 km is feasible for fencing works.

Four other states share a border with Bangladesh — Tripura (856 km), Meghalaya (443 km), Assam (262 km) and Mizoram (318 km).

The sources said the BSF agenda points for the forthcoming talks may include prevention against attack, assault, abuse and stone pelting on BSF personnel and Indian nationals by Bangladesh-based criminals/miscreants, joint efforts to prevent trans-border crimes, action against Indian Insurgent Groups (IIGs) in Bangladesh and denial and delay in taking over apprehended illegal Bangladeshi entrants by the BGB.

Kedarnath Yatra temporarily suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dehradun

Heavy downpour and adverse weather conditions caused disruptions across Uttarakhand on Sunday, leading to the temporary suspension of the Kedarnath Yatra, and that left hundreds of pilgrims stranded.

The intense rainfall caused local streams and rivers to swell and led to debris accumulation at certain locations, which was cleared immediately. Following a weather warning issued for the Rudraprayag district, Char Dham Yatra pilgrims were stopped at secure holding areas in Srinagar.

Srinagar SDM Nupur Verma said about 400 vehicles were accommodated at the NIT Ground and Awasth Vikas Ground on the instructions of the district magistrate. The movement of vehicles was restricted from 10 am onwards.

As weather conditions improved, the stranded vehicles were allowed to move toward their destinations in a phased manner. Special arrangements for drinking water, food, and lodging were being provided for pilgrims who chose to halt for the night.

The Srinagar district administration has set up a control room for coordination and



Police personnel rescue pilgrims from a swollen river following heavy rainfall in Champawat district, Uttarakhand on Sunday

assistance. In case of emergency, pilgrims can contact the Srinagar Tehsil Office on 01346-251178. Assistance centres operating from 6 am to 8 pm can be reached at 8533851735 for the NIT Ground and 9286486043 for the Kaliasaur Porta Cabin.

Rudraprayag district administration authorities issued an immediate directive to halt the Kedarnath Yatra, placing pilgrims at the nearest holding zones and safe locations due to an orange alert issued by the weather department. The alert predicted heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and adverse weather conditions across the district.

Rudraprayag District Disaster Management Officer Nandan Singh Rajwar said sector officers deployed at all landslide-prone zones, includ-

ing Sonprayag and Gaurikund, were instructed to ensure no pilgrim advanced further until the weather normalised.

Officials from the police, DDFR, SDRF, NDRF, and other departmental teams remained on alert along the yatra route. The district administration ensured essential facilities and safety arrangements at all holding points.

Later in the day, the temporary restrictions on the Kedarnath Yatra were lifted during the afternoon hours as rains ceased and weather conditions improved along the pedestrian route. Movement was restored from various transit halts, allowing the Kedarnath pilgrimages to resume smoothly.

Significant rainfall was recorded after 8:30 am on

Sunday, including 31.0 mm in Champawat, 27.5 mm in Kaladhungi, 26.0 mm in Ganai Gangoli, 13.7 mm in Pithoragarh, and 5.2 mm in Mussoorie.

Maximum temperatures across both the plains and hills of Uttarakhand remained markedly below normal during the past 24 hours.

In Dehradun, the maximum and minimum temperatures recorded on Sunday were 26.6 degrees Celsius and 17.0 degrees Celsius, which were nine degrees and five degrees below normal, respectively.

Pantnagar recorded a maximum of 32.0 degrees Celsius, Mukteshwar 14.8 degrees Celsius, and New Tehri 18.6 degrees Celsius.

According to the evening forecast issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), high-altitude areas of Uttarakhand located at 3,800 metres and above are likely to receive snowfall, while several other parts of the state are expected to experience light to moderate rain or thunderstorms on Monday.

The IMD stated that light to moderate rain, thunderstorms, or snowfall are likely at many places in Uttarakashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, Bageshwar, and Pithoragarh districts. Similar weather conditions are expected at a few places in the remaining districts of the state.

Delhi's average AQI between Jan-May 2026 lowest in 8 years barring 2020

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The average Air Quality Index (AQI) in Delhi between January and May this year stands at 211, the lowest in eight years barring 2020, when pandemic-related curbs sharply brought down AQI levels, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) said on Sunday.

The commission said the average AQI during this period stood at 214 in 2025, 231 in 2024, 213 in 2023, 238 in 2022, 235 in 2021, 181 in 2020, 237 in 2019, and 243 in 2018.

In a post on X, the CAQM said, "Delhi recorded 75 'Good to Moderate' AQI days during



January-May of 2026, as against 70 in 2025, 75 in 2024, 74 in 2023, 37 in 2022, 59 in 2021, 98 in 2020, 59 in 2019 and 44 in 2018 respectively, during the corresponding period."

The commission also highlighted that the average AQI in Delhi during May this year

-- recorded at 157 -- has been the lowest during the eight-year period, barring 2020 and 2021.

The average AQI for May stood at 170 in 2025, 223 in 2024, 171 in 2023, 212 in 2022, 144 in 2021 and 2020, 221 in 2019, and 217 in 2018, the CAQM said.

Maharashtra leaders mourn Suman Kalyanpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and Deputy CM Eknath Shinde on Sunday mourned the death of veteran playback singer Suman Kalyanpur, remembering her as one of India's most celebrated voices whose songs shaped generations of music lovers.

While Fadnavis described her passing as the loss of a divine voice that enriched India's musical heritage for more than six decades, Pawar said it marked the end of a golden era, and Shinde called her an enduring symbol of Indian light classical and film music.



Kalyanpur, who gave her voice to hits such as "Na Na Karte" and "Tumne Pukara", passed away on Sunday evening at her residence due to age-related issues, a close friend said. She was 89. Fadnavis said Kalyanpur initially trained in painting

but found her true calling in music, going on to establish herself as one of the most respected playback singers in the country. Her sweet voice and command over classical music made her songs immensely popular, particularly during the 1950s and 1960s, he said.

The chief minister said that Kalyanpur made an indelible contribution not only to Marathi music but also to Hindi, Bengali and Odia songs. Born in Dhaka in the then-undivided India and later settled in Mumbai, she was honoured with the Padma Bhushan for her contribution.

Fadnavis said Kalyanpur's work in playback singing, devotional music and emo-

tional songs significantly enriched India's musical legacy. Her timeless songs will continue to live on in the hearts of listeners, he said.

"Though her immortal songs will remain with us forever, the absence of the gentle and graceful Sumanji will always be felt," the chief minister said.

Calling her death a major loss to the cultural and music fraternity, Fadnavis expressed condolences to the Kalyanpur family and her countless admirers.

NCP SP chief Sharad Pawar expressed grief over the demise of veteran playback singer Suman Kalyanpur, saying her death marks the end of a golden era in Indian classical and light music.

In a condolence message, Pawar said the news of Kalyanpur's passing was deeply saddening and described her as an artiste who enriched Indian music with her melodious, soulful and emotionally moving voice.

He said her immortal songs in Hindi, Marathi and several other regional languages had captivated generations of listeners and left an enduring impact on India's musical landscape.

Pawar said that Kalyanpur's contribution to Indian music would be remembered for years to come and that her songs would continue to resonate with music lovers across the country.

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Shah emphasized that dialogue and diplomatic engagement remain the only viable path toward resolving the border dispute and strengthening relations between the two neighbouring countries.

UP appoints full-time DGP after four years

Krishna is scheduled to retire in June 2029. His career spans over three decades, marked by postings across various districts and zones in Uttar Pradesh, including Allahabad (now Prayagraj), Kanpur, Lucknow, and Agra. He also served on central deputation from 2012 to 2017 before returning to state service.

The appointment follows the guidelines laid down by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Supreme Court.

The Uttar Pradesh Government had forwarded the names of 19 eligible IPS officers to the UPSC for consideration. A selection committee meeting was held in New Delhi on May 26, attended by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary SP Goyal and Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Prasad.

From the initial list, the commission shortlisted a panel of three officers for the state Government to choose from namely Renuka Mishra (1990 batch), the senior-most officer on the panel; Piyush Anand (1991 batch), currently on central deputation and serving as the DG of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF); and Rajiv Krishna (1991 batch), the incumbent acting DGP who was subsequently appointed as the permanent chief.

A 1991-batch IPS officer, he comes from a family with a strong background in public service, including several senior officers and political figures.

According to UPSC guidelines and Supreme Court directives, a permanent DGP is entitled to a minimum tenure of two years. Given that Rajiv Krishna's original date of superannuation is June 2029, his appointment ensures he will lead the state police force for the next two years.

Rajiv Krishna's appointment marks the return of a full-time, permanent leadership to the Uttar Pradesh Police department.

BJP clears Cabinet expansion in West...

"A full-fledged Council of Ministers of the nationalist Government elected by the people of West Bengal will be constituted," he said in a social media post. Governor RN Ravi will administer the oath of office to them at Lok Bhavan.

Adhikari took oath as the chief minister on May 9 after the BJP swept the assembly elections, ending the 15-year rule of the TMC. Along with Adhikari, four ministers took the oath that day. They were Agnimitra Paul, Nisith Pramanik, Ashok Kirtania and Kshudiram Tudu.

Sources said in the new list, women and backward communities will remain a priority for the BJP and North Bengal is also another priority. With North Bengal already securing key positions, Mathabhanga MLA Nisith Pramanik as a Cabinet Minister and Cooch Behar Dakshin MLA Rathindra Bose as the Assembly Speaker, sources indicate that two more MLAs from the region, Dipak Burman and Shankar Ghosh, are also likely to be included.

The expansion is also expected to significantly boost female representation. Party sources said at least two more women are likely to be inducted, along with a woman actor. Additionally, actor-turned-politician Rudranil Ghosh is also in the race.

Additionally, two journalist-turned-politicians, Swapan Dasgupta and Jagannath Chattopadhyay, may also get key portfolios in the upcoming expansion. Dasgupta, a former Rajya Sabha MP, is reportedly a strong contender for the post of Minister for Higher Education.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as the CM for the second consecutive term on May 12 by Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, several Union ministers, chief ministers of NDA-ruled states and other top dignitaries. Along with the chief minister, four other ministers had taken oath -- the BJP's Ajanta Neog and Rameswar Teli, Asom Gana Parishad's (AGP) Atul Bora and Bodoland People's Front's (BPF) Charan Boro.

"I am pleased to inform that the Council of Ministers of the Government of Assam will be expanded on June 5, 2026," Sarma said in a post on X. He however did not mention the number or names of new ministers to be inducted.

Among the ministers who took office on May 12, Neog, Bora and Boro were retained from the previous ministry, while Teli, a former Union minister of state, was inducted in the state Cabinet for the first time as he returned to the Assembly. All other departments, not yet allotted, are held by the chief minister. The BJP-led NDA came to power for a third successive term in the state, bagging 102 out of the total 126 seats. The saffron party had secured 82 seats, and its allies AGP and BPF won 10 each.

Trump says US, Iran close to a "very good deal"

US media outlet Axios reported that Trump asked for several amendments to the deal his envoys reached with their Iranian counterparts.

Trump wants the deal and expects to finalize it soon, but is keen to strengthen several points that are important to him - particularly around Iran's nuclear material, Axios reported quoting two US officials.

Trump's request has launched another round of back-and-forth between the parties that could last several days.

"It's more specifics about how the US gets the material and the timing," a senior administration official said, referring to the enriched uranium. The second source told Axios that Trump also wants to amend some of the wording around the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz - which hosts roughly one-fifth of the world's energy supplies in normal times.

The US official said Trump was told it would take around three days before the Iranians get back with a response. (PTI)

Kohli, bowlers give RCB second IPL title win...

Shot-making was not exactly an easy proposition on the pitch No. 6 at the Narendra Modi stadium, a mix of red and black soil, and it aptly reflected in the GT batting.

Washington Sundar resisted the trend with an unbeaten 50 (37b, 5x4), but the damage around him was far too big to mitigate. The fatigue of playing Qualifier 2 on Friday and a delayed departure because of inclement weather at Mullanpur also might have added to their list of woes.

But none of that should not take any credit away from the RCB bowlers who found the correct lengths on this deck.

The Titans needed skipper Gill and his opening partner B Sai Sudharsan to fire upfront to pile a competitive total, but they failed in that endeavour. A steady beginning was not alien to GT openers but Gill's swat off Josh Hazlewood (2/37) took the leading edge of his bat to create a simple catch for his opposite number Patidar.

Sudharsan, who was once saved by DRS from being caught behind off Jacob Duffy, did not last long either.

The left-hander's woeful pull off a well-directed high and wide bouncer by Bhuvneshwar Kumar (2/29) did not travel beyond a running-in stumper Jitesh Sharma.

Once their two batters, who have amassed over 700 runs each this season, the GT batting lost its rudders, ending an underwhelming Power Play phase at 45 for two.

There was no real fire in the rest of the batters to enact a recovery act.

Jos Buttler (19) and Washington, who brought up his fifty in 37 balls, tried to keep the Titans' innings together but they struggled to shake off their defensive mien.

The young pacer Rasikh Salam Dhar (3/27), who continued his impressive run behind leaders Bhuvneshwar and Hazlewood, picked up the wickets of an out-of-synch Nishant Sinhu (20 off 18 balls) and Rahul Tewatia as the home side lost the cream of its batting line-up even before reaching 100.

That the Titans had to wait till the 13th over for the first six off their innings — a mighty drag over mid-wicket off Krunal Pandya by Arshad — underlined GT's turmoil on the night that belonged entirely to RCB and Kohli.

CBSE breaks silence on OSM row

Coempt, the company that did the OSM for the CBSE exam, has come under attack as the firm allegedly was already mired in controversy under its old name, Globarena.

"We are grateful to all alert citizens and ethical hackers pointing out such weaknesses, and have gotten in touch with some of them directly. We request any others to reach out to our security teams at secy-cbse@nic.in for any further inputs," the board added on X.

The statement comes amid concerns raised in the public domain regarding alleged vulnerabilities in the portal used by the board's service provider.

Several CBSE Class 12 students had flagged mix-up cases after accessing scanned copies uploaded on the portal and finding that the answer sheets did not belong to them.

Vedant, a Class 12 student, had recently alleged in a social media post that the Physics answer sheet uploaded by the CBSE under the revaluation process was not his. It went viral, after which several other students took to social media with similar claims.

The CBSE later reached out to them and shared their correct answer sheets. The board said that it had taken up on "top priority" the cases related to alleged mismatched answer sheets and other concerns faced by students in the revaluation process.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday held discussions with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on the payment and technical issues faced by students during the CBSE post-result and revaluation processes.

PM Modi hosts key BJP meeting ahead of major...

Possible nominations for State LC elections, spanning across Karnataka, Bihar and Maharashtra, were also discussed in the meeting, sources added.

The biennial election for 16 seats of Maharashtra LC is set to be held on June 18. In Karnataka, seven LC seats will be at disposal after expiry of terms of the incumbent members while in Bihar, one LC seat became vacant after resignation of former Bihar CM Nitish Kumar.

Sources also said that the discussion was held on strengthening the organisation, mobilising workers and supporters at the grassroots to propagate landmarks and milestones of the Government over the past 12 years. PM Modi recently completed twelve years in power and the party brass hopes to inform, intimate and impress upon the electorate about the India growth story that unfolded in all these years under his leadership.

Saket collapse toll rises to six

A multi-agency rescue operation involving the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Delhi Fire Services (DFS), DDM, Delhi Police, Delhi Civil Defence, CATS ambulances, and local volunteers continued through Saturday night. Officials said the rescue operation concluded late Sunday after all trapped people were accounted for and the debris was thoroughly searched, marking the end of active emergency response.

CCTV footage of the collapse circulated widely on social media. The video captured a student beginning to film after noticing stones and bricks tumbling onto the road. Seconds later, the entire building crashed down, a dense cloud of dust engulfed the area, and panic erupted among nearby residents.

The injured were identified as Kshitij Pratap (25), Neelam Yadav (25), Anuj Dixit (22), Tarun (25), Saika Khan (27), Aastha (26), Aditya Sharma (24), and Vishal (25). All were shifted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre for treatment. Police said some of the injured had already been discharged after receiving medical care. Others remained under medical observation and were being treated in the hospital.

The exact cause of the collapse is yet to be ascertained. Authorities have launched a detailed inquiry to determine whether structural weaknesses, construction activity, or violations of building norms contributed to the tragedy. As part of early administrative action, the Deputy Commissioner of MCD's South Zone suspended Assistant Engineer (Building) Sudesh Singh Chouhan and Junior Engineer (Building) Aman Jain over alleged lapses in supervision related to the collapsed building.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta visited the site of a building collapse on Sunday. The Government ordered a magisterial inquiry into the matter. The FIR has been lodged at Mehrauli police station, while the inquiry will be conducted under the supervision of the South District Magistrate on the chief minister's directions. Delhi Police officials said further legal action would be taken based on the findings of the investigation.

Nepal pushes fresh border talks

"After becoming Prime Minister, I found out that it is not only India; Nepal has also encroached on India's land," he said. "Both sides will need to sit down and look into this matter."

The comments come amid continued debate over the status of Lipulekh, Limpiyadhura and Kalapani, territories claimed by Nepal but administered by India. Successive Nepali Governments have maintained that historical treaties and maps support Nepal's claim to the disputed areas.



GRAPEVINE

Trouble brews for Congress over Jharkhand RS berth

The JMM-Congress coalition is brewing trouble for the two vacant Rajya Sabha seats, which – one remained vacant since the demise of JMM Guru Shibu Soren, while the other vacancy is due to the end of tenure of BJP leader Deepak Prakash. With the numbers on their side, JMM desires to contest both the RS berths and does not want to take along Congress. Recently, Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka met Chief Minister Hemant Soren and reiterated their claim for one seat. There are no issues regarding the first seat; however, the second seat, which the BJP is also eyeing, is a bone of contention. CM Hemant Soren's alliance has 56 seats in the 81-member Assembly. With 34 MLAs, JMM is the largest constituent, followed by Congress with 16 MLAs. RJD stands third with four seats, while CPI (ML) has two MLAs in the Assembly. NDA, on the other hand, holds 24 seats with BJP's 21, LJP's 1, AJSU's 1, JDU's 1, and others' 1. The strategy is to ensure that 28 MLAs of the coalition remain united and there is no horse-trading.



For Minister Gopi, acting is better!

As there is an imminent reshuffle in the Union Cabinet, Minister of State Suresh Gopi is in a dilemma. The film star Suresh Gopi is the BJP's lone and first Lok Sabha MP from Kerala. When he was made Minister, he made a request to the party to allow him to continue acting, citing his several pending film contracts, worth in crores of rupees. The request was denied. Grapevine is that Suresh Gopi wanted to continue his film acting and social work and did not want a Delhi-stuck minister job. Grapevine has it that he once again sent a feeler through the proper channel that the party bosses should regard his earlier repeated requests for relieving him from any role in the Council of Ministers, though he is always available as the party's foot soldier in the State and elsewhere.



Bureaucratic-political bonhomie!

Barely five days before his retirement on May 31, 1988, batch IAS Sanjay Gupta was appointed Himachal Pradesh Chief Secretary. He had been holding the charge of officiating chief secretary since October 1, 2025, after his predecessor Prabodh Saxena superannuated, securing six months extension from March 31, 2025, to September 2025. Senior bureaucrats described Gupta's elevation as procedural and to ensure that Gupta receives all service-related benefits associated with the post of chief secretary after retirement. It is more of a formality to protect his service benefits, and several charges pending against him at various levels may continue. There have been instances in past that IAS, IPS have been appointed to the posts even before 24 hours of their retirement to keep intact the bureaucratic-political bonhomie.



Austerity on leave for NGT member!

Even the non-NDA Governments are feeling the heat for austerity measures as advised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and have cut down their expenses in the wake of the West Asia crisis. However, eyebrows are being raised in the AAP-led Punjab Government and neighbouring Congress-led Himachal Pradesh Government over the travel itinerary of an Expert Member of the Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). He will be visiting both the States, accompanied by family members, for seven days and has sought suite accommodations and vehicles in the capacity of 'State Guest' status. The member is scheduled to visit Amritsar, Wagah Border, Dalhousie, Khajjar and adjoining tourist places at the cost of the State's exchequer. "Our salaries have been cut by 40 per cent and how do we accommodate such requests. This is vacation season, and the Government has to put a check on these activities and allow only the official, professional engagements to be considered," remarked a Himachal Pradesh official.



PM urges people to stay hydrated amid heat wave

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

With vast swathes of India reeling under an intense heat wave, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged people to stay hydrated in view of soaring temperatures across the country.

In his monthly radio broadcast, *Mann Ki Baat*, he said people should take extra precautions when stepping out in the sun.

"With temperatures soaring across much of the country, it is important to take extra care. Stay hydrated. If you need to step out in the sun, do so cautiously and take necessary precautions," he said. "Keep drinking water. Don't forget the guidelines issued by various Government departments in

this regard either," the Prime Minister added.

He also urged citizens last Wednesday to take maximum precautions as the country is witnessing soaring temperatures, and said staying hydrated is key during such harsh weather.

Modi also referred to the king of fruits in his radio broadcast, saying there is hardly a home where mangoes are not talked about in the summer season.

He noted that every region has its own mango and its own aroma. "Hapus or Alphonso of Maharashtra, Kesar of Gujarat – these are the lifeblood of 'aamras'; Dussehri of Uttar Pradesh and Langra of Kashi. There are mangoes from Bihar, whose aroma can be smelt from far. *Chausa, Malda* – memo-



ries of people are tied to every name," he said.

The prime minister said if someone goes to South India, people will find other varieties like *Banganapalli, Totapuri, Neelam, Malgova*; there is Himsagar in Bengal; Suvarnarekha of Odisha and

Andhra Pradesh.

"In other words, the place changes, and so does the mango's form, colour, and taste... This journey of the mango is now reaching from villages to the global market," he said.

Referring to the Chola-

era copper plates returned by the Netherlands during his recent five-nation tour, Modi said he had been receiving messages from people in India and abroad regarding them.

"There is a lot of curiosity among people about these copper plates. Hence, today I would like to share some information related to them. These include 21 large and 3 small copper plates. They primarily relate to King Rajendra Chola the first, fulfilling a vow made by his father, King Rajaraja Chola," he said.

Modi said the plates mention the donation of the village of Anaimangalam to a Buddhist monastery and also document the achievements of the Chola dynasty.

"They reveal how formida-

ble the Chola Empire's maritime power was. They also provide information about their relations with Southeast Asian countries," he said.

The prime minister said astronomy has fascinated generations of Indians and highlighted that the Bangalore Astronomical Society has launched a mission to popularise the subject in rural areas.

"Gazing at the stars at night is an entrancing experience in itself. An organisation called Astro Kerala organises night observation camps and workshops. Here, young people learn to make telescopes and use star maps.

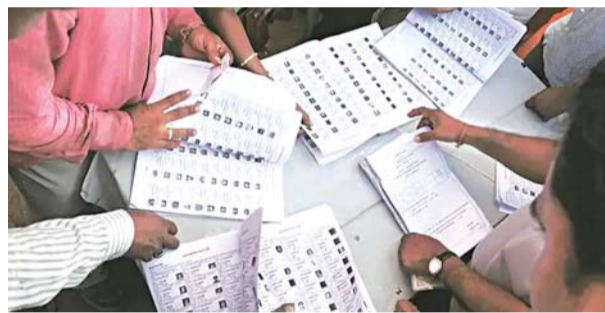
"The Big Bang Astronomy Club of Rajkot has organised numerous astronomy events – from the Gir forests to the Rann of Kutch," he said.

ECI starts SIR in 4 States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has commenced the Enumeration Phase of its Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Odisha, Mizoram, Sikkim and Manipur, aimed at ensuring that every eligible citizen is included in the voters' list while preventing the inclusion of ineligible persons.

In a press note issued on Sunday, the poll panel said the exercise, ordered on May 14 under Article 324 of the Constitution and relevant provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, forms part of a larger revision programme covering 16 States and three Union Territories. According to the Commission, the primary objective of the Special Intensive Revision is to ensure that "no eligible citizen



is left out while no ineligible person is included in the Electoral Roll."

The poll authority had launched phase 3 of SIR in 16 States and three Union territories on May 14 in a staggered manner. During the enumeration phase, which began on Saturday, Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will conduct house-to-house visits to distribute, collect, and verify enumeration forms. Electors can submit their duly filled forms either

through BLOs or online. Those whose forms are received by the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) on or before June 28 will be included in the draft electoral rolls.

Electors who are unable to submit their enumeration forms by the deadline can still apply for registration as a new voter through Form 6, along with the prescribed declaration form, during the claims and objections period.

India, Australia to hold defence talks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

India and Australia will review the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties and identify new avenues for collaboration during the second India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue, co-chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles in New Delhi on Monday.

Giving details, defence ministry officials said the discussions will focus on strengthening defence and security cooperation, enhancing military interoperability, industry collaboration, including co-development and co-production opportunities, and regional and global security developments of mutual interest.



The meeting is expected to further strengthen bilateral defence relations, enhance strategic trust and cooperation, promote stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region and identify new areas of collaboration in defence and security.

Richard Marles' visit follows the inaugural Dialogue held in Australia in

October 2025 and reflects the growing momentum in the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Australia is a key partner in India's vision of a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The visit underscores the growing depth and maturity of the India-Australia defence partnership.

Over 1.12 crore PM SVANidhi loans disbursed in 6 years

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

More than 1.12 crore collateral-free loans worth over ₹17,800 crore have been disbursed under the PM SVANidhi scheme since its launch in June 2020, emerging as a key driver of financial inclusion and economic empowerment for street vendors, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs said.

As the Prime Minister Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) scheme completes six years on Monday, the ministry said that the scheme has benefited over 75.5 lakh street vendors across urban India, helping them access formal credit, adopt digital payments and avail social security benefits.

Launched in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, PM SVANidhi was designed to provide affordable working capital loans to street vendors who traditionally relied on informal sources of credit charging



high interest rates, the ministry said in a statement.

The scheme offers collateral-free loans in three progressive tranches of ₹15,000, ₹25,000 and ₹50,000, along with interest subsidies and credit guarantee support.

Beneficiaries who successfully repay their loans are also eligible for UPI-linked RuPay credit cards with limits of up to ₹30,000.

The ministry said digital inclusion has been a major focus of the scheme, with more than 55 lakh beneficiaries onboarded onto digital platforms. These beneficiaries have collectively carried out over 841 crore digital transactions worth nearly ₹8.96 lakh crore.

Omar Abdullah convenes NC MLAs' meet amid dissatisfaction

MOHIT KANDHARI
Jammu

Political temperatures are once again rising in the Kashmir Valley. Feeling the heat, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who recently resumed office work after a brief sojourn, has convened a meeting of the party legislators to brainstorm on the issues of 'collective importance and public welfare' on June 3.

According to the political grapevine, the Chief Minister has personally invited all party MLAs to join the meeting to deliberate on matters of collective importance and public welfare.

The meeting is scheduled to take place at the Chief Minister's Gupkar residence on June 3.

As public anger was growing against the Omar Abdullah-led Government over its poor handling of public welfare issues, several senior party leaders (including elected public representatives) had made passionate appeals to the party top brass (both privately and publicly) to take



timely corrective measures to arrest the drift.

The Jammu and Kashmir Unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party had even launched a poster campaign on social media claiming the Chief Minister was missing and not available to address the issues of public importance.

Referring to the upcoming meeting called by Omar Abdullah with NC legislators, the leader of the Opposition, Sunil Kumar Sharma, on Sunday claimed the Chief Minister was attempting to manage growing dissatisfaction and internal disagreements within the party.

"The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that

internal differences do not come out in public.

The leadership wants to maintain control over the narrative and prevent any visible cracks within the party," he said.

In a scathing attack, Sharma claimed that the Abdullah family has never resigned from power and would compromise on the demand for restoration of full statehood if their political privileges remain intact.

Addressing media persons in Srinagar, Sharma said, "Abdullahs don't resign; Omar would settle for anything below Union Territory status as long as there is no cut in protocol".

JAL SHAKTI MINISTRY, ISRO TO INK MOU FOR WATER MANAGEMENT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) are expected to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to strengthen satellite-based applications and advanced technologies for water



resource assessment, monitoring and management, with 24 priority studies and areas of cooperation already identified.

The MoU is expected to be signed during the national workshop on R&D in Water to be held on June 1 at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre here, the ministry said in a statement.

Admiral Krishna Swaminathan takes charge as Navy Chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Admiral Krishna Swaminathan on Sunday assumed charge as India's new chief of the Naval Staff amid a fast-evolving regional maritime security scenario.

He succeeds Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who retired from service. Admiral Swaminathan was serving as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command before taking charge of the top post.

The new Navy chief, speaking to reporters, described the regional security environment as "challenging, complex, and unpredictable" and asserted that maintaining peak operational readiness will be his highest priority.

"The Indian Navy stands vigilant to protect national interests wherever they are

and is very actively deployed in a regional security environment that continues to remain challenging, complex, unpredictable, and uncertain," he told reporters.

"It shall be my highest priority to ensure that the Indian Navy maintains the highest level of operational readiness and combat effectiveness so that it can protect the nation's security and economic interests," he said.

Admiral Swaminathan said the Indian Navy is well set on a course of capability enhancement and modernisation. "It shall be my endeavour to sustain the growth momentum of the Navy, consolidate all ongoing programs, scale up where required, and sharpen our operational capabilities through the induction of niche and emerging technologies," he said.

"I will devote every single day of my life to making the



New Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, left, with outgoing Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi during a ceremony marking his assumption of charge as India's new CNS in New Delhi on Sunday

Navy a better, stronger, sharper, and more impactful service so that it can serve the interests of national security, national development, and national economic prosperity," he added.

Admiral Swaminathan said the Navy is deeply committed to jointness, 'Atmanirbharta'

and indigenisation. He also praised Admiral Tripathi, describing him as one of the "finest" military professionals globally.

Admiral Swaminathan was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1987 and is a specialist in communication and electronic Warfare.

General NS Raja Subramani takes charge as new CDS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

General NS Raja Subramani, widely known as an expert on Pakistan and China, on Sunday took charge as India's new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) with a primary mandate to implement the ambitious military theatreisation plan and bolster tri-services synergy. He succeeded General Anil Chauhan, who signed off after completing his tenure as the country's senior-most military commander on Saturday.

General Subramani was serving as the Military Advisor at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). He retired as the Vice Chief of Army Staff on July 31 last year.

The military officer, shortly after taking charge, said transformation of the armed forces and organisational reforms to enhance tri-ser-



Lt Gen NS Raja Subramani accorded a Tri-Services Guard of Honour during a ceremony marking his assumption of charge as the new Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in New Delhi on Sunday

VICES synergy and integration will be his primary focus.

We will accelerate the development, induction and integration of indigenous weapons in our armed forces, he said in a brief media statement.

"Our armed forces consistently demonstrated profes-

sionalism and operational decisiveness in safeguarding our national interests. We are committed to protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country," he said.

"I assure citizens of India that armed forces will continue to serve the nation with

dedication, courage, honour and professionalism," he added.

General Subramani also noted that he would work towards accelerating the development, induction, and integration of indigenous weapon systems into the armed forces.

As Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Subramani's primary task will be to implement the theatreisation model by rolling out integrated military commands.

In his illustrious career spanning over 40 years, Gen Subramani served across a wide spectrum of conflict and terrain profiles and held a host of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments. He served as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff from July 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025 and was General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Central Command from March 2023 till June 2024.



States Focus

Inclusive growth vital for Viksit Bharat, says VP Radhakrishnan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mangaluru (Karnataka)

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Sunday said inclusive development would be central to India's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, stressing that progress must benefit all sections of society.

Addressing a gathering at the inauguration of the Siri Mathashree Industrial Park, organised under the aegis of Dharmasthala institutions, Radhakrishnan said the vision of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) could be realised only through equitable progress, social empowerment and economic opportunities for all.

He said India had witnessed a rapid transformation over the past decade through initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the poor, farmers, women and youth, while strengthening infrastructure and promoting innovation.

"The country's development journey is centred on inclusive growth and last-mile delivery. Economic



progress must benefit every citizen and ensure dignity and opportunity for all," he said.

Highlighting the role of young people in nation-building, Radhakrishnan said the aspirations and energy of the country's youth would be crucial to achieving the goal of a developed India by the centenary of Independence.

He called upon students and entrepreneurs to contribute to innovation, skill development and nation-building efforts, adding that

neership, enhanced manufacturing capabilities and created new opportunities for employment and economic development.

Gehlot noted that India's progress was being driven by a combination of innovation, welfare measures and people-centric governance, adding that sustained investments in education, technology and infrastructure were laying the foundation for long-term growth.

The governor also emphasised the need for balanced and inclusive development to ensure that the benefits of growth reached marginalised communities and remote regions.

The speakers underlined the importance of collective participation in achieving the national goal of 'Viksit Bharat' and said cooperation among Governments, institutions and citizens would be essential to transforming India into a developed nation.

The programme was attended by public representatives, educational leaders, students and other dignitaries.

Congress slams Union Govt over mining approval inside Hasdeo forest



Congress leader Jairam Ramesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Congress on Sunday criticised the Modi Government over the approval of a coal mining venture in Chhattisgarh's Hasdeo-Arand forest, alleging that the BJP's "trouble-engine regime" is determined to see the project through, whatever the cost to 'Adivasi jal-jangal-zameen' and the ecosystem.

The Opposition party's attack comes days after the proposal for coal mining in Chhattisgarh's pristine Hasdeo-Arand forest, which will require the cutting of lakhs of trees, has obtained a key approval from the

Environment Ministry's forest advisory committee (FAC).

The mining is planned to take place in the Surguja district's Kente Extension Opencast Coal Block, which is being developed by the Adani group.

Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said the Modi Government has given approval to coal mining by "Modani" in Chhattisgarh's Kente Extension Opencast Coal Block, 98 per cent of which falls under Hasdeo Aranya's pristine sal forests.

This will result in indiscriminate felling of at least 7 lakh trees, Ramesh said on social media.

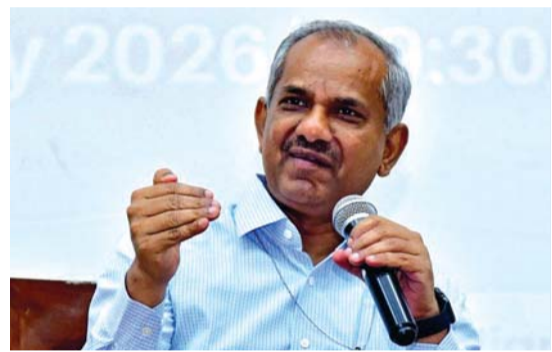


PM MODI'S PRAISE FOR SATTU MATTER OF PRIDE: BIHAR CM

Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reference to Bihar's local products during his 'Mann Ki Baat' programme is a matter of pride for the residents of the State.

During the 134th episode of his monthly radio programme, Modi described Bihar's traditional food 'sattu' (roasted gram flour) as a significant means to cope with heat, and also mentioned the State's famous 'Jardalu' mango.

Choudhary, in a statement issued by the CMO, said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioned Bihar's traditional and nutritious drink 'sattu' as a means to cope with extreme heat, and made a reference to the State's renowned 'Jardalu' mango. These references project Bihar's unique identity on the national stage." (PTI)



EX-MOES SECY RAVICHANDRAN TO JOIN IIT-MADRAS

For someone who struggled with the basic concepts of physics even after earning an MSc degree, life has come full circle. M Ravichandran retired this week as secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and is now set to return to academia as a faculty member at IIT-Madras. Ravichandran, who demitted office on May 29 after a five-year tenure as Earth Sciences secretary, plans to continue his association with ocean sciences at the premier institute after a career marked by grit and determination. As secretary, he steered the programme for the modernisation of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and was instrumental in pursuing the Government's ambitious Deep Ocean Mission. (PTI)

Gujarat launches first phase of Census

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ahmedabad

The first phase of the Population Census-2027 will begin across Gujarat on Monday, with the launch of a month-long houselisting exercise completely conducted through digital means for the first time.

Running from June 1 to June 30, the Houselisting and Housing Census Operations (HLO) will see over one lakh enumerators visiting households across every district, urban local body, and village to map living conditions and amenities, officials said on Sunday.

Director of Census Operations in Gujarat, Sujal Mayatra, said the exercise marks the 16th census in the country and the eighth after Independence.

"In this phase, enumerators will ask 33 questions covering housing status, family details, source of drinking water, toilet facilities and household assets," Mayatra said in



a statement. The second phase, involving population enumeration (PE) and caste census, will be conducted from February 9 to February 28, 2027, he said.

According to the Directorate of Census Operations, Gujarat has 1,10,598 house listing blocks (HLBs), and 1,09,038 enumerators and 18,254 supervisors have been deployed for the exercise.

Census in Himachal Pradesh to be held in two phases: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Shimla

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Sunday that the census in Himachal Pradesh will be conducted in two phases.

He appealed to the people to make maximum use of the "self-enumeration" facility provided by the Directorate of Census Operations.

He said citizens can submit their information online through the self-enumeration portal se.census.gov.in



From June 1 to June 15, 2026.

"Census is the backbone of democracy and development. It serves as an important tool for obtaining information about the population, family conditions,

housing, resources and the facilities available to citizens. Such data plays a crucial role in planning and policy formulation," he said.

The chief minister said, "During the first phase, house listing and housing census will be conducted from June 16 to July 16, 2026. The second phase will involve population enumeration. Also, the Census will be conducted in digital mode this time, with enumerators and supervisors using mobile devices to collect information related to houses and households."

Union Government deploys 2 CoBRA battalions in Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Centre has ordered the deployment of two battalions of the CRPF's jungle warfare unit CoBRA for operational duties in Manipur, official sources said on Sunday.

The State administration and the Union Government have been working to bring long-lasting peace in Manipur, as more than 260 people have been killed and thousands rendered homeless in ethnic violence between Meiteis and Kuki-Zo groups since May 2023.

Officials said the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has approved a proposal of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to deploy two CoBRA battalions in Manipur — battalion number 207 based in West Bengal and 210 located in Assam — for operational duties.

"The two CoBRA battalions will undertake specific oper-



ations against the armed groups that undertake violence in Manipur," a senior security officer said, adding the earmarked units will move in the State over the next few weeks.

The Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) was raised by the CRPF in 2008-09 to tackle the menace of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) that was raging in multiple Indian states apart from insurgency in certain States of the Northeast.

CoBRA has a total of ten battalions at present, and they are mostly deployed in the anti-Naxal operations theatre. Each CoBRA battalion has a strength of about 1,000 commandos.

The commandos of this battalion are credited by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with undertaking successful intelligence-based jungle warfare and guerrilla tactics operations against Naxals, leading to the end of Maoist violence in the country this March.

National Medical Commission proposes 10-year limit for completing MBBS course

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has proposed amending the Graduate Medical Education Regulations (GMER), 2023, to allow MBBS students up to 10 years to complete their course, including the compulsory rotatory medical internship, effectively restoring the earlier time limit that was reduced in 2023.

In a draft amendment uploaded on its website, the commission has invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders and the public within 30 days.

Under the proposed changes, no student shall be allowed more than four attempts to clear the first professional MBBS examination, a provision that remains unchanged. However, students would be allowed to continue the undergraduate medical course for up to 10 years from the date



of admission, including the internship period.

This is in alignment with the NMC's Foreign Medical Graduate Licentiate (FMGL) regulations, 2021.

"Provided that under no circumstances the student shall be allowed more than four attempts for the first year (First Professional MBBS) and no student shall be allowed to continue the undergraduate medical course after 10 years from the date of joining the MBBS course (including continuous rotatory medical intern-

ship)," the draft amendment issued on May 18 said.

In June 2023, the NMC reduced the maximum duration for completing the MBBS programme from 10 years to nine years.

According to an official, the proposed relaxation is expected to benefit students who face academic setbacks, health issues, personal emergencies, or other unforeseen circumstances during the course, providing them greater flexibility to complete their medical education without losing eligibility.

No fresh Babesia infection cases among Gir lions: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Gir Somnath

No new suspected cases of Babesia infection among Asiatic lions have been reported in the past three days, while 17 big cats remain under observation, Gujarat Forest and Environment Minister Arjunbhai Modhwadia said on Sunday.

During the day, the minister visited Jamwala Rescue Centre, Babariya Forest Range and Jasadhar Animal Care Centre in the Gir lion landscape to review the situation following the death of eight cubs due to the suspected infection.

"As of now, a total of 17 lions remain under observation. No untoward incidents have occurred over the past three days. Furthermore, lions in the surrounding areas and adjacent areas



Arjunbhai Modhwadia

are also being kept under observation. A team of doctors is working continuously," he said.

The deaths of the big cats due to suspected Babesia infection have been reported in the revenue areas outside the Gir sanctuary, particularly in Gir Gadhada in Gir Somnath and Babra Kot of Amreli district.

Babesia, a parasitic disease, spreads through ticks and can cause weakness, coughing and nasal discharge in affected animals.

Kids most vulnerable to tobacco and nicotine products: Experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Children are up to nine times more likely than adults to be attracted to new tobacco and nicotine products, making them the primary targets of industry marketing strategies, leading public health experts warned on World No Tobacco Day on Sunday.

The experts said the tobacco and nicotine industry is increasingly using flavours, sleek designs, digital promotion and other tactics to make its products appealing to young people, raising concerns about a new generation becoming addicted to nicotine.

The warning comes as the world marks this year's World No Tobacco Day under the theme, "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction", which focuses on exposing the tactics and strategies used

to make tobacco and nicotine products appear attractive, particularly to children.

Dr Shalini Singh, Director of ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), said tobacco and nicotine often focus their marketing efforts on children and young adults as most users start consuming such products during adolescence or early adulthood.

"That is why the marketing tactics are designed to create curiosity, experimentation and eventually addiction," she said on Sunday during a webinar organised by Tobacco Free India, a citizens' initiative.

She said the challenge today extends beyond traditional tobacco products and includes newer nicotine products that are often perceived as less harmful and risky than they actually are.

Former Chief of the National Cancer Institute in



Delhi, Dr Alok Thakar, said tobacco continues to impose a heavy burden on India's health system.

"As oncologists, we witness the consequences of tobacco use every day. Many tobacco-related cancers are preventable, yet thousands of families continue to suffer because addiction often begins at a young age," he said. In a separate development, the World Health Organisation (WHO)

announced the World No Tobacco Day Award 2026 for the ICMR-National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR) in recognition of its contribution to tobacco control and cancer prevention. The award is among the highest recognitions conferred by the WHO in the field of tobacco control.

Describing the recognition as an encouragement for the wider tobacco control community, Dr Singh said, "It rein-

forces the importance of sustained efforts in research, awareness, policy support and public engagement. India has made important progress, but the tobacco and nicotine landscape continues to evolve and requires continued vigilance."

Dr Thakar cautioned that many people continue to underestimate the risks associated with smokeless tobacco products.

"In India, a significant proportion of oral cancer cases are linked to products such as gutkha, khaini and similar forms of smokeless tobacco. The packaging may change, and the marketing may evolve, but the health consequences remain serious," he said.

Former NCERT Director Professor JS Rajput said the issue should be viewed not only as a health challenge but also as an educational and social concern.

AIKS alleges Adani-Leap duopoly in FCI silo scheme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) has strongly condemned the alleged corporate takeover of the country's public food security infrastructure, claiming that a "frightening market concentration" has emerged in the Food Corporation of India's (FCI) ₹20,000-crore "Hub and Spoke" silo modernisation scheme.

Citing a recent investigative report, the farmers' body alleged that Adani Agri Logistics Ltd and Leap India Food & Logistics Private Ltd have jointly bagged 110 out of 134 silo contracts worth more than ₹16,500 crore. Out of the projected 60 lakh metric tonnes of grain storage capacity, nearly 46.5 lakh metric tonnes will



reportedly be controlled by these two private entities.

In a joint statement, AIKS President Ashok Dhawale and General Secretary Vijoo Krishnan alleged that this duopoly was facilitated with the connivance of the Union Government.

They claimed that the FCI had originally suggested an "anti-monopoly" clause to prevent single corporate groups from cor-

nering the projects, given the strategic significance of national food security.

"The NITI Aayog and the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) colluded during a Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC) meeting in May 2022 to eliminate this anti-monopoly clause under the pretext of letting market forces prevail," the AIKS leaders claimed.

BJP backs Khandu amid CBI probe, rejects resignation rumours

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Itanagar

The BJP in Arunachal Pradesh on Sunday backed Chief Minister Pema Khandu amid speculation over his political future following a Supreme Court-directed CBI inquiry, asserting that there is no question of a leadership change while an investigation is underway.

The party's comment comes a day after an Assam-based news portal reported that Khandu would resign in view of the ongoing CBI probe, triggering social media speculation across the State.

The Supreme Court had in April ordered a preliminary CBI inquiry into charges that public work contracts worth approximately ₹1,270 crore were awarded between 2015 and 2025 to firms allegedly linked to members of Khandu's family. The probe is currently underway.

Addressing reporters at the party's headquarters here, state BJP president Kaling



Moyong said it would fully respect the judicial process and would not take any decision until the investigation reaches its conclusion.

"If the Supreme Court delivers a verdict against the chief minister, the party will take an appropriate decision. But not now, as the investigation is still going on," Moyong said.

Senior BJP leaders in the State maintained that the party remains united and that there has been "no discussion on a change of leadership" despite attempts to

fuel speculation through unverified reports circulating on social media and digital platforms.

Reiterating the support for the chief minister, BJP general secretary Tadar Niglar said all party legislators remained united under Khandu's leadership and dismissed speculations of division within the ruling party.

"All 46 party MLAs are under one umbrella and under one leadership. There is no division within the party," Niglar said.

He warned that the party would initiate disciplinary action against those found to be involved in spreading misinformation regarding the chief minister's alleged resignation.

"However, if anyone from the BJP is behind this fake news, we will take stringent action against that individual," Niglar added.

BJP's another general secretary, Junty Singpho, expressed confidence in the judicial system and the chief minister, stating that the truth would emerge through due process. "We believe in the judiciary, and we also believe in our chief minister. We are confident that he will come clean from these allegations," she said.

Meanwhile, the Itanagar district unit of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) on Sunday lodged a complaint at the Itanagar Police Station against the publication that carried the report on Khandu's alleged resignation.

PM talks mangoes, silent on 18.5 lakh students: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the CBSE OSM row, saying he had the time to speak about mangoes during his monthly radio address, but not about 18.5 lakh children whose answer sheets were scanned with phones.

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said Prime Minister Modi's silence on the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) On-Screen Marking (OSM) issue is no longer indifference, it is "complicity".

In his 'Mann Ki Baat' radio broadcast on Sunday morning, Modi referred to the king of fruits, saying there is hardly a home where mangoes are not talked about in the summer season.

In a post on X, Gandhi said the CBSE's May 2025 tender required answer sheets to be scanned with automatic robotic scanners, spines preserved, at a minimum of 300 DPI (dots per inch).

"The tender reissued in

August quietly removed all of it. 'Scanners' became generic. The resolution dropped to 200 DPI. Now we know what that meant in practice. It has been exposed that COEMPT scanned the answer sheets using mobile phones," the former Congress chief said.

"The blurred copies, the missing pages, the unscanned books — they are not 'errors'. They are the predictable outcome of a contract written to fit a vendor," Gandhi said. This is fraud, and every child whose marks were wrongly evaluated is a victim of it, he said.

"This morning, the Prime Minister had time to speak about mangoes. He has not had time to speak about 18.5 lakh children whose answer sheets were scanned with phones. Dharmendra Pradhan still sits in office. Modi ji's silence is no longer indifference. It is complicity," Gandhi said.

In his 'Mann Ki Baat' broadcast, Modi noted that every region has its own mango and its own aroma.

"Hapus or Alphonso of Maharashtra, Kesar of Gujarat — these are the lifeblood of



'aamras'; Dussehri of Uttar Pradesh and Langra of Kashi. There are mangoes from Bihar, whose aroma can be smelt from far. Chausa, Malda — memories of people are tied to every name," he said.

The prime minister said if someone goes to South India, people will find other varieties like Banganapalli, Totapuri, Neelam, Malgova; there is Himsagar in Bengal; Suvamarekha of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

"In other words, the place changes, and so does the mango's form, colour, and

taste... This journey of the mango is now reaching from villages to the global market," he said.

Gandhi on Sunday targeted the Centre over the CBSE's OSM row, sharing a video of his interaction with a group of students and describing them as brave young Indians who asked the Modi Government simple questions but received "insults instead of answers".

Asserting that the students deserved a bright future, Gandhi said, "We will make sure they get it."

Assam CM Himanta meets Rajnath, seeks role for State in defence sector

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday met Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to discuss strategic pathways for positioning Assam as a major player in the country's rapidly growing defence ecosystem.

The high-level meeting focused on aligning Assam with the Centre's ongoing push to strengthen indigenous defence manufacturing and enhance production capabilities under the flagship 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative.

Sharing details of the interaction on social media platform X, the Chief Minister described the meeting as "always enriching" and lauded Singh's long-standing



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during a meeting with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

leadership. "He is a powerhouse of wisdom and knowledge. We have so much to learn from his vast experience and an excellent administrator, a dedicated public servant and a veteran karyakarta," Sarma stated.

During the deliberations, Sarma explicitly sought the Defence Minister's guidance and blessings to unlock future development opportunities for Assam. He

emphasised that integrating the State into the national defence sector is a key component of Assam's broader focus on upgrading industrial development and enhancing strategic infrastructure in the Northeast.

The Chief Minister also expressed his gratitude to the Defence Minister for his extensive campaigning efforts during the recent Assam Assembly elections.

NF Railway employees protest against 30,000 job cuts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Guwahati

Tens of thousands of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) employees have launched a massive protest demonstration outside the NFR Headquarters in Maligaon, venting their anger against the Railway Board's contentious directive to abolish 30,000 posts across Indian Railways.

The demonstration marked the culmination of a fortnight-long nationwide protest called by the Bhartiya Railway Mazdoor Sangh (BRMS), which ran from May 15 to May 29. In the Northeast, the agitation was spearheaded by the Purvottar Simant Railway Karmachari Sangh (PSRKS) and the Northeast Frontier Railway Mazdoor Sangh, mobilising workers across various divisional headquarters through rallies, posting, and intensive awareness campaigns.

As part of the agitation, railway unions had earlier submitted memoranda on May 22 through respective Divisional Railway Managers, addressed to the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Railway Board,



demanding an immediate reversal of the policy.

Addressing the massive gathering at Maligaon, Union General Secretary Harish Bhuyan heavily criticised the Railway Board's "arbitrary policy". He pointed out the stark contradiction in the Government's approach, noting that while Indian Railways is pursuing rapid modernisation — including the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme to upgrade 1,275 stations, dedicated freight corri-

dors, track doubling, electrification, and the expansion of high-speed Vande Bharat trains — the administration is systematically shrinking its workforce.

Union leaders argued that the introduction of modern infrastructure, locomotives, and advanced coach manufacturing units requires a substantial increase in manpower to ensure safety and efficiency, rather than freezing recruitments and abolishing existing vacancies.

MISSING AHMEDABAD MEDICAL STUDENT FOUND DEAD IN GEORGIA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Ahmedabad

A 22-year-old medical student from Ahmedabad, who had been missing in Georgia for nearly two weeks, has been found dead, according to reports received by his family. Authorities reportedly recovered the body from a river and have launched an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the



death. The student, identified as Dhvanit Rajdeep, was pursuing higher medical studies in Georgia. He was reported missing after allegedly disappearing from his hostel on May 14, prompting concern among family members and friends.

Following his disappearance, the family sought assistance through social media and approached India's Ministry of External Affairs for support in tracing his whereabouts. Relatives had earlier claimed that the student had been facing difficulties linked to a dispute with his local landlord and alleged mental harassment.

Georgian authorities have sent the body for post-mortem examination and are investigating whether the death resulted from an accident, suicide, or any criminal act. Officials have not yet announced any conclusions.

Amarnath Yatra security to be stronger this year: Jammu IGP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jammu

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Jammu Zone, Bhim Sen Tuti, on Sunday, reviewed security and logistical arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra in Kathua district, asserting that the security grid for this year's pilgrimage would be stronger compared to previous years.

"As far as security arrangements during the yatra are concerned, we will make every effort to provide better security than what we have in previous years. The administration, police, Army and all other agencies have a role to play in this," he said, adding that security measures for the yatra — scheduled to commence July 3 — are already in place.

Tuti inspected the security grid along the Jammu-Pathankot national highway and at Lakhanpur, the gateway to Jammu and Kashmir, ahead of the 57-day pilgrimage.

Speaking to reporters following a review meeting in Kathua, the IGP



said all stakeholders were working in coordination to ensure smooth conduct of the yatra. "We came here today to review the preparations, and all aspects were discussed by senior officers. Everyone concerned is present here. The arrangements last year were quite good as the reception centre was operated very smoothly, and I believe we will be able to provide even better arrangements this time," he said. Tuti

said every effort would be made to further strengthen security measures.

Asked about the ongoing anti-terror operation in Rajouri district, the IGP said the encounter had entered its ninth day, but there was no information for the public at present.

Regarding reports about the detention of a couple and the alleged recovery of hawala money from them, Tuti said the matter is under investigation, and it would not be appropriate to comment at this stage.

The annual Amarnath Yatra attracts thousands of pilgrims from across the country, with extensive security and logistical arrangements being made by the administration ahead of the pilgrimage.

The 57-day annual pilgrimage will commence on the twin routes — the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam track in Anantnag and the 14-km shorter but steep Baltal trek in Ganderbal — on July 3, and will conclude on Raksha Bandhan, August 28.

PM to unveil ₹18,000 cr projects in Surat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Surat

Preparations are in full swing for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Surat on June 5, 2026, with senior political leaders and top administrative officials reviewing arrangements ahead of the high-profile tour.

A high-level meeting was held at the Surat Collectorate to assess security, traffic management, logistics and public convenience measures related to the Prime Minister's visit. The review was attended by Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Paatli, District Collector Tejas Parmar, the Surat Police Commissioner, Surat Municipal Commissioner and senior officials from various depart-



ments. According to officials, the Prime Minister is expected to arrive at Surat Airport at around 2 pm on June 5. From there, he will proceed to the L&T facility in Hazira, where he is expected to spend approximately 45 minutes reviewing ongoing industrial operations and infrastructure projects.

Following the plant visit,

Modi will attend a major public programme at the city's Indoor Stadium. During the event, he is set to dedicate and lay foundation stones for a series of development projects collectively valued at more than ₹18,000 crore, benefiting Surat and the wider South Gujarat region.

The package is expected to include the inauguration of completed projects as well as the launch of several new infrastructure and development initiatives.

Authorities have intensified preparations across departments to ensure smooth execution of the visit, while security agencies are coordinating comprehensive arrangements for the Prime Minister's movement and public engagements.

Pakistani intruder held in Uri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Jammu

The Indian Army on Sunday apprehended a 22-year-old Pakistani intruder while he was crossing the Line of Control in the Uri Sector. In a separate operation, the Indian army also foiled an exfiltration attempt in the Uri sector of north Kashmir's Baramulla district by apprehending two residents of Sopore along with their guide during a joint operation with Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Meanwhile, 'Operation Sherawali' entered its ninth consecutive day on Sunday as security forces continued their massive anti-terrorist operation in the dense forests of Dori Mal in Rajouri's Gambhir Moghla area. A multi-layered security cordon has been laid, with heavy deployment of the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police's Special Operations Group (SOG), CRPF, and other security



agencies to prevent the trapped group of terrorists from fleeing the area.

In a post on X, Chinara Corps of the Indian Army said that a PoJK intruder was also apprehended after being intercepted while crossing the Line of Control in the Uri sector.

The intruder has been identified as Zeeshan Mir. According to the Army, alert troops challenged the intruder and apprehended him without causing harm.

"A PoJK intruder has been apprehended, who was intercepted by alert Chinara

Warriors while crossing the Line of Control in Uri Sector. The vigilant troops maintained restraint while challenging the intruder and surgically apprehended the individual. The intruder has been handed over to Jammu and Kashmir Police for further legal proceedings," the Army said.

In another operation, the Army said two individuals from Sopore were apprehended by troops while allegedly attempting to exfiltrate through the Uri sector along with their accomplice guide.

South Coast Railway Zone launch fulfills long held dream: Naidu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Amaravati

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday said the launch of the South Coast Railway Zone, headquartered in Visakhapatnam, marks the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream of the people of the State. He said it is a "historic milestone".

The commencement of operations comes weeks after the railway ministry issued a gazette notification defining



the jurisdiction and organisational structure of the SCoR.

The zone is expected to enhance rail connectivity, freight movement, and regional development.

"The official commencement of the South Coast Railway Zone, headquartered in Visakhapatnam, from June 1, is a historic milestone. A dream we have cherished for decades is becoming a reality," Naidu said on X. He said the new railway zone will transform the transportation landscape of North Andhra and pave the way for new

employment opportunities. He added that the railway zone will accelerate industrial growth and mark a crucial milestone in transforming Andhra into a logistics hub. He emphasised that this development will contribute significantly to the State's economic progress, particularly in the north coastal region.

Naidu thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for fulfilling the long-pending aspiration of the people of Andhra through the operationalisation of the SCoR.

CISF to secure NATGRID campus in Bengaluru

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Centre has sanctioned the deployment of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel for securing the NATGRID campus in Bengaluru.

A spokesperson for the paramilitary force said on Sunday that the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sanctioned a total of 76 posts for the task.

The NATGRID (national intelligence grid) is a critical national security infrastructure that aggregates data from multiple intelligence and law enforcement databases to support counter-terrorism operations, the CISF spokesperson said.

It has a campus in Yelahanka in Karnataka's Capital, Bengaluru. Its headquarters in Delhi is already secured by the CISF to provide security against terrorist



attacks and sabotage. The force, under the MHA, provides armed security cover to critical and sensitive installations in both the Government and private domains.

In a similar development last week, the CISF took over security of the Sushma Swaraj Bhawan located in Delhi's Chanakyaपुरi area with the deployment of 90 personnel.



Editor's TAKE

Long-awaited reckoning in Karnataka

The question is not just who sits in the CM's chair – it is whether this transition will heal Karnataka Congress or deepen its fault lines.

It was on the card, a transition waiting to happen. Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah has finally resigned clearing the way for DK Shivakumar to take over the reins of Congress-led Karnataka government. Make no mistake it was not a voluntary act of stepping down on some flimsy grounds but a pressure from all corners including high command that led to his resignation. The veteran, who had once vowed to serve his full term, relented – though not without resistance. The party offered him a Rajya Sabha seat, but the veteran leader expressed no interest in shifting to national politics. His parting words to the press – “High Command asked, so I have given my resignation.”

But the big question is what led to this moment? Indeed, the MUDA land allotment controversy loomed large adding urgency to this moment. The Karnataka High Court dismissed Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the Governor's sanction of prosecution against him in the alleged MUDA scam case, leaving him legally exposed and politically vulnerable. The case had gifted an issue to the BJP which made the most of it. Yet the resignation was also the culmination of a two-year tug-of-war. When Congress swept to power in 2023, a power-sharing deal had been tacitly understood – Siddaramaiah first, Shivakumar to follow. Shivakumar is seen as a powerful organisational leader with significant influence among party workers and Vokkaliga voters.

For Congress, this transition is both a risk and an opportunity. Karnataka remains the party's most important governed state – a showcase of its guarantee-driven governance model and a base from which to counter the BJP nationally. Party insiders believe the leadership shift, if executed smoothly, could help Congress avoid internal friction and project unity ahead of upcoming political battles. Shivakumar brings formidable organisational muscle and fundraising clout. His Vokkaliga identity also addresses a caste arithmetic gap the party has long needed to plug. But the risks are real. Siddaramaiah's AHINDA coalition – an acronym for minorities, backward castes, and Dalits – was the bedrock of Congress's 2023 landslide.

His loyalists are numerous, ambitious, and not guaranteed to transfer their allegiance smoothly. The new CM will need to manage a restless cabinet, navigate continued legal turbulence around the MUDA case, and deliver on the five guarantee schemes without fiscal overreach – all while keeping the party united ahead of the 2028 assembly election. Is all well in Karnataka Congress? True, the party has managed this succession without a floor revolt – which is itself no small achievement. But managed transitions in Indian politics have a way of producing delayed reckonings. Siddaramaiah is no ordinary backbencher. He will remain an MLA with a mass base, and a strong opinion. DK Shivakumar inherits a government in reasonable health but with considerable turbulence ahead. His test will be whether he can hold the coalition together, shield the party from the BJP's MUDA offensive, and prove that Congress' Karnataka story has a second, compelling chapter.

Birsa Munda legacy empowers a generation

More than a century after he led a courageous resistance against colonial oppression, Bhagwan Birsa Munda continues to inspire India's march toward justice, dignity, and inclusive development



RANJANA CHOPRA

When India recalls its great freedom fighters, one name rises from the forests of Chotanagpur with enduring moral force - Bhagwan Birsa Munda, revered as Dharti Aaba, the Protector of the Land. More than a historical figure, he remains a living symbol of dignity, resistance, and tribal self-respect. His vision - that tribal identity must be protected, equality must be meaningful, and development must reach ordinary people with justice - continues to guide India's journey towards Viksit Bharat. Today, after twelve years of renewed national emphasis on inclusive development, those ideals are shaping policy, governance, and the aspirations of a new India.

Giving the legacy its rightful place

Bhagwan Birsa Munda's legacy has long lived in the songs, stories, and collective memory of tribal communities across India. In 2021, the Hon'ble Prime Minister accorded this legacy national recognition by declaring 15th November, Birsa Munda's birth anniversary - as Janjatiya Gaurav Divas. The recognition deepened further with the observance of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh from November 15, 2024 to November 15, 2025 to mark his 150th birth anniversary. During this period, more than 2 lakh events were organised, reaching over three crore citizens in a nationwide celebration of tribal pride, heritage.

Across the country, these celebrations reflected the richness and diversity of tribal life. From the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland and the Tribal Literary Festival in Kerala to the National Tribal Film Festival in Jharkhand and the Canoe Sprint Championship in Telangana, the events brought tribal culture, creativity, sport, and storytelling into the national spotlight. Together, they saw participation from more than 11 lakh tribal citizens representing distinct cultures and communities. They were declarations - that tribal heritage is a living, breathing force in shaping modern India. Building upon twelve years of sustained and focused national efforts towards tribal empowerment and inclusion, Janjatiya Garima Utsav 2026 carries this momentum forward through four thematic weeks that together reflect the full spectrum of tribal development. The third week, in particular, focuses on a question central to India's future: how do we recognise the individuals and communities that shaped this nation, and how do we empower the next generation to carry that legacy forward?

Restoring the Names

Answering that question begins with recognising the many tribal heroes whose contributions remained absent from mainstream historical nar-



THE EFFORT TO RESTORE TRIBAL VOICES TO THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE IS ALSO TAKING SHAPE THROUGH TRIBAL FREEDOM FIGHTERS MUSEUMS, ENVISIONED AS SPACES OF MEMORY AND RECOGNITION

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ratives for far too long. Across tribal regions, generations of educators, artists, healers, and reformers have sustained communities and preserved cultural identity. Their stories deserve a rightful place in India's national memory, and sustained efforts are now underway to document and celebrate these contributions.

Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) across the country are playing a central role in this effort by documenting oral histories, recording indigenous knowledge systems, and preserving tribal languages and cultural traditions. At present, 29 TRIs across 26 States and 3 Union Territories are engaged in this work, with 355 primers documented in 222 tribal languages. These efforts are helping preserve invaluable cultural knowledge for future generations.

The effort to restore tribal voices to the national narrative is also taking shape through Tribal Freedom Fighters Museums, envisioned as spaces of memory and recognition. Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned 11 such museums across 10 states to honour the role of tribal communities in India's freedom movement. Four museums have already been inaugurated, including those dedicated to Bhagwan Birsa Munda in Ranchi and Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh in Nava Raipur. Through these institutions, the stories of tribal heroes are being documented, celebrated and permanently woven into India's collective historical memory.

Empowering the torch bearers

From honouring the past, the journey naturally moves towards empowering the present generation. This is most visible in the growing number of tribal students benefiting from the Ministry's scholarship programmes. In the current year alone, 26,01,979 tribal students have been supported under five scholarship schemes, with a total outlay of ₹3825.54 crores. Many are the first in their families to access higher education, carrying not only personal aspirations but the hopes of entire communities. Of this, over 56 per cent of the current scholarship beneficia-

ries are women. The expansion of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) reflects the same commitment to educational access and opportunity. The number of sanctioned EMRS institutions has increased from 167 in 2013-14 to 723 in 2025-26, a rise of over 330 per cent - while functional schools grew from 123 to 499 during the same period. Student enrolment has also risen significantly, from 0.34 lakh to 1.56 lakh students. By providing quality residential education in tribal regions, EMRS institutions are helping build stronger educational foundations and expanding opportunities for tribal youth across the country.

These numbers reflect more than the expansion of schemes; they represent a larger structural shift. Scholarships and fellowships are investments in confidence, representation, and leadership. Our commitment is unwavering: no tribal student should be denied opportunity because of geography, background, or limited access to institutions of learning.

Alongside this educational transformation is a significant shift in grassroots leadership led by tribal women. For generations, tribal women have been the quiet keepers of culture, natural resources, and community life - sustaining families and traditions. India is home to 5.20 crore tribal women, accounting for almost half of the total tribal population, and their leadership is becoming central to inclusive development. At present, 4,712 VDKs have been sanctioned, of which 3,365 are

operational, benefiting over 12.9 lakh people, with women constituting more than half of the beneficiaries. These efforts are strengthening grassroots democracy.

The legacy that walks forward

Celebration, remembrance, education, and women's leadership together form part of a larger and continuing story, one in which tribal communities are increasingly shaping India's future with confidence and dignity. Through initiatives such as Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan (DA-JGUA) and Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adiwasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN), transformative change is reaching the ground through a new paradigm of convergence and collaboration.

The rise of tribal scholars, the recognition of unsung heroes, and the growing leadership of tribal women together reflect how the legacy of Bhagwan Birsa Munda continues to live in contemporary India. Today, India's more than 10.5 crore tribal citizens are forward-looking chapters in the national story. They are not at the margins of national progress, but among the strongest contributors to the vision of Viksit Bharat - scholars breaking new ground, women redefining leadership and unsung heroes finally receiving recognition. In this journey, the legacy of Dharti Aaba walks forward.



PIC TALK



Artists perform during an event marking the 300th birth anniversary celebrations of Ahilyabai Holkar, at Rajwada in Indore

PHOTO: PTI

The hidden health cost of emotional disconnection



PRATI KSHA VATS

2ND OPINION

Many illnesses are not merely diseases of the body – they are expressions of an unheard mind. A significant part of human suffering today can be prevented, not only through medicine, but through awareness, emotional expression, and genuine human connection. There is a quiet illness entering our homes. It carries no fever, appears in no diagnostic report, and yet settles invisibly into daily life – in missed conversations, in growing emotional distance between people who once shared everything effortlessly. In today's world, we measure love through responsibility – through how much we provide, how hard we work, how secure a future we build. These intentions are genuine. But somewhere along the way, we have replaced presence with provision.

This absence is felt most deeply by those who rarely demand attention – our elders. Their meals are provided, medicines managed, comfort ensured. Yet emotional care remains missing. They sit quietly, near windows, watching time pass – not seeking entertainment, but connection. What they often hear instead are familiar words: “I am busy,” “Work is too much.” These are not unkind words.

They come from responsibility. But over time, they replace emotional connection with explanation. Because love is not only measured in effort – it is felt in presence.

The World Health Organisation recognises that loneliness among older adults is not merely an emotional concern, but a serious health risk linked to depression, cognitive decline, and increased medical dependency. Loneliness does not remain only in the mind – it begins to shape the body. This pattern is not limited to elders.

Within relationships too, when emotional needs go unmet, they rarely surface as direct communication. Instead, they emerge as irritation, withdrawal, or unexplained physical symptoms – fatigue, headaches, persistent discomfort. What appears as overreaction is often an unspoken need for closeness. A simple hug, a few minutes of undivided attention, can resolve what no argument can. There is a deeper truth rarely acknowledged. In

some families, attention increases when illness appears – people gather, conversations slow, concern becomes visible.

Unconsciously, a connection forms: *when I am unwell, I am seen.* Over time, this emotional adaptation may shape behaviour. Medical visits begin serving a dual purpose – not only for physical care, but for moments of togetherness. The root cause is not medical.

It is emotional absence. When emotional needs remain consistently unmet, a quiet cycle begins – loneliness leads to physical discomfort, which brings temporary attention, only for loneliness to return. This cycle may gradually increase medical dependency, even when no purely physical cause exists.

What can interrupt this cycle is not complexity – it is consistency. A few minutes of undivided attention daily, genuine listening, simple questions asked with real interest – these are not small gestures. They are emotional anchors.

Before illness becomes the only language through which someone is heard, we have the chance to listen earlier. Because no one should have to fall sick just to feel seen.

The writer is Nutritionist, Wellness Coach and Health Writer



DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

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TECHNICAL GLITCHES MUST NOT UNDERMINE STUDENTS' FUTURES

Apropos the news report, “Technical glitch delays CUET-UG 2026 exam: NTA” (May 31), the disruption caused by a technical failure during one of India's most significant entrance examinations is deeply worrying.

Thousands of students, after months of rigorous preparation, were left waiting for hours in uncertainty and anxiety. Although the National Testing Agency (NTA) and its technology partner have stated that the issue was resolved and compensatory time was granted, the incident once again highlights the vulnerability of systems handling high-stakes examinations. The fact that more than 3,700 candidates were offered a retest reflects the seriousness and scale of the disruption. Examinations such as CUET play a crucial role in determining

admissions to leading universities and shaping the academic future of lakhs of students. Any technical malfunction not only causes immense stress but can also adversely affect performance and confidence.

Equally concerning was the apparent lack of timely communication with students and their families during the crisis. The authorities must undertake a comprehensive review of the incident, strengthen digital infrastructure, and conduct rigorous system testing well before examinations are held.

Students deserve an examination process that is reliable, transparent, and free from avoidable disruptions. Safeguarding their future should remain the foremost priority of all stakeholders involved.

SANJAY CHOPRA | MOHALI

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

Punjab's political battle remains wide open

Punjab's recent municipal election results have undoubtedly given a boost to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), but it would be premature to draw conclusions about the next Assembly election. The political landscape in the state remains fluid and highly competitive. Former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's public reservations about the appointment of BJP's new state chief, Kewal Singh Dhillon, despite describing him as a friend, have highlighted concerns regarding leadership and organisational strength within the party. However, electoral outcomes in Punjab are rarely determined by personalities alone. On the ground, voters are far more concerned about pressing issues such as unemployment, the drug menace, farmers' distress, law and order, and overall development. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann continues to enjoy considerable visibility, while Congress remains weakened by internal divisions. The BJP is still experimenting with leadership combinations, and the Shiromani Akali Dal is striving to regain lost political ground. Punjab's electorate has a long history of surprising political observers with last-minute swings and unexpected verdicts. Therefore, municipal success should not be mistaken for a guaranteed Assembly mandate. Punjab's voters are guided primarily by local concerns, and the credibility of candidates.

RS NARULA | PATIALA

Karnataka: Smooth leadership transition

The Congress party in Karnataka finds itself at a crucial political juncture as a long-simmering leadership struggle appears to be reaching its conclusion. The ongoing transition became necessary after prolonged differences within the party, which had increasingly affected its internal cohesion and governance.

With the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting convened to elect its new leader, all indications suggest that Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar will take over as Chief Minister following Siddaramaiah's resignation. Senior leaders have been engaged in intensive consultations to ensure a smooth transfer of power and maintain stability within the ruling party. The Congress leadership must ensure that factional interests do not overshadow the larger objective of effective governance. For Siddaramaiah, who has been a dominant political figure in the state, the transition represents a particularly significant phase. At the same time, it offers an opportunity for the party to demonstrate maturity and organisational strength. Citizens hope that the uncertainty surrounding the leadership issue will soon give way to stability, allowing the government to focus on addressing the state's developmental and administrative priorities.

CK DORAI RAMANI SURESH

Why good people are not coming public life

The column “Why Good People Are Quietly Disappearing?” raises an important concern that resonates with many people today. The reality is not that good people have vanished; rather, many have withdrawn from public life because they feel increasingly alienated by an environment that often rewards aggression, self-promotion, and narrow self-interest.

The growing influence of materialism has significantly altered social values. Success is frequently measured in terms of wealth, status, and visibility, while qualities such as integrity, humility, and public service receive far less recognition. As a result, individuals who uphold ethical principles often find themselves overlooked or marginalised.

Personal ambition and advancement are increasingly prioritised over collective well-being, weakening the sense of community that binds society together. Relationships are often evaluated through their usefulness, while civic responsibilities are neglected. In such circumstances, many principled individuals choose silence and withdrawal. However, their absence comes at a significant social cost. Communities thrive when ethical and compassionate people actively contribute to public life, guide younger generations, and uphold shared values.

HARSH PAWARIA | ROHTAK



Why rural development will define India's journey towards a developed nation by 2047

India's growth story over the next two decades will be shaped as much by the rise of its villages as by the expansion of its cities. Rising rural productivity, stronger infrastructure and vibrant local enterprise will play a defining role in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat



VIKRAMJIT SINGH SAHNEY

From July 1, India's rural development framework will enter a new phase with the implementation of the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 - VB-G RAM G. More than the replacement of an existing programme, it reflects a wider shift in the country's development priorities. The focus is no longer only on providing temporary employment support, but on strengthening the long-term economic capacity of villages.

For nearly two decades, MGNREGA played a major role in supporting rural livelihoods, particularly during periods of economic distress. Millions of families benefited from the assurance of work and income support, but rural India today is changing rapidly. Aspirations have expanded. Villages are more connected than before, and expectations from development have also evolved. Rural communities now seek better infrastructure, stronger agriculture, local opportunities and more stable incomes.

The new framework attempts to respond to these realities. It combines livelihood security with asset creation, local planning and infrastructure development. In many ways, it reflects the larger ambition of building a Viksit Bharat where development reaches every village and every household.

Building Viksit Bharat by 2047

Mahatma Gandhi believed that India's future would be shaped by the strength of its villages. His idea of Gram Swaraj was rooted in self-reliance, local participation and empowered rural communities.

Even today, that idea continues to hold relevance. India's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047 will depend not only on the growth of cities, but also on the transformation of rural India. Strong villages, productive agriculture and empowered Panchayats will remain central to that process.

The emphasis on Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans under the new framework is therefore significant. Greater involvement of Panchayats in identifying local priorities can help ensure that development responds to regional realities. A drought-prone village in Rajasthan naturally faces different challenges than a flood-affected district in Bihar or a tribal region in Odisha. Local planning allows solutions to emerge from the ground rather than being imposed uniformly from above. In the true spirit of cooperative federalism the government has perceived more active involvement of states in finalizing the projects at panchayat level and participating more meaningfully.

Stronger livelihood support with higher investment

One of the key features of the new framework is the increase in guaranteed employment from 100 days to 125 days annually for eligible rural households willing to undertake unskilled work.

The financial commitment behind the programme is equally notable. For FY 2026-27, the Centre has allocated ₹95,692 crore for the scheme, while the combined outlay with state contributions is expected to cross ₹1.5 lakh crore. Such investment can provide significant momentum to rural infrastructure creation and local economic activity. Importantly, the transition process has been designed to avoid disruption. Existing job cards will continue to remain valid during the transition phase, ongoing works will proceed without interruption and workers will not lose employment opportunities because of pending e-KYC formalities.

From wage support to productive asset creation

The most important shift under the new framework is the emphasis on durable rural assets. Employment generation is being linked more closely with projects that can strengthen village economies over time. The programme focuses on areas such as water conservation, irrigation support, rural connectivity, livelihood infrastructure and climate resilience. These are not short-term interventions. A properly restored pond, an irrigation canal or a rural storage facility can continue to benefit communities for years.



For millions of rural families, development is not an abstract policy debate. It is about water reaching farms on time, roads connecting villages to markets and better infrastructure reducing uncertainty in everyday life. This is where the framework can make a meaningful difference. Public expenditure creates greater value when it leaves behind productive assets that support local livelihoods long after the construction work is completed.

Climate resilience as a development priority

The emphasis on climate resilience is another important aspect of the programme. Rural India today faces increasing pressure from irregular rainfall, droughts, floods and extreme weather events. These challenges directly affect agriculture and rural incomes.

India can no longer treat climate resilience as separate from rural development. Water security, watershed management and climate-adaptive infrastructure are becoming essential economic priorities for villages across the country. It will ensure the critical projects like reinforcing embankments to avoid floods.

The highlights of the new scheme is 6 monthly social audit and publishing weekly information for the public and monitoring of work by centre state working committees. By integrating such works into the programme structure, the framework attempts to address both immediate livelihood needs and long-term sustainability concerns simultaneously.

Technology and transparency

The use of technology in implementation is expected to improve transparency and accountability. Real-time monitoring systems, geo-tagging and digital tracking can help reduce leakages and improve oversight.

There is also greater emphasis on timely wage payments and grievance redressal. Over the years, delayed payments often weakened confidence in rural employment programmes.

Faster payments and better monitoring systems can improve delivery at the ground level.

At the same time, implementation systems will need to remain sensitive to workers in regions with weaker digital connectivity so that technology becomes a tool of inclusion rather than a barrier.

The scheme also envisaged direct payment to workers digitally into their accounts and all payments will be made on fortnightly basis.

India's growth story over the next two decades will be shaped as much by the rise of its villages as by the expansion of its cities. Rising rural productivity, stronger infrastructure and vibrant local enterprise will play a defining role in India's journey towards Viksit Bharat.

The larger message of the VB-G RAM G framework lies in this very vision. It recognises villages as active partners in national growth and development. By strengthening livelihoods, creating durable rural assets and empowering Panchayats, the framework has the potential to build more resilient, confident and economically capable rural communities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly emphasised that the path to Viksit Bharat passes through empowered villages, self-reliant communities and inclusive development. The road to Viksit Bharat will therefore run through India's villages, farms, Panchayats and rural enterprises. In that sense, the framework carries forward both Mahatma Gandhi's belief in the strength of villages and Prime Minister Modi's vision of building a developed India by 2047.



THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN IMPLEMENTATION IS EXPECTED TO IMPROVE TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY. REAL-TIME MONITORING SYSTEMS, GEO-TAGGING AND DIGITAL TRACKING CAN HELP REDUCE LEAKAGES AND IMPROVE OVERSIGHT.

Dr Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Padma Shri is Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

How UP emerged as X-factor in Op Sindoor success against Pakistan



SUDHIR K MISHRA

War is the ultimate auditor of military capability. It strips away the layers of bureaucratic optimism and the polished presentations of defence expos. In the span of 88 hours in May 2025, Operation Sindoor delivered its verdict. For decades, we had spoken of Atmanirbharta-self-reliance-as a strategic aspiration. When the guns fell silent on May 10, it was clear that self-reliance was no longer an aspiration. It was a survival imperative.

And it had a new address: Uttar Pradesh. As someone who shepherded the BrahMos programme from a drawing board concept to the world's fastest cruise missile, I view the conflict as a validation of an industrial philosophy. The

success was not accidental, it was the result of a convergence of technological maturation, political will and industrial ecosystem building centered on the Gangetic plains. The perception of Uttar Pradesh as a mere hinterland died when the BrahMos was unleashed and it carried the signature of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor or UPDIC. The creation of the UPDIC changed the topology of our security map. Linking Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Aligarh, Agra and Chitrakoot was a strategic decision to weaponize India's demographic dividend. In modern warfare, you cannot fight with a missile that lacks a spare part supplier or a radar that lacks a maintenance hub. You need an ecosystem where a microchip fabricated in Noida is integrated into a seeker head tested in Lucknow, mounted on a launcher assembled in Kanpur and loaded with ammunition produced in Aligarh. By April 2025, this ecosystem was operational, moving UP from 'hinterland' to 'heartland'. The BrahMos was the star of Operation Sindoor. The engagement at Nur Khan airbase (Chaklala) near Islamabad serves as the definitive case study. A BrahMos struck the heart of the Pakistani air force's capability. The story behind that strike is one of industrial resilience. Recognizing the need for volume and redundancy, we aggressively expanded production into Uttar Pradesh. The integration and testing facility in Lucknow became a critical node. During the conflict, the Lucknow hub supported by a network of MSMEs across the state-ensured a throughput that kept the squadrons armed. We were able to rapidly replace missiles fired in the opening strikes, ensuring follow-on operations did not stall due to "ammo hunger." The BrahMos involves thousands of components, from the ramjet engine to the seeker head. In UP, we indigenized the supply chain for many of these sub-systems. When Pakistan attempted to disrupt our logistics, the decentralized nature of UP's manufacturing-spanning 4,000+ MSMEs-meant there was no single point of failure.

However, Operation Sindoor was not just about striking; it was about surviving. Pakistan's retaliation involved Fatah ballistic missiles and a swarm of drones, including Turkish YIHA and Asisguard Songar combat drones. This was India's first full-spectrum drone war, and the survival of our forward operating bases depended entirely on the Air Defence network. Here, too, UP's contribution was decisive. Electronics production units in Noida and Ghaziabad worked round-the-clock to provide the high-reliability radar components and secure data links required for the Akash missile system to intercept incoming threats. Furthermore, private startups in the UP corridor provided the "agile" response needed for counter-drone warfare. Noida also emerged as a silent warrior in the electromagnetic spectrum. The Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS), which allowed for the seamless coordination relies on real-time data processing engineered in some software and hardware labs of the NCR and its extensions into UP. The Secure Communication Links that protected our data from interception were fortified by encryption standards much of it developed in these clusters. Resilience is also about logistics. Our ability to bounce back was the true metric of power. This is where Uttar Pradesh's geography became decisive. Kanpur became the artery of sustainment; its ammunition factories ensured that the howitzers did not fall silent. The state's central location allowed for the rapid movement of critical spare parts for Rafales and Mirages to the front lines. UP acted as a sponge that absorbed the shock of demand and released the capability of supply.

This transformation was driven by focused political leadership. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's stewardship of the Defence Corridor moved beyond the "ribbon-cutting" culture to focus on the nuts and bolts-land acquisition, power supply for MSMEs and easing regulatory hurdles. The political backing created an environment where a private startup in Lucknow could bid for a BrahMos component contract, and the state government acted as the guarantor of stability. It is pertinent to mention here Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and CM Yogi jointly flagged off the first batch of BrahMos missiles from the Lucknow facility on October 18, 2025. This major achievement happened in just five months since inauguration, demonstrating the project's ability to transition from launch to full production in record time. The lessons for UP are clear: we must move up the value chain. Having mastered missile bodies in Kanpur and electronics in Noida, the next phase must focus on propulsion, advanced materials and artificial intelligence. The war showed that the future is unmanned. UP has the potential to become the drone manufacturing capital of India, integrating the software talent in Noida with the fabrication capability in Agra and Kanpur. Ultimately, weapons do not fight wars; people do. The most valuable asset Uttar Pradesh contributed was not a missile, but a mindset. The Defence Corridor has created high-value employment where an engineer tightening screws on a BrahMos seeker in Lucknow or writing code in Noida knows they are directly contributing to national security. Operation Sindoor demonstrated that India possesses the capability to fight a limited, high-intensity conflict with decisive results. It proved that the BrahMos, deeply integrated into the UP manufacturing ecosystem, can be produced, sustained, and replenished in large numbers.

The 88-hour confrontation is now history, but its lessons are shaping our future. Uttar Pradesh stands at the center of this transformation. We have moved beyond the era where the state was merely a recruitment ground for soldiers. Today, it is the arsenal of the Republic.

As I look back, the image that stays with me is the supply chain in synchronized rhythm-the trucks rolling out of Kanpur, the code being compiled in Noida, the missile bodies taking shape in Lucknow. Operation Sindoor tested our missiles, our doctrine and our courage. It also tested our industry. And Uttar Pradesh passed with distinction.



Dr Sudhir Kumar Mishra is former Director General, BrahMos Aerospace and a Distinguished Scientist, DRDO

India's opinion addiction: When every scroll tells you what to think



DEBARATI DHAR

Walk through any public space today and the scene is the same. Airports, metro stations, university corridors, parks — everywhere, people are locked into glowing screens, thumbs moving in that familiar, almost hypnotic rhythm. Listen closely to the audio bleeding from nearby earphones and you will not just hear music. You will hear voices — urgent, relentless, and opinionated — telling you exactly how to feel about the world. We have become addicted to a new kind of dopamine: the constant consumption of other people's opinions.

As someone who studies communication in the context of democratic participation, I have watched this shift unfold with growing concern. This is not simply a change in political behaviour. It represents a fundamental transformation in how public discourse operates — and what it is doing to our capacity for independent thought. For years, the central anxiety in media studies was the digital divide: the gap between those with access to information and those without. That problem has effectively inverted. Today, we are not starved of information. We are drowning in it. And paradoxically, greater access has not produced more thoughtful citizens. It has produced more dependent ones. For decades,

mass communication was shaped by what Kurt Lewin called Gatekeeping Theory — the idea that editors, journalists, and media institutions controlled what information reached the public and how it was framed. Those gates, for all their flaws, imposed a kind of discipline. Today, the gates have not merely been bypassed. They have been torn down entirely. In their place stands the creator economy: millions of independent commentators, influencers, and self-appointed analysts broadcasting to millions of followers from spare bedrooms and makeshift studios.

On the surface, this looks like a democratic triumph. No more editorial monopolies. No more corporate gatekeepers deciding which stories matter. Just direct, unmediated expression from ordinary people.

Social media has expanded this into something far more chaotic: an endless-step flow, where anyone with a smartphone can become an interpreter of national events, broadcasting real-time takes to thousands of followers without editorial oversight, fact-checking, or accountability. But focusing only on who is speaking misses the deeper problem, which is the nature of the medium itself. Marshall McLuhan's famous insight — that the medium is the message — reminds us that what matters is not just the content on the screen, but what the screen does to our thinking. The smartphone, governed by the attention economy, does not care whether an opinion is accurate or nuanced. Its logic is optimised purely for engagement: speed, emotional provocation, and compulsive return. When



political discourse enters this environment, it must conform to the algorithm's demands. Traditional media, despite its many failures, operated within natural boundaries. A newspaper had a fixed number of pages. A broadcast ended when the hour did. Those limits gave the human mind something precious: a pause. Space for scepticism, reflection, and quiet absorption. Digital platforms have no such limits.

They are architected for infinite scrolling and continuous stimulation. In this environment, complex socio-political issues cannot survive in their original form. They must be compressed into punchy, emotionally charged, instantly

digestible content. The platform rewards outrage, absolute conviction, and ideological certainty. This is where the structure of the digital public sphere becomes psychologically hazardous. Humans are naturally inclined to avoid cognitive discomfort. We seek out voices that confirm our existing fears and beliefs.

Algorithms, designed to maximise engagement, have become extraordinarily skilled at exploiting precisely these tendencies — feeding us content that matches what we already think, drawing us deeper into personalised echo chambers that feel like the whole world.

The result is a slow but profound transformation in how citizens relate to democracy. The troubling irony is that the most opinion-saturated individuals often believe themselves to be the most informed.

A person might spend hours each day consuming political podcasts, YouTube commentary, and social media threads, genuinely convinced they are fulfilling a civic duty. In reality, they are increasingly outsourcing their thinking. Rather than assembling verified facts and forming independent judgements, they are absorbing pre-packaged interpretations from digital commentators who have already done the thinking — and the feeling — for them. This arrangement creates a peculiar trap for creators as well. The influencer who appears authentic and independent is rarely truly free. Challenge your audience's ideological comfort zone and your metrics fall, your revenue drops, and the algorithm deprioritises your content. Creators become prisoners

of the very echo chambers they help construct, compelled to escalate their rhetoric continuously just to maintain visibility. The appearance of liberated expression masks a deep structural dependency. A functioning democracy does not require consensus. It requires, as Jürgen Habermas argued, a shared foundation of reality — a common factual base from which genuine disagreement can emerge. When the public sphere fractures into millions of algorithmically curated bubbles, each with its own personalised version of truth, that foundation begins to erode. We are no longer arguing from shared facts. We are performing our identities through our chosen digital icons. The real danger here is not polarisation, which is as old as politics itself. The deeper threat is the gradual erosion of independent thinking — the slow weakening of our capacity to sit with uncertainty, evaluate evidence patiently, and reach conclusions without emotional scaffolding provided by someone else. More voices do not automatically produce better dialogue. The democratisation of expression does not guarantee the democratisation of thought. When every scroll tells us what to think, and every individual becomes an opinion-maker, the question worth sitting with is an uncomfortable one: who is left to simply think for themselves?

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Order Order

Thane court acquits 3 women in prostitution racket case



A special court in Maharashtra's Thane has acquitted three women accused of trafficking girls for prostitution after the prosecution failed to examine the key decoy customer and the minors.

A copy of the order dated May 29 was made available on Sunday.

Special Judge (POCSO) S P Agarwal acquitted Sharminbanu, alias Zeenat Yunus Siddhiqui (36), Rizwana Javed Khan (27), and Afsana, alias Muskan Anis Shaikh (25), who were charged under the Indian Penal Code, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (PITA), and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

The prosecution alleged that police on September 27, 2017, exposed a prostitution racket being operated from a flat in Mumbai near Thane after a decoy customer was sent to the spot. He was found with a 17-year-old girl, who had been allegedly pushed into prostitution, when the police arrived. More minor girls were rescued from the flat, the prosecution said, adding that three women were named in the FIR for their alleged involvement in the illegal activity.

However, none of the independent witnesses, the girls, or the decoy customer testified during the trial, noted the court. Pointing to the testimony of the informant, the court termed it "hearsay in nature".

The judge declined to rely only on the evidence of the decoy customer. The court further noted that the Call Detail Record (CDR) lacked exact locations and no chemical was applied to the "seized trap money". (PTI)



RTI on court fees still incomplete after 4 transfers; CIC notice to Law Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

An RTI application seeking nationwide data on judicial court fee collections was transferred to four government departments and public sector entities but the information provided remained incomplete, prompting the CIC to direct a fresh reply and issue show-cause notices to officials of the law ministry.

The RTI applicant had sought details of annual collections of judicial court fees, including e-court fees, on an all-India basis, the total amount collected since June 1, 2014, with state-wise annual figures and the utilisation of such collections and related allocations.

According to the Central Information Commission (CIC) order, the application was filed with the Department of Legal Affairs under the Ministry of Law and Justice and was subsequently transferred to the Department of Financial Services (DFS), its Institutional Finance-I (IF-I) Division, Industrial Finance



Corporation of India Ltd (IFCI) and finally the Stock Holding Corporation of India Ltd (SHCIL).

The IF-I Division informed the applicant that the information sought was not available with it and transferred the application to IFCI.

IFCI, in turn, said the queries appeared to pertain to SHCIL and forwarded the application to the company.

SHCIL provided details of e-court fee collections for 16 states and Union Territories where it operates e-court services. However, on the second query relating to court fee collections since June 2014 and the third query

first two points and had stated that information on the third point was not available with it.

"The CPIO Stockholding Corporation of India Ltd. provided the reply only on points 1 and 2 of the RTI application and said that the information on point 3 is not available," the order said.

Recording SHCIL's submission that it would revisit its response and rectify any discrepancy, the CIC directed the company's CPIO to provide a revised reply on points one and two.

The Commission also issued a show-cause notice to the CPIO of the Department of Legal Affairs, asking why action under Section 20 of the RTI Act should not be initiated for wrongly transferring the entire application to DFS and for remaining absent during the hearing without prior intimation.

A separate show-cause notice was issued to the First Appellate Authority in the Ministry of Law and Justice for not responding to the appellant's letter dated October 12, 2024.

regarding utilisation of the collections, it stated that the information sought was not applicable to it.

During the hearing, the appellant submitted that the information provided on the first two points was incomplete and that no information had been received on the utilisation of court fees, which related to the Ministry of Law and Justice.

The Commission observed that the application had moved from the Department of Legal Affairs to DFS, then to the IF-I Division, IFCI and finally SHCIL.

It noted that SHCIL had provided replies only on the

Man gets 20 years in jail for raping 15-year-old girl in Navi Mumbai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Thane

A man was sentenced to 20 years in jail for raping a 15-year-old girl.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge Parag Sane in Belapur found Govindkumar Harilal Nirmal (24), a vada-pav stall labourer, guilty under IPC Section 376(3) and multiple provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The court also imposed a concurrent 2-year rigorous imprisonment sentence under IPC Section 506 for criminal intimidation.

In July 2019, Nirmal pulled the victim, a Class X student,



from a common water tap into his house and raped her twice.

As per the prosecution, he put a speaker on full volume to drown out her

al. However, the court, in its order, said it had no difficulty to act on the testimony of a victim of sexual assault alone to convict an accused where her testimony inspires confidence and is found to be reliable.

Underscoring that a survivor cannot be viewed with suspicion, the court added, "It must not be overlooked that a woman or a girl subjected to sexual assault is not an accomplice to the crime, but is a victim of another person's lust."

Courts cannot cling to a fossil formula and insist upon corroboration if the case strikes the judicial mind as probable, it added.

POCSO Act applies if victim of commercial sex trafficking is minor: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court has held that cases involving the trafficking of children for Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can attract charges under the stringent POCSO Act, alongside the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act.

A bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan on Friday issued a slew of directions to mitigate the concerns of sex workers, while clarifying the legal framework for the prosecution of perpetrators and the rehabilitation of victims.

It said the consent of an adult victim to the intended exploitation is irrelevant if any of the listed "means," like the use of threat, force, other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, abuse of a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person, are used.

"The consent of a child victim of trafficking is irrelevant, regardless of whether or not 'means' have been used... Lack of consent is not an element of the crime of trafficking in persons.

"Thus, the focus should be

firmly on the actions and intentions of the perpetrators, and once the elements of the crime of trafficking, including the use of one of the identified means (coercion, deception, etc.), are proven, any defence or allegation that the victim 'consented' should be deemed to be irrelevant," it said.

The bench said a person's awareness that they are being employed in the sex industry or prostitution does not exclude them from being a victim of trafficking, as they may have been deceived about the conditions of work, which later turned out to be exploitative.

The top court said Article 23 of the Constitution prohibits trafficking in human beings, beggars, and all other similar forms of forced labour, and its ambit is wide and unlimited. It strikes at human trafficking in whatever form it is found and is enforceable not only against the State but against any private individuals engaged in such practices.

The bench noted that while dealing with Article 23 or legislations enacted to give effect to it, the court has consistently adopted a liberal interpretation, presuming and extending protections and benefits to all those in conditions of exploitation.



Punjab: AAP MLA Pathanmajra gets regular bail in rape case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chandigarh

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has granted regular bail to AAP MLA Harmeet Singh Pathanmajra in a rape case registered against him last year.

The court, in the order delivered on Friday, asked him to surrender his passport to the trial court and to report to the police station concerned twice a month.

Pathanmajra, a first-time MLA from Sanour in Patiala, was arrested from Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, on March 25. He had been on the run in the rape case since September 2 last year after escaping from custody when Punjab Police went to Haryana's Karnal to arrest him.

The case was registered against him on September 1, 2025, at the Civil Lines police station here on the charges of rape, cheating and criminal intimidation.

The case was registered based on a complaint by a



Zirakpur-based woman, who alleged that the MLA misrepresented himself as a divorcee, entered into a relationship with her and later married her in 2021 while already being married.

The complainant had alleged that she came in contact with Pathanmajra in 2013-14 through Facebook and they got married in August 2021.

It was only after she saw an affidavit in March 2022 filed by him for contesting the assembly elections that she came to know of his

subsisting marriage, she had alleged.

The counsel for Pathanmajra contended that the allegations in the FIR were motivated and the MLA had been implicated on account of political rivalry.

In its order, the court said, "In these facts, all this while when the complainant conceded had physical relationship with the petitioner for about a decade from 2013-14 onwards, it becomes debatable whether she could remain oblivious of his existing marital ties and could it

be said this protracted relationship was without her consent, or that the consent had been given because she believed herself to be lawfully married wife."

The court observed that the fact that Pathanmajra had earlier absconded could not be a ground to deny him bail.

"There is no denying the fact that the petitioner previously absconded from the process of law and slipped out of the country. Nevertheless, he returned and was arrested on March 24, 2026. Prior thereto, he had been declared a proclaimed person also and further proceedings in that regard are pending.

"His being (an) absconder can itself not be a ground to decline bail in the facts of this case, as discussed hereinbefore. Similarly, pendency of other FIRs would also not be a sufficient ground to detain him in custody. One of the FIRs is related to the instant case only when he

allegedly escaped from custody in Karnal," the court said.

Even otherwise, the petitioner's entitlement to bail is to be decided on the facts of the case at hand. Additionally, the allegations that the petitioner and his agents are threatening and pressurising the complainant or her brother have not been substantiated even prima facie. No complaint in that regard has been registered, it said.

Accordingly, considering the totality of the facts and circumstances, the petitioner is ordered to be released on regular bail subject to his submitting bail and surety bonds to the satisfaction of the trial court or the duty magistrate, provided his custody is not needed in any other case, the order said.

The release shall also be subject to surrendering his passport to the trial court. Also, while on bail, he shall report to the concerned police station twice a month, it said.

Punjab, Haryana HC suspends former CBI court special judge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Chandigarh

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has suspended with immediate effect judicial officer Rajeev Goyal, the former Panchkula CBI court special judge.

At the time of the suspension, he was posted as the additional district and sessions judge, Kaithal.

The suspension order did not specify any reason, though it indicates that it pertains to the period when Goyal was posted as special judge in the CBI Court.

The May 29 order, issued by the court's registrar general, states: "Hon'ble Chief Justice and judges, in exercise of powers under Article 235 of the Constitution of India read with Rule 4 (b) of the Haryana Civil Services (Punishment and Appeal), Rules, 2016... to place Sh. Rajeev Goyal, the then special



judge, CBI Court, Panchkula (now posted as additional district and sessions judge, Kaithal) under suspension with immediate effect in contemplation of initiation of disciplinary proceedings against the officer.

"During the period of suspension, the headquarters of Sh. Rajeev Goyal will be at Kaithal. He will not leave the headquarters during this

period without the prior permission of the district and sessions judge, Kaithal..." reads the order.

Goyal was transferred to Kaithal as the additional district and sessions judge over a month back.

Notably, the CBI Special Court in Panchkula, Haryana, has jurisdiction to hear all CBI cases registered across the state.

Former Sanghi Industries promoter settles with Ambuja, drops NCLAT plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Alok Sanghi, former promoter of Sanghi Industries, has withdrawn his plea before the appellate tribunal, NCLAT, against Ambuja Cements following the settlement of a dispute with the country's second-largest cement manufacturer. The withdrawal has brought the litigation between the two over Sanghi's personal guarantee of Rs 84 crore to a close.

Ambuja Cements, which acquired Sanghi Industries in 2023 in a Rs 5,185 crore deal, has already withdrawn its plea against Alok Sanghi filed before the Ahmedabad bench of the Ahmedabad bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on April 10, 2026.

Sanghi had moved the appellate tribunal, NCLAT, challenging an NCLT order passed in November 2025 on Ambuja Cements' insolvency



plea regarding a personal guarantee of Rs 84 crore extended by him. The NCLT had appointed an interim resolution professional after the plea.

Earlier in April, the appellate tribunal was informed that a settlement had been arrived at between Sanghi and Ambuja Cements, following which the Adani Group firm moved an application before the NCLT seeking withdrawal of its

Section 95 plea under the IBC. It was also pointed out that the report of the Resolution Professional (RP) under Section 99 has not been filed, largely due to the stay order passed by the NCLAT.

Subsequently, on May 26, counsel appearing for Sanghi sought permission to withdraw the petition before the NCLAT, which was allowed.

"The learned Counsel for the appellant (Alok Sanghi) makes a statement on instruction that he is withdrawing this appeal. The statement of the learned Counsel is recorded. The appeal is dismissed as withdrawn," recorded a two-member NCLAT bench in its order.

Section 95 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016, allows creditors to initiate insolvency proceedings against debtors, including personal guarantors and partnership firms.

No tussle at all with judiciary over appointment of judges: Law Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The government is looking at systems followed in different countries for appointment of judges, Union law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal has said while asserting that there is "no tussle" between the Executive and the Judiciary and a good consultation process is being followed to fill vacancies in the higher judiciary.

He also said that amid rising pendency in courts, the government is working to strengthen the alternative dispute resolution mechanism.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, Meghwal said that the government is examining systems adopted by various countries in the appointment of judges.

He, however, explained that appointment systems in other countries are being examined informally and



no formal mechanism has been put in place to study them.

"Let us see what comes out of it," Meghwal said

while responding to a question on whether there could be an alternative to the collegium system.

Responding to another

question on differences between the Executive and the Judiciary over the appointment of Supreme Court and high court judges, Meghwal asserted that there is "no tussle" and "good consultations" take place.

"First of all, I want to say there is no tussle and there is a good consultation process," he asserted.

He said there are occasions when the Supreme Court collegium differs on the names suggested by the government. Similarly, the government also holds back their recommendations for reasons such as negative background checks, he said.

"But there is no tussle at all," he observed.

Both Houses of Parliament had passed with near unanimity a bill to overturn the collegium system by setting up a body to appoint SC and HC judges.

The Supreme Court, however, struck down the National Judicial

Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act along with the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act on October 16, 2015, declaring them unconstitutional and void.

In a 4:1 majority decision, the five-judge Constitution Bench ruled that the NJAC violated the "basic structure" of the Indian Constitution by severely undermining the independence of the judiciary and the principle of separation of powers.

This historic verdict dismantled the government's proposed panel and revived the decades-old Collegium system for appointing judges to the higher judiciary.

Meghwal said that with over five crore cases pending across the Supreme Court, 25 high courts and lower judiciary, the Modi government is pushing for alternative dispute resolution mechanism, including arbitration, to reduce pendency.

India's Ancient Wisdom of Mixed-Crops and Inter-Crops Farming

May the farmers be happy, healthy, and wealthy. — Parashara



MEENAKSHI LEKHI
FORMER MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, GOVT. OF INDIA



Dr. SOPHIA LISAM
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, BHARAT KI SOCH



For over 5000 years, before the advent of synthetic fertilisers or corporate seed patents, Indian agricultural knowledge systems had already cracked the code of sustainable farming. The ancient art of mixed cropping and intercropping practiced across the subcontinent for millennia is not merely a farming technique. They represent a practical philosophy of resilience expressed through plants. Emerging evidences from archaeology and agronomy shows clearly that our ancestors understood diversity as the path to survival.

Today climate change is intensifying. Groundwater is depleting. Monocultures are failing. The answers to our 21st century agricultural challenges may lie at the meeting point of ancient wisdom and modern science.

The most striking evidence comes from Khirsara, also in Gujarat. A detailed study of macro-botanical remains and soil organic matter isotopes showed a dramatic agricultural transformation around 4200 years ago, when an abrupt arid event gripped the region. Facing severe climatic stress, the inhabitants deliberately shifted from a 90% barley-based monoculture to a diverse system dominated by drought-resistant millets alongside sorghum and rice. This was not passive adaptation. It was intentional and strategic crop-switching, an ancient form of risk management. The site survived the climatic crisis and continued for generations.

At the site of Binjor in northwestern India, direct dating of food grains published in *Radiocarbon* (2020) documents the advent of summer monsoon crops around 2600-2500 BC, reflecting a calculated response to changing rainfall patterns. As a synthesis published by Cambridge University Press in *Antiquity* (2023) concludes, Indus agricultural strategies were regionally diverse, context-sensitive and driven by conscious farmer choice.

every ecological zone. In the misty hills of Nagaland, the Chakhesang tribe perfected the Ruza farming system (often documented as Zabo). A 2024 study in the *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge* describes this as an integrated system where water-harvesting ponds, terraced rice fields, fish, livestock and mixed crops function as a single living organism. On the semi-arid Deccan plateau, farmers paired deep-rooted pigeon pea with shallow-rooted millets, so plants drew nutrients from different soil layers without competing. In Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, local communities sowed a dozen different tubers, cereals and legumes together in a single clearing. In Kerala and Bengal, coconut groves hosted black pepper vines, yams and vegetables. This was sophisticated risk management not primitive agriculture.

There are two distinct cropping methods documented across India. First, **mixed cropping or broadcast-casting**, in rainfed areas like Rajasthan and the Deccan Plateau, farmers mixed seeds of before sowing, the goal was survival. If rainfall was scarce at least one crop would endure. This was the farmer's insurance policy. Second, **spatial intercrop-**

ping, farmers arranged plants in specific row or strip patterns to manage sunlight, water and root depth. In Kashmir farmers intercropped fruit trees with saffron and vegetables. Traditional farmers across India also recognised symbiotic relationships without understanding the chemistry. Pairing legumes with cereals kept the soil fertile. Marigold or certain herbs planted alongside vegetables repelled pests. These were empirical discoveries tested over centuries.

The Moringa tree grew naturally on farm edges for generations as one remarkable example of this wisdom. Dravidians cultivated it in every home yard. The *Ain-i-Akbari*, written 400 years ago, listed it as a commercial oilseed crop. India once exported Moringa oil to the West for perfumes and cosmetics. Research published in *Acta Horticulturae* (2021) confirms the oil remains stable for up to twelve months. Every part of the tree found use: tender pods turned into *achar* and *chutni*, leaves cooked as *sabji* and seeds prepared as medicine. Ayurveda values Moringa (*Shigru*) for diabetes, asthma and cardiac disorders. We cut these trees in the name of modernisation. Their loss is not just a plant but a practical logic.

Lessons for a Climate-Uncertain Century

Contemporary agronomy is rediscovering what traditional farmers always knew. Study in the *Indian Journal of Agronomy* (2024) found that barnyard millet intercropped with green gram produced 25% more food per unit of land than either crop alone. Cotton intercropping in Gujarat has reported gains as high as 44%. These are not marginal gains. They are transformative.

The mechanism is simple. Diverse plant communities use light, water and soil nutrients more completely than single species. Legumes fix nitrogen for neighbouring cereals. Deep roots access minerals shallow roots cannot. Pest cycles are disrupted because the host plant is never alone. A mixed field never fails entirely. If one crop wilts, another stands.

India must feed over 1.4 billion people under unpredictable monsoons and rising temperatures. The industrial model of monocultures has proven brittle. When a pest or dry spell strikes a monoculture, the entire harvest vanishes. When it strikes a mixed field, something survives. The lesson from Khirsara 4,200 years ago is the lesson for tomorrow: diversify or perish.

This is not a call to abandon modern agriculture but to integrate it. Science and tradition are co-authors of the same solution. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Rain Forest Research Institute now recognise traditional farming systems as a priority for climate-resilient agriculture. The need of the hour is simple. We must relearn indigenous intercropping and mixed cropping.

Fable with Moral

Savitri's Dharma

(Mahabharata, Vana Parva)



Long ago, King Ashvapati of the Madra kingdom performed rigorous austerities to honour Goddess Savitri and was blessed with a radiant daughter, also named Savitri. She grew into a maiden of exceptional beauty and inner strength. When no suitor dared approach her, she set out to choose her own husband. After a year's journey, she selected Satyawati, son of the exiled blind king Dyumatsena, who lived in a forest hermitage. The heavenly sage Narad warned that Satyawati was destined to die exactly one year later. Undeterred, Savitri declared she had chosen once and would not choose again. The marriage was solemnised with joy.

As the fateful day approached, Savitri undertook the triatara vow of fasting and prayer. On the destined morning, she accompanied Satyawati into the forest under the pretext of seeing the blooming woods. While chopping wood, Satyawati was suddenly overcome by exhaustion and a splitting headache. He lay down with his head on Savitri's lap and breathed his last.

Before Savitri appeared, Yama, the majestic God of Death, in his terrifying yet luminous form. He tied Satyawati's soul in his noose and turned to leave. Savitri rose and followed him steadfastly.

Yama commanded, "Return, Savitri! Perform your husband's last rites. You cannot follow the dead."

Savitri replied calmly, "My lord, where my husband goes, I must follow. This is the eternal law of marriage and dharma."

Impressed by her resolve and wisdom, Yama offered her a boon, asking her to choose anything except Satyawati's life. Savitri requested the restoration of her father-in-law

Dyumatsena's eyesight. Yama granted it and urged her to return. She continued walking behind him, engaging him in profound discourse on dharma, righteousness, and duty. Pleased by her flawless logic, eloquence, and devotion, Yama granted her another boon: the return of Dyumatsena's lost kingdom. Then a third, her father Ashvapati would be blessed with a hundred sons.

Still, Savitri persisted. She argued that a wife's place is beside her husband and that true dharma demanded his life be restored so she could fulfil her worldly duties. Yama, deeply moved by her intelligence, purity of love, and unyielding spirit, finally relented. He unbound Satyawati's soul from the noose and returned it to his body, blessing Savitri for her extraordinary devotion.

Satyawan awoke as if from deep sleep. Hand in hand, the couple returned to the hermitage. Soon, Dyumatsena regained his sight and kingdom, fulfilling all the boons. Savitri's love and wisdom had conquered death itself, proving that steadfast devotion and righteous determination can alter even fixed fate. Her story remains an eternal symbol of marital love and spiritual strength.

Moral of the Fable
Unwavering devotion, righteousness, and determination can overcome any obstacle.

Did you know?

Long before British enterprises established commercial tea plantations in Assam during the 1830s, the region's indigenous Singpho tribe had already mastered the art of tea cultivation and brewing. For centuries, the Singphos harvested wild tea leaves (*Camellia sinensis var. assamica*) that grew naturally in the fertile Upper Brahmaputra Valley.

To process their harvest, they perfected a unique and sustainable method: stuffing fresh tea leaves tightly into hollow bamboo tubes and roasting them over an open fire. Once dried and aged, this traditional technique yields a deeply organic, smoky, and full-bodied tea known locally as *Phalap*.



When Scottish explorer Robert Bruce, accompanied by Assamese nobleman Maniram Dewan, observed the Singpho chief Bessa Gaum drinking this distinctive beverage in 1823, it sparked the discovery that would later revolutionize global tea history. Today, *Phalap* remains a prized cultural treasure, standing as a living testament to Assam's ancient agricultural heritage.

Wisdom Word Search

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

WORDS TO FIND

Ethei-Loukhong, Kei, Khong, Loungaak-Eshei, Lou-Khaoba, Loumi, Loupuk, Lou-uba, Maru, Pengba

ETHEI-LOUKHONG - Irrigation; a traditional water-diversion system within paddy fields, where Ethei refers to channeling water and Loukhong to the interconnected pathways across the fields.

KEI - Granary; a storage space for preserving harvested grains and ensuring food security.

KHONG - Canal; a water channel used for irrigation and agricultural sustenance.

LOU-KHAOBA - Harvesting; the gathering of mature crops marking the culmination of the agricultural cycle.

LOUMI - Farmer; a cultivator whose labour sustains agrarian life and food production.

LOUNGAAK-ESHEI - Agricultural folk songs traditionally sung in paddy fields, often associated with crop protection, pest control and collective farming practices.

LOUPUK - Paddy field; cultivated wetland dedicated primarily to rice farming.

LOU-UBA - Agriculture/Farming; the practice of cultivating land for food and livelihood.

MARU - Seed; the source of cultivation symbolising continuity, regeneration, and sustenance.

PENGBA - Weeding; the removal of unwanted plants to protect crop health and productivity.

Note: These terms come from Manipuri, one of India's 22 scheduled languages.

Marvels of India

COTTON: BHARAT'S GIFT TO THE WORLD

World's Oldest Cotton
Cotton features significantly in Bharat's agricultural legacy. Metallurgical analysis of a copper bead recovered from a Neolithic burial in the Indian subcontinent revealed mineralised threads identified as cotton, making these fibres the earliest known example of cotton. This was confirmed by a research paper in the *Journal of Archaeological Science* (2002).



A Native Species, A Civilisational Crop
The species cultivated in the Sindhu-Saraswati Valley - *Gossypium arboreum* - is indigenous to the Indian subcontinent and distinct from the cotton introduced by Europeans in the 16th century. Sites such as Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, Lothal and Dholavira have all yielded indirect evidence of textile impressions, dye residues etc., testifying to a sophisticated, organised textile economy.

Cotton, Trade and Food Security
Cotton's role extended beyond clothing. As Sven Beckert notes in his book titled "Empire of Cotton: A Global History" (2015), Harappan farmers were the first to spin and weave cotton and the Vedas also mentioned cotton spinning and weaving. The Harappans sailed the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf, trading animal hides, gems and fabrics. Cotton was central to this commerce, generating surpluses that ensured food security.

Bharat's Civilisational Signature
Herodotus, the ancient Greek historian, described Indian cotton as "exceeding in beauty and goodness". Across millennia, cotton is not merely a crop; it is Bharat's civilisational signature.

QUIZ Agriculture & Food Security

Questions	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
1. Who was the 'Sitadhyaksha' in the Mauryan Empire?	Superintendent of Agriculture	Superintendent of Forest Produce	Superintendent of Pastures	Superintendent of Storehouses
2. Why was the Sudarshana Lake built by the Mauryans in Junagadh, and later repaired by dynasties like the Shakas?	To provide safe bathing spot for people	To increase city's aesthetic beauty	For irrigation and water storage	For extinguishing nearby forest fire
3. Which of them was a type of mechanical water wheel, used for drawing water from a tank/well to irrigate agricultural fields?	Taccavi	Chachar	Araghatta	Ghatika
4. Which of these cities was known as a cotton hub during the Tamil Sangam period?	Kaveripattinam	Uraiyur	Vellore	Arikamedu
5. Which of these dynasties introduced the Paik System, that was pivotal in getting labour for agricultural management?	Ahom	Pala	Sena	Gauda

ANSWERS: 1 - A, 2 - C, 3 - C, 4 - B, 5 - A

panchatantra

The Brahmin and the Gold Coins



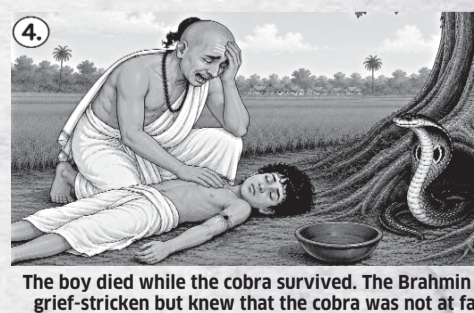
1. A kind Brahmin daily offered a bowl of milk to the cobra who lived in a burrow at the base of a tree, next to a field.



2. Soon the Brahmin's prayer for prosperity were answered by the cobra with a shiny gold coin everyday.



3. When the Brahmin's son saw the gold coin, he thought there must be more in the cobra's burrow. He waited for the cobra to emerge and hit him with a stick. The cobra fought back and bit the boy.



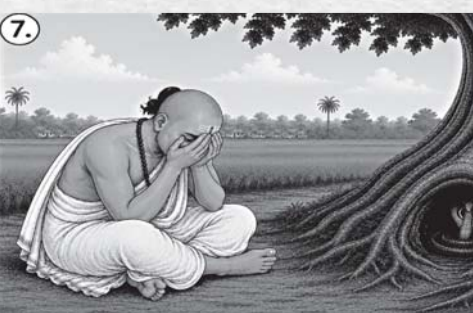
4. The boy died while the cobra survived. The Brahmin was grief-stricken but knew that the cobra was not at fault.



5. The Brahmin again went to the same spot to offer the cobra milk and prayers. The cobra emerged and confronted the Brahmin. "Your greedy son is dead but you still come here for the gold coin. I have no affection left for you, my heart is broken. Go away and never come back."



6. The cobra gave the Brahmin a parting gift, a big sparkling diamond. The Brahmin walked back home, lamenting the loss of both, his son as well as the blessings of the cobra.



7. **MORAL OF THE STORY:** Greed destroys common sense and leads to downfall.

FROM THE WORLD

CANADA
India trade talks upbeat

Canadian and Indian officials have expressed optimism about ongoing negotiations on a proposed free trade agreement during a business summit in Regina, amid renewed engagement between the two countries after trade talks stalled in 2023, according to media reports.

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe, Canada's High Commissioner to India Chris Cooter and India's High Commissioner to Canada Dinesh Patnaik, on Friday, participated in the Western Canada-India Leaders Summit in Regina, the capital city of the province of Saskatchewan, where they discussed bilateral ties and negotiations on the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), and spoke with delegations. According to Canadian broadcaster CBC News, Cooter said negotiations on the agreement were continuing and expressed confidence that a deal could be reached later this year. (PTI)

UK
Foreign Secy to visit China, India

UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper will travel to China on Monday before a visit to India on a two-nation tour focused on tackling global challenges and bolstering cooperation.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said the ministerial engagements with the two major powers are expected to cover the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Ebola outbreak in Africa. Cooper is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Thursday, followed by interactions across business and academia.

"The Foreign Secretary (Cooper) will be in India, where she will meet with External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar and meet with entrepreneurs, academics and government partners who are delivering on the UK-India Vision 2035," the FCDO said. (PTI)

Myanmar blast kills more than 45: Rescuers

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Bangkok

A blast on Sunday at a building in northeastern Myanmar said to have been storing explosives for mining has killed more than 45 people, according to rescue workers and independent media reports.

About 70 other people were injured in the explosion that took place around noon in the village of Kaungtup, in Namhkam township.

The area, located about 3 km south of the Chinese border, is under the control of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, an ethnic armed group fighting Myanmar's central government.



A rescue worker who rushed to the site of the blast told The Associated Press that 46 bodies, including six children, had been recovered by Sunday evening and taken for cremation.

The rescuer, who spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons, said 74 wounded people

had been transported to the township hospital and rescue operations were continuing.

Another rescuer in Namhkam, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said about 40 people were killed and more than 100 houses near the blast site were damaged.

Nepal PM triggers controversy in his maiden appearance in Parliament

SHIRISH B PRADHAN
Kathmandu

After staying away from Parliament since the start of session on May 11, Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah made his maiden appearance on Sunday and triggered a controversy with his answer on the border issue with India.

Shah, who took oath as the prime minister in March, was present in the House of Representatives to answer the questions raised by the lawmakers since Parliament began earlier in the month.

Earlier in the month, the

opposition lawmakers had disrupted Parliament proceedings at least four times and even boycotted it once demanding PM Shah to appear in person.

Seven lawmakers, including two from the ruling Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RSP), asked questions to the prime minister on issues related to the recent Human Rights Commission report, Kalapani-Lipulekh territory dispute with India, landless squatters management, cooperatives fund mis-appropriation, voting rights of Nepalese living abroad, good governance and



misuse of visit Visa. Responding to them, Shah said action will be taken as recommended by the report of Human Rights Commission regarding the Gen Z move-

United Airlines flight to Spain returns to US midair due to security threat

SARAH RAZA ■ New York

A United Airlines flight bound for Spain from US Newark Liberty International Airport turned around midflight Saturday due to a possible security threat in flight.

The flight departed around 6 pm for Palma de Mallorca, Spain, but landed back at Newark at 9:37 pm, according to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

The airline said there were 190 passengers and 12 crew members on board the Boeing 767 aircraft.

According to air traffic control audio, security came to inspect the aircraft after



someone named their Bluetooth device a "certain four-letter word." A passenger posting on social media said crew members repeatedly asked passengers to turn off all Bluetooth devices, but two devices remained on.

The flight turned around after communicating with the airline's headquarters in Chicago. (AP)



WHO hails five Ebola recoveries as new Congo treatment centre opens

JUSTIN KABUMBA/MARK BANCHEREAU

Five patients have recovered from a rare type of Ebola, the head of the World Health Organisation said Sunday during a visit to eastern Congo's Bunia, a city at the heart of an outbreak.

"Four people will be discharged today, and there was one who was discharged the day before yesterday," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said during the opening of a new Ebola treatment centre in Bunia, the provincial capital of Ituri.

"Of course, we're still working on vaccines and treatments, but that doesn't mean that people cannot recover from Ebola," he added.

The WHO said Friday a patient had recovered from the Bundibugyo virus, the current kind of Ebola, which has no approved treatment or vaccine. It was the first documented recovery of a con-

firmed Bundibugyo patient during the current outbreak.

The health organisation said the latest official figures showed 906 suspected cases and 223 suspected deaths. Neighbouring Uganda has confirmed nine cases and one death, the Ugandan Health Ministry said Friday.

The virus continues to spread faster than the response despite better-organised health facilities and new aid arrivals, Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, said Saturday, calling for the immediate expansion of testing, faster deployment of aid workers and sustained access for medical supplies.

The dangers faced by health workers have been heightened by anger among residents over the stringent medical protocols for handling the victims' bodies, which clash with local burial rites. Residents have launched at least three attacks against health centres. (AP)

US strike on alleged drug boat kills three

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Washington

The US military said it carried out another strike Saturday on a boat accused of smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean, killing three men in the fourth attack this week and putting the total death toll at 205.

US Southern Command announced the strike with its usual language that the vessel was "engaged in narco-trafficking operations" and operated by a designated terrorist organisation. It provided no evidence for the allegation.

It's the latest in a months-long campaign against alleged drug boats traversing the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific.



Video released by the military on social media shows a small vessel floating in the ocean before it's hit and engulfed in a fireball.

The attack brings the death toll to 205 in a series of US strikes that began in early September, with other attacks announced on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.

Ukraine hits Russian energy targets, nuclear plant

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Moscow

Ukraine launched fresh strikes on Russian energy sites overnight into Sunday, Russian authorities and media reported, while Kyiv denied Russian claims that a Ukrainian drone struck a key Kremlin-occupied nuclear plant.

Drone debris set fire to a fuel storage facility in Russia's southwestern Rostov region, Gov. Yuriy Slyusar reported on Telegram on Sunday. He said residents of nearby homes were evacuated.

The drones also damaged civilian infrastructure in Saratov province, also in southwestern Russia, according to Gov. Roman Busargin. Astra, an independent Russian news channel, said an oil refinery was on fire in the regional capital, Saratov.

Ukraine has stepped up its attacks on Russia's oil and gas facilities in recent months, arguing the energy sector both funds and directly fuels Moscow's more than 4-year-old invasion.

Meanwhile, Kyiv denied Russia's



claims that a Ukrainian drone struck the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, the largest in Ukraine and Europe.

Russian forces captured the plant in the early weeks of the war, and it remains close to the front lines in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, one of four regions Russia has formally annexed despite lacking full military

control or international recognition for its actions.

Russia's state nuclear energy company, Rosatom, said on Saturday that the drone exploded after tearing a hole in the wall of a turbine hall. Rosatom's CEO Alexei Likhachev accused Ukraine of a "deliberate" attack.

"This afternoon, a Ukrainian

kamikaze combat drone struck the turbine hall building of Power Unit No. 6, resulting in a detonation," Likhachev said. He added that there was no damage to the main equipment.

Ukraine's military denied Russia's "yet another propaganda ploy," saying it did not strike or target the plant. The military said in a statement that it adheres to international humanitarian law and is aware of the "consequences of any actions targeting nuclear facilities." (AP)

"Along the relevant section of the front line, there was no active fighting at the time of the incident, and no weapons were used," it said.

Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, voiced "serious concern" following the incident in a post on X.

Ukraine's state nuclear supervisory agency said the damage claimed by Russia must be verified by IAEA experts present at the Zaporizhzhia plant as part of a long-term monitoring mission.

France detains hundreds after violent clashes as Paris Saint-Germain won Champions League

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Paris

French police detained 780 people involved in violent clashes in Paris and other French cities that erupted Saturday night after Paris Saint-Germain won the Champions League title.

Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said 57 officers were wounded, with most suffering minor injuries, as football fans set off fires and vandalised shops. One small group even tried to storm a Paris police station.

Nunez said at a news conference Sunday that "the situation has been largely brought under control".

"Most of the celebrations took place peacefully" across

the French capital, he said, noting most incidents happened in the Champs Elysees neighbourhood and close to the Parc des Princes stadium in western Paris, where fans had gathered to watch the match.

Police also intervened five times overnight to prevent people from blocking traffic on the main ring road around Paris, he said.

Nunez said incidents took place in about 15 cities in France, describing "one to two" shops vandalised in each city other than Paris. He said 780 people were detained in all, with 480 of them in the Paris area alone.

The Paris prosecutors' office said 277 people have



been formally placed in police custody, including 82 minors, for alleged offences. Most were for assault of

police officers, while other allegations include theft, vandalism and disturbing the public order.

One serious accident involved a driver losing control of a car that rammed into a restaurant's terrace, leaving two people wounded, including one seriously, Nunez said.

But Nunez said that planned celebrations for the team's win on Sunday afternoon at the Champ de Mars, near the Eiffel Tower, would go ahead as scheduled. He warned that police would respond with "firmness and determination" to any potential violence.

The PSG team will then be hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee presidential palace.

Fans began celebrating in Paris after the final whistle

Saturday evening in Budapest, Hungary, where Paris Saint-Germain won by beating Arsenal on penalties in a dramatic final.

Fans marched along the avenues near Paris' Arc de Triomphe monument, with some setting off flares and blaring car horns. Around 20,000 people gathered on the Champs-Elysees, where police worked to contain the crowd.

The Paris police prefecture said smaller groups caused disturbances in various locations, with some vandalising shops and setting fires to garbage and self-service bicycles in the streets. Cars were also set ablaze.



Sri Lanka raises retail fuel prices amid West Asia conflict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Colombo

Sri Lanka has increased retail fuel prices once again due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia and global energy supply disruptions, according to the state oil entity, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation.

The hike in fuel prices was announced on Saturday and came into effect from midnight. This is the fifth such hike that comes after President Anura Kumara Dissanayake repeatedly stressed that the public needs to reduce consumption in the wake of pressures caused by the conflict.

Petrol price has increased by 5.85 per cent, diesel by 3.83 per cent, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) said.

The price of diesel has risen by Sri Lankan rupees (LKR) 15 to a new price of LKR 407 per litre, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) said in a press release.

Petrol prices now stand at LKR 434 per litre, which was previously priced at LKR 410 per litre, it added.

The price of Kerosene has also been raised by 20 rupees per litre, from 265 rupees to 285 rupees, the official release said.

The new prices apply to all CPC filling stations across the island nation.

Out of the five fuel price hikes between March 1 and May 31, three revisions came between March 1 and 22. Petrol per litre price rose from 293 rupees at the end of February to 434 rupees per litre.

LKR has also been depreciating against the dollar since May, according to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka.

The apex bank on May 22 said that the rupee had so far depreciated by over 7 per cent. On Saturday, LKR had gained a bit, and the overall depreciation so far this year now stands at over 5 per cent. (PTI)

Japan rejects China's militarism charge, questions Beijing's military build-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Beijing/Singapore

Japan on Sunday dismissed China's charge of "new militarism", with Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi questioning Beijing's own military expansion, including its nuclear arsenal, strategic bombers and rising defence spending.

Addressing the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum in Singapore, Koizumi defended Japan's ongoing defence modernisation and stressed that Tokyo remained committed to its post-war pacifist principles while adapting to an increasingly complex security environment in the Indo-Pacific.

"Some of you may have heard the term 'new militarism', but nothing (could be) further from the truth.

"Think about it. There is a country that has a huge arsenal of nuclear weapons and strategic bombers. Japan has neither of such weapons, and yet Japan is labelled 'new militarism'," he said in an apparent reference to China.

Koizumi said Japan's reputation as a peace-loving nation, built since the end of World War II, would not be undermined by what he described as "false claims".

"Opaque military build-ups and action without clear intentions will be the cause of distrust and miscalculation," he warned, adding that Japan will implement its defence reforms "with a high degree of transparency", according to Japan's Kyodo News agency.

Japan's defence modernisation includes a planned revision of key national security docu-



ments and investments in areas such as artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, cyber capabilities and space.

China has repeatedly criticised Japan's military modernisation, describing it as a "dangerous rupture"

of post-war pacifist tradition.

Responding to a question from a Chinese delegate, Koizumi said Japan's defence policy and military build-up are not aimed at any specific country and are not intended to lead to military confronta-

tion. "That said, China continues to increase its defence spending at a high level and is rapidly expanding its military capabilities across a broad range of areas without sufficient transparency," he said.

China this year increased its defence budget by 7.2 per cent to about USD 245 billion, continuing its long-term military modernisation drive.

Beijing's actual military expenditure is believed by several international analysts to be significantly higher than officially disclosed figures.

Koizumi said China's military activities and growing external assertiveness are matters of "serious concern" for Japan and the broader international community, according to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.



RBI likely to hold rates, stay cautious amid West Asia crisis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

The Reserve Bank is expected to leave the key policy rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent this week and adopt a cautious stance that factors in the possible headwinds to inflation and growth trajectory amid the West Asia turmoil, experts opined.

With surging energy prices, continuing supply chain woes and a depreciating rupee, primarily driven by external challenges, some experts are of the view that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may raise its inflation forecast and lower its GDP growth estimate at its bi-monthly monetary policy meet from June 3 to 5.

After three days of deliberations, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, will announce its decision on June 5.

In April, the Reserve Bank had kept its key policy rate unchanged, adopting a cautious wait-and-watch stance as policymakers assessed the fallout from the West Asia conflict on energy supplies, inflation and growth.

A research report from the SBI's economic research department expects the RBI to maintain status quo in June policy against volatile backdrop. Going by the growth-inflation spiral, the report expects the consumer price



index (CPI) trajectory (as of now) may indicate more than 5 per cent inflation for the next three quarters (current quarter at 4 to 4.1 per cent). It also expects Q4FY26 real GDP growth closer to 7.2 per cent and FY26 GDP growth at 7.5 per cent. "Our nowcasted full year FY2027 GDP growth rate of 6.6

per cent, however, with the continued geopolitical uncertainties, the numbers will be revised as more data comes in. "Our call is along 'hold the rates' with a data-driven future dependency.

However, an inflation targeting central bank can always use interest rate tools like

Operation Twist that address market microstructure," the report said. It also emphasised that the MPC needs to debate the role of exchange rate as a policy anchor beyond its mandate of pure inflation targeting. Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist at Bank of Baroda, also does not expect any change in the repo rate or stance next week.

"However, the tone will be cautious, leaning towards being hawkish. We can expect RBI to increase their inflation forecast towards 5 per cent and lower that on GDP more towards 6.5 per cent from 6.9 per cent," he said. Sabnavis also does not expect any specific foreign exchange measures, though there will be an

explanation of developments.

In its annual report released on Friday, the RBI said it will be reviewing and improving GDP growth and inflation forecasting during the current financial year. RBI said that the outlook for the Indian economy in 2026-27 remains positive, supported by strong macroeconomic fundamentals, although a prolonged West Asia conflict may pose downside risk.

According to the report, inflation in 2026-27 is likely to remain aligned with the target on the back of adequate foodgrain stocks, sufficient reservoir levels and stable agricultural prospects despite possible El Nino conditions and above-normal summer temperatures.

PhysicsWallah targets above 30% revenue growth, to use AI for costs



Edtech firm PhysicsWallah expects to grow revenue by over 30 per cent this fiscal and leverage artificial intelligence to reduce operational expenses, a senior company official said. The company recently reported narrowing of consolidated loss to ₹69.14 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026 due to increase in enrolments and average revenue per person from a loss of ₹289.27 crore in the same period a year ago.

"We will continue to grow upwards of 30 per cent in terms of our revenue. The current focus of the management is to generate revenue through AI because education is a direct impact area and all the repeat tasks AI performance has been significantly improved and cost is also significantly reduced," PhysicsWallah Co-Founder Prateek Maheshwari said.

Revenue from operations of PhysicsWallah (PW) increased by about 51 per cent to ₹918.8 crore during the quarter from ₹609.6 crore in March 2025 quarter. The loss of PW narrowed to ₹24.17 crore in FY26 from ₹243.26 crore in FY25. "We saw 20 per cent improvement in enrolment and 11 per cent improvement in average revenue per person which led to a blended improvement in revenue of 35 per cent," Maheshwari said.

He said that the company recorded a significant difference in terms of profit after tax (PAT). "The PAT for last year was more than ₹200 crore negative and this year it is just around minus ₹24 crore. So overall it's quite satisfactory for us," Maheshwari said. (PTI)

IIFCL eyes record ₹75,000 crore loan sanction in FY27: MD Rishi



India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) is looking for a record loan sanction of ₹75,000 crore during the ongoing financial year as the government has removed SIFTI restrictions, providing the state-owned lender greater financing flexibility and wider participation in infrastructure projects across various sectors. "With the government removing SIFTI (Scheme for Financing Viable Infrastructure Projects) restrictions, we can now finance more than 20 per cent of total project cost, we can venture into large projects and downsell later on," IIFCL managing director Rohit Rishi told PTI. "Following the removal of SIFTI restrictions, IIFCL is expected to witness stronger growth through greater financing flexibility and wider participation in infrastructure projects across various sectors. This significant policy change enables faster credit expansion through new and innovative lending products," he said.

IIFCL has already sanctioned loans worth ₹38,000 crore so far this financial year, he said, adding that the aim is to sanction loans around ₹75,000 crore and disburse about ₹39,000 crore in the current financial year. SIFTI (Scheme for Financing Viable Infrastructure Projects) had put some additional limits on the operations of IIFCL. The company was not allowed to lend more than 20 per cent of the project cost due to the restrictions. Last month, the government removed the restrictions. So far, IIFCL was under dual regulation of the government and the Reserve Bank of India. Speaking about the asset quality, Rishi said, IIFCL is among few entities which has net NPA of zero. He also exuded confidence that IIFCL would cross the ₹1-trillion loan book size by the end of FY27. The loan book at the end of March 2026 was ₹81,715 crore, up 17 per cent over the previous financial year. To fund its increasing loan book, the company plans to diversify its borrowing portfolio to lower its borrowing cost in FY27.

Assam semiconductor plant may begin production this fiscal: Vaishnav

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The semiconductor plant at Jagiroad in Assam is expected to start production within this financial year, I&B and Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has said.

Vaishnav said this after his meeting with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday evening. "Met Assam CM, @himantabiswa ji. Discussed the progress of the semicon-



ductor plant at Jagiroad. We aim to start production from this plant within this financial

year," Vaishnav said in a post on social media platform X.

The union minister said the National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT) for training young citizens in semiconductor manufacturing technologies is also shaping well.

The Assam chief minister said it was always a pleasure to meet the "erudite" and very knowledgeable" union minister.

"We exchanged notes on

expanding the overall railway network and rail infrastructure in Assam - which includes work on ongoing 1,300+ km of track expansion and 50+ Amrit Bharat stations," Sarma said.

The Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test Pvt Ltd (TSAT) at Jagiroad in Assam is set to become one of the country's premier manufacturing sites, aligns with the nation's broader goal of establishing a self-sufficient semiconductor ecosystem.

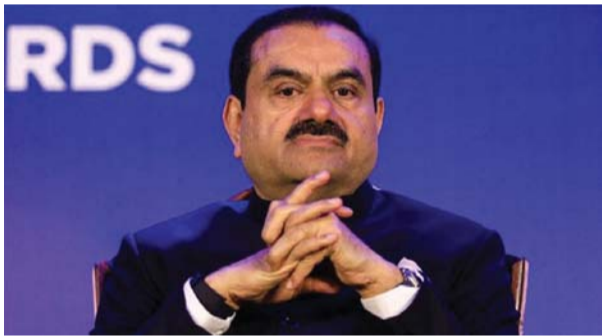
US legal issues behind it, Adani bets on AI-driven infrastructure boom

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Billionaire Gautam Adani said the Adani Group has moved beyond its US legal challenges and is accelerating investments across energy, transport, logistics and digital infrastructure, positioning itself to benefit from rising demand for artificial intelligence-led growth.

In his annual letter to shareholders, Adani said the conglomerate remained committed to expansion despite heightened scrutiny over the past year, adding that matters related to the group's US legal proceedings were now "behind us", allowing it to focus on its next phase of growth.

Adani described the group's recent ₹24,930 crore rights issue in flagship firm



Adani Enterprises as a vote of confidence from investors at a time when the conglomerate faced questions over governance and regulatory issues.

"Even though it was a year in which the world grew more fractured, complex energy security models returned to the centre of national strategy and technology became inseparable from

sovereignty, Adani Group remained anchored to an unwavering belief - India's future cannot wait," he said.

"While others debated, the Group built, advancing its journey as the world's most integrated infrastructure platform - across energy, transport, logistics, utilities and industrial manufacturing." And this progress did not come in calm conditions

for the ports-to-energy conglomerate.

"It came in the middle of extraordinary scrutiny. However, we did not bend. We did not pause," he said. "Because what we have always been defined by is: Not the noise that surrounds us, but the strength of our response.

Not the intensity of the challenge, but the clarity of our purpose. Not the criticism, but the nation-building we continue to believe in." Adani also sought to draw a line under the legal and regulatory challenges that have weighed on the group since late 2024.

"The matters related to our US legal proceedings are now behind us thereby allowing us to focus with renewed confidence and belief on the next phase of our growth," he said.

Central Bank to enter wealth management, credit card biz in H2 FY27: CEO

KUMAR DIPANKAR
■ New Delhi

Central Bank of India plans to roll out wealth management and credit card business in the second half of the current fiscal to ramp up its fee income, MD and CEO Kalyan Kumar has said.

The bank has obtained board approval for the same. "Now, we are in the process of issuing RFP (Request for Proposal) for onboarding those who are having expertise so that...we can start this business. In this year I understand by middle of the year we should be in a position to launch this business," he told PTI in an interview. Besides, he said, the bank is planning to launch products that can improve the non-interest



income. For corporate customers, he said, "cash management services play a very important role. That product is under development with us and by August we are going to launch it...We are having centralized forex sale through that LC (Letter of Credit) and LG (Letter of Guarantee) business and also forex business we are starting." (PTI)

LIC plans foray in fintech space, strategic investment also on table: CEO Doraiswamy

KUMAR DIPANKAR
■ New Delhi

Insurance giant LIC is actively considering establishing a fintech arm either through strategic investment or organic way to cater to its growing digital needs, CEO and MD R Doraiswamy said.

"Naturally, to meet the modernisation requirement and particularly to bring innovation, we are engaging both fintech and insurtech players and we are getting a lot of new things being developed by such players," Doraiswamy told PTI in an interview.

On the other side, he said, "we are a big financial institution investing in multiple organisations and we also look at strategic investments in any specialised player as a way of improving the returns



on the policyholders' funds."

Talking about Life Insurance Corporation of India's IT journey, he said, it was one of the early adopters of digital technologies. "We have built our own core competence in developing our business applications by building up a software development centre. We have sizable number of people working in our IT department creating the IT solutions for us but that

does not mean that we can be totally self-dependent. We engage a lot of IT service providers for the new infrastructure and platforms," he said. Doraiswamy, who had spearheaded the modernization of IT infrastructure and Business Applications of LIC's Individual Business as Executive Director, said, the Corporation need to have both its own core development teams as well as the support of IT players.

"So, both go hand in hand...we are engaging the fintech players but whether it can be a strategic partner, we are looking at various options available and we may be coming up with something...our first aim is to modernize our IT applications and become as agile and nimble-footed as possible to remain relevant in the competition," he said.

LIC is currently evaluating value proposition of various options on the table, he added. Asked if LIC is prepared for further dilution of stake by the Centre, Doraiswamy said, "We have been prepared right from day one. When we started preparing for the IPO, we were prepared for this kind of subsequent action as well. So the call is taken by the government." (PTI)

FSSAI seeks Blinkit explanation over bad-quality curd complaint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Food regulator FSSAI has sought explanation from quick commerce firm Blinkit on a complaint by a person who allegedly fell sick after consuming curd ordered from the platform, sources said.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has received a written complaint from a person who allegedly had to seek medical help after falling sick following the consumption of curd bought from e-commerce platform Blinkit, they added. Medical prescription has also been attached in the complaint registered with



FSSAI. According to sources, FSSAI has written a letter on May 29 to the CEO of Blink Commerce Pvt Ltd), apart from person in-charge of operations after it received a complaint from a person who had ordered curd through the Blinkit mobile application.

The complainant allegedly developed severe stomach ache and diarrhoea shortly after consumption of the curd and had to seek medical help, they added.

Of late, FSSAI has received several complaints, either through social media or rep-

resentations, regarding supply of unhygienic, spoiled or damaged food by sellers through the Blinkit e-commerce platform, sources said.

The FSSAI has directed Blinkit to provide an explanation and also submit a comprehensive Action Taken Report (ATR). As per the food safety law and FSSAI regulations, e-commerce Food Business Operators (FBOs) are required to comply with the provisions under Section 26 and Section 27 of the FSS Act, 2006, which stipulates that a food business operator shall be responsible for the safety of any article of food manufactured, stored, or distributed by them.

Consumer Affairs Secretary reviews legal weights-and-measures reforms with States

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The consumer affairs ministry on Sunday reviewed the rollout of legal metrology reforms across eight northern states and union territories, pressing local authorities to move swiftly toward a simplified registration-based system for businesses dealing in weights and measures.

The meeting, chaired by Consumer Affairs Secretary Nidhi Khare, covered Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab,



Haryana, Chandigarh and Ladakh. It follows similar consultations with southern states earlier this week as part of

a nationwide series of regional reviews.

The discussions centred on implementing the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026 and recommendations from a high-level committee on regulatory reforms, an official statement said.

A central focus was replacing the existing licensing regime for manufacturers, dealers and repairers of weights and measures with an automatic registration system. Officials stressed the reform was intended to fundamentally streamline the regula-

tory process, not simply relabel licences as registrations.

"Registrations are to be granted automatically on submission of prescribed documents," the ministry said, reducing delays for businesses operating under the legal framework.

Officials also reviewed a newly introduced "Improvement Notice" mechanism, which allows businesses to correct first-time procedural violations before facing penalties, a provision aimed at cutting litigation and encouraging voluntary compliance.



PROSPECT

US-India four-day trade talks begin today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The chief negotiators of the US and India will begin four-day talks in New Delhi on Monday on finalising the details of the interim trade pact, whose framework was agreed upon in February. The US team will be led by its chief negotiator Brendan Lynch. India's chief negotiator is Darpan Jain, who is an Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce. The two sides are "proposed to finalise the details of the interim agreement and take forward the negotiations under the broader BTA on multiple areas such as market access, non-tariff measures, customs and trade facilitation, investment promotion, and economic security alignment," the Commerce Ministry has said.

On February 7, India and the US issued a joint statement finalising the contours or framework of the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA) or an

interim trade agreement. Now, both sides will have to finalise the legal text for that deal.

The framework reaffirmed the countries' commitment to the broader India-US BTA negotiations.

According to that framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on India to 18 per cent from 50 per cent. It had removed the 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods for buying Russian oil and was to cut the remaining 25 per cent to 18 per cent under the pact.

But, on February 20 this year, the US Supreme Court ruled against President Donald Trump's sweeping reciprocal tariffs, which were imposed under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). After that, the US President announced the imposition of 10 per cent tariffs on all countries for 150 days, starting February 24.

In light of these changes, a meeting between the chief negotiators of India and the



US scheduled for February was postponed. The two sides then met in Washington in April, when the Indian team, headed by Jain, visited America from April 20-23, 2026.

To carry forward those discussions, the US team is visiting India from 1-4th June. As the tariff landscape has changed in the US, both sides may wish to revisit

the agreement's framework.

Under the agreed framework, India proposed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products.

New Delhi has also expressed its intentions to purchase USD 500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years.

This meeting will be important, as India enjoys a comparative advantage over its competitor countries. Now, with all US trading

partners facing a uniform 10 per cent tariff, the pact requires recalibration. Further, in March, the US Trade Representative (USTR) also launched two unilateral Section 301 investigations against a number of countries, including India, over excess capacity and failures to eradicate forced labour in global supply chains.

India has strongly rejected allegations made by the USTR. Two investigations and has requested that the probes be initiated, as the initiation notice has failed to provide a cogent rationale to substantiate the claims.

The US was the second-largest trading partner of India in 2025-26. India's outbound shipments to the US grew marginally 0.92 per cent to USD 87.3 billion during the last fiscal year, while imports increased 15.95 per cent to USD 52.9 billion. The trade surplus declined to USD 34.4 billion in 2025-26 from USD 40.89 billion in 2024-25.



DG CRPF, GP Singh, IPS, met Jhang Murmu, wife of missing CRPF Constable Badal Murmu in Chaibasa.

West Asia conflict to impact SAIL steel prices marginally

State-owned SAIL expects the ongoing West Asia crisis to have only a marginal impact on its steel prices and is establishing alternative shipping routes to ensure the uninterrupted supply of raw material from the region, a top company executive said. The company buys raw materials, such as limestone from Dubai, Ashok Panda, the newly appointed chairman of the steel major, said.

"So far as SAIL is concerned, we will have some impact with respect to the fluxes, limestone, et cetera, which we are buying from Dubai. So, the landed cost, the CFR (cost and freight) cost is going to go up, because it was around USD 23-24, now it will be around USD 35," the official said in reply to a question related to the impact of the West Asia crisis. But overall, in sellable steel, its impact will be hardly ₹100 or ₹200, the chairman said.

Panda also said that in times of crisis, the availability of raw materials is crucial rather than their cost for uninterrupted operations and that SAIL is working towards tying up with parties to secure larger quantities from West Asia through diverted routes.



Indian Army conducts yoga session at Pasang Sonam Lake



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Itanagar

The Indian Army's Spearhead Division under the Spear Corps conducted a yoga session for soldiers on the picturesque banks of Pasang Sonam Lake, at an altitude of nearly 9,000 feet, as part of the month-long celebrations leading up to International Yoga Day 2026.

Troops deployed in forward areas participated with enthusiasm, practising

simple yoga postures, breathing exercises and meditation techniques amid the pristine high-altitude surroundings.

The serene landscape of Pasang Sonam Lake provided an ideal setting to promote physical fitness, mental resilience, inner balance and harmony with nature.

The session highlighted the importance of yoga as a healthy routine for soldiers operating in challenging terrain and remote

border areas. It encouraged flexibility, concentration, stress management and a positive attitude, while strengthening camaraderie and collective motivation among troops.

The event reflected the Indian Army's continued focus on holistic wellness, discipline and operational fitness. It also showcased the commitment of troops in frontier areas to remain connected with national initiatives such as International Yoga Day.

Suzlon Energy to challenge SEBI's ₹29 crore penalty order in SAT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Suzlon Energy Ltd said it will move the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) against a Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) order imposing a penalty of ₹28.95 crore on the company, its two promoters and ex-CFOs over alleged misrepresentation of financial statements.

In a BSE filing, the company stated that the SEBI, through an order passed on May 29, 2026, set aside an earlier adjudication ruling on June 27, 2025.

The earlier ruling had exonerated Suzlon Energy and its promoter-directors Vinod R Tanti, Girish R Tanti and former CFOs Kirti J Vagadi and Amit Agarwal without imposing any penalty regarding allegations of misrepresentation in financial statements between FY14 and FY18.

"The company will be filing an appeal before the Securities Appellate Tribunal in respect of the SEBI order dated 29th May 2026," the renewable energy solutions



provider said on Saturday. Capital markets regulator Sebi imposed a penalty of ₹15.95 crore on Suzlon Energy Ltd (SEL), ₹5.75 crore on Vinod R Tanti, and ₹5.45 crore on Girish R Tanti.

The markets watchdog also penalised its former chief financial officers: ₹1.5 crore on Kirti J Vagadi and ₹30 lakh on Amit Agarwal.

Suzlon noted that after the adjudication order, SEBI issued a show-cause notice in

September 2025, under its revisionary powers, seeking to examine whether the earlier order should be reviewed.

The company responded to the notice, providing factual justifications and denying the allegations.

Suzlon Energy also sought to reassure its investors, stating that there would be no impact on the company's financial, operational, or other activities.

DAILY SUDOKU

2	4		9	5				
	8		5					
5						7	4	
8		3	1					
9	4					1	2	
				4	3		7	
5	7					9		
			9	2				
1	8			7	5			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

HOW TO SOLVE IT

Sudoku is a logic puzzle where you fill a 9x9 grid so that numbers 1 to 9 appear once in every row, column, and 3x3 box, using elimination and logical deduction—no maths involved.



SOLUTION (30.5.26)

5	4	9	6	8	7	1	2	3
8	1	7	9	3	2	5	6	4
6	2	3	4	1	5	8	9	7
9	5	6	3	2	1	4	7	8
2	3	8	7	6	4	9	1	5
4	7	1	5	9	8	2	3	6
7	8	2	1	4	6	3	5	9
1	9	5	8	7	3	6	4	2
3	6	4	2	5	9	7	8	1

DOUBLE CROSSWORD MONDAY | JUNE 1, 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6				
7									
10	11	12		13					
14			15			16			
		17	18		19	20			
		21			22				
23			24			25			
26		27	28			29	30		31
		32			33				
34									
		35							
36									

ACROSS

- 4 Appraises depressed areas around Uruguay's capital (6)
- 7 Tubes of paste (8)
- 8 Low creatures on board for a game (6)
- 10 Being most upset about the ringleader, rage wildly (5)
- 13 Accepted as being to the good (4)
- 14 Royal stallion? (4)
- 15 A big thing in rubber gloves (4)
- 16 Lucky fellow? (3)
- 17 Get one in a trap (4)
- 19 Happy, light-hearted youth (4)
- 21 To automobile people, it means something like "pink" (9)

DOWN

- 1 A failure as a schoolteacher? (5)
- 2 He'll do (5)
- 3 Ghostly grimace, not having a single good card! (4)
- 4 It helps one to see how some provisions are distributed (5)
- 5 Water getting out of the lake (4)
- 6 The blinking thing can shut the light out! (6)
- 9 A drink for the head (6)
- 11 For advice, it's up to the party leader (3)
- 12 The dramatic character of wild anger (5)
- 13 Figure fit to be possibly justified (7)

ACROSS

- 23 Yearn to be like John Silver (4)
- 24 James's contribution to carbon dating (4)
- 26 Jo Brand's occupation? (3)
- 27 Hardly looked upon with pleasure (4)
- 29 Might one bite out of indignation? (4)
- 32 Just me again (4)
- 33 Open country to warm the heart! (5)
- 34 Military assembly, as for a padre (6)
- 35 He seeks to find out what the students know (8)
- 36 Next to a cable, a couple of letters can seem heavy (6)

DOWN

- 15 Laden rubbish container? (3)
- 16 Girl of the month? (3)
- 18 Discussed the toss? (6)
- 20 Place a complaint about the accommodation? (5)
- 21 Broncbuster's horse (3)
- 22 To the Yankee, it's not the real thing (3)
- 23 Where lace is woven on to a piece of cloth (6)
- 25 Diminutive person always ready (3)
- 28 Where the villagers practise putting? (5)
- 30 Billy's favourite nurse (5)
- 31 Proportion of bronze in a medal? (5)
- 32 She's in diametric opposition! (4)
- 33 A little house outside Margate (4)

SOLUTION (30.5.26)

- ACROSS: 1. Sun-set, 7. Idea-list, 8. Bone, 10. Olive-R, 11. Le-gato, 14. Led, 16. Cased, 17. Tail, 19. Solos (rev), 21. Caged
- DOWN: 22. Lod-ge, 23. Tons, 26. Shrew(-d), 28. Ma-X, 29. We-l-ter, 30. Gal-oot, 31. Open, 32. F-altered, 33. Setter
- 19. S-AD, 20. Lee, 21. Cow-ered, 22. Let, 23. F-A-Lent, 24. Ox-on, 25. Sitter, 26. Swift, 27. RIF-e, 28. MA-p, 30. Gods.
- 18. Alpha

NLC India, RIL to jointly explore developing underground lignite gasification project in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

NLC India Ltd and Reliance Industries Ltd will jointly explore developing an underground lignite gasification project in Gujarat as part of efforts to augment domestic gasified fuel supplies amid the global fuel crunch, sources said. The public sector undertaking Neyveli Lignite Corporation India Limited (NLCIL) has signed an agreement with RIL to assess the feasibility and technical viability of converting lignite reserves through underground gasification.

NLCIL holds two lignite blocks in Gujarat that would be considered for the project, they said. The preliminary technical studies for underground lignite gasification blocks with RIL are in progress, they said, adding that Reliance Industries was brought on board for its expertise in gasification technologies, sources said.



The move is aimed at partially addressing the domestic gas shortage exacerbated by the ongoing global fuel crisis. If successful, the project could provide a supplementary source of synthesis gas for industrial use and potentially strengthen energy security by reducing dependence on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG).

NLCIL, a state-run miner and power producer, has been seeking alternative ways to monetise its lignite resources. Underground lignite gasification converts in-situ lignite into synthesis gas (a mixture of hydrogen,

carbon monoxide and other gases) which can be used as fuel or as a feedstock in chemical and fertiliser industries.

A senior industry analyst said the partnership with Reliance Industries, which has prior experience in gasification projects and downstream gas handling, could accelerate project development and de-risk technical challenges.

The company is also planning to set up a lignite-to-methanol plant estimated at Rs 4,394 crore at Neyveli, in Tamil Nadu, which is likely to be completed by next year.

The project is part of NLCIL's diversification plan.

The proposed lignite-to-methanol plant is in line with the Centre's coal gasification plan, a sustainable way of utilising the fuel to meet its ambitious net-zero plans.

The Union Cabinet approved a Rs 37,500 crore scheme this month to promote surface coal and lignite gasification projects, aiming to gasify around 75 million tonnes of coal. The scheme is intended to accelerate India's coal and lignite gasification programme and support the national target of gasifying 100 million tonnes of coal by 2030.

The scheme marks a major step towards strengthening energy security and reducing dependence on imports of key products such as LNG (more than 50 per cent imported), urea (20 per cent imported), ammonia (100 per cent imported), and methanol (80-90 per cent imported).

Assam Rifles conducts boatmanship training

TONY DAS
Guwahati

The Assam Rifles conducted a five-day boatmanship training cadre from May 26 to May 30 for personnel of all Assam Rifles units deployed in Mizoram as part of operational preparedness for the forthcoming monsoon season.

The training focused on boat handling, river navigation, flood rescue operations, casualty evacuation, outboard motor handling, safety procedures and tactical river



crossing techniques. Personnel underwent extensive practical training aimed at enhancing their capability

to operate effectively in flood-prone and inaccessible areas during monsoon contingencies.

The cadre culminated in a practical exercise involving river crossing and rescue drills, validating the skills acquired during the training. The initiative reflects the Assam Rifles' commitment towards maintaining a high state of operational readiness and disaster response capability in the North East.

As the "Sentinels of the North East", the Assam Rifles continue to remain prepared to assist civil administration and local communities during emergencies and natural disasters.



BRIEFLY

New coach Shako backs Sujat Kalkal for Olympic glory



India's new men's freestyle wrestling coach Shako Bentiadis believes reigning U23 world champion Sujat Kalkal has the potential to become an Olympic medalist but must further sharpen his technical skills to dominate the highly competitive 65kg category. He also urged Indian coaches to continuously upgrade themselves through greater exposure to international training methods and evolving tactical trends in the sport. Returning to India after a successful four-year stint with Olympic medalist Bajrang Punia, the Georgian coach made it clear that his mission extends beyond preparing elite wrestlers for major events. Well-versed with Indian culture, Bentiadis joined the national camp in Lucknow on Saturday and immediately got down to business, watching the trials for the Asian Games. He wants to create a culture of continuous learning among Indian coaches, whom he feels need greater exposure to international training methods and evolving tactical trends in world wrestling. Bentiadis, who guided Bajrang through one of the most successful phases of his career, described Sujat as the natural successor in India's rich 65kg tradition that previously featured legends such as Sushil Kumar and Bajrang. "First it was Sushil Kumar, then Bajrang and now Sujat," Bentiadis said while assessing the country's leading 65kg wrestler. (PTI)

India gets second spot at Asian U20 Athletics Championships



India clinched three more gold on the final day to end their impressive campaign at the second place in the medal tally in the 22nd Asian U20 Athletics Championships on Sunday. India accumulated 19 medals – 10 gold, 5 silver and 4 bronze – in the four-day meet to finish second behind China (14 gold, 9 silver, 2 bronze). Japan ended at third with 18 medals (5 gold, 5 silver, 8 bronze). India also won two silver and one bronze on the final day Sunday. The Indian 4x400m women's team, anchored by Neeru Pathak, won gold with a time of 3:38.07 seconds to better the meet record. The other members of the team were Bhumika Sanjay Nehate, Tahura Khatun and Sehnoor Bawa. The previous meet record of 3:38.20 was set by Japan in 2018. All three medal winning teams in the men's 4x400m relay improved the previous meet record of 3:07.38 set by Japan in 1999. China took home gold with a time of 3:04.88 and Qatar won silver (3:05.06). The Indian men's 4x400m relay team also improved the meet record of 3:07.38 but finished third with a time of 3:05.54. (PTI)

PSG wins back-to-back Champions League titles

JAMES ROBSON
■ Budapest

Winning the Champions League was so incredible Paris Saint-Germain had to do it twice. PSG became back-to-back European champion by beating Arsenal 4-3 on penalties in a dramatic final in Budapest that ended 1-1 after extra time on Saturday. "It's incredible," captain Marquinhos said. "From the very first day of this season, the coach said it's hard to win, and winning twice is even more difficult. So we all had to get back to work. That was the mentality." Arsenal defender Gabriel Magalhaes fired the last of his team's penalties over the bar

to hand PSG the shootout win. The French giant is only the second team to retain the trophy in the modern era after all-time king of Europe Real Madrid. Luis Enrique became a three-time winner as a coach and has moulded a team that is simply too good even for the best of the continent has to offer. That includes an Arsenal team that won the Premier League last week and topped the first stage of the Champions League with a perfect winning record, finishing 10 points and 10 places ahead of PSG. That mattered little in Puskas Stadium as PSG reaffirmed its status as the dominant force in European



soccer. "It's even more special because we knew before the match how difficult it would be," Luis Enrique said. "I think it's deserved over the course of the whole season, even if the final was very closely contested." After demolishing Inter Milan 5-0 in last year's final, PSG endured a tougher

foe as Arsenal sat deep and relied on the best defense in the competition. PSG dominated possession but created little after going behind to a Kai Havertz goal in the sixth minute. It took an Ousmane Dembele penalty in the 65th to level the score and take the final to extra time for the first time in 10 years. By going back to back, Luis Enrique has achieved what his god friend Pep Guardiola could not after winning Champions Leagues at Barcelona and Manchester City. Luis Enrique also joined Carlo Ancelotti, Zinedine Zidane in an elite group of coaches with at least three European Cups. The next target will be to emulate Madrid's three in a row under Zidane from 2016-18. And with a starting lineup in Budapest with an average age of under 24, Luis Enrique has built a team that has the potential to dominate for years. But it was pushed all the way by a dogged and determined Arsenal. PSG's Eberechi Eze missed an earlier spot kick but Arsenal goalkeeper David Raya saved from Nuno Mendes to keep the score level. Lucas Beraldo converted the last of PSG's spot kicks, meaning Gabriel had to convert to take it to sudden death. But he blasted high over the bar to spark celebrations by PSG players and fans. (AP)

Charani backs India to bounce back in series decider

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bristol

Left-arm spinner Sree Charani admitted that a victory in the second women's T20I against England would have been a confidence booster for India, adding that the team is now focused on embracing the challenge of clinching the series decider. Hosts England levelled the three-match series 1-1 with a 26-run victory in the second T20I on Saturday after India had won the opening match by 38 runs earlier in the week. The series serves as a crucial preparation for the women's T20 World Cup that begins in England and Wales on June 12. "I think every match is



important for us to win, to get confidence or to get something out of the match. If we had won here, I think we were two wins, so it would have given us more confidence," Charani said at the

post-match press conference. "I think now we have a good challenge ahead for us, so I think we'll take it," she added. Despite India's defeat, the young left-arm spinner was one of the standout performers, claiming three key wickets. Her victims included opener Danni Wyatt-Hodge, wicketkeeper batter Amy Jones and former captain Heather Knight. Charani said her success came from sticking to her strengths rather than trying anything extraordinary. "I am just trying to bowl to my strength, that's it, not much, I am not trying anything, just sequence bowling. I think turning the ball is my key strength." After the third and final T20I in Taunton on Tuesday, the Indian team will play two warm up games in Cardiff on June 8 and 10. The Women in Blue will open their T20 World Cup campaign against Pakistan on June 14.

Teenager Moise Kouame's French Open run ends

JEROME PUGMIRE
■ Paris

Teenager Moise Kouame's French Open run ended when he lost to Alejandro Tabilo 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (9) in the third round. The 17-year-old Kouame saved four match points but his resistance was finally broken when he fluffed a shot at the net. He walked around the net to hug his Chilean opponent on Saturday. Just like in the previous two matches, he entertained a raucous home crowd with his combination of whipped forehands down the line, sharp volleys at the net and improbable retrieves from the back of the court. Kouame, ranked 318th, has been quite the

showman on his Grand Slam debut, and unleashed two big downward fist pumps after winning the first set. When he broke to level at 4-4 in the fourth set the crowd rose to their feet. But he could not withstand Tabilo's relentless accuracy and waved goodbye to the fans at Court Suzanne-Lenglen. Still, his three matches taught him a lot in a short space of time. "I have had a three-set match, I have had five hours' match, I've had four sets with a lot of stress in this match," he said, adding that he was happy with how his body held up. "During matches I didn't feel cramps almost at all. That was a big question at the start of the tournament," he said. "If I'm playing long



matches for three hours, will my body be able to keep (going)? The answer is yes, so it's a really positive answer." Kouame is from the Paris suburb of Sarcelles and practiced before his match wearing a Paris Saint-Germain soccer jersey. A little while after his match, PSG won the Champions League final against Arsenal on penalty kicks in a tense final in Budapest, Hungary. The match was beamed live to 48,000 fans at PSG's Parc des Princes stadium in western Paris – only a few hundred meters from the French Open – and PSG fans going there mingled with tennis fans heading to Roland Garros earlier in the day. (AP)

India beat Korea in Women's U18 Asia Cup hockey



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Kakamigahara (Japan)

The Indian women's hockey team registered a convincing 3-1 victory over Korea in their second Pool A match of the U18 Asia Cup here on Sunday. Riding on goals from Nousheen Naz, Shruti Kumari and Kiran Ekka, India maintained their winning momentum in the tournament following their opening-day triumph over Malaysia. India made a bright start and earned a penalty stroke in the opening quarter. Nousheen (4th minute) stepped up and calmly converted the opportunity to hand India an early 1-0 lead. The Indians continued to dominate possession and doubled their advantage in the second quarter. In the 21st minute, Shruti found the back of the net with a fine field goal, giving India a comfortable 2-0 cushion heading into the half-time

break. Korea attempted a comeback after the break and reduced the deficit in the third quarter when Gyeongmin Ryu scored in the 41st minute. However, India restored their two-goal advantage soon when Kiran, who was also named player-of-the-match, successfully converted a penalty corner in the 43rd minute. India remained disciplined in the final quarter, denying Korea any further scoring opportunities to seal the important victory. The Indian team earned four penalty corners and one penalty stroke during the match, while Korea won two penalty corners. Having won their opening two matches against Malaysia and Korea, India now sit atop the Pool A standings with six points and will look to maintain their unbeaten run when they face Singapore in their final Pool A fixture on June 2.

Gauff's French Open title defense ends

ANDREW DAMPF
■ Paris

A minor car crash couldn't sidetrack Coco Gauff before she began her French Open title defense. It took a player who could match the American's court coverage in long baseline rallies to mark the end of the road for Gauff in Paris. That player was Anastasia Potapova, who produced a 4-6, 7-6 (1), 6-4 victory over Gauff in the third round on Saturday. "She was able to finish the points and I wasn't," Gauff said. "Just not capitalizing on certain shots." The match was played before mostly empty stands inside Court Philippe-Chatrier as French fans stayed away to watch the Champions League soccer final. Gauff's second Grand Slam title came with a victory over top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in the final at Roland Garros a year ago.



the same way back-to-back times." "Coco is such a champion. I respect her so much," Potapova said. "I've been fighting for the last point and here I am." When Gauff shanked a forehand wide on Potapova's first match point, Potapova fell on her back and covered her eyes as she stuck her feet up in the air in celebration. Gauff waved to the crowd and quickly walked off court when it was finished. It wasn't a matter of

mistakes for Gauff – she hit three double-faults to her opponent's eight and had 46 unforced errors to Potapova's 56. It was more that Potapova controlled more in the longer rallies and wore Gauff out. Gauff ran a total of 2,309 meters (yards) to Potapova's 2,090. Earlier, Naomi Osaka beat 18-year-old American opponent Iva Jovic 7-6 (5), 6-7 (3), 6-4 after nearly three hours – in her 100th Grand Slam match – to set up a round-of-16 meeting with top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka. Sabalenka beat Daria Kasatkina 6-0, 7-5. For her second-straight match, Osaka wore a metallic gold bomber jacket over a sequined gold playing dress during her walk-on. But this time her outfit was offset by a tannish-gold colored train that stretched all the way down to the red clay on Court Suzanne-Lenglen.

Gukesh downs Praggnanandhaa to revive title hopes

AJAI MASAND
■ Oslo

A day after turning 20, D Gukesh rediscovered both his spark and his smile, defeating compatriot R Praggnanandhaa in a gripping classical battle to pocket three full points and reignite his campaign in Norway Chess. Reigning champion Magnus Carlsen's woes deepened as he lost to American Grandmaster Wesley So, leaving the world Number 1 at the bottom of the six-player standings after five rounds. The victory lifted So to second place on 8.5 points, behind tournament leader Alireza Firouzja, who maintained his grip on the top spot with 10 points and has so far dominated the field. For Gukesh, now on 6.5



points and in sole third place, the victory seemed to breathe life back into the venue. Fans, who had packed the arena, flocked around the world champion for autographs, selfies and photographs, while Gukesh himself appeared far more relaxed after a difficult few days in which he had often slipped quietly out of the playing hall following disappointing results. Praggnanandhaa, on six points, remained fourth, while German Grandmaster Vincent Keymer was fifth on five points. Carlsen, meanwhile, found himself in the unfamiliar position of last place with 4.5 points. For Gukesh, another classical

victory in Round 6 and a Firouzja loss could put him within striking distance of the lead. The all-Indian showdown was a roller-coaster, with momentum swinging repeatedly between the two players. Both enjoyed winning chances, but in the end it was Gukesh who held his nerve when it mattered most. The game, arising from a Ragozin Defence, initially

appeared to favour Praggnanandhaa despite the engines showing little separation. Yet Gukesh remained unfazed, even making his first visit to the confessional booth and displaying little concern about his position. A tense battle turned into a time scramble as both players raced through the critical phase around move 40 with only seconds to spare.

बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र Bank of Maharashtra
Zonal Office: Wright Town, Jabalpur 482001 | HEAD OFFICE: Lokmangal, 1501, Ishvijanagar, Pune-5
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POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule – 8 (1)] (For Immovable Property)

Name & Address of Borrower(s) and Guarantor	Outstanding Amount as on Notice	Description of Property (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date Possession Date
Branch : Mandla M/s Rupesh Poultry Farm Seeds, Prop. Mr. Rupesh Janghela (Borrower)	Rs. 1252859/- (Rupees Twelve Lakh Fifty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Fifty Nine only) + Unapplied interest + penal interest thereon and other charges and expenses w.e.f 07.03.2026	Commercial Diverted Land at Village Dungiariya, Kharsara no. 89/4/2 & 89/4/1/1, Ph.No. 2, RI Circle Bamhani, Tehsil and Dist: Mandla, total area admeasuring 0.46 Hectare. Bounded as: North: Kharsara no. 89/4/1/2 Agri Land of Smt. Bhuri Bai, East: Road, West: Kharsara No. 89/4/1/2 Agri Land of Smt. Bhuri Bai, South: Other Land. Owner of Property: Smt. Bhuri Bai Janghela Asset ID: 200054665117	07.03.2026 26.05.2026 Symbolic Possession

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of Maharashtra for an amount hereinabove mentioned. The details of the properties mortgaged to the Bank and taken possession by the Bank are as above. The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (B) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.
Place: Mandla, Date : 01.06.2026
Chief Manager & Authorised Officer, Bank of Maharashtra

UGRO UGRO Capital Limited
B-17, Fourth Floor, Art Guild House, Phoenix Market City, Kuria (West), Mumbai-40070

DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ("THE ACT") AND THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 ("THE RULES")

The undersigned being the authorised officer of UGRO Capital Limited under the Act and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Act, read with the Rule 3, issued Demand Notice(s) under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that the borrower(s) are avoiding the service of the demand notice(s), therefore the service of the demand notice is being effected by affixation and publication as per the Rules. The contents of the demand notice(s) are extracted herein below:

Name of the Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount
1) ZERO GARMENTS 2) BANNERS, 3) SUDHIR JAIN, 4) NAMITA JAIN LAN – UGINRSS000064156	Demand Notice date : 25-May-2026 Notice Amount : Rs. 4,61,35,108.00/- (Rupees Four Crore Sixty One Lakh Thirty Five Thousand One Hundred Eight Only) As on 25/05/2026

Description of Secured Asset(s) - All that part and parcel of immovable property bearing Property Situated At, House/Plot No. 02, Shankar Bag Colony, Near Marimata Chouraha, Tehsil & Dist. Indore (M.P.) admeasuring Total Area 2640 Sq. ft. & 245.35 sq.mtr. on constructed G+1 House, bounded by - On or towards the North Back Lane, On or towards the South: Road of Colony, On or towards the East Plot No. 3, On or towards the West Plot No. 1.

The borrower(s) are hereby advised to comply with the demand notice(s) and pay the demand amount mentioned therein and hereinabove within 60 days from the date of this publication together with applicable interest, late payment penalty, bounce charges, cost and expenses till the date of realization of the payment. The borrower(s) may note that UGRO Capital Limited is a Secured Creditor and the loan facility availed by the borrower(s) is a secured debt against the immovable property(ies) being the secured asset(s) mortgaged by the borrower(s) with UGRO Capital Limited.

In the event, the borrower(s) are failed to discharge their liabilities in full within the stipulated time, UGRO Capital Limited shall be entitled to exercise all the rights under Section 13(4) of the Act to take possession of the Secured Asset(s) including but not limited to transfer the same by way of sale or by invoking any other remedy available under the Act and the Rules thereunder in order to realize the dues in the loan account of the borrower(s). UGRO Capital Limited is also empowered to ATTACH AND/OR SEAL the Secured Asset(s) before enforcing the right to sale or transfer. Subsequent to the sale of the Secured Asset(s), UGRO Capital Limited also has a right to initiate separate legal proceedings to recover the balance dues, in case the value of the Secured Asset(s) is insufficient to cover the dues payable by the borrower(s) to UGRO Capital Limited. This remedy is in addition and independent of all other remedies available to UGRO Capital Limited under any other law.

The attention of the borrower(s) is invited to Section 13(8) of the Act in respect of time available, to redeem the Secured Asset(s) and further to Section 13(13) of the Act, whereby the borrower(s) are restrained/prohibited from disposing or dealing with the Secured Asset(s) or transferring the same by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in ordinary course of business) any of the Secured Asset(s) without prior written consent from UGRO Capital Limited and non-compliance of the above is an offence punishable under Section 29 of the Act. The copy of the demand notice(s) is available with the undersigned and the borrower(s) may, if they so desire, collect the same from the undersigned.
Date: 01/06/2026, Place: Indore
SD/- (Authorised Officer), UGRO Capital Limited

UGRO UGRO Capital Limited
B-17, Fourth Floor, Art Guild House, Phoenix Market City, Kuria (West), Mumbai-40070

DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ("THE ACT") AND THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 ("THE RULES")

The undersigned being the authorised officer of UGRO Capital Limited under the Act and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Act, read with the Rule 3, issued Demand Notice(s) under Section 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that the borrower(s) are avoiding the service of the demand notice(s), therefore the service of the demand notice is being effected by affixation and publication as per the Rules. The contents of the demand notice(s) are extracted herein below:

Name of the Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount
1) VIJAY RAJ MOBILE AND JUICE CENTER PROP VIJAY TALEDA, 2) VIJAY TALEDA, 3) JYOTI TALEDA, 4) RASHMI TALEDA, 5) VISHAL TALEDA, 6) RAJESH TALEDA LAN – UGBLSS0000064912	Demand Notice date : 25-May-2026 Notice Amount : Rs. 1,90,40,015.00/- (Rupees One Crore Ninety LakhForty Thousand Fifteen Only) As on 19/05/2026.

Description of Secured Asset(s) - (1) PART (A): Plot No. 8/201, Mauja Nazul Town Ganesh Ward 27(F), Nazul Sheet No. 26, Tehsil & District Betul Madhya Pradesh. Plot area 750 SQ. FT OR 69.70 SQ. MT. Land with House and bounded by Boundaries : North - Nazul Plot No. 8/121 (Galli), South - Nazul Plot No. 8/128 (Colony Road), East - Nazul Plot No. 8/126, West - Nazul Plot No. 8/198.
(2) PART (B): Plot No. 8/198, Mauja Nazul Town Ganesh Ward 27(F), Nazul Sheet No. 26, Tehsil & District Betul Madhya Pradesh Plot area 375 SQ. FT OR 34.84 SQ. MT. Land with House and bounded by Boundaries : North - Nazul Plot No. 8/121 (Galli), South - Nazul Plot No. 8/128 (Colony Road), East - Nazul Plot No. 8/126, West - Nazul Plot No. 8/198.

The borrower(s) are hereby advised to comply with the demand notice(s) and pay the demand amount mentioned therein and hereinabove within 60 days from the date of this publication together with applicable interest, late payment penalty, bounce charges, cost and expenses till the date of realization of the payment. The borrower(s) may note that UGRO Capital Limited is a Secured Creditor and the loan facility availed by the borrower(s) is a secured debt against the immovable property(ies) being the secured asset(s) mortgaged by the borrower(s) with UGRO Capital Limited.

In the event, the borrower(s) are failed to discharge their liabilities in full within the stipulated time, UGRO Capital Limited shall be entitled to exercise all the rights under Section 13(4) of the Act to take possession of the Secured Asset(s) including but not limited to transfer the same by way of sale or by invoking any other remedy available under the Act and the Rules thereunder in order to realize the dues in the loan account of the borrower(s). UGRO Capital Limited is also empowered to ATTACH AND/OR SEAL the Secured Asset(s) before enforcing the right to sale or transfer. Subsequent to the sale of the Secured Asset(s), UGRO Capital Limited also has a right to initiate separate legal proceedings to recover the balance dues, in case the value of the Secured Asset(s) is insufficient to cover the dues payable by the borrower(s) to UGRO Capital Limited. This remedy is in addition and independent of all other remedies available to UGRO Capital Limited under any other law.

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Date: 01/06/2026, Place: Betul
SD/- (Authorised Officer), UGRO Capital Limited

"I lost the same way in Rome as I did here," Gauff said. "You never want to lose



Satwik-Chirag win maiden Singapore Open crown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Singapore

Former world No 1 pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty fought back from a game down to clinch their maiden Singapore Open title, defeating Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri in the men's doubles final of the BWF Super 750 tournament, here on Sunday.

The Asian Games and Commonwealth Games champions produced a gritty comeback to secure their first title in two years and their ninth career World Tour crown, besides claiming a third Super 750 title with a tense 18-21, 21-17, 21-16 win in one hour 13 minutes.

The victory was particularly significant for the world No. 4 Indian duo, who became the first Indians to win the doubles title at the Singapore Open.

Satwik and Chirag had last lifted a trophy at the Thailand Open in 2024. Since then, they had reached four finals



but finished runners-up on each occasion before finally breaking the drought in Singapore.

The Indians had entered the final trailing 1-2 in their head-to-head record against the Indonesian pair, with

their most recent defeat coming in the Malaysia Open quarterfinals in January. After dropping a closely-

fought opening game, Satwik and Chirag raised their intensity and dominated the longer rallies to turn the contest

SATWIK-CHIRAG HAD LAST LIFTED A TROPHY AT THE THAILAND OPEN IN 2024. SINCE THEN, THEY HAD REACHED 4 FINALS BUT FINISHED RUNNERS-UP

around against the world Number 3 Indonesians. The triumph capped an impressive week for the Indian pair, who had stunned reigning world champions and top seeds Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae of South Korea in the semifinals.

As the winning point was sealed, Satwik and Chirag lay flat on the court in celebration.

Satwik followed it up with a baby-themed celebration, while an ecstatic Chirag let out a loud roar before leaping onto his partner.

The duo later danced on court as they savoured a long-awaited return to the top step on the podium.



Sooryavanshi truly special: Tendulkar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar hailed teenage sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as a "truly special" talent, urging coaches and mentors not to interfere with the youngster's natural instincts as he continues his rapid rise in Indian cricket.

After becoming the youngest centurion in IPL history during his debut season last year, Sooryavanshi elevated his reputation even further this time with a string of fearless performances against some of the world's premier bowlers, including Jasprit Bumrah, Kagiso Rabada and Pat Cummins.

"Everyone is talking about Sooryavanshi, and I watched him bat — it was magnificent. I mean he is something truly special. And not just the ability to hit the ball, but what also fascinated me was the wrist work that he has," Tendulkar said at Cricinfo Honours.

The 15-year-old from Samastipur in Bihar amassed 776 runs at a staggering strike rate of 237.31 in the IPL this season, establishing himself as one of the most exciting

young prospects in the game.

"To be able to play in all directions of the ground, you need good wrist work. And he is not sloggling the ball. He is just picking the line and length earlier than the rest of the guys and he is able to clear the rope comfortably."

Tendulkar said he has little doubt that Sooryavanshi possesses the talent to represent India in Test cricket in the future, but cautioned against placing excessive expectations on the teenager too early in his career.

"I would tell him to just be himself. There is always a first time. In Test cricket, along with age, he will learn how to deal with various challenges. It's about having a solution-oriented mindset."

"Problems are always going to be there. Problems will be there till the last day of your career, till the last ball you face. The bowler is asking a question every ball. Now, what solutions do you find?"

"He's kind of a player who looks very confident, very, very sure of what he wants to do and I would not want to play around with his natural instincts."

Tendulkar believes preserving that instinctive approach will be crucial to the youngster's development.

Sachin Tendulkar proposes IPL rule changes: No impact sub, 5-over spell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Batting legend Sachin Tendulkar wants the controversial impact player rule to be scrapped while also suggesting a couple of changes to restore the balance between bat and ball in the Indian Premier League.

Introduced in 2023, the impact player rule allows teams to substitute anyone in the playing XI with one of the five listed substitutes at any point of the match.

"I feel there are a few things which, on a personal note that I can say, I think the impact player needs to go

away," Tendulkar said at the ESPNcricinfo awards.

"I feel when in a T20 format you just have to play 20 overs, and then you are adding one more batter to that line-up. Where bowlers are already being challenged, I find that imbalance."

With increasingly batting-friendly surfaces producing record scores in recent seasons, Tendulkar believes the rule has exacerbated an already uneven contest between bat and ball.

The regulation has also drawn criticism from several prominent players, including India captain Shubman Gill and former skipper Rohit



Sharma, who have argued that the rule takes the skill out of the game and dimin-

ishes the value of all-rounders. Tendulkar suggested mod-

ifying the powerplay structure by introducing a bowling powerplay alongside the existing batting one.

"(In) the powerplay of six overs with field restrictions, only two fielders are allowed outside the ring. Let the first four overs be batters' powerplay with the same field restrictions."

"Post that, the remaining two powerplay overs should be determined by the fielding captain as and when he wants to take. Those two consecutive overs will also get one fielder extra outside the ring at any stage of the game," Tendulkar said. "So you (the fielding side)

are able to control the game better."

The batting great also proposed increasing the bowling quota of one player per team from four overs to five, allowing sides to utilise their premier bowler for a larger portion of the innings.

"One bowler should be allowed to bowl five overs. Because invariably the best bowler of the side is going to bowl that fifth over."

"Wouldn't you want to see that best bowler bowl more? The top batters are batting sometimes even 20 overs. Why shouldn't the best bowler be bowling five overs?" he asked.



Indian coaches undergo UCI advanced programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Three Indian cycling coaches have been selected and are currently undergoing an advanced course organised by the International Cycling Federation (UCI) in Aigle, Switzerland to enhance their skills. The three coaches selected by the Cycling Federation of India (CFI) are Mayank Patel, Joginder and Prateek Manodhya, who have joined the course on June 8 and will continue till June 18.

While Joginder, a former cyclist, has 15 years of coaching experience across all formats, Mayank is the current performance, video analyst-cum-coach of the Indian team.

Prateek is far less experienced and had been associated with Madhya Pradesh Amateur Cycling Association and Chhattisgarh Cycling Association.

The international federa-

tion, UCI, is serious about promoting cycling in India and it has several plans and are actively engaging with the CFI. As a first step, it had given approval for the Bajaj Pune Tour a couple of months back.

"India possesses undeniable talent capable of excelling at the Asian level. Our cyclists have demonstrated this through consistent podium finishes at recent Asian Track Championships and Asia Cups, where athletes like Harshveer Sekhon, Ronaldo Singh, and Swasti Singh have shattered national records and secured medals," Joginder, who is one of the coaches training in Switzerland, told PTI.

"India's cycling journey, rooted in the pioneering spirit of early 20th-century globetrotters who circum-navigated the world on two wheels, reflects a deep reservoir of resilience and endurance.

Avani, Diksha secure top 10 finishes in Jabra Ladies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Evian-les-Bains (France)

Indian golfers Avani Prashanth and Diksha Dagar produced Top-10 finishes at the Jabra Ladies Open De France with steady final round performances.

Avani carded a final round of 2-under 69 to move to tied 5th, which equalled her career best result on the LET, while Diksha (71) ended T-9 to record her third top 10 result of the 2026 season.

Avani totalled 4-under par with rounds of 72-68-69 and Diksha shot 67-72-71 to be 3-under par for the week.

Helen Briem secured her second title with a dominant seven-shot victory over her closest rival, Shannon Tan of Singapore. Briem shot a bogey free final round card of 4-under 67 for a total of was 12-under par for the week with



rounds of 69-65-67.

Interestingly Avani, Diksha and the Hero Women's Indian Open winner, Shannon Tan played in the same group and began from

the first hole. Avani had a great start with birdies on the third, sixth, seventh and ninth holes and at that point, Avani was making good ground and posed a serious

challenge to Briem, who was only two shots ahead, but had played fewer holes.

However, three bogeys on the back nine saw Avani's challenge unravel, though a birdie on the 18th hole allowed her to move back into T-5 and equal her career best result.

Avani has previously finished T-5 at the Hulencourt Women's Open and the Hero Women's Indian Open during the 2025 season. She has a unique record of having been T-5 in all of her top 10 performances.

Diksha began her final day with a birdie on the first followed by two consecutive bogeys and a birdie on the fourth hole. A birdie on the seventh hole would see her at 1-under par at the turn.

Despite dropping a shot on the 13th hole Diksha picked up two shots on 15th and 16th holes and was inside Top-3. A double bogey

on Par-5 18th saw her tumble down the leaderboard. She had to settle for a T-9. This result is Diksha Dagar's third top 10 result of the season.

Briem was also one of only two players in the field to have recorded under par score on all three rounds, with Shannon being the second player to have done so. Briem began her final round on the first hole and made her first birdie of the day on the seventh hole.

On the back nine she picked up three shots in four holes to cement her strong lead over the field as she made birdies on the 11th, 12th and 14th holes.

Shannon Tan, the defending Order of Merit champion, finished in second place this week. Shannon recorded her third top 10 finish in only her seventh start of the season after finishing the week at 5-under par (70-69-69).

One third of coaches are egoistic; stubborn: Antil

SUMAN RAY | New Delhi

One third of coaches are highly egoistic, use outdated training methods, stubborn and some of them are even abusive, alleged two time Paralympic gold medalist Sumit Antil.

Antil, who has broken his own world record in F64 javelin throw category in Bengaluru last week, was candid enough to give his own example as a victim to these abuses to prove his point. "There are some coaches



who are egoistic who are not willing to learn and act with time. The ratio I would say is 30 per cent to one third of the total coaches. The older coaches are more

egoistic than the newer lot, "Antil told PTI in an exclusive interview from his hometown in Sonapat. "I have seen others who are willing to adopt new

things. Those who have become coaches after 2010-11 are willing to learn and adopt newer things and techniques."

The Paralympic world record holder believes no athlete would leave his job and maintained a good behaviour. "No athlete is a fool to leave his coach. He leaves because either he wants to reach the next level which the coach is not able to provide or because of his bad behaviour. (PTI)

Rayhan Thomas slips but stays in Top 30 on Korn Ferry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Raleigh (USA)

Rayhan Thomas had a difficult third round at the UNC Health Championship as he recorded his first over par round of the week here.

Thomas carded 3-over 73 to slip down the leaderboard to T-28. Thomas had been in prime position to register his first top 10 finish of the 2026 season, but slipped on Day 3.

Alvaro Ortiz leads the field with a score of 12-under par (67-62-69).



Thomas began his third day with a bogey on the first hole and dropped a second shot on the fifth hole. Three consecutive birdies on the seventh, eighth and ninth holes saw Thomas under par at the turn.

Tim Ream will be the captain of US national team at the World Cup

RONALD BLUM
Fayetteville (US)

Tim Ream was surprised, his voice filled with emotion.

On the verge of becoming the oldest US player to appear in a World Cup, the 38-year-old defender was picked by coach Mauricio Pochettino to captain the Americans next month.

"Wow," Ream said during a news conference Saturday, seated alongside Pochettino. "This is more than a dream come true. I've done everything possible to be a part of this group, to help this group along. I'm just really, really



grateful to be sitting here, to have this honour."

Ream was not aware he was going to be appointed captain until Pochettino made the announcement during a news conference on an indoor field at the new US National Soccer Training Center.

"It's the highest honor for me in this group," he said, his voice echoing in the gym-like room. "I'm not going to take that for granted."

A St. Louis native who plays for Charlotte in Major League Soccer, Ream will be 38 years, 250 days on the day the U.S. plays its opener against

Paraguay on June 12, older than defender Fernando Clavijo when the U.S. was knocked out by Brazil in 1994. Clavijo was 37 years, 162 days or 38 years, 162 days — his birthdate was listed at Jan. 23, 1957, when he played and January 23, 1956, at the time of his death in 2019.

Ream started all four games for the US at the 2022 World Cup, when Tyler Adams at 23 was the youngest captain among the 32 nations and the youngest for the US since 1950.

Adams said Thursday that he didn't care whether he would return as captain. (AP)

PM interacts with record-breaking sprinters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE | New Delhi

Hailing sporting excellence and acknowledging the remarkable achievement of the athletes, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday had a lively conversation with sprinters Gurindervir Singh and Animesh Kujur on Sunday during his monthly radio broadcast, Mann Ki Baat.

Both athletes recently broke national records, and the Prime Minister said the men's 100-metre race at the National Senior Athletics Federation Competition was widely discussed across the country.

Modi highlighted the performance of athletes who set new national records across different events at the recently concluded competition in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

During the event, he said, four national records were broken in four



different events. "Gurindervir Singh, Vishal TK, Tejaswin Shankar, Dev Meena, and Kuldeep Kumar — these friends set new records in different categories. First of all, I extend my heartiest congratulations to all of them," he said.

"One event that is being widely dis-

cussed across the country is the 100-metre race. Within just two days, the national record in the men's 100-metre race was broken three times. The two athletes who achieved this feat are Gurindervir Singh and Animesh Kujur," he said. The two athletes then spoke about their sporting journeys and experiences during the radio programme.

"It has been a very special interaction with Gurindervir Singh and Animesh Kujur, offering a glimpse of why the future of Indian athletics is very bright," PM Modi said.

Referring to a swimming club run by Sajji Valasheri at Aluva, Kerala, Modi said more than 15,000 people, including specially abled individuals, have learnt swimming there. "Sajji ji has also taught swimming to Divyang children. Lying behind this effort, there is a hidden pain too," he said.