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## NDA hunts majority as Opposition splinters

Sensing opportunity in Opposition rifts, the party intensifies efforts to secure Delimitation and One Nation One Election

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA  
 ■ New Delhi

In an attempt to revive the Delimitation Bill and introduce the One Nation One Election Bill in the Parliament with a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha at the earliest, the BJP-led NDA Government is preying on the rebellions within several Opposition parties, including Mamata Banerjee-led TMC, the DMK and the AAP, among others

Sources in the Government said the process to acquire two-thirds or closer in Parliament has been intensified as it is determined to bring in One Nation, One Election Bill for holding simultaneous polls — Lok Sabha and Assembly — across the country.

The Delimitation bill sought to increase Lok Sabha seats to a maximum of 850 from the current 543 to operationalise the women's reservation law before the 2029 Lok Sabha polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census. Seats were also to be increased in states and UT assemblies to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women. It



Representative image

FILE PHOTO

was defeated by a margin of 54 votes during a special session of the Parliament called in April 2026.

During the April 2026 voting in the Delimitation Bill, 528 MPs were present, making the two-thirds

majority mark 352. The government secured 298 votes against 230 opposing the bill. In terms of numerical strength, the two-thirds majority mark in the 543-member Lok Sabha is 362. With JDU and TDP, the NDA

has the support of 293. If 20 TMC MPs support the NDA-led Government the figure will come to 313. Further, if 22 DMK MPs too offer support the tally will increase to 335. Sources in the BJP said the government is also eyeing

the nine MPs from the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena (UBT); a split within their ranks could secure the support of six additional MPs, inching more closer to 341.

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### BJP, CONGRESS CLASH OVER RS NOMINATIONS

RAJESH KUMAR  
 ■ New Delhi

The ruling BJP and the Congress on Tuesday traded charges for preventing their respective candidates contesting for the Rajya Sabha elections due on June 18.

The Congress missed nominating Meenakshi Natarajan from the MP after her nomination was rejected on Monday when election authorities found that information related to a case had allegedly not been disclosed by her.

On the other hand in Jharkhand, the Congress alleged discrepancies in the nomination papers of Parimal Nathwani, the BJP-backed Independent nominee for the RS polls in Jharkhand, and lodged a complaint with the returning officer. The poll officer has given Nathwani time till Wednesday to resolve the objections.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairing a meeting

### PM reviews 12 years in office

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
 ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has received warm congratulations from world leaders on the eve of his becoming the longest-serving elected Prime Minister of India. A meeting of the NDA to celebrate its government completing 12 years and Modi becoming the longest continuously serving elected PM of India is also scheduled on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayaka, in a letter to the PM conveyed the warm congratulations of the Government and people of Sri Lanka stating: "This milestone is a testament not only to your years in office, but also to the trust and confidence of the world's largest democracy have repeatedly placed in your leadership."

The President also highlighted India's remarkable economic and social trans-

### MODI BREAKS NEHRU RECORD

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formation and noted that Prime Minister Modi's vision has inspired many beyond India's borders, including Sri Lanka, 2022.

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### The ByStander

20 TMC MPs extend support to NDA in the LS



### PM SPEAKS WITH AMIR OF KUWAIT

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday spoke with the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah, as tensions continue to rise in West Asia.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs, the two leaders "exchanged views on the evolving security situation in West Asia."

The MEA said the Prime Minister "expressed deep concern over the escalation of tensions" and reaffirmed India's "strong condemnation of attacks on Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity."



FILE PHOTO

During the conversation, Modi also reiterated India's longstanding position that the crisis should be resolved through diplomatic means. The statement said he "reiterated the call for de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy for earliest restoration of peace and stability."

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## India deployed nuclear warheads, claims SIPRI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
 ■ New Delhi

India has deployed nuclear warheads for the first time and might have slightly expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025 while continuing development of new types of nuclear-delivery systems, according to the annual report of a Swedish think tank, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

In its report, the SIPRI also said data reveal that India deployed 12 nuclear warheads in 2025, and China increased the number of deployed warheads from 24 to 34 and noted countries were now "increasingly relying on nuclear weapons as instruments of national power."

The global watchdog also said India has at present 190 nuclear weapons while Pakistan has 170. "India was estimated to have a growing stockpile of about 190 nuclear weapons as of January 2026—a small increase from the previous year. These weapons were assigned to a maturing nuclear triad of aircraft, land-based missiles and SSBNs," the report released on Monday said.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, on Monday, made public its SIPRI Yearbook 2026 and said approximately 4,012 nuclear warheads remain deployed with missiles



Agni-V Missile passes through the Rajpath during the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade-2013

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

THE DATA FROM SIPRI REVEALS THAT INDIA DEPLOYED 12 NUCLEAR WARHEADS IN 2025, AND CHINA INCREASED THE NUMBER OF DEPLOYED WARHEADS FROM 24 TO 34

and aircraft across the world.

"Of the total global inventory of an estimated 12,187 warheads in January 2026, about 9,745 were in military stockpiles for potential use," said the SIPRI report.

This would be the first time that the Sipri report shows a part

of India's nuclear warheads as operationally deployed while most of it remained in stockpile.

In May 2025, India and Pakistan — two countries with nuclear weapons — fought a four-day war. With Pakistan using its warheads to blackmail, India, in a way, called its nuclear bluff.

"... World events — not least the outbreak of conflict between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan — are challenging nuclear deterrence logic," noted SIPRI, adding that dangers associated with nuclear weapons were growing.

The SIPRI counts nine countries with nuclear warheads.

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## India slams Pakistan for human rights abuses in PoK

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

India on Tuesday accused Pakistan of trying to divert attention from its alleged human rights abuses and urged the international community to hold Islamabad accountable for its "misdeeds and abuses" in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK). The sharp reaction came against the backdrop of reports that more than 20 people were killed in police action on protesters in several parts of PoK.

Responding to a question at a media briefing, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal alleged that Pakistan was resorting to disinformation to mask its domestic challenges.

"We continue to see in this context, a pattern of fake news and videos emanating from Pakistan. It is a desperate attempt by Pakistan to cover-up its own failings and deflect attention away from its human rights abuses," he said.

Referring to the situation in PoK, Jaiswal said: "There are reports of severe police brutality in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir in which several protestors have been killed and many injured. We hope the international community will hold Pakistan accountable for its misdeeds and abuses."

India's comments came as reports pointed to fatalities and



Police officials patrol an area amid the ongoing violence in PoK, where 11 people were killed and hundreds injured during violent clashes

PTI

injuries during protests across parts of PoK, with New Delhi describing the incidents as evidence of Pakistan's "brutality" against people in the region.

The developments have drawn international scrutiny, with more than 50 British lawmakers urging UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper to address reports of a communications shutdown, detentions, and rising tensions in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

In a letter, the parliamentarians said members of the British Kashmiri community had faced difficulties contacting relatives in the region. They also cautioned that restrictions on communication could further aggravate an already fragile and volatile situation.

## Through avalanches and adversity, India breaks through the Himalayas

MOHIT KANDHARI  
 ■ Minimarg (Zojila Tunnel)

India on Tuesday achieved the breakthrough in the iconic Zojila Tunnel, one of its most ambitious and strategically vital infrastructure projects, marking the completion of 12 years of the Narendra Modi-led Union Government.

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari performed the breakthrough blasting of the main tunnel being constructed at an altitude of 11,578 feet above sea level, around 24 km from Sonamarg and 103 km from Srinagar, near the East Portal of the tunnel at Minimarg. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar

Abdullah were also present along with senior officers of the project executing agencies.

The breakthrough blasting of the main tunnel was conducted at an equidistance of 6.5 km, providing access to East Portal (east side) to West Portal (west side). Officials of the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) said the breakthrough is six months ahead of schedule. The tunnel from Baltal in the Ganderbal district of central Kashmir to Minimarg in Drass district of the Union Territory of Ladakh has an 18-km approach road.

The tunnel is likely to be thrown open to the public in February 2028, the officials



J&K LG Manoj Sinha with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and CM Omar Abdullah during the inspection and breakthrough ceremony of Zojila tunnel at Minamarg in Ladakh

PTI

said, adding that after the breakthrough, the civil works will take another seven to eight months before the electrical works will begin. The tunnel, 9.5 metre wide, 7.57 metre high and 13.153 km long, is a horseshoe-shaped single-tube, a two-lane road. Once operational, the tunnel would enhance both civilian and military mobility across the treacherous Zojila Pass, which is usually shut for traffic for three winter months due to heavy snowfall.

The 13 km-long, Asia's longest tunnel, carved through the formidable Himalayas, will deliver reliable all-weather connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh.

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### CID ENTERS MAMATA'S RESIDENCE IN MLA SIGNATURE INVESTIGATION

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
 ■ Kolkata

A CID entered the Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief Mamata Banerjee's home and party office at 30B Harish Chatterjee Street in Kalighat on Tuesday afternoon with a search warrant after a brief standoff with security personnel and a party leader, as a part of its probe into the controversy surrounding alleged forged



CID officials at TMC central party office-cum-residence of Mamata Banerjee

PTI

signatures of TMC MLAs, which has triggered a split in the party.

Around noon, three CID teams were sent out. One team went to the Kalighat location. The other teams visited the home and office of TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, Mamata Banerjee's nephew. Neither was present, as they were both in Delhi for an INDIA bloc meeting.

At the Kalighat address, staff initially did not let the CID team in, leading to a brief standoff at the gates. CID officials warned that blocking their entry could have legal consequences and started recording video of the premises. They were mainly looking for the original "Meeting Resolution Book" dated May 6, which is central to the forgery claims. Investigators said that statements from Abhishek Banerjee during the probe led them to the locations.

The investigation shows that on May 9, Abhishek Banerjee wrote to the Speaker, recommending senior leader Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay as Leader of the Opposition.

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## Cabinet approves Rs 13,800 crore package for Metro, IT and farmer welfare

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, on Tuesday approved a series of major decisions involving investments and financial commitments worth nearly Rs 13,800 crore aimed at strengthening urban infrastructure, digital governance and farmer welfare across the state.

The Cabinet approved the revised cost of the Bhopal Metro Rail Project at Rs 10,033.62 crore, up from the original estimate of Rs 6,941.40 crore. In addition, it cleared Rs 3,532.22 crore in supplementary financing to meet revised project requirements, taking the overall approved financial package for the metro project to Rs 13,565.84 crore. The funding includes additional equity contributions from the Centre and the state, subordinate loans and grants for taxes, land acquisition and rehabilitation costs.

In another significant decision, the Cabinet approved Rs 235.63 crore for the continuation of state IT cadre consultancy services and information technology initiatives between April 2026 and March 2031. Of this, Rs 180.20 crore has been earmarked for technical consultancy services to support digital transformation across government departments, corporations and agencies. The initiative will also strengthen the state's preparedness in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big

data analytics, blockchain and cybersecurity.

An additional Rs 55.43 crore was approved for IT-related training and capacity-building programmes. The funding will support training in e-governance, cybersecurity and data management for government officials and employees, while also promoting innovation through e-governance excellence awards and awareness programmes.

The Cabinet also approved a reduction in mandi fee on cotton from 1 per cent to 0.5 per cent to support cotton ginning mills operating in the state. Officials said the move would improve the competitiveness of nearly 158 ginning units in Madhya Pradesh, reduce input costs and encourage industries to remain within the state instead of shifting operations to neighbouring regions. The decision is expected to boost employment and increase GST collection costs.

To ensure smooth procurement of wheat, paddy and coarse grains during upcoming marketing seasons, the Cabinet approved a government guarantee of Rs 8,600 crore for the Madhya Pradesh State Civil Supplies Corporation and Markfed. The guarantee will enable both agencies to access institutional finance and manage procurement operations efficiently.

In a major farmer welfare measure, the Cabinet approved an increase in mandi cess from Re 1 to Rs

1.50. The additional revenue, estimated at around Rs 500 crore annually, will be utilised for farmer-centric initiatives, including rural road development, agricultural research, infrastructure creation, cold storage facilities, warehouses, processing units and logistics networks. The government said the enhanced revenue would strengthen agricultural infrastructure while supporting long-term growth in the farm sector.

The decisions are expected to provide a significant boost to infrastructure development, digital governance, industrial growth and agricultural welfare in Madhya Pradesh. The Cabinet noted that the revised Bhopal Metro project will significantly enhance the capital city's public transport network by improving connectivity, reducing travel time and providing an efficient mass transit system. The project is expected to support future urban expansion and ease traffic congestion in rapidly developing areas of the city.

The decisions reflect the government's focus on balancing infrastructure development with agricultural growth and digital transformation.

By strengthening transport systems, expanding technology-driven governance and creating additional resources for farmers, the state aims to accelerate economic development while improving service delivery and rural prosperity.

## Laptop, documents stolen from BJP MLA's residence

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

A theft has been reported at the official residence of Mauganj BJP MLA Pradeep Patel in Bhopal, where thieves allegedly stole a laptop, cash, ATM cards, a pen drive and important documents belonging to the legislator's personal assistant.

The incident took place on June 7 at the MLA Rest House in the Arera Hills area. Police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

According to the complaint filed by personal assistant Dr Ramanand Patel, he had arrived in Bhopal from Mauganj and was staying in Room No. 74 of Block-3 at the MLA Rest House. He told police that around 10.30 am, he locked the room from the outside and went to fetch water. He later spent some

time with an associate in another room within the premises.

When he returned around 12.30 pm, he found his laptop missing.

The laptop, valued at approximately Rs 25,000, reportedly contained important Assembly-related data. He also discovered that the lock of an almirah inside the room had been broken.

Police said a pen drive, two ATM cards, cash, a wristwatch and several important documents related to Assembly work were also stolen from a bag kept inside the almirah.

The theft has raised concerns about security arrangements at the government residential complex, which houses legislators and their staff. Investigators are examining CCTV footage from the premises and surrounding areas to identify the culprit.



Congress candidate Meenakshi Natrajan briefs media persons after her nomination for RS elections was rejected by the election commission, at PCC headquarters in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

## MP launches AI-based teacher attendance system

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

The School Education Department's "Hamare Shikshak" mobile application is transforming attendance management for teachers and staff across Madhya Pradesh by introducing a transparent, reliable and technology-driven monitoring system.

Integrated with Education Portal 3.0, the app enables real-time e-attendance, allowing instant access to attendance records and strengthening administrative oversight across schools and educational institutions. Officials say the initiative is a significant step towards enhancing transparency, accountability, administrative efficiency and data-driven governance in the education sector.

One of the key features of the system is its Artificial Intelligence-

based liveness authentication technology. While marking attendance, employees are required to perform live actions such as blinking or smiling, ensuring that attendance is recorded only by the actual individual. The feature effectively eliminates the possibility of proxy or fraudulent attendance and enhances the credibility of the system.

The app also incorporates geofencing technology, which allows teachers and staff to mark attendance only from within the designated boundaries of their assigned school, office or training centre. This ensures the physical presence of employees at their workplaces and further strengthens the authenticity of attendance records.

Apart from regular working days, the e-attendance system can also be used during training programmes and other depart-

mental activities. The platform provides officials with real-time monitoring, analytical tools and attendance reports at district, block, cluster and school levels.

Department officials said the availability of real-time data has improved decision-making and enabled more effective administrative management. By leveraging advanced technologies such as AI and location-based verification, the School Education Department is working to modernise education administration and make it more responsive, efficient and accountable.

The initiative reflects the state's broader push towards digital governance and technology-enabled public service delivery, with officials expressing confidence that the system will contribute to improved institutional discipline and better management of human resources in the education sector.

## 42 kg narcotics seized in Jabalpur, seven arrested

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Jabalpur

The Crime Branch and local police have seized more than 42 kg of narcotic substances, including over 30 kg of doda chura and nearly 12 kg of ganja, during coordinated operations across Jabalpur. Seven accused, including a woman, have been arrested.

Police said the contraband was brought to the city concealed in a truck and was being prepared for distribution at different locations. Authorities also recovered Rs 50,000 believed to be drug sale proceeds, along with a truck, a car, a scooter and 10 mobile phones. In one of the cases, Tilwara police intercepted two suspects carrying bags during night patrol near a passenger shelter close to Hotel Orbit. One accused, Lalit Kahar (28), was arrested, while his accomplice escaped.

A search of Lalit's bag led to the recovery of 6.178 kg of ganja worth about Rs 3.09 lakh. During questioning, he allegedly revealed that the contraband was sourced from Odisha and sold locally in small packets. Further investigation is underway.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and BJP State President Hemant Khandwal during a meeting after the nomination of Congress candidate for RS elections was rejected by the election commission, at BJP State headquarters in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

## Friend behind Rs 2L robbery of Indore trader in Jabalpur

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Jabalpur

Police have cracked the sensational robbery of an Indore-based trader in Jabalpur and revealed that the crime was allegedly masterminded by the victim's own friend. The accused is said to have planned the entire operation from Indore, nearly 500 kilometres away, while directing his associates over the phone.

Five accused have been arrested in the case, while the alleged mastermind, Piyush Patel, remains absconding. Police have recovered the looted cash, mobile phones, a knife and two motorcycles used in the crime.

The robbery took place on the evening of June 7 under the Madholal police station limits. Indore resident Abhay Kumar Singh had arrived in Jabalpur along with his friend Lakhman Chourasia on June 6 to collect outstanding business payments. According to police, Piyush Patel, who is originally from Jabalpur but currently lives in Indore, advised the traders to stay at his brother-in-law's house near Patan Bypass.

The next day, the traders travelled to Majholi village and collected Rs 2 lakh from customers. While returning, Piyush allegedly called them and requested that they collect a package from a youth on his behalf. A young man later arrived on a motorcycle and handed over the parcel.

Afterwards, the same youth offered to drop the traders at the bus stand. Trusting him, both men boarded the motorcycle. As they were travelling along a service road on the highway at around 7.30 pm, three men on a white scooter intercepted them and allegedly threw chilli powder into their eyes.

The motorcycle lost balance and fell. The attackers then allegedly threatened the traders with a knife and fled with a bag containing Rs 2 lakh. However, the motorcycle rider, identified as Rajendra Patel, was caught by the victims while attempting to escape.

During interrogation, Rajendra allegedly revealed that Piyush Patel had planned the robbery and was constantly guiding the accused over the phone.

## Special prayers at Mahakal Temple

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Ujjain

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) city unit will organise a special religious ceremony at Shri Mahakaleshwar Temple on Wednesday to mark the completion of 12 years of the Central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The programme will begin at 11 am and will feature the chanting of 108 sacred mantras, along with special prayers seeking the Prime Minister's good health, long life, continued success and the nation's prosperity and welfare.

According to BJP city president Sanjay Agrawal, the event is being organised to commemorate what the party describes as 12 years of transformative governance and public service under Modi's leadership.

He said the past decade has witnessed significant achievements in areas such as infrastructure development, welfare schemes for the poor, national security, women's empowerment, digital transformation and the vision of building a self-reliant India.

## Woman murdered, limbs severed for silver anklets in Nazirabad

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

A 60-year-old woman was allegedly murdered and her legs severed to steal silver anklets in a gruesome crime that came to light in Bhopal's Nazirabad area. Police have detained a villager, who allegedly confessed to the murder during questioning.

The victim, Badam Bai, a resident of Patharia village in Berasia, had been missing since June 4. According to police, the accused, Jaswant Gurjar, who was known to the victim's family, allegedly took her on his motorcycle on the pretext of helping her meet her son Ravi.

Family members lodged a missing person complaint at Berasia police station on June 6 and expressed suspicion about the accused's involvement. During interrogation, the accused allegedly informed police that the woman's body was lying in a forested area near Sheshapura.

Police and family members later recovered the decomposed body from beneath a mahua tree in the forest. Investigators found that both

## MP's Shaurya model strengthens women at grassroots

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

What began as a modest initiative in six districts of Madhya Pradesh in 2013 has evolved into one of the country's largest grassroots movements for women's empowerment.

The state's Shaurya Dal programme, comprising more than 2.25 million women and girls, has become a powerful community-based network working to prevent social crimes, promote awareness and strengthen the position of women across urban and rural areas.

Recognising its impact, the state government has decided to continue the programme for another five years, from 2026-27 to 2030-31.

Unlike conventional support systems that intervene after incidents occur, Shaurya Dals focus on prevention. The groups actively

monitor and address issues such as domestic violence, child marriage, human trafficking and gender-based discrimination at the community level. Women aged between 15 and 45 years serve as members, often resolving disputes and creating awareness through dialogue and community engagement before situations escalate into legal cases.

Officials describe the initiative as a unique social network that currently connects more than 22.52 lakh women and girls across Madhya Pradesh. The membership includes around 7.64 lakh school and college-going girls, bringing youthful energy and modern perspectives, alongside 14.88 lakh homemakers and experienced women who contribute their understanding of local social realities.

The programme, implemented by the Women and Child Development

Department, has expanded from remote tribal regions to urban neighbourhoods, creating platforms where women can collectively address challenges and access government welfare schemes. Beyond safety and protection, Shaurya Dals have also become vehicles for promoting health, nutrition, education, employment opportunities and social security.

Over the years, the initiative has helped women become more aware of their rights and encouraged greater participation in community decision-making.

Members are often involved in campaigns aimed at improving access to education, preventing child marriage and ensuring that women receive benefits available under various government programmes.

Officials say the success of the programme lies in placing leadership directly in the

hands of women. By empowering women to support and protect one another, the initiative has challenged traditional social barriers and fostered greater confidence and self-reliance among participants.

As the programme enters its next phase, the state government hopes to further strengthen the network and expand its reach. The Shaurya Dal model is increasingly being viewed as an example of community-driven women's empowerment, demonstrating how collective action at the grassroots level can bring meaningful social change and create safer, more inclusive communities.

The programme has also created a strong network of community volunteers who act as a bridge between women and government institutions, ensuring that grievances are addressed promptly and welfare benefits reach eligible beneficiaries.



## Councillors question readiness for new waste rules

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

A special meeting of the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Tuesday witnessed heated discussions as councillors from both the ruling BJP and opposition Congress raised concerns over sanitation services, waste collection infrastructure and implementation of new solid waste management rules.

The meeting, held at the corporation's hall at ISBT, focused on the provisions of the revised Solid Waste Management Rules. Waste management expert Atul Khare delivered a presentation outlining the new regulations, which include penalties for littering, open dumping and burning of waste. Under the proposed

framework, organisers of events involving 100 or more people will also be required to inform the municipal corporation at least three days in advance and obtain necessary permissions.

While the meeting was convened to discuss the new rules, several councillors used the opportunity to highlight deficiencies in civic services across the city.

Congress councillor Devanshu Kansana expressed dissatisfaction over the pace of municipal works, citing a recent incident in which a tree uprooted during a storm in a slum area of his ward took six days to be removed. He said such delays reflected the poor speed of civic response and raised questions about the effectiveness of the administration.

His remarks drew objections from BJP councillors,

who argued that sanitation services in their wards were functioning satisfactorily. BJP councillor Brijla Sachan said there were no such issues in her area, a view echoed by several members of the ruling party.

Mayor Malti Rai defended the corporation's sanitation efforts and said councillors who regularly visited their wards were aware of the extensive cleaning operations being carried out, including night-time sanitation drives. She maintained that field-level assessments were more accurate than conclusions drawn from social media or messaging platforms.

The debate continued outside the council hall, with Kansana later visiting the city's "Kachra Cafe" at 10 Number Market. He alleged irregularities in its function-

ing and claimed the facility was not maintaining proper records of waste received and goods distributed in exchange. He questioned whether the initiative was operating according to its intended purpose.

Opposition councillors also raised concerns regarding the enforcement of existing waste management regulations. Acting Leader of Opposition Mohammad Sarwar said action against the use of banned polythene bags remained inadequate and called for stricter implementation of the rules. He also pointed to issues in waste segregation and disposal, alleging that garbage removed from drains was often left unattended because collection vehicles failed to transport it.

Several councillors questioned whether the civic body

possessed adequate resources, manpower and infrastructure to effectively implement the new rules. Congress councillor Yogendra Singh "Guddu" Chauhan said many wards continue to face shortages of sanitation workers and waste collection vehicles, resulting in delays in garbage collection whenever vehicles break down.

Interestingly, concerns over manpower shortages were also raised by BJP councillors.

Vilas Rao Ghadge said the number of sanitation workers in his ward had declined despite increasing waste generation, while Rajendra Chouksey highlighted inadequate sanitation arrangements in several government housing complexes and the absence of a dedicated garbage vehicle in his ward for nearly four years.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav presents a photo of Sanchi Stupa as a memento to the Consul General of Germany, Christoph Hallier, during a meeting at his residence in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo



AICC General Secretary and State In-charge Harish Chaudhary, Congress State President Jitu Patwari, leader of opposition Umang Singhar and other leaders during a dharna in front of the Election Commission's office after the Congress candidate Meenakshi Natarajan's nomination for RS elections was rejected by the election commission, in Bhopal on Tuesday.

## Civic body demolishes three unsafe buildings

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Neemuch

The Neemuch Municipal Council on Tuesday demolished three dilapidated buildings identified as unsafe during a special drive aimed at preventing accidents and ensuring public safety.

The action was carried out under directions of the state government and with the guidance of the district administration. Municipal teams used JCB machines and other equipment to remove a dangerous structure on Kalidas Marg in the Juna Bazaar area, the old Arya Samaj building in Puranganj, and a hazardous portion of

another deteriorated building in Thakkar Bappa Ganj. Chief Municipal Officer Durga Bamanliya said the municipality had conducted a survey across the city and identified 12 buildings that were structurally unsafe and posed a threat to residents and passersby. Property owners were subsequently served notices directing them to either repair or demolish the structures within a stipulated period.

However, when the owners failed to comply with the notices, the municipal administration initiated demolition proceedings in the interest of public safety. Officials said the drive is part of an ongoing effort to eliminate

dangerous structures before the monsoon season, when weakened buildings become more vulnerable to collapse.

The demolition operation was carried out under the supervision of municipal officials and enforcement personnel, with authorities maintaining that similar action would continue against other unsafe buildings identified during the survey.

Municipal officials have appealed to property owners to regularly assess the condition of ageing structures and undertake necessary repairs to avoid risks to life and property. The remaining identified buildings will be reviewed, and further action will be taken wherever required.

## RTO seizes bus during safety drive

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Indore

The Regional Transport Office (RTO) flying squad conducted a special vehicle inspection drive on Tuesday at Radisson Square, Teen Imli Square and along Neemawar Road to check compliance with passenger safety norms and transport regulations.

During the campaign, officials inspected more than 65 buses, examining emergency exits, fire extinguishers, first-aid boxes, emergency evacuation arrangements, vehicle permits, fitness certificates, insurance documents and other mandatory safety provisions.

Officials said the drive was aimed at ensuring passenger safety and verifying adherence to transport regulations

by commercial vehicle operators.

During the inspection, one bus was found transporting passengers between Jabalpur and Indore without a valid permit. The vehicle was seized and a penalty of Rs 46,000 was imposed on the operator for violating permit conditions.

RTO officials also instructed bus operators to strictly comply with all passenger safety requirements and permit regulations to avoid action in the future.

The enforcement drive was carried out under the directions of Transport Commissioner Umesh Joga and Indore Collector Shivam Verma. The operation was led by Indore RTO Pradeep Sharma and Flying Squad In-charge Akash Sitole.

## Indrapuri residents protest demolition

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

Residents of Indrapuri Labour Colony staged a protest outside the Bhopal Municipal Corporation office on Tuesday, demanding rehabilitation and alternative housing after their homes and shops were demolished during an anti-encroachment drive last week.

The affected families alleged that they had been living in the colony for nearly four decades and possessed government-issued lease documents. They claimed authorities had assured them that alternative accommodation would be provided before any demolition was carried out. However, they said the promise was not fulfilled and

the structures were removed without rehabilitation arrangements in place.

According to the protesters, around 55 houses and 70 shops were demolished during the drive, affecting more than 300 people. Many families said they have been left homeless and are now living in the open amid the onset of the monsoon season. The displaced residents submitted a memorandum to the Mayor and the District Collector, demanding immediate rehabilitation, allotment of houses and alternative commercial spaces for those who lost their shops.

Among the protesters was Saroj Mehra, whose house and shop were both demolished. She said her family's livelihood depended entirely on the income generated from

the shop. According to her, officials had earlier assured residents that they would receive alternative premises before any demolition took place.

She said the family has been struggling since the demolition and claimed they have been unable to arrange regular meals. Household belongings remain scattered outdoors, while no public representative has visited them since the action was carried out.

Another resident, Jyoti Yadav, said both her parental and marital families lived in the colony and were affected by the demolition. She said her husband is unwell and she is responsible for caring for their young daughter. With both their home and source of income lost, the family is uncertain about where to live during the rainy season.

## Khajuraho hits 46°C amid pre-monsoon weather shift

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh continued to witness a mix of scorching heat, pre-monsoon thunderstorms and intermittent rainfall on Tuesday, with Khajuraho recording a blistering 46°C — the highest temperature in the state and one of the hottest readings in recent years. Despite the intense heat, weather experts say conditions are becoming increasingly favourable for the arrival of the southwest monsoon, which is expected to enter the state between June 15 and 18.

For Bhopal, meteorologists have forecast relief from the heat over the coming days, with afternoon cloud cover, thunderstorms and light to moderate rainfall likely. Similar weather conditions

are expected in neighbouring districts including Raisen, Sehore, Vidisha, Rajgarh, Narmadapuram, Betul and Harda. The changing weather pattern is expected to bring down temperatures and provide respite from the recent spell of extreme heat.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Khajuraho's temperature touched 46°C, while Datia recorded 44°C, Raigarh, Rewa and Tikamgarh registered 43°C, while Nowgong recorded 42.8°C. Temperatures also remained above 42°C in Satna, Guna and Mandla. Across the state, 26 cities reported temperatures above 40°C despite ongoing thunderstorm and rain activity.

Among the major cities, Gwalior remained the hottest at 42.8°C, while Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain and Jabalpur

recorded temperatures around 40°C.

The weather department has warned that the state will continue to experience a combination of heat, thunderstorms and rain over the next few days. A heatwave alert has been issued for Bhind, Datia, Niwari, Tikamgarh and Chhatrapur districts for June 10 and 11.

Weather experts attribute the changing conditions to active pre-monsoon systems, including a cyclonic circulation and trough affecting parts of central and eastern India. These systems are drawing moisture into the region and triggering thunderstorms, lightning and scattered rainfall across several districts.

Eastern districts including Rewa, Satna, Sidhi, Singrauli, Shahdol, Umaria, Anuppur, Dindori, Mandla, Balaghat

and Seoni are expected to receive rainfall accompanied by thunder and lightning over the next three to four days. Moderate rain is also likely at several places in the Mahakoshal region.

In the Malwa-Nimar region, including Indore, Ujjain, Dhar, Khargone, Barwani, Khandwa and Burhanpur, increasing moisture from the Arabian Sea is expected to bring cloud cover and isolated showers, though rainfall activity is likely to remain less widespread than in eastern Madhya Pradesh.

Meteorologists said the state is currently witnessing the combined influence of summer heat, pre-monsoon activity and increasing humidity. As monsoon systems advance further north, temperatures across most parts of Madhya Pradesh are expected to

decline by 2°C to 5°C. While areas receiving rainfall will experience pleasant weather, regions with only cloud cover may continue to face humid conditions.

Experts believe the stage is now set for the southwest monsoon to enter Madhya Pradesh next week. However, farmers have been advised to wait for widespread and sustained rainfall before beginning large-scale Kharif sowing operations.

Meteorologists are also monitoring a western disturbance likely to affect the western Himalayan region on June 11. Its impact, combined with existing weather systems over central India, could further intensify thunderstorm and rainfall activity across parts of Madhya Pradesh, strengthening conditions for the monsoon's advance into the state.

## MP Cabinet panel clears Rs 492 crore projects for Simhastha

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Tuesday directed officials to ensure timely completion of all infrastructure and civic works planned for Simhastha 2028, stressing the need for efficient crowd management, enhanced safety measures, adequate water supply, improved transport facilities and comprehensive disaster preparedness for the mega religious congregation.

Chairing the sixth meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Simhastha 2028 at the Secretariat, Yadav instructed departments to accelerate construction of road networks, Shipra river ghats, pilgrim accommodation facilities and transport infrastructure. He also called for immediate commencement of staffing and training programmes to ensure smooth management of the event.

The committee approved 17 new development projects worth Rs 491.66 crore and reviewed the progress of 148 ongoing development and infrastructure works valued at over Rs 16,910 crore across Ujjain and seven neighbouring districts.

Among the major projects approved for Ujjain are a bridge and approach road from Shani Temple to Prashanti Dham Square at a cost of Rs 30 crore, a new parallel bridge over the Kanh River on the Tapobhoomi-Pipliyaragho Panchkrosi route costing Rs 12 crore, and a 5.5-km two-lane road from Tapobhoomi to Gangedi via Raghopiya to be built at Rs 30 crore.

The committee also approved a four-lane Panchkrosi road connecting Dewas Road, Lalpur and Garoth Road at a cost of Rs 18 crore, expansion and renovation of the PWD Circuit House, construction of a new rest house on Dewas Road, road widening projects and several connectivity improvements around the city.

In Omkareshwar, the committee approved development projects worth more than Rs 260 crore, including temple precinct works, multi-level parking facilities, railway overbridge construction, hospital upgrades, staff quarters, administrative infrastructure and civic amenities. The Chief Minister also directed officials to develop a fully equipped hospital and helipad in Omkareshwar to strengthen emergency response and air ambulance services.

Yadav instructed officials to establish a separate development authority for the Barwah-Omkareshwar-Khedhi Ghat region to improve coordination and execution of projects in Khandwa and Khargone districts.

Reviewing preparations for the Shipra riverfront, the Chief Minister directed that ghat construction, parking facilities and access roads be developed simultaneously. He also suggested involving nearby ashrams and gurukuls in the management of ghats to ensure their effective long-term utilisation even after Simhastha.

## All-faith forum opposes proposal to rename BU

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Sarvdharm Sadbhavana Manch on Tuesday strongly opposed the proposal to rename Barkatullah University, describing the move as an insult to freedom fighters and a departure from the spirit of national unity and historical respect.

The issue was discussed at a meeting of the organisation held in Bhopal under the chairmanship of senior social worker Rajendra Kothari. Representatives from different religious and social communities participated in the meeting and unanimously rejected the proposal passed by the university's Executive Council regarding the name change.

Speakers at the meeting argued that there is no precedent in the country of renaming an institution established in the memory of a freedom fighter.

They said such a move would set an undesirable precedent and undermine the contributions of individuals who played a role in India's struggle for independence.

The forum maintained that Barkatullah University carries historical and emotional significance for the people of Bhopal and that any attempt to alter its identity would amount to disregarding the city's heritage and collective sentiment.

Participants also recalled that the decision to rename Bhopal University as Barkatullah University had been taken with broad con-

sensus across communities. They said the institution's name reflects a shared legacy and should be preserved.

The meeting resolved to send a delegation to meet Governor Mangubhai Patel, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and the university's Vice-Chancellor to submit memorandums opposing the proposed change. The organisation also decided to write to the President and the Prime Minister, seeking their intervention in the matter.

Members of the forum urged the government and university authorities to reconsider the proposal and maintain the existing name, stating that preserving historical identities strengthens social harmony and respects the sacrifices made by freedom fighters.

## State Government withdraws proposed two-child service rule

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has taken a major decision in the interest of government employees and job aspirants by directing the withdrawal of a proposed provision linking eligibility for government service to the number of children a candidate has.

Acting on the Chief Minister's instructions, the General Administration Department has cancelled the draft amendment related to the two-child norm in the Madhya Pradesh Civil Services Rules and ordered its removal from the official portal.

The proposed provision was based on a policy introduced in 2001, under which candidates having more than two living children after January 26, 2001, were considered ineligible for direct recruitment and certain departmental appointments in government service. The policy

was incorporated under the Madhya Pradesh Civil Services (General Conditions of Service) Rules, 1961.

Under the existing framework, government employees having more than two children could also face disciplinary implications under the Madhya Pradesh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1965, where such cases were treated as misconduct.

After reviewing the matter, the Chief Minister directed the General Administration Department to immediately withdraw the draft rules containing the provision and publish a revised draft after removing all clauses that declare candidates ineligible for government service on the basis of having more than two living children.

Officials said the decision reflects the state government's intent to remove restrictions that could affect employment opportunities for eligible candidates. The department has

## Two arrested with illegal liquor

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Rewa

Police on Tuesday arrested two men allegedly involved in the illegal sale of liquor and seized a carton of country-made liquor from their possession.

According to Saman police station officials, a tip-off was received that a consignment of liquor was being brought to Rewa from the Gudh area for illegal distribution. Acting on the information, police laid a trap and intercepted two suspects.

During the search, officers recovered a carton of liquor from their possession. The accused were identified as Shivam Saket and Anshu Saket. Police said the duo was involved in selling liquor illegally in different parts of the city. A case has been registered against both under the Excise Act, and further probe is on.

**केनरा बैंक Canara Bank** Canara Bank, Specialised ARM Branch, Plot no. 4, PSP Area, Near AIIMS, Saket Nagar Bhopal Tel.: 8989014648 **E-AUCTION (SALE NOTICE)**

### Appendix-IV-A (See provision to rule 8(6) & 6(2) ) SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE & IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-auction Sale Notice For Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rules 8(6) & 6(2) of The Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) & Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged / charged to the secured creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer the Canara Bank (secured creditor) will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS, AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" & WHAT EVER THERE IS" on 29/06/2026 for recovery of bank dues to the Canara Bank (secured creditor)

Name and address of the Borrower & Guarantors	Description of Property	Demand Notice Dt.		Reserve Price EMD Amt.
		Possession Dt.	Outstanding Amt.	
Borrower/Mortgagor: M/s Kara Ji Prop: Mr. Harshit Meena Berasia Road Bhopal MP-462420 Borrower/proprietor: Mr. Harshit Meena C/o Mr. Babu Lal Meena	Commercial diverted land measuring 0.405 Hectare of Khasra no. 52/1/2/2/2, situated at village- Nazirabad, Patwari Halka No. 19, R.N.M -Nazirabad, Tehsil- Berasia, Bhopal (M.P.). Boundaries As Per the valuation report: East : Owner's Property, West : Owner's Property, North : Other's Property, South : Other's Property BAANKNET PROPERTY ID: CNBRKARAJI SYMBOLIC POSSESSION COORDINATES: 23.805945, 77.253474	30.12.2024 07.03.2025	as on 08/06/2026	₹ 62,91,000/- ₹ 6,29,100/- ₹ 10,000/-
Borrower/Mortgagor: M/s Rishi Goatry Farm Proprietor Shri Chandrabhan Singh s/o Udam Singh Thakur Resident at 64 Gram Intkhedi Chhap, Bhopal-462030	Commercial diverted land and building measuring 0.8490 Hectare of Khasra no. 481/1(S), situated at village- Intkhedi Chhap, Patwari Halka Intkhedi Chhap, Tehsil- Berasia, Bhopal (M.P.). Boundaries As Per the Mortgage Deed: East: Rasta, West: Land of Manohar Singh, North: Land of Dasrath Singh, South: Land of Ami Patel, Note: As per the latest valuation report, road shown on the east is passing through other's private land which is not legal approach. BAANKNET PROPERTY ID: CNBRISHIGOATRY COORDINATES: 23.228578, 77.274516	25.03.2025 30.05.2025	as on 08/06/2026	₹ 1,27,53,000/- ₹ 12,75,300/- ₹ 10000/-

Last date for submission of online bids is on or before 28/06/2026 upto 5.00 p.m.  
Date and Time of e-auction : 29/06/2026, 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM (With unlimited extension of 5 minutes duration each)  
1) The intending bidders shall deposit above mentioned Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) being 10% of the Reserve Price in E- Wallet of M/s PSB Alliance Private Limited (baanknet.com) portal directly or by generating the Challan therein to deposit the EMD through RTGS/NEFT in the account details as mentioned in the said challan, on above mentioned date of bid submission.  
2) The successful bidder shall deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD already paid), immediately on the sale being knocked down in his/her favour and the balance within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale. If the successful bidder fails to pay the sale price as stated above, the deposit made by him shall be forfeited.  
3) All charges for conveyance, stamp duty/GST registration charges etc, as applicable and any taxes, revenue/dues to any local authority etc shall be borne by the successful bidder only.  
4) For sale proceeds of Rs. 50,00,000 (Rupees Fifty lacs) and above, the successful bidder will have to deduct TDS at the rate 1% on the Sale proceeds and submit the original receipt of TDS certificate to the Bank.  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer web portal : <http://BAANKNET.com> or may contact - Chief Manager, SPLSD ARM Bhopal, Canara Bank, Plot no. 4, PSP Area, Near AIIMS, Saket Nagar Bhopal. Contact no. 8989014648, 8057766078, 9691096410, 9123403299 (BHOPAL), 7905027805 (JABALPUR AND BILASPUR), 7683068902 (RAIPUR), 9140476074 (GWALIOR), 9830130770 (INDORE), 8073562754 (BHOPAL) during office hours on any working day.  
Date: 08.06.2026, Place: Bhopal **AUTHORISED OFFICER, CANARA BANK**



## 80-yr-old dies days after hotel blaze kills his kin

**KHUSHI MEHROTRA**  
■ New Delhi

The devastating Malviya Nagar hotel fire that wiped out eight members of a Gurugram-based family last week claimed its ninth victim on Tuesday with the death of 80-year-old Radhe Shyam Aggarwal, the family patriarch whose illness had brought his relatives to Delhi and inadvertently placed them in the path of tragedy.

Aggarwal, who had been undergoing treatment for a lung-related ailment at Max Hospital in Saket, died days after the June 4 blaze at the Flourish Inn bed-and-breakfast hotel. With his death, the entire Aggarwal family has been wiped out, leaving no immediate survivors.

Family members who perished in the fire were identified as Vivek Aggarwal, his wife Tarjani, their daughters Jeevisha and Waria, Vivek's mother Premlata, his uncle Ashok Goyal, aunt Kamala Goyal and another relative, Jhimri Aggarwal.

According to relatives, the family had checked into the hotel only a day or two before the fire to avoid the daily commute between Gurugram and Delhi while attending to Radhe Shyam Aggarwal's medical needs.

"They had taken two rooms in the last one or two days to beat the Gurugram-Delhi distance," a relative had told *The Pioneer*.



Radhe Shyam Aggarwal

Sources told *The Pioneer* that the family was allegedly in the hotel's basement area when the fire broke out and rapidly engulfed the building, trapping occupants amid dense smoke.

In a particularly poignant detail, Jeevisha, a student in Bengaluru, had been called to Delhi just a day before the tragedy so she could meet her ailing grandfather.

Sources said Radhe Shyam Aggarwal remained admitted to the Saket hospital after the fire and was largely unaware of the catastrophe that had unfolded barely a few hundred metres away, *NDTV* reported. He reportedly kept asking about the absence of his family members, not knowing they had all died in the blaze.

The scale of the tragedy became evident during a visit to the Hauz Rani neighbourhood a day after the fire, where Vivek Aggarwal's white Audi remained parked outside the charred hotel. Looking at the vehicle, a resident remarked sorrowfully, "Who will drive this now? *Jiski thi vo toh chalogaya.*"

The fire, one of Delhi's deadliest hotel blazes in recent years, has sparked questions over fire safety compliance and emergency preparedness in commercial establishments across the Capital.

Authorities are continuing their investigation into the circumstances that led to the tragedy. So far, the fire has claimed 22 lives, including foreign nationals.

## Israel plans Shivaji Maharaj statue to strengthen India ties

**ASHOKE RAJ**  
■ New Delhi

Israel is planning to install a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in one of its major cities as part of efforts to deepen cultural and historical ties with India, Israeli Consul General to Mumbai Yaniv Revach announced on the Maratha king's Coronation Day.

Speaking on the occasion, Revach revealed that the proposal has already been discussed with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who has expressed support for the initiative.

"We approached Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to seek his advice regarding the partnership. He immediately gave us his blessing and assured us of all the support we may need," Revach said. According to the diplo-

mat, the proposed statue is envisioned as a long-term project and a gesture of goodwill from Israel towards the people of India. He explained that the idea emerged after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's historic visit to Jerusalem, which inspired both nations to explore new avenues for strengthening bilateral relations.

"Following Prime Minister Modi's visit to Jerusalem, we decided to deepen the ties between Israel and India in different aspects. One of those aspects was the history of our two nations," Revach told. Rather than undertaking a large project in India, Israel decided to honor the legacy of Shivaji Maharaj by installing a statue in Israel, he said.

Revach highlighted similarities between the historical experiences of India and



Israel, particularly the struggles both nations faced in securing and preserving their homelands.

"When I came to India a few months ago, I learned about the similarities between India and Israel. Both nations had to fight for their land and identity over many decades," he said.

The consul general noted that Israel has been making

special efforts to bring the people of both countries closer together, particularly since Modi's visit to Israel earlier this year.

"I believe that we need to make efforts to create greater awareness about Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Israel," Revach added.

He praised Shivaji Maharaj's qualities of good governance, courage, and religious tolerance, saying they continue to inspire generations. According to Revach, the proposed statue would serve as a powerful symbol of friendship between India and Israel while also recognizing the historical links between Maharashtra and India's Jewish community.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis unveiled a 20-foot bronze statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

at Navi Mumbai International Airport on Shivrajyabhishek Din, commemorating the Maratha ruler's coronation.

The airport, which commenced operations in December 2025, now features the statue as a tribute to the legendary warrior king.

"I am confident that every passenger arriving at or departing from this international airport will draw inspiration and energy from Maharaj's image, statue and memorial," Fadnavis said during the unveiling ceremony. The development comes as India and Israel continue to expand cooperation across cultural, historical, economic, and strategic sectors, with both nations emphasising stronger people-to-people connections alongside diplomatic engagement.

## MCD cracks down on illegal buildings, fire safety violations after inspections

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Tuesday demolished 16 properties and sealed 29 establishments as part of its ongoing crackdown against illegal constructions and buildings over by-law violations.

The civic body also issued show-cause notices to 21 unauthorised constructions, 57 sealing show-cause notices, and 22 demolition orders during the day. According to the Revenue

Department's daily inspection report, authorities inspected 452 sites across Delhi between June 5 and June 9. On June 9 alone, inspections were carried out in multiple districts, including West, South, North East, South West, East, and Central Delhi. Action taken included show cause notices, restraining orders, sealing of buildings, demolitions, and eviction notices.

The West district recorded the highest number of inspections with 80 sites visited, followed by South

district with 65 and North district with 45. In the South district, officials issued four show cause notices, sealed one property, and initiated demolition action at another site.

Inspection reports from Patel Nagar in the Central district identified several violations in hotels and commercial establishments. At Deventure Hotel in West Patel Nagar, officials found missing fire safety display boards, unauthorised rooms built on top floor beyond sanctioned plan.

## Eight burnt alive in fire at cracker godown in Jaipur

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Jaipur

Eight persons were burnt alive in a fire that raged after a blast at an illegal cracker godown here in Khoh Nagoriyan area on Tuesday morning, officials said. The fire erupted in a small house in Ayesha Nagar Talai colony, where firecrackers were allegedly kept, they said.

Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma and Congress leader Ashok Gehlot offered their condolences over the incident. Assistant Commissioner of Police Vinod Sharma said

eight persons have died in the blaze. Of them, five died during treatment at SMS Hospital while one, whose identity was yet to be ascertained, was brought dead. Two succumbed to critical burn injuries at a private hospital. Seven of the eight deceased were identified as Sameer, Ajim, Nasir, Abdul Wahid, Rabil, Bilal and Ashraf.

Jaipur Collector Sandesh Nayak said that according to preliminary information, combustible material stored inside the premises likely caused the fire.

## NDA hunts majority as Opposition splinters

With the fractured TMC likely to come on board with NDA, the tally will cross the 300 mark. Sources said the Government is also taking advantage of fissures in the Congress-DMK and that talks are underway to secure conditional support from MK Stalin's party, which has 22 Lok Sabha MPs. The DMK recently lost the Tamil Nadu polls, which it fought with its oldest ally, Congress. The latter joined hands with Vijay-led TVK post polls to the government in the State last month.

The NDA is also nearing a two-thirds majority in the Rajya Sabha, and the June 18 biennial elections would further add to its tally, which is 150 plus currently. While seven of the 10 MPs of the AAP in Rajya Sabha have already joined the BJP, TMC has 13 MPs in Rajya Sabha and Sukhendu Sekhar Roy has already resigned, who is likely to make it in the upper house again, representing the BJP.

Further, if their leadership decides to extend conditional support to NDA at the Centre and in Parliament, then the eight DMK MPs in the Rajya Sabha could also extend their support. The threshold for a two-thirds majority in the Upper House is 164.

## BJP, Congress clash over RS nominations

Congress questioned the role of Election Commission which gave an audience to BJP backed candidate Nathwani while immediately rejecting Natarajan's candidature. Congress has sought time from the poll watchdog to protest on Wednesday.

The Congress MLAs of Madhya Pradesh, who had been waiting to take a flight to Bengaluru, meanwhile, were called back when Natarajan's nomination was rejected. Sources said the flight was recalled from the runway.

The development came after BJP leaders lodged a formal objection before the Returning Officer, seeking cancellation of Natarajan's candidature. The BJP alleged that the Congress leader had failed to disclose details of a pending court case in Telangana in her election affidavit, a mandatory document that candidates are required to submit while filing nominations. The objection was raised by BJP candidate Mahesh Kewat, who is contesting the third Rajya Sabha seat.

Congress's attempts to protest against the Returning officer's move on late Monday evening fell flat when a delegation led by senior party leader KC Venugopal reached the poll office. Sources said that most officials at Commission had left after 6 pm. Though Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar was in the office, the Congress had not sought an appointment, sources said.

Natarajan alleged that the BJP is "muzzling democracy and the Constitution," saying that what was earlier limited to "vote theft" has now become "seat theft." She said, "When the number of members was not adequate, and the BJP fielded third candidate, it all started from there, and we started to understand that they are doing the politics of muzzling the democracy, constitution."

A high drama ensued at the Election Commission office late in the night, when top Congress leaders rushed there to hand over a petition against the rejection, but were denied entry. The security refused the Congress leaders, including Jairam Ramesh, to enter the EC office, saying they had not taken permission from the poll body. Congress leaders K C Venugopal, Sachin Pilot, Bhupesh Baghel and Ramesh staged

a dharna outside the EC office.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Mohan Yadav hailed the decision and called on the Congress party to "introspect."

## PM reviews 12 years in office

Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, James Marape, in a personal video message, described Prime Minister Modi as "a role model and an example of leadership". He also stated — "Lifting over 200 million people out of poverty to good life today is an amazing feat."

Marape expressed Papua New Guinea's warm friendship and its desire to further consolidate bilateral ties. Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago Kamla Persad-Bissessar also congratulated Modi on this occasion, noting that "under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, India has evolved as a leading voice on global matters."

All constituents of the ruling NDA besides the top leadership of the BJP, including Prime Minister Modi, are expected to attend the crucial meeting. Modi becomes the longest continuously serving elected prime minister of India, breaking the record of the first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

A resolution hailing Prime Minister Modi for this feat is likely to be adopted at the meeting of the NDA partners, sources said. On June 10, Modi will cross the record of Nehru's 4,399 days in power as an elected PM following the 1952 general elections. Nehru's stint from 1947 to 1952 was as head of an interim government as elections were not held till 1952.

Former prime minister Indira Gandhi had a tenure of 14 years, more than that of Modi, but her prime ministership was not uninterrupted. By surpassing Nehru's 4,399-day record, Modi becomes the longest continuously serving elected prime minister of India, the sources said.

On May 26, 2014, Modi took charge as India's prime minister with a landslide victory. He got re-elected with a bigger mandate in 2019 and his second term began on May 30 of the same year. His third consecutive term started on June 9, 2024.

The NDA meeting, to be held at Bharat Mandapam, will be attended by chief ministers and deputy chief ministers of all 22 NDA governed states and Union Territories besides the leaders of all alliance constituents.

## Modi breaks Nehru record

"This milestone is a testament not only to your years in office, but also to the trust and confidence that the people of the world's largest democracy have repeatedly placed in your leadership," The message from the Sri Lankan President said. The President also highlighted India's remarkable economic and social transformation and noted that Prime Minister Modi's vision has inspired many beyond India's borders, including Sri Lanka. 2022.

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## FROM PAGE - 1

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## India deployed nuclear warheads, claims SIPRI

The countries are the US, Russia, the UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel.

The annual report said that 2,100-2,200 of the deployed warheads were kept in a state of high operational alert on ballistic missiles.

"Nearly all of these warheads belonged to Russia or the USA, and, to a lesser extent, France and the UK, but China and India may now occasionally deploy a small number of warheads mounted on missiles during peacetime," it said.

As of January 2026, India had deployed 12 nuclear warheads while China had 34. In the case of China, it was an increase from 24 in 2025.

While the US has deployed 1,770 warheads, Russia has 1,796. France comes third, having deployed 280 warheads. The UK has deployed 120 warheads.

"India is believed to have once again slightly expanded its nuclear arsenal in 2025," said SIPRI. The think tank said India also "continued development of new types of nuclear delivery systems".

India is focused on developing long-range weapons capable of reaching targets throughout China, it said, adding that Pakistan, too, was in the focus of military developments.

On its part, Pakistan was accumulating fissile material in 2025, indicating that it might expand its nuclear arsenal in the coming decade, according to SIPRI analysis.

"The brief armed conflict between India and Pakistan in May 2025 saw India attacking Pakistani air- and missile bases that are likely to have nuclear-related roles, but both sides took steps to avoid escalation," it noted.

The world's top arms-tracking organisation, in its latest report reveals a massive departure from decades of New Delhi's policy where nuclear warheads and delivery systems were kept in separate storage.

The report claimed this is the first time India's arsenal has been classified as operationally deployed, rather than stockpiled.

The SIPRI report further stated that India's nuclear weapons stockpile saw a small spike in the last year, while deploying a small number of warheads on a ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) and conducting deterrence patrols.

am from Iran. I am proud of it. I can say I am proud that about 80% of the project is already finished; the remaining 20% might take another two years or so to complete fully. Regardless, the breakthrough is a major event for the tunnel, and we are happy that, under the current system, we have managed to execute this project effectively. It will take roughly another two and a half years for the tunnel to become operational. However, in a dire emergency, especially if the Army needed to use it, it might be possible to utilise the tunnel for a short period, although under normal circumstances, it is not feasible to use it yet..."

## CID enters Mamata's residence in MLA...

A purported resolution dated May 6, bearing signatures of about 70 TMC MLAs, was submitted to the Assembly Secretariat around May 20.

On May 27, two TMC MLAs, Ritabrata Banerjee and Sandipan Saha, told Speaker Rathindra Bose that there was no meeting or resolution on May 6. They said they were only asked to sign a book on May 19. They also pointed out that at least 14 signatures were written in block letters rather than real cursive handwriting, calling the document "manufactured and fabricated."

The Assembly Secretariat filed an FIR at the Hare Street police station for forgery, cheating, and criminal conspiracy. The case was handed over to the CID, which set up a special investigation team. Officials have taken statements from 13 TMC MLAs, and at least three lawmakers have said the signatures linked to them are not real. Handwriting experts are involved, and the court has allowed more signature samples to be collected.

The CID has called Abhishek Banerjee to appear three times, but he has not appeared, citing health problems from an earlier incident and seeking protection from coercive action from the Calcutta High Court. The TMC has expelled the two whistle-blower MLAs for "anti-party activities". Party leaders have called the probe a "political vendetta" by the BJP-led government.

Senior TMC leaders, including Leader of the Opposition Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay, have been questioned. The party says the resolution showed a united decision by its lawmakers. Some members who disagree say many MLAs initially supported a different candidate for the LOP post, citing disagreements following the party's worst election results in over ten years.

The CID's visit to Mamata Banerjee's home is a major step in the investigation. Officials are expected to keep checking documents and taking statements in the coming days. The results could have a significant impact on the TMC's already-tense internal unity as it adjusts to opposition. Both the BJP and the TMC have accused each other, with the BJP saying the probe protects legislative integrity and the TMC calling it harassment of the opposition. The Calcutta High Court will hear Abhishek Banerjee's petition on Thursday.

## PM speaks with Amir of Kuwait

The Prime Minister also thanked the Kuwaiti leadership for its support to the Indian community in the Gulf nation. According to the MEA, Modi "thanked His Highness the Amir for his personal attention to the continued well-being and the safety of the large Indian community in Kuwait."

The phone call comes amid growing concerns over the security situation in West Asia, with India closely monitoring developments in the region while emphasising the need for peace, stability and diplomatic engagement.



## PM hails 12 years of governance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday stated that the past 12 years of the government have been dedicated to trust, development, and public welfare. He noted that with the blessings of 140 crore countrymen and the spirit of the Nation First, no stone has been left unturned in empowering the youth, women, and farmer brothers and sisters. Several Union ministers hailed his leadership.



Several union ministers hailed Prime Minister Modi's leadership as his government completed 12 years on Tuesday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the country has witnessed the simultaneous realisation of welfare for the poor and unprecedented development.

In a post on social media, he said Modi had served the nation and its citizens tirelessly and highlighted a range of welfare and infrastruc-

ture initiatives undertaken during his tenure.

"Under Modi ji's leadership, over these 12 years, the country has witnessed for the first time the parallel realization of poor welfare and unprecedented development," Shah said.

The home minister cited measures such as free ration for 80 crore people, pucca houses for more than four crore poor families, health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh for 50 crore people and LPG

connections for over 10 crore households.

He also referred to the launch of more than 90 airports and over 140 Vande Bharat trains, besides the construction of 1.45 lakh km of roads and 3,000 km of modern expressways.

Referring to India's economic growth, Shah said the country had become the world's fastest-growing major economy under Modi's leadership.

"Modi ji has served the nation and its citizens tirelessly through these 12 years without taking even a single day off," he said.

Shah said such transformation was possible only when leadership's intent was pure, goals were in the national interest and dedication was complete.

Modi was sworn in as prime minister for the third consecutive time on June 9, 2024, following another decisive victory in the 2024 Parliamentary elections.

## Nabin marks 12 years of NDA Government



BJP National President Nitin Nabin visits an exhibition, marking completion of 12 years of the NDA Government at party headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday

ABHINAV KUMAR JHA  
New Delhi

Celebrating completion of 12 years of the NDA Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP President Nitin Nabin on Tuesday said that the period represented not merely a change in governance but a historic reclaiming of India's self-confidence.

Joined by the party's senior members and the full Cabinet of the Narendra Modi government, Nabin noted that Modi is set to become the country's longest-serving democratically elected Prime Minister when he surpasses the first PM Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure on Wednesday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Health Minister JP Nadda, Home Minister Amit Shah, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, and Railways and Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnav were also present at an event organised for an interaction with senior journalists at Bharat Mandapam.

Nabin said the era of Bharatiyata is here. "There was a time when we did not take pride in Indian-ness," he said. The BJP chief cited the abrogation of Article 370, the eradication of Naxalism, and a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism as defin-

ing features of the BJP-led NDA dispensation. He also said that basic facilities that had eluded people for years, from toilets and schools to cooking gas cylinders and health services, had been delivered to their doorsteps.

BJP also presented its 12-year report card under the banner "Viksit Bharat ka Sankalp: 12 Varsh, 12 Badi Uplabdhyan" (Resolve of a Developed India: 12 Years, 12 Major Achievements), listing what it described as transformational outcomes across welfare, economy, security, and infrastructure.

The achievements cited include more than 25 crore people lifted out of poverty, over four crore families given permanent housing, and more than 60 crore people brought under the Ayushman Bharat health scheme. The party also cited more than three crore women becoming self-sufficient through the Lakhpati Didi initiative, over 57 crore Mudra loans disbursed to support self-employment, and more than 12 crore toilets built to ensure dignity for women.

On the economy, the party claimed record exports of ₹79 lakh crore and record defence exports of ₹38,400 crore. Social security coverage has tripled, it said. UPI transactions have grown 12,000 times, with digital transactions reaching ₹314 lakh crore.

## States Focus



### CM HELPLINE 1076 LAUNCHED IN CHHATTISGARH

A toll-free Chief Minister helpline, where people from Chhattisgarh can register their grievances, get them addressed from government authorities, and also submit suggestions for development policies, was launched on Tuesday. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai launched the much-awaited CM Helpline 1076 in Raipur and also unveiled its logo, a government official said. Speaking on the occasion, Sai affirmed his government is committed to ensure that every citizen's grievance is heard, resolved within a stipulated time frame and addressed through an accountable administrative system. He noted that complaints, suggestions and feedbacks received during the 'Sushasan Tihar' campaign (Good Governance Festival) highlighted the need for an effective, robust and permanent public engagement mechanism. (PTI)



### RAHUL SLAMS GOVT OVER CUT IN UJJWALA SUBSIDISED REFILLS

In a scathing attack on the Government, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said 12 years of "anti-poor" economic policies and a "compromised" foreign policy have pushed the country into such a dire situation that lakhs of poor families and women have been forced to bear the "poisonous smoke of firewood stoves". Gandhi's criticism of the government came over its reduction of the number of subsidised refills of LPG gas cylinders under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. (PTI)

## Returning Officer rejects Congress candidate Meenakshi's nomination for Rajya Sabha election

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Congress suffered a major setback in the Rajya Sabha election process on Tuesday after the Returning Officer rejected the nomination of Congress candidate Meenakshi Natarajan following objections raised by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP had challenged Natarajan's nomination, alleging that she failed to disclose details of a case pending before a court in Telangana in her election affidavit. The party argued that the omission amounted to concealment of material facts and sought cancellation of her nomination.

Representing the BJP, advocate Sanket Gupta submitted a formal objection before the Returning Officer, contending that Supreme Court rulings and Election Commission guidelines require candidates to disclose all relevant cases



Congress candidate Meenakshi Natarajan speaks to media at PCC headquarters in Bhopal Madhya Pradesh

in their affidavits. He maintained that the alleged non-disclosure made the nomination liable for rejection.

The issue triggered intense political activity inside the Madhya Pradesh Assembly complex throughout the day. Senior leaders from both the Congress and the BJP gathered outside the Returning Officer's chamber as arguments were presented by both sides.

Before the decision was announced, Leader of Opposition Umang Singhar strongly defended Natarajan and termed the BJP's objection baseless. He argued that no criminal case had been registered against the Congress candidate and that the matter involved only a court notice.

According to Singhar, Election Commission rules require disclosure of registered criminal cases, not merely notices issued by courts.

He accused the BJP of raising the objection for political reasons and said Natarajan's legal team had submitted a detailed response before the Returning Officer.

## The number that could split Trinamool Congress

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH  
New Delhi

Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar's 19-MP Gamble Against Mamata Banerjee. Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar keeps returning to the same figure: nearly 20 MPs stand with her in open revolt against Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee. The number that actually decides the rebels' fate, however, is 19. On June 8, the four-time Barasat MP and former TMC chief whip led a dramatic breakaway in the Lok Sabha.

She claimed that 20 TMC MPs, including herself, had signed a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking recognition as a separate parliamentary bloc. The group declared it would extend support to the BJP-led NDA while remaining formally outside it, citing lawlessness, misgovernance and unemployment in West Bengal. Eighteen MPs signed physically, two did so online. The rebels have resigned from all party posts and insist they are not defecting but reforming from within to "work for Bengal's development in conjunction with



the Centre and State Government."

The arithmetic is everything in the lower house of the parliament. TMC holds 28 seats in the Lok Sabha (one vacancy after the death of a sitting MP). Under the anti-defection law's 10th Schedule, a breakaway faction needs the support of at least two-thirds of the party's strength in the House to merge with another party or function as a separate group without facing disqualification. For 28 MPs, the threshold is at least 19. Fall short, and the rebels lose their seats. If they muster the numbers, cross it, and keep both their mandates and their leverage.

The rebellion is the sharpest challenge to the

TMC chief Mamata Banerjee has ever faced in the party's 28-year history. It unfolded barely a month after TMC's crushing defeat in the May 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, where the party was reduced to just 80 seats against the BJP's landslide majority of 207 seats.

A parallel revolt is already underway in the state legislature, led by expelled MLA Ritabrata Banerjee. In Delhi, at least 14 rebel MPs were seen meeting Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav and West Bengal BJP Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari. Dastidar, a doctor-turned-politician and one of Mamata's most trusted lieutenants, has framed the uprising as ideological rather than personal.

### TMC LEADERS CRITICISE REBEL PARTY MPS

New Delhi: On Tuesday, Trinamool Congress leaders Kalyan Banerjee and Kirti Azad criticised rebel party MPs, accusing them of lacking political ethics, keeping ties with the BJP, and abandoning party workers facing harassment and political attacks.

Banerjee said the TMC called the meeting after dissenting MPs claimed support from most Lok Sabha members and planned to be recognised as a separate group. He asked why they were not joining the BJP if they had the support they claimed to have, adding that the BJP would not accept them.

On Monday, Lok Sabha MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, a leader of a rebel group, said they planned to write to Speaker Om Birla to express support for the NDA. She claimed 20 party MPs had agreed to write. Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy resigned from the Upper House after making allegations against the party. Banerjee said rebel MPs should do the same if

they had grievances.

Banerjee said Sukhendu Sekhar Roy had resigned from the Rajya Sabha after making allegations against the party, and urged others making similar allegations to resign as MPs and show political morality. He questioned whether a letter from the dissident group was genuine, noting that such an important document had not been shared publicly. He asked why it was not made public or given to the press, alleging the exercise lacked transparency.

Banerjee said the rebel leaders were working closely with the BJP.

The two leaders pointed out that rebel MPs met Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav, with West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari present, saying this showed they were with the BJP. On Monday, while TMC leader Mamata Banerjee, national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and several senior MPs attended a meeting of the INDIA bloc leaders. (PNS)

## Disruptions in Houses a serious challenge to democracy: Om Birla

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Chandigarh

The Second Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region Zone-II (North Zone) concluded on Tuesday with the valedictory address by the Governor of Haryana, Professor Asim Kumar Ghosh.

Addressing the valedictory ceremony, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla stated that frequent interruptions and disruptions in the Houses pose a serious challenge to democratic institutions. He underlined that the solution to this problem lies within the legislative institutions themselves by promoting conduct aligned with public expectations, dialogue, and meaningful discussion. Strengthening public trust is the greatest responsibility of all public representatives today. He called upon the public representatives to ensure that their conduct in legislative institutions is exemplary so that the welfare of the last person in



Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla Addressing the Valedictory Session at the 2nd Annual Conference of the Zone-II, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region in Chandigarh

society can be secured. Birla remarked, "Society is shaped by the conduct and behaviour of its leadership. The public has elected and sent us here, hence our conduct has a direct impact on society."

He hoped that all legislators would assimilate these resolutions in their respective states and institutions and move forward.

Expressing happiness over the successful organisation of the two-day conference,

Birla said that public representatives and policy-makers from various states shared their experiences, perspectives, and innovations here. He informed that the conference concluded with four important resolutions aimed at making legislative institutions more effective, accountable, and people-centric.

He said that the dream of a Developed India (Viksit Bharat) is anchored on strong parliamentary and legislative institutions.

## Centre announces ₹95,692 cr interim allocation under VB-G RAM G

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Centre on Tuesday announced an interim allocation of ₹95,692 crore under the newly introduced VB-G RAM G scheme for a seamless transition, with Union Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan asserting that no state would face any reduction in funds.



Addressing a press conference after a meeting with the state rural development ministers, Chouhan said the interim allocation had been made as the draft rules of the new scheme were still being finalised and to ensure that rural employment and development activities continue uninter-

rupted after June 30. "Without causing any inconvenience to workers, we are moving from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to the Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Grameen) (VB-G RAM G). There will not be a gap of even a single day in the availability of work," he said.

Chouhan said the central government has already allocated ₹30,000 crore under MGNREGA. In addition, an interim allocation of ₹95,692 crore has been released today to states and Union territories, which brings the total allocation to over ₹1.25 lakh crore.

According to the Rural Development Ministry, Uttar Pradesh has been allotted the highest interim allocation of ₹9,721.48 crore, followed by West Bengal at ₹8,508 crore, Tamil Nadu at ₹7,585.49 crore, Rajasthan at ₹7,581.87 crore, Andhra Pradesh at ₹7,707.21 crore and Bihar at ₹6,715.83 crore.

## Shah unveils LPMS platform for tech-driven border security

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH  
New Delhi

In the national Capital on Tuesday, diplomacy and infrastructure converged through two parallel moves that underscore India's renewed focus on its 4,096-km eastern frontier with Bangladesh. As the 57th Director General-level Border Coordination Conference between the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) enters its second day (June 8-11), Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the Land Port Management System (LPMS), a flagship digital platform designed to overhaul land border management at India's 13 operational land ports.

Official statements described the LPMS launch as a "step towards modern,



technology-enabled smart border management."

The system brings together real-time data analytics, automated clearance, and better surveillance to make trade smoother and address cross-border risks. This move fits with Shah's idea of a "smart border project" that uses drones, radars, sensors, and AI-driven monitoring in BSF-guarded areas. The goal is to make operations more

transparent, reduce manual work, and improve detection of smuggling, infiltration, and counterfeiting.

At BSF headquarters, DG Praveen Kumar (IPS) is leading the Indian team in talks with BGB chief Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui. This four-day conference, which has been held twice a year since the two forces started working together, comes at a

sensitive moment. India wants stronger action against illegal migration, cattle smuggling, drug trafficking, arms movement, and gaps in the border fence, especially in West Bengal, where land issues have caused delays.

Bangladesh is expected to bring up concerns about alleged "push-in" incidents and reported border deaths. These tensions have already appeared in local meetings, including recent standoffs with civilians at the Panchagarh-Thakurgaon sector.

The timing of these steps is important because they indicate a broader shift in how India manages its eastern border. By digitising port operations at places like Petrapole and Hilli, the LPMS adds a digital layer of security and trade management to the existing physical barriers.

Security experts see these changes as part of a bigger strategy. The BSF is moving beyond traditional border guarding, incorporating civil administration and technology into its approach. Shah recently announced a "quadrangular security grid" that is being tested along the Bangladesh border, where economic and security interests sometimes clash. If it works, the LPMS could cut clearance times by up to half, help legal trade, and disrupt smuggling networks, as long as Dhaka cooperates.

For India, these talks are a chance to agree on joint patrols, faster intelligence sharing, and a strong position against insurgents and traffickers. BSF officials say the agenda also covers updating procedures for fence repairs, the use of drones, and handling accidental crossings.



## States Focus



### REBEL SAD MLA MANPREET JOINS AMRITPAL'S PARTY

Rebel Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) MLA Manpreet Singh Ayal joined the Amritpal Singh-led Akali Dal (Waris Punjab De) here on Tuesday. He joined the party in the presence of Amritpal's father Tarsem Singh and Faridkot MP Sarabjit Singh Khalsa. Ayal's joining came days after he quit the Shiromani Akali Dal (Punjab Surjit), a breakaway faction of the Sukhbir Singh Badal-led SAD. A three-time MLA from the Dhaka seat in Ludhiana, Ayal had announced resignation from all posts of the SAD (Punjab Surjit) on May 20. Following the joining, Ayal said he will raise various issues of Punjab, including the release of 'Bandi Singhs' (Sikh prisoners), unemployment and law and order. Replying to a question, he emphasised 'Panthic' unity. Khalsa said Ayal's joining will give a boost to the party, as he is an experienced leader and has a clean image. Amritpal's father Tarsem Singh said he welcomes Ayal into the party old. Khadoor Sahib MP Amritpal Singh is currently lodged in a jail in Assam (PTI)



### ARUNACHAL IS KEY TO INDIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE: PABITRA

Describing Arunachal Pradesh as an integral part of India's cultural heritage, Union minister Pabitra Margherita on Tuesday praised the state's progress in infrastructure development and preservation of indigenous traditions, while crediting its MPs for helping bring key development and textile projects to the region. Addressing weavers, handicraft artisans and district officials during his visit to the Lower Subansiri district, Margherita, the Union Minister of State for external affairs and textiles said Arunachal Pradesh holds a special place in the country's cultural identity and reiterated the Centre's commitment to supporting traditional crafts and local livelihoods. (PTI)

## ED summons ex-Kerala CM's daughter in PMLA case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Kochi

The Enforcement Directorate has summoned former Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's daughter Veena T and officials of sand mining company Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd (CMRL) for questioning in a money laundering case.

Officials said Veena has been asked to depose at the central agency's zonal office here on June 12. Her statement will be recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

CMRL managing director Sasidharan Kartha and other company officials are among the nine others who have been summoned for questioning on different dates beginning this week, the officials said.

The investigation pertains to alleged irregularities in CMRL's financial transactions and its links with



Veena's now-defunct company Exalogic Solutions Private Limited.

The ED is probing an allegation that CMRL made fraudulent payments worth ₹2.78 crore to Exalogic Solutions under the guise of 'IT consultancy services'.

Another company named Empower India Capital Investment Private Limited, operated by Kartha, had also extended loans worth ₹50 lakh to Exalogic Solutions despite its failure to make timely repayments,

the officials said. They claimed that the CMRL management and Veena generated "proceeds of crime" in this process and that they want to understand the rationale behind these transactions from them.

The PMLA case was filed in March 2024 after the ED took cognisance of a complaint registered by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), the investigation arm of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, which later filed a prosecution complaint

(chargesheet) before an Ernakulam court in April 2025.

The CMRL was caught in the crosshairs of central probe agencies following an Income Tax Department raid in January 2019, which unearthed alleged fake expenses to the tune of ₹130 crore. Court documents reveal that the company had "inflated" its expenditure by ₹133.82 crore by booking "bogus" cash expenses under the heads of 'transportation' and 'sludge handling' between the financial years 2012-13 and 2018-19 and generated cash that was used to make illegal payments to politicians, parties, media houses and public servants.

The court papers state that the CMRL CFO and MD "admitted" before tax authorities that such cash payments were made to ensure smooth business operations, as they faced threats of closure of the business and environmental challenges.

### CPI(M) SEEKS TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM VEENA VIJAYAN AFTER ED SUMMONS

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The ED summons to T Veena, daughter of former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in a money-laundering case triggered political reactions on Tuesday, with CPI(M) leaders seeking to distance the party from the matter and saying that she would deal with it through legal channels.

The remarks also came in the wake of criticism over a violent protest allegedly carried out by party workers following the recent ED raid at Veena's residence here in connection with the case.

Reacting to the development, CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas said the law should take its own course in the matter. "Veena's case should proceed on its own merits. Let the investigation take its course," Brittas told

reporters in New Delhi.

He said Veena had already furnished details before the Serious Fraud Investigation Office. Seeking an ED investigation into the donations made by a Kerala-based sand mining company named Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd (CMRL) to leaders of various political parties, Brittas called for a comprehensive probe into the company's political contributions. Claiming that certain political parties had acknowledged receiving funds from the company, Brittas said questions should also be raised regarding whether such contributions were duly disclosed to the Election Commission. "When viewed in that context, the disputes relating to Veena's case are comparatively small," he said. (PNS)

## CITU expresses grief over fatal accident at Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) expressed shock and grief over a fatal accident at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant on June 8, in which eight employees died on the spot while transferring hot molten steel from the furnace (SMS) to the continuous casting system. The deceased include three regular workers, four contract workers and one officer. Six others sustained severe injuries. CITU said the death toll may rise further.

According to CITU, the accident occurred during the movement of a ladle carrying molten steel from SMS-1 to the continuous caster.



The CITU alleged that the horrible accident took place basically owing to gross violation of and compromise in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), which is integrally linked with the basic preventive safety norms in such an extremely hazardous steel production process.

CITU stated that any lapse in this process can cause the hot metal mix to explode in the ladle, leading to spillage of molten metal. The union

noted that Vizag Steel Plant operates with only one ladle furnace despite its large capacity, while other SAIL integrated steel plants have at least three. Repeated demands by unions to increase the number of LFs were ignored by the management, CITU alleged.

The union further claimed that substandard ferro-alloy was used and the stipulated time for LF or ARS processing was skipped on the day of the accident.

CITU also pointed to a critical shortage of trained manpower due to superannuation without fresh recruitment, forced VRS, and the termination of over 5,000 skilled contract workers. The union said this shortage has become a hazard for safe operations.

## Tejashwi Yadav slams Bihar CM over Rabri's bungalow row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Patna

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday hit out at the Bihar Government for allotting a bungalow occupied by his mother and former CM Rabri Devi to a minister and downgrading security cover for his parents, alleging that Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary was indulging in cheap politics.

Yadav accused the BJP-led NDA dispensation of patronising corrupt officials and criminals and claimed that law and order has "completely collapsed" in the State. "Samrat Choudhary is playing cheap politics... What is the need for security? Those who are afraid have kept security. The people are with us... Although Samrat Choudhary has become chief minister, he is not a chief minister; he is a cheap minister," Yadav said while speaking to reporters. His comment comes after the building construction department, through a May 27 order, allotted the 10, Circular Road bungalow, which Rabri Devi has been occupying for two decades, to BJP leader and state



minister Nand Kishor Ram.

The State Government also downgraded the security cover given to RJD supremo and former CM Lalu Prasad and his wife Rabri Devi.

High drama was witnessed at the residence of Rabri Devi on June 6 when several RJD leaders stood guard, claiming their leader had "returned" her security cover in protest against "shabby" treatment from the NDA Government.

Talking to reporters here, Yadav, the RJD national working president, said, "The NDA Government in the state is least bothered about the problems being faced by the people. Its leaders are busy patronising corrupt officials and criminals."

## Congress scared of BJP-JD(S) tie-up for 2028 polls: HD Kumaraswamy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Mandya

JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy on Tuesday said that the ruling Congress in Karnataka is worried about his party's alliance with the BJP and its implication in the 2028 Assembly polls and hence was attempting to create a divide by making sympathetic remarks regarding ex-PM HD Deve Gowda not getting a Rajya Sabha seat.

The clarification came amid criticism from Congress leaders, who accused the BJP of denying Gowda a Rajya Sabha nomination. Congress empathises with Deve



Gowda now. Everyone knows how they treated Gowda in his 70 years of political life.

I don't want to discuss it now. They are showing sympathy towards Deve Gowda because they are worried about the BJP-JD(S)

alliance; they realise what will happen in the 2028 Assembly polls, so they intend to create division in the alliance," Kumaraswamy said.

Speaking to reporters, he asked, "Did JD(S) or Deve Gowda ask for a Rajya Sabha seat?" "It is not of our concern; the BJP has over 60 MLAs.

If we ask for a Rajya Sabha seat, what will be the public opinion about Deve Gowda? Some are discussing that Deve Gowda would have raised Karnataka's voice there (in Parliament), which is a different matter. Whether he is in power or not, I can give multiple examples of him raising his voice for the

state," he added.

Late on Sunday, the BJP announced Prof M Nagaraja as its Rajya Sabha candidate from Karnataka, where the party can win one of the four seats going to polls on June 18, based on its current strength in the Assembly.

The polls were necessary because the terms of four MPs, including Gowda, are concluding this month. The JD(S), an ally of the BJP, was reportedly hoping the latter would re-nominate its supremo to the Rajya Sabha.

Clarifying that Gowda has never gone to the doors of others for the

sake of power, Kumaraswamy said that despite having the chance to serve as Prime Minister for a full five years, Gowda quit and came back, stating that he would not remain if his self-esteem were hurt.

"Will he have to fight for a Rajya Sabha seat? He only needs good health from God," he added.

The JD(S) leader also rejected the Congress party's claims that they had ensured Gowda's entry into the Rajya Sabha last time in June 2020.

"Where and when did it happen? Where did Congress have the number to put another candidate?" he asked.

## No action against 21 AIADMK MLAs who supported TVK in floor test: Speaker

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Chennai

Days after the rival AIADMK factions patched up, Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker JCD Prabhakar announced on Tuesday that no action will be taken against the 21 MLAs from the opposition party who voted in favor of the TVK Government during the May 13 floor test.

The decision follows a formal request from AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) to drop the matter. Speaking to reporters at the State secretariat, Prabhakar said that after considering the request, it was decided the 21 AIADMK MLAs will not be disqualified.

To a question about the fate of four AIADMK MLAs who have resigned and joined the ruling TVK, Prabhakar said action has been initiated against the legislators. "Once a decision has been made,



I will inform you officially", he added. Following the speaker's decision these legislators will continue as Assembly members without facing action under anti-defection laws. During the crucial trust vote for the newly formed TVK government, 25 out of the AIADMK's 47 MLAs defied party the diktat to vote against the C Joseph Vijay-led ruling dispensation.

## Zoji La tunnel a game changer for Ladakh: LG Saxena after historic breakthrough

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Leh

Ladakh Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday described the historic breakthrough of the Zoji La Tunnel as a "game changer" for the Union Territory, saying it will revolutionise connectivity and drive the region's development.

Calling the project a dream initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor said the tunnel will provide year-round connectivity between Ladakh and the rest of India while significantly improving access to border areas. "The historic breakthrough of Zoji La Tunnel, a dream project of the prime



important chapter in India's infrastructure development journey and all-weather connectivity between J&K and Ladakh, the Lt Governor thanked him for making the project possible and for supporting Ladakh with key road infrastructure projects.

Saxena said enhanced connectivity would boost tourism, create new livelihood avenues and bolster the collective efforts for sustainable development in the high-altitude regions of Ladakh. J&K LG Manoj Sinha said that we are grateful to PM Modi and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari for making the historic Zojila Tunnel breakthrough a reality.

minister, will prove to be a game changer in the development journey of Ladakh. This would significantly strengthen connectivity in the border regions of Ladakh and provide year-round connectivity with the rest of India," Saxena said in a post on X.

Responding to a post shared by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, who described the breakthrough as an

illustrious career spanning over three decades. He is one of the tunnelling experts who have been associated with four major strategic tunnel projects in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

An M Tech in Tunnelling and Underground Space Technology, Janak Singh Rathore transformed these academic achievements into practical engineering excellence, contributing significantly to some of India's most challenging and strategically important tunnel projects in the Himalayan region. As project director, he played an

active role in the construction of the 9 km long Chenani-Nashri Tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. Later, Janak Singh Rathore became part of the core team of experts who supervised the work of the 6.5 km long Z-Morh Tunnel and successfully implemented the project.

Previously, he worked tirelessly on another ambitious project, the 8.5 km long Qazigund-Banihal tunnel, which provided all-weather connectivity to the commuters travelling in the region. Speaking exclusively to The Pioneer, Janak Singh



Rathore said, "From Jammu to Ladakh, I have served in different roles across these landmark projects, gaining invaluable experience and working alongside some of the finest professionals in the industry."

He said all these projects were extremely challenging in terms of complex geology, unpredictable hydrology, harsh weather conditions, freezing temperatures ranging from -15°C to -35°C, difficult terrain. Yet, each challenge became an opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to nation-building. "As I continue my journey

with the Zojila Tunnel Project, I feel grateful for every challenge, every lesson, and every colleague who has been part of this remarkable journey and the experience. These tunnels are not merely engineering marvels; they are symbols of determination, connectivity, and national progress," he added. He said, "I feel proud to have contributed, even in a small way, to these transformative infrastructure projects."

Rathore worked as a senior geotechnical expert on the Zojila tunnel project. He said our primary objective was to

transform geological uncertainty into informed engineering decisions, ensuring safe tunnel advancement, controlled project risks, and successful completion of this strategically important all-weather connectivity project linking Kashmir with Ladakh.

His expertise in rock mechanics, engineering geology, tunnel engineering, instrumentation, slope stability, groundwater management, and construction risk mitigation under challenging Himalayan conditions came in handy during the execution of the project.

## Zoji La breakthrough: Expert Janak Rathore hails 11,578-foot tunnel milestone

MOHIT KANDHARI  
Zojila Tunnel, Baltal

An ace geotechnical and tunnelling expert, Janak Singh Rathore, was on cloud nine on Tuesday after he witnessed Union Minister Nitin Gadkari performing the breakthrough blasting of the Zoji La tunnel being constructed at an altitude of 11,578 feet above sea level to provide all-weather connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh.

Hailing from the remote village of Sarthal in Kishtwar District, Janak Singh Rathore has come a long way in his

transform geological uncertainty into informed engineering decisions, ensuring safe tunnel advancement, controlled project risks, and successful completion of this strategically important all-weather connectivity project linking Kashmir with Ladakh.

His expertise in rock mechanics, engineering geology, tunnel engineering, instrumentation, slope stability, groundwater management, and construction risk mitigation under challenging Himalayan conditions came in handy during the execution of the project.



## Mamata meets Sonia amid rebellion in TMC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi

A day after an opposition INDIA bloc meeting stressed unity and better coordination among the alliance partners, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at her 10, Janpath residence.

Sources said the two leaders are learnt to have discussed the strategy between the two parties going forward after the opposition bloc meeting, and following an exodus of Trinamool members after the party's defeat to the BJP in the recent Bengal polls.

The meeting followed after Gandhi, the chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and Banerjee met each other warmly with a hug at the opposition bloc's meeting here on Monday. The Congress



TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee departing from the residence of Congress MP Sonia Gandhi after a meeting in New Delhi

shared pictures of the bonhomie between the two leaders. The meeting comes in the wake of a rebellion within the Trinamool, with several party MPs deciding to form a separate group and align with the ruling NDA.

A majority of Trinamool's 80 MLAs have already formed a separate group led by

Ritabrata Banerjee as the leader of opposition in the State Assembly.

This was the first closed-door meeting between Banerjee and Gandhi after Trinamool's defeat in the polls, and alleged attacks on party workers and MP Abhishek Banerjee after the elections.

## ED raids Sanjeev Arora over ₹100 crore GST scam

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH  
New Delhi/Chandigarh

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday launched a fresh round of searches in a money-laundering investigation involving former Punjab minister Sanjeev Arora and several associates. The agency is probing an alleged ₹100 crore Goods and Services Tax (GST) fraud linked to the sale of mobile phones.

ED officials said they are searching about six locations at the same time in Jalandhar and Ludhiana in Punjab, and Bareilly and Noida in Uttar Pradesh. These include homes and business offices linked to people and companies under investigation. The main focus is Hampton Sky Realty Ltd., a company connected to Arora. Authorities believe money from the alleged GST evasion was routed through this real estate firm and other channels to hide the illegal funds.

This comes just weeks after Arora was arrested. The 62-year-old was taken into custody last month after a day-long search at his official home in Chandigarh and is now in judicial custody. Arora, who previously held important portfolios such



as Power, Industry, and Commerce in the Aam Aadmi Party Government led by Bhagwant Mann, had his duties quickly assigned to other ministers after his arrest to keep the Government running smoothly.

The case has caused a stir in Punjab's political scene. Arora's arrest and the ongoing raids have raised questions about possible financial wrongdoing within the state's ruling party.

The ED's searches across several states show the agency's efforts to trace the full path of the suspected fraud. Investigators are looking into how GST refunds and input tax credits from mobile phone sales may

have been misused to create fake revenue, which was then moved into businesses that appeared legitimate, including real estate.

People familiar with the investigation said the new searches are meant to collect more documents, find evidence, and question those linked to the companies involved. Carrying out searches in four cities at once shows that the alleged scheme crossed state lines, with mobile phone supply chains reportedly used to divert large amounts of tax money.

The GST fraud, estimated at ₹100 crore, is believed to involve a network of shell companies and

fake invoices used to evade taxes. The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) authorises the ED to seize property and assets derived from these crimes. The raids on Tuesday are expected to provide important clues that could help uncover the larger scheme.

This situation has been a political challenge for the Punjab Government. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's team quickly reassigned duties to demonstrate their commitment to maintaining stability. Still, the case has raised further questions about how the AAP runs the Government, especially in key areas such as industry and commerce.

As the searches continue, the ED has not shared details about what they have found or whether there will be more arrests.

Legal experts say the agency's careful approach shows that the case has been built step by step. Arora, who says he is innocent, will likely face a long legal process. These recent events have drawn attention to the connection between politics and financial crimes in India as the investigation moves forward. People in Punjab's business and political circles are paying close attention.

## Operation Blue Star a 'black day': Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan's remark triggers row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Mumbai

Senior BJP leader and Maharashtra minister Girish Mahajan has kicked up a row by terming Operation Blue Star a "black day" and dubbing those killed in the military action "martyrs" while slamming the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

He also likened the Army action to the invasion of the Golden Temple by Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali.

Mahajan became the first representative of any state Government to attend the Operation Blue Star anniversary commemoration at the headquarters of Damdami Taksal in Amritsar district last Saturday. "For us, Operation Blue Star is a black day. Our brothers and sisters were martyred and killed," he



Girish Mahajan

said while addressing the gathering in Amritsar.

Terming Operation Blue Star a "military attack" on the Sikh community's holy shrine, Mahajan alleged that then PM Indira Gandhi had forcibly sent the Army into Punjab and inside the sacred complex. "It was a military attack on our holy shrine. Indiraji forcibly sent them (the Army) to Punjab and into our sacred place," he said. Drawing a parallel with Ahmad Shah Abdali's inva-

sion of the Golden Temple, Mahajan said the attack on the holy Sikh shrine in 1984 had caused deep pain to the community.

He further alleged that Sikhs were brutally killed and claimed that those responsible were never punished. "Such a major tragedy took place. I would not call it an accident, but a deliberate act in which so many of our brothers and sisters were killed. Even after that, nobody was punished," Mahajan said.

Operation Blue Star was a military operation by armed forces conducted between June 1 and 10, 1984, with the stated objective of removing Damdami Taksal leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and militants from the buildings of the Golden Temple.

The operation marked the beginning of the insurgency

in Punjab. The remarks triggered backlash from Congress and Shiv Sena (UBT), with senior leaders demanding Mahajan's sacking from the cabinet and BJP.

Maharashtra Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal said the minister should apologise to the armed forces for insulting them with his "Abdali invasion" remark and the people of the country, accusing him of attempting to glorify Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

In a statement, Sapkal said Operation Blue Star was a necessary military action against armed Khalistani militants and was not directed against any religion.

He alleged that Mahajan's comments questioned the sacrifices made by those who acted to safeguard the country's unity and integrity.

## Shaurya Chakra awards to two Manipur natives brought immense pride: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Imphal

Manipur Chief Minister Y Kheanchand Singh on Tuesday said conferring the Shaurya Chakra on two defence personnel from the state brought immense pride to the people.

His remarks came after Major Leishangthem Deepak Singh of 11 Para (Special Forces) and Rifleman Manglem Sang Vaiphei of 3 Assam Rifles, both from Manipur, were awarded the Shaurya Chakra on Monday for displaying raw courage, unparalleled bravery and total disregard for personal safety in the line of duty.

President Droupadi Murmu conferred seven Kirti Chakras, 15 Vir Chakras, and 29 Shaurya Chakras to the personnel of the defence



forces, Central Armed Police Forces and State or Union Territory police forces.

The Shaurya Chakra is India's third-highest peacetime gallantry award.

Extending congratulations to Leishangthem, Singh, in a social media post, said, "His courage, professionalism, and unwavering dedication to duty bring immense pride to Manipur and serve as an inspiration to generations of

young Indians." The CM saluted Leishangthem's valour and commitment to the nation.

He also extended congratulations to Vaiphei for "his exceptional courage, tactical acumen, and distinguished service during a counter-infiltration operation".

Vaiphei hails from the Churachandpur district. In another post, Singh said, "His (Vaiphei) gallantry and

dedication to the nation bring immense pride to Manipur and inspire our youth to serve with honour, commitment, and patriotism." BJP state president Adhikarimayum Sharda Devi, on behalf of the party, said the two brave sons of Manipur have displayed "extraordinary courage, unwavering dedication to duty, and selfless service to the nation". "Their acts of gallantry in the face of grave danger embody the highest traditions of valour, sacrifice, and patriotism," she said.

"The people of Manipur take immense pride in their remarkable achievements and salute their steadfast commitment to protecting innocent lives and safeguarding the sovereignty and security of our nation," she added.

## Conduct caste-based census immediately, PMK urges Tamil Nadu CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Chennai

PMK leader Dr Anbumani Ramadoss on Tuesday urged Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay to take immediate steps to conduct a caste-based census in Tamil Nadu.

Ramadoss met CM Vijay at the Secretariat and handed over a letter, a copy of which was later released to the media. In a letter addressed to Vijay, he said, "Tamil Nadu alone has gone beyond the usual 50 per cent cap and has



TN Chief Minister Joseph Vijay with Pattali Makkal Katchi MP Anbumani Ramadoss during a meeting at Chief Secretariat in Chennai

implemented a 69 per cent reservation, and it is the only state that sought to include this ceiling in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. However, the reservation is now under threat."

He pointed out that in the case challenging the 69 per cent reservation, the Supreme Court's judgment dated 13 July 2010 upheld it and at the same time directed that a caste-based census be conducted within a year to determine the exact extent of reservation. Stating that

reservation was confirmed without conducting the caste census, some parties again filed cases in 2012 against the 69 per cent limit.

"When these cases came up for hearing on 27 May this year, although the Supreme Court dismissed certain connected petitions on the ground that some student petitioners had completed their studies, two principal cases remain pending."

"Those cases can be listed for hearing in the Supreme Court at any time," he said,

adding, "If Tamil Nadu cannot demonstrate through a caste census that the population proportion of reserved communities justifies a 69 per cent reservation, there is a real risk that the 69 per cent ceiling may be struck down and therefore, it is necessary to conduct a caste-based enumeration in Tamil Nadu—commonly called a Social Justice Survey to protect the 69 per cent reservation," the former union minister said.

Pointing out that a national caste-based enumeration

was scheduled to be included as part of the 2027 national census being conducted by the central Government, Anbumani said, "The data gathered at the national level will not be sufficient to meet Tamil Nadu's needs".

"The central exercise will capture only certain macro indicators such as caste-wise population counts, which are inadequate for state-level decisions on quotas, livelihood improvements, and other social-justice actions," he said.

## Pradhan reviews re-NEET preparations



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
New Delhi

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday reviewed preparations for the June 21 NEET-UG re-test and assured candidates that measures have been put in place to ensure the examination is conducted smoothly, securely and without errors.

He also appealed to the candidates to focus on their studies, asserting that the government is taking extra precautions this time, from question paper setting to their delivery at the examination centres.

The minister assessed the readiness of the examination system and reviewed the measures being undertaken to ensure the smooth, secure and transparent conduct of the NEET-UG re-test.

During the review meeting at the headquarters of the National Testing Agency (NTA), Pradhan emphasised the importance of maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality and integrity throughout the examination process, sources said.

He said special attention has been given to safeguarding every stage of the process, from the preparation of question papers to the secure transportation and timely delivery of examination materials to centres across the country, they added.

Pradhan also said that meetings have been held under the Cabinet secretary, and all the states have been asked to cooperate with the re-examination process.

## Bihar: 5 killed as tree falls on their house in Sitamarhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Sitamarhi

Five members of a family, including three children and a newborn, died after a branch of a peepal tree fell on their house during a storm in Bihar's Sitamarhi district, officials said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred around 2 am in Rewasi village of the district, they said.

Confirming the incident, Sub Divisional Officer (Sitamarhi Sadar) Anand Kumar said, "A heavy branch of a peepal tree crashed onto the mud house of Sikandar Sahni during strong winds and rain early Tuesday. The occupants were trapped



under the debris."

The deceased have been identified as Sikandar Sahni's wife, Pooja Devi (32) and the couple's four children, all aged under 10 years, including a newborn. Sikandar Sahni sustained injuries in the incident and has received medical treatment, officials said. Riga MLA Baidyanath Prasad visited the bereaved family and expressed condolences.

## Punjab: Two linked to cross border terror module held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Amritsar

The Punjab Police in coordination with central agencies arrested two men linked to cross-border handlers and recovered two hand grenades from their possession, officials said on Tuesday.

Those arrested have been identified as Davinder Singh and Rajwinder Singh, both from Tam Taran. Police also impounded the car they were travelling in, which bore a Punjab registration number. Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav said preliminary investigation has revealed that the accused were in direct contact with foreign-based handlers and were



acting on their instructions.

He said the recovery of hand grenades points to a larger conspiracy aimed at disturbing peace and public order in the border state. According to the DGP, further investigation is underway to trace both forward and backward link-

ages to identify other members of the network.

Sharing operational details, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amritsar Rural Kanwalpreet Singh Chahal said police received reliable intelligence that Davinder and Rajwinder had retrieved

a consignment of explosive material sent by their cross-border handlers and were planning to carry out a terror-related activity to disturb peace and harmony in the State.

Acting swiftly on the input, police teams under the supervision of Deputy Superintendent of Police (Investigation) Gurinderpal Singh Nagra and DSP Attari Yadwinder Singh launched an intelligence-based operation and intercepted the duo in the Khasa area of Amritsar, recovering two hand grenades during the search of their vehicle.

The SSP further said preliminary probe suggests the accused were waiting for instructions from their

foreign-based handlers to execute a planned activity.

Chahal also revealed that both accused were introduced to the foreign-based handler by Harwant Singh alias Harry, who is currently lodged in Amritsar Jail.

He said the two men had previously smuggled several weapons and explosives to associates linked to Harwant. Police have also recovered a mobile phone belonging to Harwant from within Amritsar Jail, and a separate case has been registered in this regard, the SSP said.

Further investigation is underway to establish the full extent of the network and identify all individuals involved, officials added.

## Japanese PM likely to hold summit level talks with Modi in Guwahati

TONY DAS  
Guwahati

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is likely to arrive here on a three-day visit to Assam from July 1 to hold summit-level talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday.

The two Prime Ministers are expected to hold talks on varied issues, focusing on economic and infrastructure collaboration. Speaking at the launch of the pilot project of Blue Valley Cluster—Fragrances, Flavours and Ayush in collaboration with the European Union, the Chief Minister said that there is a possibility of summit-level talks between the



two Prime Ministers. "This will again strengthen Assam's role in India-Japan relationship," he added.

The possibility of the summit being held here indicates Assam's growing importance as a key stakeholder in the ambit of the Act East Policy.

## Kerala Govt rejects saffronisation charge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
Kottayam

Kerala Higher Education Minister Roji M John on Tuesday rejected allegations by the CPI(M) and its student wing SFI that the UDF Government was facilitating a BJP-friendly "power-sharing" arrangement in universities through appointments made by Governor and Chancellor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

Responding to reporters' questions on the allega-



Roji M John

tions, John said the Government remained firmly opposed to "saffronisation". "This Government

does not agree, under any circumstances, with saffronisation. That is what we have said from the very beginning; we have said it earlier as well. That itself is our position, and there is no change in it," he said.

The minister also turned the criticism back on the previous CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) Government, accusing it of allowing similar interventions in universities. "Those who are raising criticism now would do well to think

about what happened during their own period.

This practice of Chancellors or Governors intervening in the day-to-day functioning of universities in Kerala began during the period of the LDF Government," he said.

John alleged that individuals linked to the BJP, RSS and a pro-Sangh Parivar newspaper had been appointed to university bodies, including the Mahatma Gandhi University, during the previous Government's tenure.



## Editor's TAKE

### Nicobar island project: Development or ecocide

Nicobar, an island of immense ecological value, sits at the crossroads of strategic ambition and environmental recklessness

In the annals of India's development story, few projects have generated as much heat as the Great Nicobar Island Development Project. Conceived by NITI Aayog in 2021 and fast-tracked through environmental clearances the following year, the ₹81,000-crore mega-scheme promises a transshipment port, a dual-use military-civil airport, a township, and a power plant on one of the most ecologically sensitive islands on Earth. The government calls it holistic development. Critics call it something closer to ecocide.

The project's strategic logic is not without merit. Great Nicobar sits at one of the world's most consequential maritime chokepoints, near the Strait of Malacca, through which a staggering share of global trade passes daily. As the Indo-Pacific becomes an arena of intensifying great-power rivalry, New Delhi's desire to anchor a strategic and commercial presence here is understandable, even necessary. But strategy does not exempt a government from ecological accountability.

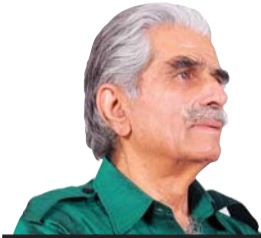
The environmental objections are not fringe concerns. More than seventy independent scientists and experts issued an open letter in late 2025 describing the project as an "exploitative commercial proposal" destructive to rich and diverse ecosystems. The numbers behind their alarm are staggering: approximately 9.6 lakh trees across 130 square kilometres of prehistoric tropical rainforest are slated for felling. Coral reefs, nesting grounds for giant leatherback turtles, and some of the world's last pristine island biospheres hang in the balance. When the Union Ministry of Environment defended the project before the National Green Tribunal in October 2025, it claimed full awareness of biodiversity impacts and a mitigation plan, but offered no satisfying answers as to what those mitigations actually entail. The human cost is no less troubling. The Shompen, one of India's most isolated and vulnerable indigenous communities, number fewer than 300 individuals. Their homeland lies directly within the project's footprint. The Nicobarese Tribal Council has alleged that community consent was falsely certified by authorities – a charge that, if true, would represent not just a legal violation but a moral failure on the part of the government. Experts warn that seismic tremors near the islands could signal volcanic activity. Great Nicobar sits in one of the most tectonically active zones on the planet – the same fault line that produced the catastrophic 2004 tsunami. Building a city intended to house hundreds of thousands of people atop this zone is not bold ambition. It is a recipe for disaster.

Nevertheless, the government's urgency is understandable. China's expanding naval reach and port investments across the Indian Ocean have understandably alarmed New Delhi.

What India must do is strike a balance: achieve its strategic objectives with minimal intervention, not an overhaul of the entire island. A genuinely independent environmental review, real and verifiable consent from the Shompen and Nicobarese communities, and a transparent assessment of seismic risk are the minimum conditions for the project to proceed. Great Nicobar's ecosystems, once destroyed, cannot be rebuilt. The island is a living system that the world cannot afford to lose.

## Delhi courts Nepal's new political forces

By extending a warm reception to Lamichhane, New Delhi underscored its determination to maintain momentum in bilateral ties amid political transitions in Kathmandu and reset its relationship with the Himalayan nation



ASHOK K MEHTA

Two back-to-back visits from Nepal's top leaders last week demonstrated Delhi's proactive diplomacy. For Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) Chairman Rabi Lamichhane, the visit was godsend, even if it was party-to-party, as he met top leaders. This is significant due to the uncertainty over Prime Minister Balen Shah's travels abroad during the first year of his tenure, which will be dedicated to 'domestic issues' of good governance and accountability. There were reports that he might go to the UNGA in New York and visit India either before or after it. But everything remains in the realm of speculation. Bhupdev Shah, the party general secretary and right-hand man, was known to have said in an interview to a Kathmandu portal that Balen was focused on achieving 100 goals in 100 days and would stay in the country for the first year.

This, and the fact that Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's travel to Kathmandu in mid-May – with an invitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Prime Minister Balen Shah to visit India – did not take place, confirmed that no visit from Shah should be expected this year. This will stir speculation that the Chinese might take advantage of the diplomatic vacuum, but the conversation in Kathmandu is mainly about which country Shah will visit first: India or China.

As part of India's Neighbourhood First policy, Delhi acted with great alacrity when Foreign Minister S Jaishankar was the first to arrive in Colombo within days of Anura Kumara Dissanayake becoming President, carrying an invitation to visit India. Delhi was therefore quick to avert widening the diplomatic gap with Nepal by getting BJP President Nitin Nabin to invite Lamichhane, which was immediately accepted, giving him a leg up over Balen, who has been hogging the spotlight, not always for the right reasons.

Lamichhane arrived in Delhi accompanied by his wife Nikita Poudel, Joint General Secretary Bipin Acharya, and Member of Parliament Deepak Bohara, along with a signed edit-page piece in Hindustan Times titled "How Can an Aspirational Nepal and a Rising India Reconnect?" He was received by BJP General Secretary and head of the Foreign Policy Cell and Diaspora, Vijay Chauthaiwale, who earned now-dubious fame when Arzu Rana, wife of then Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, tied him a rakhi four years ago.

Lamichhane had a hectic programme, symbolised by the red-carpet welcome and, according to a trusted source in the RSP, the warmth



LAMICHHANE WILL BE RE-ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF HIS PARTY AT THE END OF JUNE IN HIS CHITWAN STRONGHOLD, BOOSTING HIS RATINGS AS A NATIONAL LEADER

The writer, a retired Major General, served as Commander, IPKF (South), Sri Lanka, and was a founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, now the Integrated Defence Staff

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and humility shown by Modi in his meeting with him. He acknowledged reading Lamichhane's article and expressed willingness to help in whatever way he could in resetting ties. He requested that his good wishes be conveyed to Prime Minister Balen Shah, to whom he had already sent an invitation to visit India.

According to Kathmandu Post, the border issue was not discussed, though it had created a political earthquake in Parliament when Balen Shah stated that Nepal too had occupied Indian territory. Overall, the Lamichhane visit was very productive, with a string of meetings with Home Minister Amit Shah, Foreign Minister Jaishankar, NSA Ajit Doval, and, pointedly, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, whose visit had to be called off. Including Misri was designed to underline the point that Balen Shah's newly designed diplomatic protocol required recalibration with India, which enjoys special and multifaceted relations with Nepal. Rabi's popularity among Nepalese in India could be gauged by the tumultuous welcome he received at the Pyarelal Auditorium, which was jam-packed.

No one should forget that Lamichhane was one of the most famous television show anchors of a programme titled Seedha Kura Janata Sang (Straight Talk with the People). He gained national fame in 2013 by setting a world record in the Guinness Book for the longest television talk-show broadcast, running con-

tinuously for over 62 hours on News24.

From Delhi, Lamichhane proceeded to Lucknow and then to Ayodhya. The question Nepalese may be asking is whether he was showing deference to the Hindu Rashtra and monarchy at a time when the Royalist Rashtriya Prajatantra Party had been decimated by the RSP landslide and the party further divided. Incidentally, during the talks in Delhi, the RSS was conspicuously omitted.

Lamichhane returned to Kathmandu and received a hero's welcome from the media. They bombarded him with questions, which he was at pains to answer, given that the visit was merely to strengthen party-to-party relations and no specific issue was taken up for discussion, including the sensitive Kalapani dispute.

For that and other government-to-government matters, Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal arrived in Delhi on June 5, for a quick follow-up to Lamichhane's familiarisation with the Indian leadership. He was received by Additional Secretary (North) in the Foreign Ministry, Mannu Mahawar. Khanal had met Jaishankar last month during the India Foundation-helmed Indian Ocean Dialogue.

He has prioritised the bilateral issues Nepal has in mind, notably the central themes of development diplomacy and connectivity, which were at the heart of Lamichhane's article. This was Khanal's first official visit to India, during which he had frank and warm discussions with Jaishankar on the gamut of bilateral issues. These included linking borders through the 150-km Raxaul-Kathmandu railway line, for which the DPR has been completed;

the thorny issue of direct flights from the China-constructed Pokhara and Bhairahawa/Lumbini international airports to destinations in India, which have not been operationalised due to Indian

security concerns; a comprehensive list of Nepal's hydropower projects constituting the integrated energy market; and recent cross-border issues. The Lamichhane article recommended resetting relations to August 3, 2014, when Modi first visited Nepal as Prime Minister.

One other issue that has been pending for nearly five years is recruitment under the Agniveer scheme, which previous governments in Nepal had rejected. While Dhanraj Regmi, RSP MP and son of a soldier, has been actively canvassing for its resumption, Indian Army Nepali Gorkha veterans had also met Lamichhane seeking its revival. It is not known whether Khanal raised the issue last week.

After his successful confidence-building visit to Delhi, Lamichhane will be re-elected chairman of his party at the end of June in his Chitwan stronghold, boosting his ratings as a national leader. The other key actor in Nepal's development diplomacy taking off is balancing China – never easy.



## PICTALK



Father-son duo beat the heat under lawn sprinklers near India Gate as temperatures soars in New Delhi.

PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR



SANJAY CHANDRA

## 2ND OPINION

The ongoing society elections have generated the usual debates, disagreements, and campaign promises. Yet a few conversations I encountered recently stayed with me long after the election discussions themselves had faded.

One of the candidates is a woman who is widely known within the community for her commitment and hard work. She is often among the first to respond when residents face difficulties and among the last to leave when a task remains unfinished. Unlike many who appear only during elections, her engagement with the community has been visible throughout the year. A resident from her own tower recently advised her not to contest. His reasoning was straightforward. She would lose. Not because she lacked commitment or capability, but because she was a woman. He further suggested that she should recognise her limitations

## The prejudices we still carry

as a woman, particularly since an elected representative would be expected to deal with all kinds of people, including unsavoury elements. The advice was given as practical wisdom. A few days later, I overheard a group of morning walkers discussing another resident. Their conversation was punctuated by loud laughter and knowing glances. The object of their amusement had stated that the apartment was in his wife's name and that she would cast her vote as she chose. What followed was not a discussion about voting rights or personal choice. The laughter was at the suggestion that a man who did not control his wife's decisions had somehow failed in his role. These were accomplished professionals occupying senior positions in their respective fields.

The conversations reminded me of an evening nearly twenty-five years ago during an official visit to another city. I was taken to a prestigious club frequented by prominent politicians from rival parties. The atmosphere was relaxed and cordial, with political differences seemingly suspended over drinks and conversation. What I remember most clearly, however, was the laughter that followed an extremely sexist remark about a female politician.

The incidents occurred in different places and at different times. But they seemed connected by a common thread.

We often measure social progress through visible indicators. More women occupy leadership positions today than ever before. By almost every measurable standard,

society has moved forward. Yet many old prejudices still survive in subtle forms – in assumptions disguised as concern, in jokes disguised as humour, and in opinions disguised as common sense. They appear when competence is acknowledged in principle but doubted in practice, when independence is celebrated publicly but mocked privately, and when equality is accepted as an idea but resisted as a lived reality. This is what makes such attitudes difficult to confront. Overt discrimination is easier to identify. Hidden prejudice often arrives wrapped in the language of realism, tradition, practicality, or experience. Those expressing it rarely see themselves as prejudiced at all.

Perhaps this is why legal and institutional measures, important though they may be, can only take society so far. Societies do not become truly equal when women are simply allowed to participate. They become equal when competence is judged independently of gender, when respect is extended without qualification, and when dignity is not contingent upon conformity to old expectations.

Progress, after all, is not measured only by what we claim to believe. It is measured by what we reveal about ourselves when we speak freely, laugh casually, and assume nobody is paying attention. The prejudices we fail to confront are often the ones we quietly pass on.



The writer is a founder of Kala - Crazy About Literature And Arts, is an author, speaker, coach, and strategy consultant

## DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

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## TALENT NEEDS PATIENCE BEFORE REACHING CRICKET'S SUMMIT

There is no denying the talent that the young cricket prodigy, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, possesses. While excitement has surrounded his call-up for India in the T20 series, cricket would do well to distinguish between promise and preparedness. In sport, one must not confuse early brilliance with enduring greatness. History is filled with prodigious talents who attracted enormous attention but struggled to meet expectations. Sports fans remember players such as Freddy Adu, whose career never matched the hype generated during his teenage years. Excessive publicity and unrealistic expectations can place immense pressure on young athletes long before they are fully prepared for the demands of elite competition.

The exceptional few, such as Sachin Tendulkar, Lionel Messi, and Max Verstappen, combined

extraordinary talent with years of disciplined training, strong support systems, and progressively tougher challenges. Their success was not built on talent alone but on patience, resilience, and continuous development.

Within Indian cricket, Tendulkar emerged through the rigours of long-format cricket at a time when T20 did not dominate the sporting imagination. Others, including Vinod Kambli, faded early despite immense promise, highlighting the importance of temperament and sustained growth.

If Vaibhav is to serve Indian cricket over the long term, his development must remain anchored in the longer formats of the game. Otherwise, he risks becoming merely a short-format specialist, vulnerable to the next wave of fleeting talent.

R NARAYANAN | NAVI MUMBAI

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A new role for the Opposition

The Opposition's renewed call for unity must be carefully calibrated. Voters across states have grown weary of negative campaigns that focus solely on attacking the government without offering constructive alternatives. Electoral setbacks in several states have shown that excessive criticism, unaccompanied by a credible vision, often erodes public trust rather than strengthening Opposition ranks.

Instead of positioning themselves as obstructionists, Opposition parties should channel their collective energy into advancing governance agendas that address the concerns of ordinary citizens. Unity should not be limited to amplifying grievances; it should involve pressing the government to implement projects and policies that genuinely benefit the nation. By demanding accountability on development, employment, infrastructure, education and health-care, the Opposition can establish itself as a responsible and relevant force. A strategy rooted in constructive engagement is more likely to resonate with citizens than relentless criticism. It allows the Opposition to rebuild credibility, demonstrate political maturity and show that unity is about strengthening democratic institutions and promoting national progress.

O PRASADA RAO | HYDERABAD

### A wake-up call for political parties

A major rebellion is reportedly brewing within the Trinamool Congress (TMC), with several MPs said to be seeking recognition as a separate bloc and extending support to the ruling NDA. If true, this development could have significant implications for both West Bengal and national politics. Such political realignments raise important questions about internal party democracy, leadership accountability, and the mandate entrusted by voters. While elected representatives have every right to express dissent, any change in political allegiance must be transparent and consistent with constitutional provisions, including the Anti-Defection Law, to preserve public trust in democratic institutions.

The situation also highlights a wider challenge facing political parties across India: the need to address internal grievances, encourage dialogue, and remain connected to grassroots concerns. At a time when Parliament should focus on pressing issues such as inflation, unemployment, education, and economic growth, leaders must prioritise governance over political manoeuvring.

This episode serves as a reminder that democratic stability depends not only on electoral success but also on responsible leadership, institutional integrity, and respect for the people's mandate.

VIDYASAGAR REDDY KETHIRI | NEW DELHI

### Turning literacy into opportunity

The Uttar Pradesh government's success in implementing the Nav Bharat Saksharta Abhiyan demonstrates that large-scale adult literacy is achievable when political will, administrative commitment, and grassroots infrastructure work together effectively. Reaching 11.68 lakh adults above the age of fifteen in just three years is a commendable achievement and a significant step towards inclusive development. The programme's objective extends beyond basic literacy. It seeks to promote awareness, self-reliance, and meaningful participation in economic and social life. Experience from states such as Kerala and Himachal Pradesh shows that literacy initiatives create lasting impact only when linked to livelihood opportunities, legal awareness, health education, banking access, and digital literacy.

The centrally sponsored programme offers valuable lessons for other states with large adult literacy burdens. However, its success ultimately depends on sincere and sustained implementation by local administrations. Whether this initiative becomes a genuine social transformation or remains merely an impressive statistic remains to be seen. One hopes the commitment endures beyond electoral cycles and continues empowering people at the grassroots level.

A MYLSAMI | COIMBATORE

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## Rising seas, stronger cyclones and the fight for our blue planet

The oceans — sustaining life, biodiversity, and oxygen production — face mounting threats. Rising sea levels, warming waters, coral bleaching, plastic pollution, and intensifying coastal disasters are pushing marine ecosystems towards a dangerous tipping point



SATENDRA SINGH | TANUSHREE

Every year the world comes together to observe World Ocean Day — a moment to reflect on how deeply our lives depend on the health of our seas. Oceans cover nearly 71 per cent of Earth's surface, produce half the oxygen we breathe, regulate the global climate, and sustain the livelihoods of over three billion people. Yet today, these vast blue expanses face an unprecedented convergence of threats: climate change, pollution, habitat destruction, overfishing, and even the environmental fallout of armed conflict.

The theme of World Ocean Day 2026 — "Reimagine: Beyond the World We Know, A New Relationship with Our Ocean" — captures the urgency of this moment. It is a reminder that humanity's fate is inseparable from the fate of the ocean, and that meaningful change demands more than awareness. It demands action. Central to this year's campaign is the call for strong Marine Protected Areas and the urgent implementation of the global 30x30 Goal — the commitment to place at least 30 per cent of the planet's lands, waters, and oceans under conservation protection by 2030.

### The Ocean as Earth's Life-Support System

The oceans are far more than a scenic backdrop to human civilisation. They absorb roughly 30 per cent of all carbon dioxide emissions and about 90 per cent of the excess heat generated by those emissions. Without this enormous buffering capacity, Earth's surface temperatures would climb rapidly, rendering vast regions uninhabitable. In this sense, the ocean is not just the planet's lungs — it is its most critical climate regulator. But this service comes at a cost. As oceans absorb more heat and carbon dioxide, they grow warmer and more acidic, making conditions increasingly hostile for marine life. The consequences are already visible: more frequent marine heatwaves, mass coral bleaching events, disrupted migration patterns among fish species, and the intensification of tropical storms. Ocean warming is not a problem of the distant future. It is one of the defining challenges of our time.

### Rising seas and coastal peril

Global mean sea levels have already risen between 21 and 24 centimetres since 1880, driven by the thermal expansion of warming water and the accelerating melt of glaciers and ice sheets. The latest IPCC projections suggest sea levels could rise by anywhere between 30 centimetres and one metre by the end of this century, depending on future emissions.

The human stakes are immense. More than 680 million people currently live in low-lying coastal zones. Major cities — Mumbai, Kolkata, Shanghai, Bangkok, Jakarta, New York, and Miami — face growing flood risks. Entire small island nations risk being submerged, with their populations displaced. For India, with over 7,500 kilometres of coastline supporting ports, industries, fishing communities, and dense urban populations, the threat is particularly acute. Rising seas combined with growing coastal populations are creating a slow-moving disaster that will define the coming decades.

### Corals: Ocean's Vanishing Rainforests

Coral reefs occupy just one per cent of the ocean floor, yet they shelter approximately 25 per cent of all marine species. They sustain fisheries, provide livelihoods through tourism, and protect coastlines by absorbing wave energy. But they are also among the most climate-sensitive ecosystems on Earth. Warmer water triggers coral bleaching — corals expel the symbiotic algae they depend on for survival, and repeated bleaching leads to colony death. Scientists estimate that up to 50 per cent of the world's coral reefs have already disappeared or severely degraded since 1950. A recent global bleaching event affected reefs in more than 80 countries. The loss ripples outward: declining fish stocks, diminished tourism, and coastlines vulnerable to storm surges.

### Acidification and plastic: Twin silent crises

Ocean acidification — often called the "evil twin" of climate



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OCEAN WARMING IS ALSO FUELLING MORE POWERFUL TROPICAL CYCLONES. WHILE THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STORMS MAY NOT BE RISING DRAMATICALLY, A GROWING PROPORTION ARE REACHING EXTREME INTENSITY. CYCLONES FANI, AMPHAN, TAUKTAE, YAAS, BIPARJOY, REMAL, AND DANA HAVE ALL DEVASTATED COASTAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION IN RECENT YEARS

Satendra Singh, IFS, former Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management, GOI and Tanushree, Junior Faculty at FDDI, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GOI

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change — receives far less attention than it deserves. Since the Industrial Revolution, ocean acidity has increased by 26 per cent. This threatens species that rely on calcium carbonate to build shells and skeletons, including corals, shellfish, and plankton. As these foundational organisms struggle, the effects cascade through entire marine food webs, ultimately threatening food security for coastal communities worldwide.

Meanwhile, plastic pollution has reached catastrophic proportions. Between 19 and 23 million tonnes of plastic waste enter the oceans every year. Plastic has been found in the deepest ocean trenches and in the most remote marine environments. Sea turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish. Seabirds feed plastic fragments to their chicks. Abandoned fishing gear entangles and kills marine animals. As larger plastic breaks down into microplastics, these particles have turned up in seafood, drinking water, human blood, and even placental tissue. If current trends continue, plastic entering the ocean could nearly triple by 2040.

### Mangroves: Nature's frontline defence

Among the most underappreciated coastal ecosystems are mangrove forests. These remarkable trees — thriving at the boundary between land and sea — serve as nurseries for fish, crabs, and prawns, improve water quality, and function as highly efficient carbon sinks, storing more carbon per unit area than many terrestrial forests. India has approximately 4,992 square kilometres of mangrove cover, including the Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest. Critically, mangroves provide natural disaster protection. Research shows that intact mangrove belts can reduce wave height by up to 66 per cent, significantly buffering the impact of cyclones, storm surges, and floods. Communities shielded by healthy mangroves during the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and subsequent Bay of Bengal cyclones suffered considerably less damage than those where mangroves had been cleared. Despite this, mangroves continue to face destruction through urbanisation, aquaculture expansion, industrial development, and rising seas. Protecting and restoring them is one of the most cost-effective climate adaptation strategies available.

### Cyclones, conflict, and the road ahead

Ocean warming is also fuelling more powerful tropical cyclones. While the total number of storms may not be rising dramatically, a growing proportion are reaching extreme intensity. Cyclones Fani, Amphan, Tauktae, Yaas, Biparjoy, Remal, and Dana have all devastated coastal communities across the Indian Ocean region in recent years.

When intensifying storms combine with rising sea levels, their destructive reach extends deeper inland — threatening deltas, agricultural zones, ports, and entire coastal economies. Less discussed, but equally serious, is the environmental damage caused by armed conflict. Warships, explosions, attacks on oil infrastructure, and the destruction of coastal facilities all contaminate marine ecosystems. Oil spills in strategic waterways such as those in West Asia can devastate coral reefs, mangroves, and fisheries for decades. Environmental protection must be integrated into conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

### A shared responsibility

The solutions are not a mystery. Governments must accelerate low-carbon transitions, expand Marine Protected Areas, restore coastal ecosystems, and strengthen environmental enforcement. Industry must reduce plastic production and embrace sustainable practices. Communities can cut plastic use, support sustainable fisheries, and participate in coastal restoration. Internationally, cooperation must deepen because oceans belong to no single nation. The ocean has sustained human civilisation for thousands of years. On this World Ocean Day, the call is clear: we must now sustain it in return.

## Protecting children in the digital age



VIPUL GAUR

"Privacy is not an option, and it shouldn't be the price we accept for just getting on the Internet." - Gary Kovacs

Children today are entering the digital world at an early age. Smartphones, online gaming platforms, social media applications and virtual classrooms have become an inseparable part of childhood. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this transition, pushing millions of students towards online learning and digital interaction. While technology has undoubtedly expanded access to education and communication, it has also exposed children to unprecedented risks in the digital sphere.

A growing number of children are unknowingly sharing personal information across gaming platforms, social media applications and educational websites. In many cases, neither children nor parents fully understand how such data is collected, stored and used. The rise of targeted advertising, behavioural tracking and online fraud has made children one of the most vulnerable groups in the data-driven economy. In this context, the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023 assumes critical importance.

The DPDP Act, 2023 is India's primary law governing how personal data is collected, stored and used in the digital space. Under this framework, a Data Principal refers to the individual whose data is being processed, while a Data Fiduciary is the entity (such as an app, platform, or organisation) that collects and uses that data.

Under Section 9 of the said Act, special safeguards are provided for children's online data. It mandates that digital platforms and data handlers must obtain verifiable consent from a parent or lawful guardian before processing any personal data of a child. It also restricts practices such as behavioural tracking, targeted advertising, and any processing that may adversely impact a child's well-being. In principle, these provisions aim to ensure that children are not reduced to data sources for commercial exploitation and are protected from manipulative digital practices.

While the intent of the DPDP Act, 2023 is clearly protective, its implementation in the context of children raises practical concerns. The idea of "verifiable parental consent" assumes a level of digital awareness and supervision that may not exist uniformly across households. In reality, many parents themselves are not fully aware of how digital platforms collect and use personal data, and consent is often given mechanically through quick approvals rather than informed understanding.

At the same time, children today are active users of online games, social media platforms, and EdTech applications, many of which are designed to encourage constant engagement. In such an environment, distinguishing between meaningful consent and routine digital acceptance becomes increasingly difficult. This creates a gap between the law's intention and its real-world effectiveness.

A significant part of this challenge emerges from the rapid digitisation of education itself. Schools and EdTech platforms today rely heavily on digital tools for attendance tracking, assignments, assessments, and communication with parents. While these systems have improved access and efficiency, they have also led to the large-scale collection of children's personal data, often without a clear understanding among students or even parents of how this information is stored or used.

Many educational applications collect behavioural data such as login patterns, time spent on tasks, performance analytics, and interaction history. In some cases, this data is used not just for academic tracking but also for product improvement and user engagement strategies. This raises an important concern: data generated in the classroom is increasingly becoming part of a broader digital ecosystem, where the boundaries between education and data profiling are becoming blurred.

Beyond education platforms, children's digital exposure is also shaped heavily by social media applications and online gaming environments. These platforms are designed around engagement-driven algorithms that encourage prolonged usage, often by analysing user behaviour and preferences. For children, this translates into continuous exposure to content tailored to keep them engaged, sometimes without a clear understanding of how these systems operate.

In such ecosystems, behavioural tracking becomes routine. Every click, interaction, and viewing pattern contributes to a digital profile that can be used to predict and influence future behaviour. The DPDP Act, 2023 seeks to restrict targeted advertising and tracking for children; however, enforcing these boundaries in fast-moving digital environments remains a significant challenge. The result is a space where children are active participants, yet largely unaware subjects of extensive data collection. The challenge, therefore, is not merely about the existence of a robust legal framework such as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, but about ensuring its meaningful implementation in a rapidly evolving digital ecosystem. Protecting children online cannot depend only on formal consent mechanisms; it must also be supported by greater digital literacy among parents, educators, and children themselves. Schools and educational institutions must be encouraged to adopt transparent data practices, while platforms must be held accountable for designing child-centric and privacy-respecting systems by default.

At the same time, awareness around digital footprints and data sharing must become an essential part of early education. Without these complementary measures, the idea of "verifiable consent" risks becoming a procedural formality rather than a genuine safeguard.

Safeguarding children's digital presence requires a collective effort where law, education, and technology work in alignment. It is only then that India can ensure that its youngest internet users are not merely participants in the digital world but are also adequately protected within it.



The writer is a Post Graduate in Law (LLM) from NLSIU, Bangalore and pursuing PhD in Cyber Laws from RGNUL Patiala

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## From waste to wealth: Why India must get serious about biogas



KUSHAN MITRA

India has a habit of discovering useful ideas and then burying them under slogans. Biogas is one such idea. It is routinely described as a clean fuel, a rural livelihood generator, a waste-management solution and a climate instrument. All of that is true. But unless the government builds a sensible policy architecture and a financially viable market structure, biogas will remain a useful concept trapped in pilot projects, small installations and optimistic speeches. That would be a mistake. In a country that produces huge volumes of cattle manure, agricultural residue and municipal organic waste, biogas is one of the few energy options that can simultaneously address emissions, waste disposal and fuel import dependence. It is a rare case where environmental logic and energy security logic point in the same direction. The climate case is straightforward. Organic waste releases methane, a greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide over the short term. Capturing that methane reduces the emissions problem at source. In other words, biogas is not merely about producing a green fuel; it is about preventing a worse one from entering the atmosphere in the first place. That distinction

matters because India's biogas debate is often framed too casually. Not all biofuels are equally defensible. Crop-based fuels can raise questions about land use, food security and water stress. Waste-based biogas does not carry the same moral and economic ambiguity.

When the feedstock is cattle dung, municipal organic waste or agricultural residue, the equation is cleaner: the country is turning a liability into an asset. I recently travelled to Banaskantha district in Gujarat, where I saw firsthand how this can work. A tripartite venture between Banas Dairy, the local district dairy union, the National Dairy Development Board and Suzuki Research and Development India has created facilities where about 100 tonnes of cow dung are converted into biogas every day. The operation is industrial in scale, even if still modest in the larger national context, and the gas is sold directly to local transport users outside the plant.

This example from Gujarat points to the promise of the model, but it also reveals its limits. Such projects are viable only when multiple revenue streams are available. Gas sales alone rarely support the full economics. Plants also depend on slurry sales, fertiliser value, carbon credits and, in some cases, waste-processing fees. That is not a weakness of the model; it is the model. The problem is that policy in India still tends to treat biogas as a single-product energy business rather than a multi-product circular-economy system. That is where the government must become more serious. If it wants biogas to scale, it must stop thinking in terms of announce-



ments and start thinking in terms of market design. A biogas plant needs assured feedstock, predictable offtake, stable regulation and a financing structure that reflects its real cash flows. None of those things happens automatically. At present, the sector suffers from a familiar Indian policy problem: enthusiasm at the top, fragmentation on the ground. Municipal waste systems remain uneven, even though good work on waste-to-gas has been showcased in places like Indore. Agricultural residue collection is inconsistent. The case for biogas becomes even stronger when viewed through energy security. India still relies heavily on imported natural gas, much of it arriving as LNG from external suppliers and exposed to international price volatility. That dependence is not merely an economic issue; it is a strategic vulnerability. Every unit of domestically produced biomethane reduces that exposure, however incrementally. Biogas will

not replace LNG imports, but it can narrow the gap and improve resilience. In fact, when the gas shortage induced by the West Asia crisis occurred, industrial users across India were informed of a cut in supplies. This included the Maruti-Suzuki plant at Hansalpur, Gujarat. Production of gas from the Banaskantha Biogas facilities was diverted to Hansalpur and made up over half the shortfall according to Maruti-Suzuki officials. This is why the biogas conversation should not be reduced to environmental idealism or rural romanticism. It should be treated as industrial policy. A serious biogas ecosystem can create local jobs, improve sanitation, generate organic fertiliser that can help restore soil health, reduce methane emissions and lower foreign exchange outgo on imported gas. Few policy areas offer so many dividends from the same tonne of waste. But these require a sustainable financial model. That means the government must create conditions under which private capital can actually underwrite projects. Feedstock aggregation must be systematised. Municipal bodies, dairies, farmer collectives and cooperatives must be integrated into collection networks. Offtake contracts must be bankable. By-product markets must be formalised. Digestate standards must be clear. And if carbon credits are to be part of the revenue stack, the rules around verification and monetisation must be credible. This is the unglamorous part of clean energy policy. It is much easier to announce a target than to build the supply chain, legal framework and revenue certainty that make the target real. There is also a larger governance

lesson here. India's waste streams are not going away. Its livestock numbers are not going away. Its municipal waste burden is not going away. These will only increase as the country gets richer and more urban. Nor is its appetite for gas likely to disappear soon. A policy that treats these realities separately is less useful than one that connects them. Biogas links agriculture to energy, sanitation to industry and climate policy to import substitution. That is why the government should be more pragmatic. It should encourage decentralised plant construction where feedstock is available, but not imagine that every district will support the same business model. It should recognise that some feedstocks and locations are better than others and that commercial discipline is not a betrayal of public purpose but a precondition for it. The ideal outcome is not a sector dependent on permanent subsidy. It is a sector where the economics make sense because the policy has been designed sensibly. If that happens, biogas can become what it ought to be: not a boutique environmental project, but a mainstream part of India's energy and waste infrastructure. Biogas is one of the few solutions that can deliver measurable gains on emissions, waste and fuel imports at the same time. But only if the government stops treating it as a niche idea and starts treating it as a national necessity.

The writer is Director and the Printer & Publisher of The Pioneer

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### Order Order

## Delhi CM attack case: Court denies bail to accused

A court here has denied bail to a man accused in a case related to the assault of Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at a public meeting, saying the allegations against him were grave and supported by material collected during the investigation. Additional Sessions Judge Nishant Garg was hearing a bail plea filed by Tehsin Raza, who was accused of conspiring with co-accused Sakriya Rajeshbhai Khimjibhai to kill the chief minister.



In an order dated June 6, the court said, "Considering the nature and gravity of the offence, the possibility of the accused fleeing from justice cannot be ruled out. Accordingly, I do not consider it to be a fit case for the grant of bail. The bail application is accordingly dismissed."

According to the prosecution, the incident occurred on August 20, 2025, when the chief minister was conducting a 'Jan Sunvai' programme. The main accused allegedly attacked her, pulled her hair, threw her to the ground and attempted to strangle her before being apprehended on the spot, the prosecution said. The court noted that during the investigation, the main accused disclosed Raza's alleged involvement in the conspiracy and claimed that he had shared with him videos taken during a recce of the chief minister's residence. The prosecution further alleged that call detail records showed the two accused were in touch with each other and that Raza had transferred ₹2,000 to the co-accused. (PTI)

## Delhi court denies interim bail to Al-Falah chairman in ED case

A Delhi court on Tuesday rejected the interim bail plea of Al-Falah University chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui, accused in a ₹493-crore money laundering case being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), saying that he failed to show that his wife required his exclusive care during cancer treatment.



Additional Sessions Judge Sheetal Chaudhary Pradhan was hearing the plea filed by Siddiqui seeking six weeks' interim bail to look after his wife, who is suffering from stage-4 metastatic ovarian cancer. In an order, the court said, "Applicant has failed to show that the wife is terminally ill or is unable to take care of her daily routine and requires constant support of the accused/applicant and further, that there is no other adult member or caregiver, who cannot be made available for the wife". (PTI)

## Patna Court stays arrest of Khan Sir till further orders

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Patna

A Patna court on Tuesday stayed the arrest of educator Faisal Khan, popularly known as 'Khan Sir', till further orders, his lawyer said. Khan was named in an FIR related to a firing incident by his guards a week ago when his coaching institute was allegedly vandalised by a bunch of miscreants.



"The court has stayed his arrest till further orders, and ordered to present case diary and other antecedents on the next hearing," Khan Sir's lawyer Arvind Kumar Mouar told reporters here in Patna. The educator had filed a plea for anticipatory bail on Monday.

"All the facts have been put before the court in accordance with law. After examining the case diary, the court is expected to pass the final order," the lawyer said.

He said that the next date has not been decided yet.

The court also asked for the case diary and antecedents in connection with the two guards who were

detained by police on Thursday, Mouar said.

"Their case is scheduled for tomorrow. The hearing will take place after the case diary is presented before the court," the lawyer said. The educator has received "protection from coercive action" and will cooperate with investigating officers for whatever queries they may have. A group of 15-20 persons allegedly vandalised Khan Global Studies Institute in the State Capital Patna on June 2 night and pelted stones at its premises. Police had on Thursday detained two guards associated with Khan Sir's coaching institute for allegedly firing shots on June 2 night.

The Calcutta High Court

not be viewed as competing mechanisms but as complementary institutions serving distinct functions within a broader justice ecosystem.

"We must reject the archaic narrative that pits alternative dispute resolution against the majesty of formal courts," he said.

"Traditional courts must continue to remain the ultimate guardians of public legal standard-setting and constitutional accountability. Yet, where the court provides the architecture of certainty, mediation serves as the adaptive mechanism for private commercial harmony. The two systems do not diminish one another; they sustain each other," he said.

At the outset, the CJI dealt with arbitration, especially international arbitration, as one of the important alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and referred to the difficulties being faced across jurisdictions in getting disputes resolved through this.

"It is my earnest belief that as international arbitration has increasingly mirrored the very procedural complexities it was designed to escape, it is mediation that now emerges as the authentic frontier of commercial agility," he said.

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

Observing that international arbitration is increasingly facing procedural hurdles, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant said mediation is no longer an alternative but an essential instrument to achieve timely, amicable and lasting resolution of disputes.

He was delivering a lecture on "Mediation, Arbitration and the Courts: Converging Trends in the Indian and English Approaches in Commercial Dispute Resolution" at the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom on Monday.

Calling for a fundamental shift in how global corporations and legal systems approach conflict, the CJI said, "The primary question for a modern corporation should no longer be where to litigate, but rather how to resolve." He said courts, arbitration and mediation should

not be viewed as competing mechanisms but as complementary institutions serving distinct functions within a broader justice ecosystem.

"We must reject the archaic narrative that pits alternative dispute resolution against the majesty of formal courts," he said.

"Traditional courts must continue to remain the ultimate guardians of public legal standard-setting and constitutional accountability. Yet, where the court provides the architecture of certainty, mediation serves as the adaptive mechanism for private commercial harmony. The two systems do not diminish one another; they sustain each other," he said.

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"It is my earnest belief that as international arbitration has increasingly mirrored the very procedural complexities it was designed to escape, it is mediation that now emerges as the authentic frontier of commercial agility," he said.

"Over the last several decades, arbitration has undeniably come to be viewed across jurisdictions as a response to some of the perceived limitations of court-centric adjudication, particularly in matters involving speed, technical complexity, party autonomy, and cross-border commerce," he said.

Kant said that in India, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act came into being in 1996, and various judicial interpretations also advanced "a pro-arbitration approach", keeping in harmony with internationally accepted principles governing commercial

dismissal from service and rejection of his statutory petition, the constable moved the Delhi High Court, which rejected his plea applying the doctrine of "forum non conveniens" (an inconvenient forum). The high court said it would not be the appropriate or convenient forum for entertaining the petition.

The constable had argued before the high court that the petition was filed before it, as the offices of the Director General, BSF and the Ministry of Home Affairs are situated in Delhi.

"We hold that in case any member of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), and that includes the BSF, is aggrieved by any administrative order of termination of his service issued by the competent authority, notwithstanding that the cause of action arose outside, i.e., the said order was issued from a place beyond the territorial limits of the Delhi High Court or that the events which trig-

gered such an order occurred outside its limits, etc., still the Delhi High Court would have territorial jurisdiction in light of situs of office of the Union of India and the Director General, BSF/the officer in whom is vested supervision and command of the other CAPF, as per clause (1) of Article 226," the Supreme Court bench said.

The top court, in its judgment, said the doctrine of "forum non conveniens" has been misapplied by the high court in the context of writ jurisdiction referable to Article 226 of the Constitution.

"Such an article permits filing of a writ petition as per the situs of office of the respondent(s) and cause of action, which gives the right of action. Where the question of pursuing a constitutional remedy is involved, and invocation of writ jurisdiction is traceable to clause (1) of Article 226, the doctrine of forum non conveniens may rarely apply," the bench said.

## Delhi HC can hear service termination cases of CAPF personnel, says SC

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi



The Supreme Court on Tuesday held that the Delhi High Court can hear service termination cases of members of the Central Armed Police Forces, including the Border Security Force, even if the cause of action arose outside the national capital. A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma passed the order while reviving a petition filed by a BSF constable who had challenged his dismissal without any pensionary benefits.

The constable was dismissed on the ground that he had entered into a second marriage during the subsistence of previous ones and without the permission of his first wife. A show-cause notice was issued to him at Narayanpur in West Bengal's Malda district, where he was posted. The constable failed to submit a reply within the stipulated period. Consequently, the commandant in 2022 dismissed him from service without any pensionary benefits.

Aggrieved by the order of dismissal, the constable filed a statutory petition seeking reinstatement in service, which was rejected. Challenging the orders of

dismissal from service and rejection of his statutory petition, the constable moved the Delhi High Court, which rejected his plea applying the doctrine of "forum non conveniens" (an inconvenient forum). The high court said it would not be the appropriate or convenient forum for entertaining the petition.

The constable had argued before the high court that the petition was filed before it, as the offices of the Director General, BSF and the Ministry of Home Affairs are situated in Delhi.

"We hold that in case any member of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), and that includes the BSF, is aggrieved by any administrative order of termination of his service issued by the competent authority, notwithstanding that the cause of action arose outside, i.e., the said order was issued from a place beyond the territorial limits of the Delhi High Court or that the events which trig-

gered such an order occurred outside its limits, etc., still the Delhi High Court would have territorial jurisdiction in light of situs of office of the Union of India and the Director General, BSF/the officer in whom is vested supervision and command of the other CAPF, as per clause (1) of Article 226," the Supreme Court bench said.

The top court, in its judgment, said the doctrine of "forum non conveniens" has been misapplied by the high court in the context of writ jurisdiction referable to Article 226 of the Constitution.

"Such an article permits filing of a writ petition as per the situs of office of the respondent(s) and cause of action, which gives the right of action. Where the question of pursuing a constitutional remedy is involved, and invocation of writ jurisdiction is traceable to clause (1) of Article 226, the doctrine of forum non conveniens may rarely apply," the bench said.



dispute resolution. Indian courts have repeatedly reaffirmed the principle of minimal judicial intervention for preserving the sanctity of arbitral proceedings, he said. "However, despite its virtues, arbitration seems to be on the verge of inheriting some of the very procedural burdens from which it originally sought to depart. At least within the Indian justice delivery system, arbitral proceedings have generated an expanding parallel layer of litigation, where nearly every stage of the arbitral process becomes susceptible to judicial challenge between contesting parties," he said.

The CJI said arbitration proceedings get delayed due to questions on the very validity of the agreement, the appointment of arbitrators, the determination of the jurisdictional seat, the distinction between seat and venue, issues of jurisdiction, and challenges to

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

interim or final awards that frequently travel before courts at multiple stages.

"This, of course, is by no means a concern confined to the Indian judiciary alone. Jurisdictions across the world appear to be grappling with similar difficulties, whether in the context of domestic arbitration or complex cross-border commercial disputes," he said. The consequence is that disputes that were intended to be resolved with efficiency and expedition can, at times, become drawn out prolonged procedural contests, he said, adding that even the United Kingdom is witnessing such hurdles.

"It is my earnest belief that as international arbitration has increasingly mirrored the very procedural complexities it was designed to escape, it is mediation that now emerges as the authentic frontier of commercial agility," he said, stressing the need to go for mediation.

## SC urged to order CBI probe in Tamil Nadu horse-trading row

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi



A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a CBI probe against the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) general secretary and four others, who joined the ruling party in Tamil Nadu after resigning as AIADMK MLAs, for alleged horse-trading to form the C Joseph Vijay-led Government in the State.

The plea filed by M Srinivasan sought a direction to the CBI to register a case against TVK general secretary N Anand alias Bussy N Anand and four former AIADMK MLAs K Maragatham Kumaravel (Maduranthakam Assembly constituency), S Jayakumar (Perundurai), P Sathyabama (Dharapuram) and Esakki Subaya (Ambasamudram), who resigned as MLAs and joined the TVK on May 25 and 26. The plea filed through advocate Achintya Tiwari sought a direction to the CBI to complete the investigation and file a report within a time fixed by the court.

It prayed to the court to exercise the plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to frame specific rules for preventing horse-trading after elections about candidates who have either

been disqualified by the Speaker or those who have resigned from the Assembly without any valid, material and justifiable reason.

The petitioner also prayed for the grant of an injunction against the four former AIADMK MLAs from contesting the by-elections either independently or with the support of any political parties till rules are framed by the court.

"Issue a Writ of Mandamus or any other appropriate writ, order or direction thereby directing the Respondent Number 3 (Central Bureau of Investigation) to register the case against the respondents Nos. 07 to 11 herein for allegedly indulging in the horse trading to prove the majority in the Tamil Nadu Assembly and further direct to conduct the investigation and to file a final report within the time fixed by this

Court," the plea said.

On May 10, actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay took oath as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu with a pledge that "a new era of real, secular, social justice starts now".

The ascent of Vijay to the top job marks a significant realignment and a historic political shift in the state after his TVK emerged as the single largest party with 108 seats in the recent elections, shattering the decades-long dominance of the DMK and AIADMK in the state. Although TVK on its own did not secure the majority in the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly, Vijay managed to get support from the Congress, VCK, CPI, CPI (M) and IUML to gather 120 MLAs and cross the 118 mark to form the government, an act seen as a demonstration of his political adaptability beyond his image as a popular actor.

According to submissions made by Chaudhary's counsel, denial of immediate relief could expose her to irreparable harm, adversely affect her dignity and safety, and interfere with her professional engagements, including her appearance at the film premiere.

After considering the petition, affidavit and material placed on record, including photographs of alleged injuries and electronic evidence, the court found sufficient grounds at the preliminary stage to issue a summons and grant interim relief.

The court further directed the protection officer and the local station house officer (SHO) concerned to ensure compliance with its directions and provide necessary assistance to the petitioner.

## TMC leader Jahangir Khan remanded to five days police custody by court

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Diamond Harbour (WB)

Trinamool Congress leader Jahangir Khan, arrested on "extortion" and other charges, was remanded to police custody for five days by a court here on Tuesday.

Khan was arrested near the India-Nepal border in North Bengal's Panitanki area on Monday. He had unsuccessfully contested the Falta assembly seat in the West Bengal assembly election, and had not been seen in the constituency in South 24 Parganas district since a couple of days before the repoll in the seat on May 21.

The Diamond Harbour subdivisional court remanded Khan to police custody for five days in connection with seven FIRs filed against him at Falta police station on the prosecution's request.

The Calcutta High Court



had on May 26 vacated an interim protection granted to Khan, against whom seven FIRs were registered at Falta police station in South 24 Parganas district.

The high court granted protection from coercive action on May 18, only for Khan to participate in the repoll at Falta on May 21, the result of which was declared on May 24. Though Khan had prayed for and received interim protection from the high court on May 18 to participate in the repoll process and campaign for it, the very next day, he publicly announced his withdrawal from the contest.

Khan was produced before the court with a huge police and central force deployment amid apprehensions of protests by the public who had earlier vented their ire on the TMC leader's party office in Falta.

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Khan was produced before the court with a huge police and central force deployment amid apprehensions of protests by the public who had earlier vented their ire on the TMC leader's party office in Falta.

## Sapna Choudhary gets interim protection in domestic abuse case

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

A Delhi court on Tuesday granted interim protection to singer and actor Sapna Choudhary in proceedings initiated under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act against her husband, restraining him from contacting or approaching her until the next date of hearing.

Judicial Magistrate Nidhi Singh was hearing the plea filed by Choudhary through her counsel, advocate Preeti Singh, seeking interim relief in view of the imminent premiere of her film and her apprehension regarding personal safety and possible disruption of professional commitments.

In an order, the court said, "Respondent (Choudhary's husband) is restrained from approaching the petitioner in any manner till the next date of hearing. Respondent is restrained from contacting the petitioner in any



manner or visiting her place of residence or work and committing any act of domestic violence till the NDOH (next date of hearing)."

According to submissions made by Choudhary's counsel, denial of immediate relief could expose her to irreparable harm, adversely affect her dignity and safety, and interfere with her professional engagements, including her appearance at the film premiere.

After considering the petition, affidavit and material placed on record, including photographs of alleged injuries and electronic evidence, the court found sufficient grounds at the preliminary stage to issue a summons and grant interim relief.

The court further directed the protection officer and the local station house officer (SHO) concerned to ensure compliance with its directions and provide necessary assistance to the petitioner.

and deprive parties of an opportunity to present their case.

In his appeal before the top court, Singh highlighted the prolonged delay, stating that he is now 72 years old and has spent his youth, middle age and old age under the shadow of a criminal conviction.

"For over four decades, through youth, middle age, and now old age, he has lived under the shadow of that conviction," the plea said, adding that his criminal appeal had languished before the high court for 40 years before being finally heard and dismissed.

## SC flags 40-year delay by Allahabad HC in murder case, seeks solutions to judicial backlog

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The Supreme Court has expressed concern over the extraordinary delay by the Allahabad High Court in disposing of a 40-year-old criminal appeal filed by a murder accused challenging his conviction.

A partial working day (PWD) bench comprising Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and AS Chandurkar, on Monday, described the situation as disturbing and questioned what innovative measures could be adopted to address the mount-

ing pendency that continues to clog the justice delivery system in the Allahabad High Court.

The case pertained to Vijay Singh who was 28 years old when he was arrested in November 1983 for allegedly shooting his brother dead. A sessions court at Kanpur convicted him of murder and sentenced him to life imprisonment in December 1985.

Singh challenged the verdict before the Allahabad High Court. However, his appeal remained pending for nearly 41 years before being dismissed by the high court through a 20-page



judgment delivered on February 9 this year.

During the hearing, the top court noted that Singh had spent only about three months in custody and remained on bail for almost 43 years while awaiting the outcome of his appeal.

The court decided to continue his bail during the pendency of proceedings before it.

The bench voiced concern over the recurring issue of prolonged delays in the Allahabad High Court, observing that litigants frequently approach the top court seeking directions for expeditious hearings because of heavy

pendency. Justice Mishra sought suggestions from senior advocate Siddharth Dave and advocate Zoheb Hossain on possible measures to accelerate the disposal of old cases. Dave suggested that prosecution appeals pending for more than three decades could be dismissed to reduce the backlog.

The bench, however, rejected the idea, observing that fundamental principles of adjudication do not permit dismissal of cases solely on account of prolonged pendency. The bench cautioned that such an approach could adversely affect public interest

and deprive parties of an opportunity to present their case.

In his appeal before the top court, Singh highlighted the prolonged delay, stating that he is now 72 years old and has spent his youth, middle age and old age under the shadow of a criminal conviction.

"For over four decades, through youth, middle age, and now old age, he has lived under the shadow of that conviction," the plea said, adding that his criminal appeal had languished before the high court for 40 years before being finally heard and dismissed.





**'India's exports rising steadily due to policy push'**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Jaipur

India's exports have witnessed consistent growth in recent years, driven by supportive government policies, improved digital infrastructure, better logistics and trade reforms, a senior commerce ministry official said on Tuesday.

Speaking at a regional media interaction organised by the Apparel Export Promotion Council (APEC) and the Department of Commerce in Jaipur, Senior Economic Adviser Agrim Kaushal highlighted the government's commitment to making India a global leader in the textiles and apparel sector.

He referred to the Prime Minister's "5F vision" — "Farm to Fibre, Fibre to Fashion, and Fashion to Foreign" — as a key framework guiding the sector's growth.

During the session themed "Strengthening India's Position in Global Apparel Trade: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward," Kaushal outlined major initiatives such as the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, PM MITRA parks, Mega Textile Parks, the National Technical Textiles Mission and various export promotion measures.

"These efforts have strengthened India's textile value chain and enhanced



the country's competitiveness in global markets," he said.

Kaushal also underlined opportunities arising from India's expanding network of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and the recently launched Export Promotion Mission.

Highlighting Rajasthan's role, he said Jaipur has emerged as the largest apparel export hub in the state, contributing around 86 per cent to Rajasthan's total ready-made garment exports.

"Exporters here have successfully combined traditional craftsmanship with modern technology to access markets in the US,

Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region," he added.

Rajasthan Garment Exporters' Association (GEAR) President Rakshit Poddar said exporters in Jaipur have adapted to evolving global market demands while preserving their unique design and handicraft identity.

APEC Executive Committee member Aseem Kumar stressed the need for increased investment in skill development, technological upgrade, sustainable production, and infrastructure.

Officials said recent and proposed trade agreements are expected to further open new markets for Indian apparel exporters.

**Fitch cuts FY27 growth projection to 6.4%; US-Iran war to slow down economy**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

Fitch Ratings on Tuesday lowered its GDP growth projections for the current fiscal to 6.4 per cent from the earlier estimate of 6.7 per cent, saying that the US-Iran war will slow down the economy in the September and December quarters.

Fitch said it expects a slowdown in economic growth in FY27 from the 7.4 per cent clocked in FY26 as rising prices erode real incomes and dampen consumer spending, amid a resilient



capital expenditure.

"We expect GDP growth to ease to 6.4 per cent in FY27, a downward revision of 0.3pp from March. Domestic demand will be the main driver of growth, but lower

imports in real terms imply positive contributions to growth from net external demand," Fitch Ratings said in its June Global Economic Outlook.

Last week, the RBI had cut its growth forecast for the current fiscal to 6.6 per cent and upped its inflation projection to 5.1 per cent.

The rating agency said the slowdown in the economy will be most apparent in the second and third quarter of FY27, as rising prices due to the US-Iran war erode real incomes and dampen consumer spending. Fuel prices

have both risen by 4-5 per cent in recent weeks.

For FY28, Fitch expects GDP growth to pick up as the energy shock unwinds, with stronger consumer spending and investment translating to a growth rate of 6.7 per cent for the full financial year, and ease towards trend growth of 6.4 per cent in FY29.

Fitch has also lowered its 2026 forecast for global growth by 0.2pp to 2.4 per cent as world growth prospects have been hurt by the oil crisis prompted by the US-Iran war.



**FPI inflows into FAR securities rise by ₹8,795 cr after govt tax exemption**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Mumbai

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have invested ₹8,794.743 crore in Government securities under the Fully Accessible Route (FAR) after the Government exempted them from income tax on interest income and capital gains arising from investments in these bonds.

According to data from the Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL), FPI holdings in FAR securities stood at ₹3.32 lakh crore on Tuesday, up from ₹3.23 lakh crore on June 3.

FAR allows non-resident investors to invest in specified Government of India dated securities without any investment ceilings.

"We can see the optimism from FPIs who nearly invested 75 per cent of the net purchase in G-secs under FAR category recorded during April & May. It also strengthens India's case for inclusion in major global bond indices, such as Bloomberg's sovereign bond index, whose inclusion decision was deferred earlier this year," said Mataprasad Pandey, vice-president at Arête Capital.

The government on June 5 promulgated an ordinance amending the Income Tax Act to provide tax exemption on interest income and capital gains arising from the sale, exchange or transfer of government securities held by FPIs. The exemption is applicable retrospectively from April 1, 2025.

**'Online buyers losing up to ₹28,000 cr annually to dark patterns'**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE** ■ New Delhi

Indian consumers are losing an estimated ₹25,000 crore to ₹28,000 crore annually due to deceptive interface designs, commonly known as dark patterns, across online marketplaces, according to a report.

The 'Dark Patterns in India's Online Marketplaces' report, released by market research firm Datum Intelligence on Tuesday, said 88 per cent of the country's 304 million online buyers lose approximately ₹78 to ₹87 per month each to hidden charges, forced add-ons, drip pricing, false urgency rules and subscription traps.

"Existing regulatory interventions



have so far had limited success in curbing deceptive digital practices that continue to impact millions of consumers," the report noted.

The survey found that 63 per cent of online payment users now experience hidden charges or drip pricing-where

additional fees are revealed at the checkout stage. This marks an increase from the 52 per cent reported in 2024.

Furthermore, 73 per cent of the platforms assessed deploy forced action mechanisms, compelling users into actions they might not otherwise choose.

The study analysed 12 leading platforms across e-commerce, quick commerce and online travel.

The survey was conducted in the first quarter of 2026 among 2,590 consumers across 50 cities.

Among e-commerce platforms, Amazon emerged as the most trusted, with 50 per cent of users naming it their preferred choice.

**Geopolitical shifts to boost indigenous tech: Survey**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

India's defence sector is expected to witness accelerated adoption of indigenous technology and a five-fold jump in job creation over the next three years amid geopolitical shifts and rising security challenges, according to a survey.

The new survey by Nexgen Exhibitions Pvt Ltd (NEPL) highlighted that international developments are poised to propel indigenous technology adoption in the sector to \$36.45 billion over the next three years, a surge that could unlock a five-fold expansion in the nation's defence-tech workforce.

In its latest survey, NEPL gathered insights from over 1,500 defence experts, defence tech startups, technology innovators, and industry stakeholders across Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai,



Bengaluru, and Pune. Amid global geopolitical shifts and rising security challenges, India is accelerating its transformation into a hub of indigenous technology and innovation in defence, a statement said.

This momentum builds on recent trends as the formal hiring in India's defence technology sector has nearly doubled in the past three years, rising from about 10,000 job roles in 2025 to approximately 50,000 jobs in the next five years.

NEPL is a leader in curating world-class B2B exhibitions across more than 15 critical sectors, including homeland security, safety, engineering, healthcare, and advanced technology.

**L&T betting big on digital workers, says CFO**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ Mumbai

Larsen & Toubro is betting big on automation, robotics and technology-led solutions to scale up construction activities as increasing manpower alone may not be a viable option for growth, a top official of the company said.

"What we have been doing over the last 3-4 years in particular is to create automation to the level that we did not expect construction industry to engage. Our effort has been to automate as much as possible," said L&T chief financial officer R Shankar Raman at ICICI Securities India Investors Conference 2026.

He said the company's order book has increased to around ₹7.5 lakh crore from ₹3-3.5 lakh crore five years ago, while the workforce engaged in execution has grown from 1.5 lakh direct and indirect workers to about 4 lakh.



Raman said the company is focusing on automation to address execution challenges and reduce dependence on traditional labour-intensive construction methods. "Our effort has been to automate as much as possible. Make construction not so much of a site work. Make it a bit of a factory work by having prefabricated structures, modular structures. So, you

have painters. We have people who do the plastering. All of that is being done by robots. So, in a way, you can call them digital workers," Raman said.

Raman said labour availability has emerged as a key challenge for the construction sector as workers today have more employment choices. "Today, thanks to the way certain sectors have developed, people have got a little easier option than to go work in 40 degrees and 45 degrees and sit in a camp working for 6 months, 9 months a year. It's not a preferred option. They are quite happy to open the mall doors staying in an air-conditioned environment. And that's reality of life," he said.

He added that workforce continuity is also affected by seasonal migration, agricultural cycles and workers travelling back to their villages.

**Zepto flags losses, ED summons as risks in IPO filing**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

Quick commerce unicorn Zepto has identified a history of significant operating losses, recent summons from the Enforcement Directorate to its promoters, and intensified regulatory scrutiny over consumer protection as primary risk factors for its upcoming initial public offering (IPO).

In its updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus filed on Monday, the Bengaluru-headquartered firm disclosed that it has incurred losses in every fiscal year since its inception in July 2021, and warned that it may continue to face negative cash flows as it expands its operations.



"We may continue to incur losses and negative cash flows from operating activities as we invest in expanding our user base and technology infrastructure, adding new product categories to our platform, expanding our private labels, expanding our

supply chain operations, increasing the count of dark stores, and developing and improving the brand and visibility of our platform, among others. "There is no assurance that such investments will enable us to increase our revenue in the future," Zepto said.

Further, the company said its revenue growth may decline due to slowing demand, limited product categories that do not sufficiently address customer needs, or insufficient growth in the number of platform participants caused by increasing competition, alongside rising regulatory and compliance costs, among other factors.

The document showed that Zepto saw its net loss widen to ₹5,905.19 crore in fiscal year 2025-26, from a loss of ₹4,699.71 crore in the previous fiscal, whereas the company's revenue from operations more than doubled during the fiscal year, reaching ₹22,623.58 crore in FY26 compared to ₹11,109.94 crore in FY25.

**Rajesh Exports founder denies fund diversion in ACC Energy, says Sebi misread entries**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

Rajesh Exports Chairman Rajesh Mehta on Tuesday denied any fund diversion in its subsidiary ACC Energy and promoter-controlled Elest Ltd, saying Sebi has not understood the accounting entries, even as the company faces potential removal from the ₹18,100-crore ACC Production-Linked Incentive scheme.

"First of all, Sebi has made observations. That has to be put in the right place first. Point number two, there is zero diversion of funds. They have not understood the accounting entries," Rajesh Exports founder said. The company is ready to clarify, he added.



The market regulator's June 3 interim order flagged a circular fund-routing scheme involving ACC Energy Storage and promoter-controlled Elest Pvt Ltd. After Elest acquired 49 per cent of ACC Energy in January 2025, it gave ₹147 crore to the subsidiary, which returned Rs 112 crore on the same day. ACC Energy Storage also invested ₹262 crore in Elest without disclosing valuation details. The company's MD and CFO admitted that they were unaware of the transactions, according to the order.

Public sector players can also use the platform to increase market participation. "The recently enacted Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2025 introduced the concept of a mineral exchange and empowered the central government to promote transparent and efficient trading of minerals, including coal and its processed forms. In pursuance of the above, the Coal Exchange Rules, 2026 have been published by the Ministry of Coal in the Official Gazette on June 4," the coal ministry said in a statement.

The ministry has already designated the Coal Controller Organisation (CCO) in December 2025 as the authority responsible for registering and regulating coal exchanges.

**Flipkart partners with Meta for creator-led shopping**

E-commerce major Flipkart has announced a partnership with Meta to enable creator-led shopping across social media platforms. Under the collaboration, content creators will be able to discover and tag products from Flipkart and Myntra directly within their Facebook posts and reels. They will earn a commission on every sale, while consumers will be able to purchase products directly by tapping the product tags, the company said in a statement. The initiative will initially be launched on Facebook, with Instagram scheduled for the next phase rollout. "Two years ago, Flipkart recognised that Gen Z was rewriting the rules of Indian retail. That discovery was moving from search bars to social feeds, and that creators were becoming the new storefront. This partnership with Meta is a natural extension of that conviction," said Flipkart Group CFO Ravi Iyer. "It gives creators a direct path from influence to entrepreneurship, and offers brands a way to reach consumers through content that feels real, not advertised," he added.



**India exports GI-tagged Tezpur Litchi to Dubai**

India has exported one tonne of GI-tagged Tezpur Litchi from Assam to Dubai, marking a step forward in promoting the premium fruit, known for its exceptional sweetness, bright-red colour and distinctive aroma, in overseas markets, the Commerce Ministry said on Tuesday. The ministry is promoting exports of agri products from the North Eastern Region. It said that the Tezpur region cultivates several notable varieties of Litchi, including Bombaya, Bilati, Elaichi, Piyaji and Sahi. "The Geographical Indication (GI) status has strengthened the identity and market recognition of Tezpur Litchi, enhancing its appeal among international buyers and creating new opportunities for premium agricultural exports from Assam," it said.

**Govt publishes rules for setting up of coal exchanges**

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE**  
■ New Delhi

The government on Tuesday said it has published rules for setting up coal exchanges, a move aimed at bringing transparency and efficiency to the country's coal trading ecosystem and modernising the supply chain.

Coal exchanges are expected to enable transparent, market-driven price discovery, boost efficiency and give coal producers — including commercial and captive miners — easier access to a wider pool of buyers.



FROM THE WORLD

NEPAL  
Royal massacre probe reopened

Nepal's newly-reappointed Home Minister Sudan Gurung on Tuesday announced that he would reopen files related to royal massacre of 2001, in which the entire family of then-king Birendra Shah was killed. Gurung made the announcement soon after assuming office earlier in the day. On June 1, 2001, all family members of king Shah, including queen Aishwarya and crown prince Dipendra, were killed at Narayanhiti Royal Palace during a Friday dinner party. An official probe commission had in its report said that then crown prince was behind the massacre. Dipendra, under the influence of alcohol, reportedly killed his father, mother, brother, sister and other family members before killing himself, said the probe commission's report, which was dismissed by many at that time.

UK  
Belfast stabbing suspect held

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office called for calm on Tuesday after police said they arrested a Sudanese suspect over a stabbing in residential Belfast in Northern Ireland that drew national attention because of graphic videos of the attack online. Police said the victim was taken to the hospital with serious wounds to his face, neck and back late Monday. They said the suspect, who is in his 30s, was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder and remained in police custody. A kitchen knife was found at the scene. Police were trying to determine the motive, but there was no information to suggest the attack was terrorism-related, said Ryan Henderson, assistant chief constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. He added that police were not seeking anyone else connected to the attack. "This brutal attack will have sent shock waves through the community, causing real concern," he said.

## US House set to vote on funding Trump's immigration agenda

KEVIN FREKING/LISA MASCARO  
Washington

House Republicans will look to get nearly \$70 billion for immigration enforcement over the finish line Tuesday, enough to fund a pair of Homeland Security agencies through the next three years and the rest of President Donald Trump's time in office. Speaker Mike Johnson will need near-perfect attendance and unity on his side to complete weeks of action on the bill. The legislation got sidetracked when Republicans sought to include \$1 billion for enhanced security on the White House grounds, including for Trump's new ballroom, and the Trump administration tried to create a

nearly \$1.8 billion fund to compensate allies of the president who claim they have been unjustly investigated and prosecuted. Those proposals proved politically toxic and were scrapped. Now, the bill is focused entirely on immigration enforcement, a topic that Republicans have treated as a defining issue between the two major political parties and one they hope will carry them to victory in this year's midterm elections. The bill provides \$38 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, \$26 billion for the Border Patrol and another \$5 billion to cover unforeseen costs, fuelling Trump's deportation agenda. "It's long overdue," said



Johnson, R-La., of the bill. "We have to fund border security and immigration enforcement, and it's sad that Republicans have to do it on our own."

The funding comes on top of the nearly \$140 billion that the Republican-controlled Congress gave ICE and Customs and Border Protection last year as part of

Trump's tax and spending cuts bill. Democrats objected to giving the agencies more money without significant changes in the way they operate after the deaths of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis. For example, Democrats insisted that agents be required to display their ID badges during enforcement operations and that they get a judicial warrant before entering private property. Instead, the funding will come with virtually no strings attached. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries vowed his party would oppose the package. "We believe that taxpayer dollars should be used to make life more affordable

for the American people - not give ICE another \$70 billion blank check so that they can unleash brutality on American citizens and violently target law-abiding immigrant communities," said Jeffries of New York. The package is the result of a month-long standoff in Congress after Democrats refused to fund the Department of Homeland Security in the wake of the immigration enforcement actions in Minneapolis and other American cities, leading to the longest shutdown in agency history. Negotiations had been underway with the White House to alter ICE operations as Democrats were demanding. When those

negotiations failed, Republicans turned to a complicated procedural manoeuvre to get around the filibuster and pass the immigration funding with no Democratic votes. If approved, the package would next go to Trump for his signature, all but assuring an essentially uninterrupted flow of funds for his immigration enforcement and deportation agenda into 2029. The Senate completed its work on the legislation last week during an all-night session that extended into the early morning hours on Friday. The final 52-47 vote on the bill was nearly party line, with Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska the only Republican to oppose it. (AP)

## Pakistani soldiers killed in clashes with Taliban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Peshawar

Six Frontier Constabulary personnel were killed and four others injured in clashes with the Taliban militants who attempted to seize a check post in Hassan Khel area, some 30 km southwest of Peshawar in northwest Pakistan, officials said on Tuesday. Security forces successfully thwarted the militants' attempt to seize the Federal Constabulary check post and killed eight terrorists on Monday, they said. The militants launched the attack on the check post with the apparent intention of taking control of the facility. However, alert personnel responded immediately, trig-



gering an intense exchange of fire, officials said. Six Frontier Constabulary personnel were killed four were injured, they said. Following reports of the attack, additional contingents of security forces rushed to the area and established a security cordon. A clearance and search operation is currently underway to eliminate any remain-

ing militant presence, they said. Separately, two security personnel were abducted during an attack by militants on the Kishan Ganga checkpost near Frontier Region Jina Kor, in Mattani area on the outskirts of Peshawar. The militants used heavy weapons, destroyed 4 vehicles, and bombed the checkpost building.

## Over 700 Indian Sikhs to visit Lahore for Guru Arjan Dev's death anniversary

M ZULQERNAIN  
Lahore

Over 700 Sikh pilgrims from India are expected to arrive in Pakistan's Lahore city on Wednesday to participate in events related to the death anniversary of the fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan Dev. "The Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi has issued over 700 visas to Indian Sikh pilgrims to participate in the event to mark the death anniversary observances of Guru Arjan Dev Ji," Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) spokesperson Ghulam Mohayuddin told PTI on Tuesday. He said the annual com-



memorative ceremonies of the revered Sikh guru will be held in Lahore from June 10-19. He added that around 500 Sikhs from India are also expected to come here later this month to observe the

death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The main ceremony of the event marking Guru Arjan Dev's death anniversary will be held at Gurdwara Dera Sahib, Lahore, on June 16.

Meanwhile, the ETPB officials reviewed arrangements at the Wagah Border for the reception and facilitation of Sikh pilgrims arriving from India on Wednesday. At the meeting, officials also emphasised an uninterrupted power supply at the Wagah Border, the availability of backup generators, special cleanliness measures, and the provision of all necessary amenities. The meeting was informed that the Federal Investigation Agency would establish 20 immigration counters to streamline and expedite the clearance process for the visiting pilgrims. (PTI)

## 2 Iranian military personnel killed in Israeli attack on Iran



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Dubai

Iranian state television on Tuesday reported that at least two members of an air defence unit were killed in the Israeli attacks that rocked the country the day before. The report represented the first time Iran acknowledged fatalities from the attacks, which have put the

Mideast on edge and represented the biggest blow yet to the straining ceasefire in the Iran war. Iranian state TV identified the men as Bahman Hosseini and Ali Reza Abiri, without offering a rank for them. It said they would be buried in a city outside of Tehran, suggesting they had been posted near the Capital.

## War crimes complaint against Sudan's RSF filed in Kenya

EVELYNE MUSAMBI/  
SAM Y MAGDY  
Nairobi

Victims of alleged atrocities linked to the war in Sudan on Tuesday asked prosecutors in Kenya to investigate allegations of torture and sexual violence by members of a notorious paramilitary group. It is the first attempt to prosecute members of the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, the paramilitary group fighting against the Sudanese military for over three years, outside Sudan. The group, which has been accused by rights organisations of committing atrocities amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity, has ties with Kenya's Government, while Kenyan



President William Ruto has previously hosted RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo for talks that he said were aimed at advancing peace efforts in Sudan, a move that sparked diplomatic tensions. The complaint filed by the global legal organisation Legal Action Worldwide details torture and sexual

violence committed by RSF members at various locations in and around Khartoum between April 2023 and March 2025 when the Sudanese capital was controlled by the paramilitaries. The 12 victims are urging Kenya's Director of Public Prosecutions to approve charges against 10 members of the RSF, some of whom are

believed to be residing in Kenya. The Associated Press has contacted the RSF for a comment. According to this latest complaint, the victims were held in inhumane conditions, with little or no food, limited access to water, and inadequate sanitation facilities. They allege that they were beaten, burned, suffocated, subjected to electric shocks, and sexually abused, including through rape. Some were reportedly forced to transport dead bodies from detention facilities. Legal Action Worldwide founder Antonia Mulvey said Kenya should consider prosecuting the alleged crimes under the country's International Crimes Act of 2008. "For Kenya, despite the sensitivity of the matter, it is

an opportunity to lead in the fight against impunity. Authorities can now demonstrate the strength of the country's investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial institutions in addressing the most serious international crimes, regardless of where they are committed," she said. The RSF has been at war with the Sudanese military since April 2023, when tensions between the two sides erupted into open conflict in Khartoum and other parts of the country. The group emerged from the notorious Arab Janjaweed militias, which were accused of widespread atrocities in the early 2000s against communities identifying as East or Central African in Sudan's western Darfur region. (AP)

## Christian leaders in Lebanon urge action after Israel warning

MALAK HARB/BASSEM MROUE  
Sidon

Christian religious leaders from Lebanon's southern port city of Tyre called on the international community and Lebanese officials on Tuesday to act quickly to prevent Israel from attacking the Christian district of the city, as airstrikes on nearby neighbourhoods killed eight people and wounded dozens of others. The Israeli military has issued an evacuation warning for the port city, including the Christian quarter, which has been spared so far. The statement by the



Christian leaders was from George Iskandar, the metropolitan archbishop of Tyre for the Melkite Greek Catholic Church; Elias Kfoury, the Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Tyre, Sidon and

Dependencies; and Charbel Abdullah, the archbishop of the Maronite Catholic Archeparchy of Tyre. The warning from Israel's military prompted hundreds of people to flee the Christian

district along the Mediterranean coast, while members of the Civil Defence evacuated older people to safer areas, the state-run National News Agency said. Cars packed with mattresses, luggage and household belongings stretched for kilometres along Lebanon's coastal highway, as residents fled Tyre following the latest Israeli warning. Traffic ground to a halt as families crammed whatever they could into vehicles, with carpets protruding from rooftops, and trunks were left partially open to accommodate furniture and personal belongings. (AP)

## French singer in police custody over alleged rape, sexual assault



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Paris

French singer and actor Patrick Bruel is in police custody over allegations by at least 13 women of rape, attempted rape and sexual assault, the prosecutor's office in Nanterre said on Tuesday. Bruel, 67, who has been in police custody since Monday, denies the allegations. The singer became a

major star across the French-speaking world in the 1980s and 1990s with a string of hit songs that became part of French popular culture. He has also appeared in more than 40 films and television productions. The Nanterre prosecutor's office said in a statement that the investigation began after three women accused Bruel of sexual assault and attempted rape, allegedly committed in 1997, 2000 and 2001. During the investigation, additional women were identified and interviewed. They reported allegations of rape or attempted rape, sexual assault and harassment, according to the statement.

## India, Nepal launch cross border remittance service



SHIRISH B PRADHAN  
Kathmandu

Nepalese citizens working in India and Indian citizens employed in Nepal can now send money directly to their families or friends using banking applications, following the launch of a new cross-border remittance service between the two neighbouring countries. Nepal Clearing House Ltd (NCHL) has announced the launch of payment linkage between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Nepal's National Payments Interface (NPI) platforms. This partnership enables real-time, low-cost, and secure cross-border remittances between India and Nepal, allowing users in both countries to make seamless person-to-person (P2P) transfers, according to a statement issued by NCHL. "The successful launch of this linkage between Nepal and India is a testament to our close collaboration and commitment to making cross-border fund transfer

seamless, real-time and convenient," said Neelesh Man Singh Pradhan, Chief Executive Officer, NCHL. "As we embark together on a digital payments journey, we look forward to adding more services and ensuring inclusion for the millions of people and businesses on both sides." Now available through select banks, the service will soon be expanded to additional banks, further enhancing accessibility across a wide range of financial institutions. The service is currently available through Everest Bank, Global IME Bank, Machhapuchchhre Bank, Nabil Bank and Nepal SBI Bank, according to sources at the Nepal Rastra Bank, the central bank of Nepal. Customers of Himalayan Bank, NMB Bank and Siddhartha Bank can receive transfers through the system. "The UPI-NPI linkage represents a major advancement in financial inclusion, fostering stronger economic and digital ties between India and Nepal," states NCHL in its statement. (PTI)

## An Israeli army spokesman is face of war for millions of Arabs

MELANIE LIDMAN  
Tel Aviv

For more than two years, hundreds of thousands of people in Gaza and Lebanon have lived in dread of Avichay Adraee's next social media post. Israel's Arabic-language military spokesman has been the animated face of its campaigns and the main source of warnings ahead of strikes and major offensives. That has made him one of the most recognizable Israelis in the Arab world and a focus of fury as well as some fascination. In social media videos shared to his 2.5 million followers across platforms, the colonel appears in military fatigues, gesticulating as he

delivers official statements and mocks Israel's enemies, often using satire or pop culture references, all in fluent Arabic. In the wars sparked by Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack, his social media accounts have carried warnings for civilians to leave - sometimes at a moment's notice - areas shaded in red on maps of Gaza and Lebanon. Millions have paid heed, with hundreds of thousands seeking refuge in squalid tent camps. Adraee, who is retiring this year, takes pride in his work. Asked to respond to the fact that many associate him with death and displacement, he



said he has helped Arabs to better understand Israel's military operations. "Because of these evacuation orders, many millions were saved," he told The Associated Press. "There's no other army in the world that acts this way." Israel's offensive in Gaza

killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and displaced most of the population of some 2 million, often multiple times, before a fragile ceasefire took hold in October. Its latest war with the Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon has killed some 3,500 people and displaced over 1.2 million.

Both campaigns have drawn allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity, which Israel has adamantly denied, often through spokespeople like Adraee. The grim warnings have also made him something of a celebrity. In Lebanon, a look-alike delivery driver posts satirical videos and pranks unsuspecting residents, showing the fear Adraee inspires. "Avichay Adraee is the face of evil, to the people of Gaza and to me," said Ayman Ahmad, a resident of Khan Yunis in southern Gaza who has been displaced twice during the war. Few people in Gaza had heard of Adraee

before the war, he said, but now everyone closely monitors his social media accounts. "Once we see a new post from him, we know that a disaster is about to happen," he said. Adraee, 43, grew up in the mixed Jewish and Arab city of Haifa in northern Israel. His father's family is part of the Jewish community that lived in the area for generations before Israel's establishment in 1948. His mother's family came to Israel from Iraq, among hundreds of thousands of Jews from centuries-old communities across the Middle East who emigrated to Israel to escape violence and persecution. (AP)

## 32,000 people displaced by Philippines earthquake

**JIM GOMEZ/JOEL CALUPITAN**  
■ General Santos (Philippines)

Rescuers searched ruined buildings in the southern Philippines on Tuesday to ensure no one was still trapped a day after one of the strongest earthquakes to hit the country in a half-century killed at least 37 people and displaced more than 32,000.

Only four people were considered missing on official records in the southern provinces near where the 7.8 magnitude quake struck Monday morning, but the Office of Civil Defence acknowledged several collapsed and heavily damaged buildings must be thoroughly inspected for possible survivors or casualties.

The earthquake centred off Mindanao, the second most populous Philippine island, injured nearly 500 people and displaced more than 32,000, most of whom fled to emergency shelters.

Many people who left their homes feared a tsunami. Waves up to 1.4 meters (4.6 feet) above tide level were measured in the Philippines, but the only tsunami damage reported was to six shanties



on stilts in a coastal village. Smaller waves washed ashore in Indonesia and Palau, and as far away as southern Japan.

The earthquake left a trail of destruction, including in General Santos, a lively coastal city of more than 700,000 people known as the country's tuna capital, where at least 13 people were killed in collapsed buildings and due to falling debris.

At least 18 died in Sarangani province, mostly in a landslide that buried houses in the mountainside town of Glan, according to Rafaelito Alejandro of the Office of Civil Defence.

The other deaths were reported in the southern

provinces of South Cotabato and Davao Occidental, and on Balut Island, disaster response officials said.

About 2,500 houses and 117 Government buildings and facilities were damaged in several provinces, according to an initial Government damage assessment. The international airport in General Santos remained shut for a second day, forcing the cancellation of 63 domestic flights except for those on humanitarian missions.

About 6,000 public school buildings in quake-hit provinces must be assessed before classes can resume. The quake struck on the first day of classes nationwide after a two-month summer

break, and many who sustained injuries were young students who had gathered with excitement for morning flag-raising ceremonies.

Authorities have warned that buildings that sustained cracks could collapse due to aftershocks, some of them dangerously powerful.

"We cannot force the immediate reopening of schools because we have to ensure the integrity of the buildings," Alejandro said.

Monday's earthquake was centred at sea at a depth of 33 kilometres (20 miles), about 32 kilometres (20 miles) southwest of Maasim town in Sarangani province.

It was set off by movement in the Cotabato Trench and was the strongest since the same undersea depression triggered an 8.1-magnitude quake that whipped up tsunami waves on August 17, 1976, said Teresito Bacolcol, the director of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

About 8,000 people died from that quake and tsunami waves of up to 8 to 10 meters (26 to 33 feet) that engulfed several towns and provinces, Bacolcol said. (AP)

## Congo's Ebola deaths rise to 100 out of 550 cases

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
■ Bunia

At least 100 people have died from Ebola less than a month after authorities declared an outbreak of the disease in eastern Congo, authorities said.

Attacks on health workers from angry residents, scepticism among some locals and armed conflict in hot spots continue to challenge efforts to stop the outbreak declared on May 15.

Out of the 550 cases of the disease confirmed as of Sunday, there have been 101 deaths and 19 recoveries, according to the latest situation report late Monday.

The outbreak is concentrated in Congo's eastern province of Ituri, which

accounts for more than 90 per cent of the cases. Cases have also been recorded in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, and have spread across the border to Uganda.

The number of cases in Congo is believed to be higher because the outbreak was confirmed weeks late, and the response has been challenging due to the lack of an approved vaccine or treatment.

The latest Ebola disease outbreak is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which does not have an approved vaccine or treatment, unlike the "Zaire virus," another name for the Ebola virus, responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease.



## India slams Pak at UN over airstrikes against Afghanistan

**YOSHITA SINGH**  
■ United Nations

India has launched a scathing attack on Pakistan at the United Nations (UN), condemning its "trade and transit terrorism" and military airstrikes against Afghanistan.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathani, delivered a sharp attack against Pakistan in the UN Security Council during its meeting on the 'Situation in Afghanistan' on Monday.

"Pakistan's campaign of military airstrikes against Afghanistan is causing huge civilian casualties and suffering to the Afghan people... Such unconscionable acts of violence are a blatant assault on Afghanistan's sovereignty and a threat to the region's peace and stability," Parvathani said.

Strongly condemning the airstrikes on Afghan territory, India said these are flagrant violations of interna-

tional law, the UN Charter and the principle of state sovereignty.

Parvathani cited United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) information to note that 372 civilians have been killed and 397 injured just in the first three months of this year; a large majority of them during the holy month of Ramadan, which is a time of peace, mercy and reflection, making the act all the more reprehensible.

"No faith, no law and no morality can justify such actions," he said at the UN horseshoe table.

With Pakistan listening, India strongly reiterated that "dressing up a massacre as a military operation does not absolve the perpetrator. Killing, maiming and orphaning civilians is not counter terrorism."

"Espousing high principles of international law and Islamic solidarity while mercilessly carrying out air strikes during the holy month of Ramadan is the perfect example of hypocrisy,"



Ambassador Harish Parvathani

Parvathani said. He added that "blaming neighbours for its own failures is an old Pakistani habit. This attempt to hoodwink the world will fail."

India also strongly rejected Pakistan's directives to start referring to groups inside its own borders as 'Fitna al Hindustan', calling it an outcome of an "organised factory of hate" against India.

Parvathani described such a move as "officially sponsored misinformation and disinformation dressed in religious terminology." 'Fitna al Hindustan' is the

term used by the state to refer to the Balochistan-based terror groups.

"This is an outcome of an organised factory of hate coming from the deep state of Pakistan, which aims to keep its citizens in a state of permanent hostility with India in order to perpetuate their stay in power and control of national resources and distract them from core political and economic problems," the Indian envoy said.

"The de facto coup by the military through the 27th Constitutional amendment is only its most recent

manifestation," the Indian envoy said.

Parvathani was making a reference to the 27th Constitutional Amendment passed in November last year under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that gives Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir lifelong immunity from any legal prosecution.

Further, India also condemned the "trade and transit terrorism" inflicted upon Afghan traders by Pakistan, calling it a violation of World Trade Organisation norms.

India, the top destination of Afghan exports, is offering tariff-free access for Afghan goods to Indian markets and has operationalised a dedicated air freight corridor between India and Afghanistan.

Parvathani said India is also supporting Afghan traders by issuing hundreds of gratis long-term business visas, who are "suffering under unprecedented 'trade and transit terrorism' inflicted upon them by Pakistan's denial of passage for trade.

"The cynical closure of access for this land-locked country is in total violation of UN declarations on Land Locked Developing countries (LLDCs) and a clear weaponisation of their trade and transit vulnerabilities. This blatant Pakistani violation of WTO norms and of the UN Charter and international law should be condemned by the global community," he said.

In his statement, Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said that the most recent report of the Secretary General on the situation in Afghanistan seems to largely "externalise" the responsibility for Afghanistan's multifaceted challenges.

"The fatalities of terrorists and their supporters as a result of CT (counter-terror) operations are mentioned within the ambit of 'civilian casualties', posing serious questions on the credibility of UNAMA's reporting from Afghanistan and the nature of their engagement with the Taliban," Ahmad said. (PTI)

## Indian envoy meets US tech leaders, discusses future of AI



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
■ Washington

India's Ambassador to the US Vinay Mohan Kwatra held a series of meetings with top American technology leaders and discussed perspectives on the trajectory of advanced technologies, including Quantum, and the future of AI. Kwatra held separate meetings on Monday to discuss investment expansion, supply chain resilience, and emerging technologies. He met the President and CEO of Walmart and had a conversation on their investments in India.

"A productive conversation with Chris Nicholas, President and CEO of Walmart, on their investments in India, to discuss investment expansion, supply chain

resilience, and emerging technologies," Kwatra said in a post on X on Tuesday.

In June last year, the then leadership of Walmart Inc met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed the US-based retail giant's growing partnership with India.

In another meeting, he met the President and CEO of the Special Competitive Studies Project (SCSP). "Insightful conversation with @Ylli\_Bajraktari, President & CEO of @scsp\_ai, ahead of his upcoming visit to New Delhi for the India-US Forum," Kwatra posted. "Exchanged perspectives on trajectory of advanced technologies, including Quantum, and the future of AI, including Physical AI and the expanding India-USA cooperation in tech space," the post on X said.

## Lebanese, Pakistani Army chiefs discuss regional security



**SAJJAD HUSSAIN**  
■ Islamabad

The Lebanese army chief on Tuesday met with his Pakistani counterpart, Field Marshal Asim Munir, during which the two exchanged views on the evolving regional security situation. The military's media affairs wing said in a statement that Lebanese armed forces' Commander-in-Chief General Rodolphe Haykal called on Chief of Defence Forces Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. During the meeting, they exchanged

views on "matters of mutual interest, evolving regional security environment, defence cooperation and prospects for enhancing bilateral military relations". "The discussions focused on strengthening professional interactions, training cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two countries," it stated.

Munir reaffirmed the importance Pakistan attaches to its relations with Lebanon and underscored the army's commitment to expanding defence collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces. (PTI)

## Pilots safe after US helicopter crash near Strait of Hormuz, says Trump

**JON GAMBRELL/ MICHELLE L PRICE**  
■ Dubai

A US Army helicopter crashed near the Strait of Hormuz, but President Donald Trump said the two crew members aboard were not injured in the incident near the strategic waterway that Iran has effectively closed during the war.

What caused the crash remained unclear Tuesday morning in West Asia, which was still reeling after Iran and Israel exchanged fire the previous day in the biggest blow yet to the straining ceasefire in the Iran war. Iranian State television reported Tuesday that the Israeli attacks killed at least two members of the country's air defence units.

Since the US and Israel began striking Iran on February 28, the war has shaken the global economy, driven up energy prices around the world and made many basics, including food, more expensive. Officials have been unable to turn the April ceasefire into a deal to permanently end the conflict, particularly as Israel intensifies and expands its military campaign in Lebanon against the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah.

Trump, speaking to journalists at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York after watching the NBA Finals on Monday night, acknowledged the crash. "The pilots are fine. Yeah," Trump said. "Nobody



injured. We are going to issue a report tomorrow. But the pilots are fine."

The New York Times first reported that a US Army Apache attack helicopter went down near the strait in unclear circumstances. The US military's Central Command and the Defence Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

Apache helicopters have been a key asset for the American military as they enforce a blockade on Iranian crude oil shipments and tankers, seeking to pressure Tehran into reaching a deal. The helicopters have also been used by the United Arab Emirates to shoot down Iranian drones during the Iran war.

Trump also expressed renewed optimism over negotiations with Iran.

"We have a good chance" of signing a deal in "two or three days," Trump said. But he didn't provide any details on why there was reason for new optimism. Trump has repeatedly predicted that a deal is near over the past two months since the US and Iran

agreed to an initial ceasefire. "We're very close to having a very, very good, strong, powerful deal," the president said. "If we go and bomb - which we could do very easily if we want, and we spend another two or three weeks bombing - they'll have nothing left whatsoever. But you won't have the strait open for months."

He added, "If we do the bombing, you know, a lot of people are going to be killed. Who wants to do that? I don't."

Mediators, led predominantly by Pakistan, have been trying for weeks to get a deal across the line. However, both Iran and the US have taken hard-line positions.

The US wants to see Iran give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, which is believed still to be entombed in the country after American airstrikes in the 12-day war in 2025. But Iran is refusing that and demanding relief from sanctions. It also wants the release of frozen assets even before a final agreement is in place, something rejected by Trump. (AP)

## Indian diaspora welcome court ruling striking down \$1,00,000 H-1B visa fee

**SAGAR KULKARNI**  
■ Washington

Indian diaspora organisations in the US have welcomed the federal court order of striking down the \$100,000 fee on H-1B visa applications, calling it a fair move to the employment-based immigration system.

On Monday, a federal judge ruled that the \$100,000 fee imposed by US President Donald Trump for H-1B applications was unlawful as it did not have the approval of Congress.

The H-1B visa is a non-

immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

"We welcome the Massachusetts federal court's decision striking down the \$100,000 H-1B visa fee, which restores predictability and fairness to the employment-based immigration system," Khanderao Kand, Chief of Policy and Strategy at the



Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS), told PTI.

"All stakeholders connected with H-1B visas will have a sigh of relief after the court

the US's competitive advantage in innovation, research, and entrepreneurship.

"Access to highly skilled global talent remains essential for the continued growth of the US's technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing sectors. The judgment reinforces the principle that major policy changes must be grounded in statutory authority and economic realities," he said.

Kand said FIIDS believes a balanced, merit-based immigration framework strengthens both US businesses and the broader economy. (PTI)

## Zelensky arrives in Estonia to attend Nordic-Baltic summit

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
■ Tallinn

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in Estonia on Tuesday to attend a summit of Nordic and Baltic leaders and to meet with Estonian President Alar Karis, Estonian public broadcaster ERR reported.

Estonia is hosting the summit in its Capital, Tallinn. The country holds the rotating presidency of the NB8, a regional grouping of the five Nordic countries and the three Baltic states. It brought together the bloc's prime ministers, along with Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leader was accompanied by first lady Olena Zelenska, whom Estonia's Foreign Ministry welcomed in a post on the social platform X.

The visit comes amid friction



over Ukrainian drones, which have repeatedly strayed into the region in recent months as Kyiv steps up strikes on Baltic Sea ports Russia uses to export oil in a bid to make Moscow pay an economic cost for its war in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Russia kept up its strikes across Ukraine. In the northeastern Kharkiv region, three people were

killed and 25 others, including three children, were wounded in attacks over the past 24 hours, said Oleh Syniehubov, head of the regional administration.

In the Dnipropetrovsk region, three people were wounded when several districts came under attack overnight, said regional administration head

Oleksandr Hanzha. Russia launched 166 long-range strike drones and two guided missiles at Ukraine overnight, the Ukrainian air force said. Air defences shot down 146 of the drones, it said.

Russia's Defence Ministry said that air defences downed 140 Ukrainian drones overnight. A woman was killed when a Ukrainian drone hit an apartment building in the Belgorod region, regional emergency officials said.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha also travelled to Tallinn, where he met his Estonian counterpart, Margus Tsahkna. The two discussed Ukraine's security, pressure on Russia, and Kyiv's bid to join the European Union, Tsahkna said.

"Estonia will continue to stand by Ukraine for as long as it takes," Tsahkna wrote on X. "As Putin intensifies his

attacks and shows no sign of abandoning his imperial ambitions, our responsibility is to increase pressure, not offer concessions."

In May, Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said Estonia supports Ukraine's bid to join the European Union and wants the bloc to keep advancing the process.

Separately, Zelensky said Monday that he had held positive talks with US representatives Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner during a stopover at an airport in Moldova's capital, describing them as focused on ending the war.

In a social media post, he said the two sides discussed diplomatic prospects ahead of this month's Group of Seven summit, and that he had briefed the US side on Ukraine's assessment of Russia's intentions.



## PROSPECT

# Assam, EU welcome launch of Blue Valley Cluster

TONY DAS ■ Guwahati

The Government of Assam and the Delegation of the European Union to India on Tuesday welcomed the successful launch of the Blue Valley Cluster in Guwahati, focusing on Flavours, Fragrance and AYUSH. This initiative marks a significant step towards strengthening cooperation between Europe, Assam and the wider North-East region of India in developing ecosystems and value chains in sectors of mutual interest.

The Blue Valley Cluster (Flavours, Fragrance and AYUSH), led by the Assam Government, aligns with the priorities outlined in the EU-India Comprehensive Strategic Agenda agreed at the January 2026 EU-India Summit and, in particular with the Blue Valleys initiative. It represents an important milestone in translating the broader objectives of the India-EU partnership into practical cooperation at the regional and States level. It will serve as a catalyst for research, innovation, investment and industrial cooperation between European and Indian companies and entities.

The launch took place in



the presence of Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma; H.E. Hervé Delphin, Ambassador of the European Union to India; Sibi George, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India; H.E. Didier Vanderhasselt, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium to India; senior representatives of the Government of Assam; members of the European diplomatic corps; representatives of the Federation of European Business in India (FEBI); industry leaders; institutional partners; and stakeholders from India and Europe.

The visit of a high-level Team Europe in Assam reflects the interest in turning opportunities into concrete cooperation with Assam and India's North-East, which is one of the fastest-growing economies in India. As India's gateway to the North-East and a bridge to wider regional markets, Assam is increasingly emerging as a strategic platform for advancing international partnerships, strengthening sustainable value chains and fostering innovation-led industrial development.

A bilateral meeting between Assam Chief Minister

Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and H.E. Hervé Delphin, Ambassador of the European Union to India, was held in the presence of Sibi George, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

The Chief Minister also hosted a roundtable luncheon interaction with members of the Federation of European Business in India (FEBI) and the European delegation, providing an opportunity for direct dialogue on investment prospects, industrial collaboration, technology partnerships, skilling initiatives and avenues for

strengthening business-to-business engagement between Assam and Europe.

HE Hervé Delphin, Ambassador of the European Union to India, said, "My visit in Assam is testament to our commitment to the Northeast Region, where we see immense potential in realising the priorities of the EU-India joint Comprehensive Strategic Agenda. Assam is blessed with natural resources and human talent. Its trailblazing spirit to embrace innovation in a sustainable and inclusive way and become a major economic hub and a connectivity gateway makes it a destination of choice for companies. The Blue Valleys initiative will serve as a corridor bringing together the European and Indian businesses. The objective is to build cooperation in value chains of common interest, while ensuring that it benefits the people and communities and ensure environmental sustainability."

Reflecting on the ongoing collaboration with Assam, he added, "From supporting CITIIS 2.0 in Guwahati to the Barak River Basin Management Action Plan, our collaboration with and in the State of Assam has been very positive, delivering tangible

results. Now, we're taking this cooperation to the next level: accelerating investment and industrial cooperation which can benefit the entire North-East and the region."

Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Assam's partnership with the European Union reflects our shared vision of building resilient, sustainable, and innovation-driven economies that create opportunities for our people while strengthening India-Europe cooperation. We see immense potential for collaboration across strategic sectors including semiconductors and electronics, defence and aviation, tea, agarwood, organic foods, natural fragrances and flavours, and AYUSH-based wellness products, where Assam and the wider Northeast Region possess unique strengths and global market opportunities."

"Through initiatives such as the Blue Valleys platform, we aim to connect thousands of farmers, women-led self-help groups, startups, researchers, and industries with international value chains, enabling inclusive growth, technology transfer, quality employment, and sustainable prosperity across Assam and the Northeast," he added.



CM Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma held discussions with BookMyShow Co-Founder & CEO Ashish Hemrajani and Naman Pugalia on expanding international events ecosystem of Assam and concert economy.



## 1st Amaravati FIDE Rating Chess Tournament Concludes at VIT-AP University

The VIT-AP 1st Amaravati FIDE Rating Chess Tournament, jointly organised by VIT-AP University and the Andhra Chess Association, concluded successfully on the evening of June 8, marking a significant milestone in the promotion of chess and intellectual sports in Andhra Pradesh. The eight-day tournament commenced on June 1, 2026, and witnessed an overwhelming response from the chess fraternity across India and abroad. A total of 943 players participated in the event, representing 21 states and 2 countries. Among them were 669 internationally rated players and 76 titled players, including International Masters, Candidate Masters, FIDE Masters, and other distinguished competitors. The tournament also showcased remarkable inclusivity, with participants ranging from 4 years of age to seasoned chess veterans. Winners in different categories were awarded with prize money and a trophy. A total cash prize to the tune of Rs 30 lakhs was awarded to the winners of different categories. The championship attracted the attention of several eminent dignitaries and public representatives who visited the tournament during its course. (PNS)

## Meeting of National Level Policy Implementation and Monitoring Committee held in New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

To strengthen and modernise the cooperative sector, the first meeting of the National Level Policy Implementation and Monitoring Committee constituted under the National Cooperation Policy-2025 was held on Tuesday at Atal Kshay Urja Bhawan, New Delhi.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation & Chairperson of the Committee. The Committee deliberated on the roadmap for the effective implementation of the National Cooperation Policy-2025, with special focus on institutional strengthening, coordinated action by Central Ministries, Departments, States and Union Territories, and National



Federation/Cooperatives for digital transformation, capacity building, membership expansion and cooperative-led inclusive and sustainable economic development.

The meeting was attended by Dilip Sanghani, Chairman, IFFCO; Siddharth Jain, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Cooperation; Anand Kumar Jha, Raman Kumar and Shiv Pal Singh, Joint Secretaries, Ministry of Cooperation; Vice-Chancellor, "Tribhuvan" Sahkari University, Chairman,

make a significant contribution to the goal of Viksit Bharat @2047.

He underlined that the National Cooperation Policy-2025 provides a comprehensive framework to make cooperatives transparent, technology-enabled, professionally managed and member-centric economic institutions

During its deliberations, the Committee discussed the six strategic pillars of the National Cooperation Policy-2025, namely strengthening the foundation of the cooperative sector, making cooperatives vibrant and competitive, preparing cooperatives for the future, expanding inclusiveness and outreach, enhancing the role of cooperatives in new and emerging sectors, and connecting the younger generation with cooperative development.

## Business leaders join UNICEF India to support disabled children

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

UNICEF India on Tuesday brought together leading business leaders to advance Inclusive Impact for Early Years (IIE), a platform that encourages companies to play a bigger role in supporting young children with developmental delays, neurodivergence, autism and disabilities. The platform promotes early identification of developmental challenges of children, caregiver support, and greater inclusion at home, in schools and in communities.

The event introduced IIE to leaders from businesses, healthcare, philanthropy, civil society and the disability sector, creating opportunities for collaboration to improve outcomes for children and build more inclusive



workplaces and communities. It also highlighted the importance of focusing on inclusive early years and disability as a continuum that begins in childhood and extends into adulthood, shaping participation in society and the workforce.

Speaking on this occasion, Dr Nande Putta, Chief of Health, UNICEF India, said, "Early childhood development interventions are among the most powerful and cost-effective equalizers we have, supporting every girl and boy, including the most vulnerable, to reach their full potential."

## DAILY SUDOKU

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.

				3				
1	3	8					2	
9			3	2				1
	8	3		9				5
	1		6	8	5		7	
5		4		1	2			
3			7	6				2
	2				4	6		9
		5						

SOLUTION (9.6.26)

3	5	9	2	4	6	1	8	7
1	6	2	8	3	7	9	5	4
8	7	4	1	9	5	3	2	6
4	2	5	7	8	1	6	3	9
9	3	7	6	2	4	5	1	8
6	1	8	9	5	3	7	4	2
2	9	3	5	7	8	4	6	1
7	4	1	3	6	2	8	9	5
5	8	6	4	1	9	2	7	3

## DOUBLE CROSSWORD WEDNESDAY | JUNE 10, 2026

ACROSS

1 Gardening informant? (5)  
6 Agitatedly paces the room (5)  
9 Not much money for a half-hour with a horsey character (7)  
10 Where there's not a Sassenach in sight? (5)  
11 A vegetable container (5)  
12 King who restyled his hair a lot (5)  
13 An arrest made at Silverstone, say? (5)  
15 Quietly do wrong, in a certain case (3)  
17 God's is at the church (4)  
18 City I named anew (6)

DOWN

2 Curtis turned countryman (6)  
3 English dialect some Scots use? (6)  
4 Abolished tax on TV, say (3)  
5 A long piece the band hasn't quite finished? (5)  
6 Rags due for recycling in a tasteful coat (7)  
7 Wild romp at the Albert Hall? (4)  
8 Black stuff that's good for the car? (6)  
12 What the optimist did when he'd got out of work (5)  
13 Chummy, pig-headed mate (5)  
14 Not quite the true way to have faith? (5)

19 Joined someone to get measured (5)  
20 Persevered with the latest edition (6)  
22 Beefy speculator? (4)  
24 Still the old-fashioned typed heading (3)  
25 On which to lie, being modest about something plucky! (7)  
26 Soldier boy's forename? (5)  
27 Pretend to be a cool-headed character (5)  
28 Cilla's strange bloomer (5)  
29 Ship a girl to town? (7)  
30 Beat Alf silly at the film centre! (5)  
31 Certain material is sham to him (5)

SOLUTION (9.6.26)

ACROSS	26, O-us-t	DOWN	1, ill-fated	22, M-ash-i-e
9, Len-D-an ear	27, E-lap-se	2, Anything	23, Stops short	24, All-rounder
10, I-in-ear-nest	29, C-O-heres	3, Memo-ri-se	25, W-ee (we)	28, Pen-a-lise
12, Fits	32, Shake-down	4, (The)ir-king	5, Misnomer?	29, Ca-she'd-in
13, No-ti-on	34, Possessed	6, Tender-foot	6, Stand-i-til	30, Sudanese
14, Di-sdai-n	35, He-a-rt-en	7, Dr-astic	8, Stands-till	31, Certain
15, Twinkling	36, Letter	11, En-a-s-e	11, En-a-s-e	33, A-part
17, Merciless	37, Down	16, Knotty	16, Knotty	19, (R)IP-i-e
18, Dog rose	38, Retainers	19, (R)IP-i-e	19, (R)IP-i-e	34, Pu-t-o-ff
19, Pear-to-t	39, Faith-less	21, Hair restorer	21, Hair restorer	
20, Thal (tie)				
23, Short-cake				
25, With a Will				

## CM Yogi directs officials to prepare new Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy-2026

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to prepare the new Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy-2026 with the objective of making Uttar Pradesh the country's leading startup destination.

He said, "The state's young population, vast market, rapidly developing digital and industrial base, and investor-friendly environment have the potential to make Uttar Pradesh a national hub of innovation-driven economic growth. The new policy should empower the youth to become job creators rather than job seekers and give Uttar Pradesh a new



identity in the fields of startups and innovation."

During an important meeting on Sunday, the Chief Minister reviewed various provisions proposed under the Uttar Pradesh Startup Policy-2026. The Principal Secretary, IT and Electronics, informed the Chief Minister that the state has achieved significant success in developing its

startup ecosystem over the past few years. From being placed in the 'Aspiring Leader' category in 2018, Uttar Pradesh has progressed to the 'Top Performer' category in the Government of India's Startup Ranking 2025.

The Chief Minister said, "Startups in the state should receive the necessary support at every stage, from inception to expansion and global competitiveness."

He directed that provisions related to sustenance allowance, prototype grants, seed capital assistance, and incentives for patents and quality certifications should be made more effective in the new policy.

## INNOV8 ADDS 100 SEATS AT ISBT CENTRE IN RAIPUR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

In a significant boost to Chhattisgarh's growing startup and innovation ecosystem, Innov8 has added an additional 100 seats workspace capacity at the ISBT Centre in Raipur in partnership with the Raipur Municipal Corporation.

The initiative is aimed at supporting the state government's vision of promoting entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and employment generation in emerging cities.

With this initiative, the total capacity has grown to 350 seats, with a growing number of startups, digital-first businesses, consulting firms, and independent professionals seeking flexible and professionally managed workspaces.

Speaking on the development, Ritesh Agarwal, Founder and CEO of PRISM (corporate parent of Innov8) said "Raipur represents the immense potential that India's emerging cities hold for the future of entrepreneurship and innovation. Through Innov8's expansion at the ISBT center, we are deepening our commitment to building world-class infrastructure as we believe the next generation of successful Indian companies will emerge not just from metros, but from ambitious cities like Raipur that are rapidly evolving into vibrant economic and innovation hubs."

## UCO Bank organises retail, MSME, resource, agri carnival

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

UCO Bank's Zonal Office, New Delhi, organised a retail, MSME, resource and agri carnival on June 8 in Sahibabad, Ghaziabad. The event was chaired by Rajendra Kumar Saboo, Executive Director, UCO Bank. Numerous customers, entrepreneurs, and businesspeople enthusiastically participated.

The objective of this carnival was to provide information to the customers and entrepreneurs about the various retail, MSME and agriculture related financial schemes, loan facilities



and banking services of the Bank and to provide suitable solutions for their business growth and financial needs.

The program engaged customers and provided detailed information about the bank's various schemes and services. Officials from the Delhi Regional Office and branch managers from various branches were also present.

The event also saw the dis-

tribution of loan sanction letters to various customers by Rajendra Kumar Saboo, Executive Director, Gautam Patra, Chief General Manager, and Rajesh Kumar Tiwari, Zonal Head, New Delhi.

Through this initiative, UCO Bank reaffirmed its commitment to its customers and entrepreneurs and strengthened its resolve to promote inclusive growth and entrepreneurship.



## BRIEFLY

### Saneeth enters Australian Open men's singles main draw



India's Saneeth Dayanand advanced to the men's singles main draw of the Australian Open badminton tournament after winning his qualifying matches here on Tuesday. Dayanand, seeded fourth in the qualifying rounds, first eased past local hope Karonon 21-17 21-15 before logging a 21-9 21-16 victory over Malaysia's Ming Hong Lim to make the cut. He will face China's Hu Zhe An in his opening main draw game. However, Manraj Singh lost his second qualification match, to Malaysia's Eugene Ewe 11-21 18-21, to bow out of the competition. In the men's doubles main draw, it was curtains for the Indian pair of Achutadiya Rao and P Arjun Reddy after they went down to the Australian combination of Kanki Igawa and Ooi Yi Hern 15-21 15-21 in their opening game. The tournament's main singles competition will get underway on Wednesday where India's challenge would be spearheaded by two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu. Sindhu, seeded third, will open against Peru's Ines Lucia Castillo and is likely to face the winner of the first-round clash between Isharani Barua, Han Qian Xi. (PTI)

### Japan has high World Cup expectations: Wataru Endo



Wataru Endo made clear Monday night that Japan has very high expectations for the World Cup. "We will do our best with pride and passion to achieve something that we've never seen before in Japan's soccer history," Japan's captain said. The Liverpool defensive midfielder and his teammates spent nearly an hour at an open practice jogging around the pitch at GEODIS Park, home of Major League Soccer's Nashville club, after arriving earlier Monday. Nashville is home before Japan opens the World Cup on Sunday against the Netherlands in Arlington, Texas, in Group F. More than 5,000 fans were in the stands watching the open practice. While some traveled from Japan, others came from Michigan, Atlanta and even Austin, Texas, for a glimpse of the Samurai Blue. Japan wrapped up the nearly one-hour session with players taking turns tossing or handing gifts to fans. Takuro Kaya and his son, Yuhi, wore team gear after driving from North Carolina to support Japan. Kaya said his son's favorite player is Brighton & Hove Albion winger Kaoru Mitoma, who was left off the squad with an injured hamstring, but that his son was excited to see other players like midfielder Junya Ito. (AP)

## US team settles into WC training base with gratitude for fan support

GREG BEACHAM  
Irvine (California, USA)

The US national team already knew it was in for a once-in-a-lifetime experience this month as the home team in a World Cup. But when the 26 players took the field at Orange County's Great Park on Monday to the cheers of several thousand fans who had turned out just to watch a mere practice, they were given yet another reminder of just how special this opportunity will be if they seize it.

The Americans projected confidence and excitement as they settled into their training base for at least the next three weeks in Southern California. The team convened in Georgia last month before playing two friendlies in the past eight days.

All three of the Americans' World Cup group stage matches are on the West Coast, starting with their opener Friday night against Paraguay at SoFi Stadium, the palatial NFL arena about 50 miles away in Inglewood, California.

"I think the group is in a



really good place at the minute," US captain Tim Ream said. "We've all been, I wouldn't say overwhelmed, but pleasantly surprised by the excitement and the buzz around the team and in the stadiums. Pulling up here with 5,500 fans ready to watch a training session is incredible. I just think we're in a good place mentally right now. It's been a long two weeks, a hard two

weeks, but guys are in a great position mentally, physically and emotionally, and ready to get going."

The team was greeted in Irvine by rows of enthusiastic fans who won a multi-stage lottery among 32,000 applicants for the chance to watch practice and to get autographs at FIFA's Community Day event. US coach Mauricio Pochettino entertained the crowd and

got a "U-S-A!" chant going while his team was doing a brief gym workout before it got on the grass.

"The facilities are amazing," Pochettino said. "It's more than we expect, and not only the facilities, but the people who are here working. Great facilities and great people are an amazing combination. We are grateful, and I want to say a big thanks." (AP)

## Iran claims FIFA revoked fans' WC tickets in US



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Tijuana (Mexico)

FIFA has revoked the ticket allocation for Iran fans at the team's three World Cup games in the United States, the national soccer federation claimed Tuesday.

Each federation for the 48 teams taking part is entitled to receive and distribute 8 per cent of stadium capacity at the World Cup, adding up to several thousands of tickets for each game.

Just days before Iran opens its World Cup — on June 15 at the Los Angeles Rams' stadium in Inglewood against New Zealand — the federation claimed in a statement

reported by semi-official state media that it was now unable to provide any tickets to its supporters.

FIFA was approached for comment.

The claim adds to the turmoil between Iranian soccer, FIFA and tournament co-host the U.S., which began military attacks on Iran on February 28.

Iran's team is now based in the Mexican border city of Tijuana instead of its pre-war plan to train in Tucson, Arizona. Some federation officials also have been denied visas to enter the US, where Iran also plays Belgium in Inglewood on June 21 and then Egypt in Seattle on June 26.

## Ridhima Dilawari looks to continue dominance as Hero WPGT tees off

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mysuru

Ridhima Dilawari, who won three of the six events in the 2026 Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, will look to continue her dominance as the seventh leg gets underway in Mysuru.

The tournament at the Jayachamaraja Wadiyar Golf Course heralds the start of the second half of the 2026 domestic season. The Par-70 course will play to just under 6000 yards.

Ridhima won the second, fourth and sixth legs of the Tour and holds a sizeable lead over the field on the Hero Order of Merit standings.

Of the remaining three events, Jasmine Shekar, Tvesa Malik and amateur Lavanya Gupta won once each. This week Jasmine and Lavanya are not participating.

Ridhima's best season was in 2019, when she won five times in 12 starts and was second behind Gaurika Bishnoi in the Order of Merit.



She won only once in 2025, but has been in great form as she divides her time between the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, the AM Green IGPL Tour and the Ladies European Tour, where she is hoping to get a few starts. Ridhima will be up against

Vani Kapoor, one of the most successful players ever on the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour.

Vani, the 2025 Hero Order of Merit winner with five wins, is looking to get her first win of 2026 after having played only three of the first six events this year.

## Gukesh can take inspiration from Pragg's perseverance and script turnaround: Anand

SUMAN RAY ■ New Delhi

Legendary Viswanathan Anand hailed R Praggnanandhaa's highly competitive style of play, and urged the struggling world champion D Gukesh to take a leaf out of the book of newly-crowned Norway Chess champion to script a turnaround.

Praggnanandhaa recently became the first Indian chess player to annex the Norway title, but Gukesh finished sixth in the tournament.

"I am delighted that Praggnanandhaa has won Norway Chess in an impressive style. I am very happy at the spectacular turnaround (he made) in the last four rounds. He is playing the game with some amazingly impressive concepts and style," Anand said.

Anand advised Gukesh, who is scheduled to face Javokhir Sindarov in his title defence later this year, to take "inspiration" from Praggnanandhaa.



"At this moment, Praggnanandhaa is playing better than Gukesh but anything can change. I think there will be form swings repeatedly. Gukesh seems to be stuck a bit. I think he can take inspiration from Pragg. He can see that if you persist with hard work then at some point things will change," he added.

Anand said Praggnanandhaa is always "ready for a fight" on the board, and the attitude helps him produce some interesting concepts while playing.

"Actually, it's the same Pragg in the last one and half years. Sometimes he plays hard and comes out with interesting concepts, and he is always ready for a fight. The results might not always work out.

"In fact, after the first six rounds, you can't see much difference from the last 8 or 9 months (as in how Praggnanandhaa plays). But then there was this great turnaround and that was really nice to see because he played very interesting chess," he noted. (PTI)

## Zverev's French Open triumph receives muted reception in France due to off-court issues

SAMUEL PETREQUINAP ■ Paris

Alexander Zverev's victory at the French Open did not dominate the headlines in France on Monday as is normally expected for the men's singles champion.

Most noticeably, his win was reduced to a minor mention on the front page of sports daily L'Equipe, the country's main sports newspaper, which published an editorial highlighting accusations of domestic violence that the German player has faced.

Zverev won his first major title on Sunday in Paris when he defeated Flavio Cobolli in five sets.

L'Equipe instead dedicated its front page to handball team of



Metz, which became first French club to lift the Champions League women's trophy. There was just a small picture of Zverev on the top left corner of the main page, with the headline "Zverev, major at last."

In addition to its coverage of the final, L'Equipe published an op-ed headlined "To live with" that focused on past accusa-

tions against Zverev. Two years ago, he settled a domestic abuse case after reaching an out-of-court settlement with his former partner, who accused him of assaulting her.

A district court in Berlin ended the trial after an agreement between state prosecutors and lawyers for Zverev and his former partner Brenda Patea.

Zverev agreed to pay fines of 150,000 euros (\$162,000) to the state and 50,000 euros (\$54,000) to charitable organisations. Zverev previously denied an assault allegation made by another woman. Those accusations were investigated by the ATP, but it said in January 2023 that there was insufficient evidence. (AP)

## Infantino targeted in fresh criminal complaint by his former boss Platini

GRAHAM DUNBAR ■ Geneva

FIFA president Gianni Infantino was targeted by a revived criminal complaint in France on Monday by his former boss Michel Platini, who seemed destined to lead FIFA until being implicated in a financial wrongdoing case in 2015.

French soccer great Platini — who was acquitted again last year after a second Swiss court trial — has asked lawyers in Paris to file a criminal complaint against Infantino and five other Swiss soccer and prosecution officials. He alleges a conspiracy of false accusation and influence peddling to prevent him from becoming FIFA president a decade ago.

Lawyers also will file a civil lawsuit seeking damages from FIFA, a spokesman for Platini said in a statement about the allegations, which were previously made in



2022 directed at Swiss authorities.

The fresh filings were announced three days before Infantino opens a World Cup being played across North America that has let him often share a political stage with US President Donald Trump. (AP)

## Inspired by Kohli, Argentina's Nabila eyes big Yogasana future back home



SANSKRITI GAUBA ■ Ahmedabad

Thousands of kilometres from Buenos Aires and the football-crazy land of Lionel Messi, Argentina's lone representative at the inaugural World Yogasana Championships found inspiration from an Indian sporting icon as she scripted one of the standout performances of the competition. Argentina's Nabila, who returned home with five medals from the championships in Ahmedabad, said Indian cricket superstar Virat Kohli has been a source of motivation because of the way he has carried his country's name onto the global stage.

"He is a star here in India and he put the country in all the news everywhere around the world. I imagine his career because he is really hardworking and has put your country there. It means a lot, so I try to be inspired by that," Nabila said.

Competing in the country where Yogasana was born, Nabila admitted she arrived without any high expectations, making her five-medal haul all the more special. "For me, it was really a shock because coming here I didn't expect to have a lot of medals. Of course, India is the place that gave birth to this sport. I expected them to take first place. But just to be so close to them, I'm really happy," she said. (PTI)

## Somali World Cup referee who was denied US entry was set to make history

OMAR FARUK/GERALD IMRAY  
Mogadishu (Somalia)

The World Cup referee from Somalia who was denied entry to the United States after arriving in Miami and subsequently dropped from the tournament by FIFA was set to make history for his country.

Omar Artan was due to be the first referee from Somalia to officiate at the World Cup after making FIFA's final list for the tournament, which was announced two months ago. He is one of Africa's top referees and was named the continent's best male referee in 2025 by the African soccer body.

He was denied entry at Miami International Airport on Saturday over "vetting concerns," US Customs and Border Protection said in a statement without giving

details of those concerns. Artan was issued a visa to travel to the US last week, according to the Somalia Embassy in Kenya that processed it.

The move to deny a FIFA-appointed match official permission to enter the World Cup is highly unusual. Artan was due to meet up with other World Cup referees at their training base in Miami.

The Somalia Sports and Youth Ministry said on Tuesday that it had not been told why Artan was denied entry and its embassy in the US was making diplomatic efforts to resolve the problem and still allow Artan to referee at the World Cup, which opens on Thursday.

Somalia was one of the countries subjected to new travel restrictions last year under the



Trump administration's crackdown on immigration. That raised concerns that fans, players and officials from those countries — most of which are African — might be denied entry for the World Cup due to the larger crackdown despite having valid visas.

Artan subjected to additional inspection

"During processing, the traveler underwent additional inspection, a routine part of CBP's inspection process when officers need to verify information or determine admissibility," CBP said in its statement on Monday. "Following inspection, the traveler, a referee for the FIFA World Cup, was determined to be inadmissible due to vetting concerns and was denied entry."

It didn't name Artan and referred only to a Somali nation-

who is a World Cup referee. Artan is the only Somali referee selected for the tournament.

CBP said all travelers seeking entry into the US — including World Cup players, coaches and staff — were subject to CBP inspection and vetting.

"Admissibility determinations are made on a case-by-case basis using law enforcement, national security, and immigration information available at the time of inspection," the CBP statement said. "CBP officers have the authority to question travelers, conduct inspections, and determine admissibility consistent with US law."

FIFA said it was not involved in the immigration processes and was informed by US authorities that Artan's "status will not be changed at present." (AP)



## Red-ball cricket meant everything to me: Suthar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mullanpur

For Manav Suthar, Test format is the "pinnacle" of cricket, and the India left-arm spinner revealed that he was practising with red-ball even during IPL 2026 to stay on top of his game.

The 23-year-old Suthar made a strong impression on his maiden outing, returning 6/33 and 1/29 along with a brisk knock to set up a heavy innings and 300-run victory over Afghanistan in their only Test.

"From the very first day I started playing and as I progressed through the ranks, red-ball cricket meant everything to me," Suthar told JioHotstar.

"It is the pinnacle of the sport. So, whether I was playing U-19 cricket or the Ranji Trophy, the goal was always to play Test cricket for India. Kuldeep (Yadav) bhai's speech while presenting me with the cap was very motivating. Everyone encouraged and motivated me a lot, so it felt really special." Gautam (Gambhir) sir and the skipper (Shubman Gill)



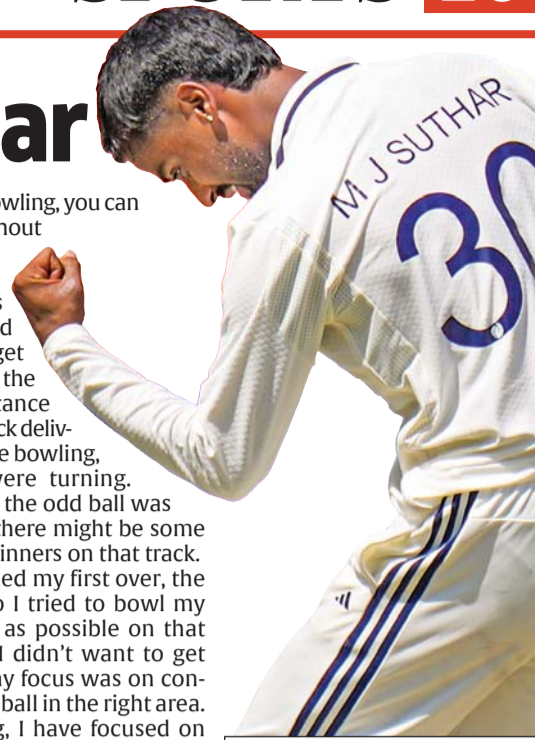
informed me that I would be making my debut. It was a very proud moment because, ever since I started playing, it had been my dream, my father's dream, and everyone's dream for me to play Test cricket for India," Suthar added.

Suthar, who played for Gujarat Titans in this year's IPL, said he wanted to be ready for the opportunity of playing Test cricket and practised with the red ball during the league. "When my name came up in the team, I was practising with the

red ball during the IPL as well, thinking about how I would approach things if given the opportunity," he said. "After coming here (Mullanpur), I had three or four long practice sessions. With bowling, it's not really about how many hours you

put in. If you enjoy bowling, you can bowl 20-25 overs without even realising it so the key is to keep bowling as much as you can." Suthar said he did not want to get carried away even as the pitch offered assistance while bowling his stock delivery. "When they were bowling, a few deliveries were turning. When I was batting, the odd ball was holding up so I felt there might be some assistance for the spinners on that track.

As soon as I bowled my first over, the ball was turning, so I tried to bowl my stock ball as much as possible on that wicket," he said. "I didn't want to get carried away, but my focus was on consistently putting the ball in the right area. Since the beginning, I have focused on spot-bowling, and whatever consistency I have today is because of that," Suthar added.



## We have crossed the line once and can do it again: Jemimah on upcoming T20 WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India are not lacking in self-belief after their historic women's ODI World Cup triumph last year and they are the "favourites" to win the upcoming T20 World Cup in England, says star batter Jemimah Rodrigues.

The women's T20 World Cup begins on June 12, and India play their first match on Sunday against Pakistan in Birmingham. New Zealand are the defending champions while South Africa ended as runners-up in the last edition in 2024.

India are placed in the six-team Group A along with Australia, South Africa, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Netherlands. Two teams from the group will qualify for semifinals.

"Everyone was a part of it (the ODI World Cup win); they know what pressure feels like and, at the same time, everyone knows that we've crossed the line once and can do it again. That



belief rubs off," Jemimah said on JioStar's 'Champions Huddle'. "But when you win one, you don't want to stop there. You want to make it two, three, however many you can. Our fans make us feel at home wherever we go. So, yes, we are the favourites, no doubt about that."

The 25-year-old Jemimah was one of the stars of India's maiden ODI World Cup triumph in 2025 at home.

"Many times, we visualise success so much, but now we've actually lived it. That helps us believe even more that we can do it again. It's great to

have so many members from the 2025 World Cup squad in this team, along with a few more youngsters coming in. I think the energy will rub off on them. Everyone is going to share their experiences," she said.

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said the ODI World Cup win has boosted the team's confidence of bagging more global events.

"Yeah, 100 per cent. I think everybody will agree with me that life has completely changed after winning our first ODI World Cup. Hopefully, we'll continue this run of

winning trophies. "This is what I want as a captain, and I think it's what everyone in our team has been dreaming of. Hopefully, we'll continue moving in this direction."

India head coach Anil Kumble said his team wants to make winning a habit.

"There's pressure in every tournament, and the players are used to it. They've been playing international cricket for some time now. We'll be going in as ODI World Cup champions for the first time," he said.

## Lord's and Gaddafi Stadium pitches rated as unsatisfactory



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

The pitches used for the first Test between England and New Zealand at Lord's in London and the third ODI between Pakistan and Australia at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore have been rated as "unsatisfactory" under the ICC Pitch and Outfield Monitoring Process.

The two venues have been handed one demerit point each after match referees Andy Pycroft (Lord's) and Graeme La Brooy (Gaddafi Stadium) submitted their respective reports, highlighting concerns raised by match officials and captains.

Pycroft said the Lord's pitch offered excessive seam movement throughout the Test and the ball also stayed extremely low on several occasions, resulting in variable bounce. "There was plenty of excessive seam movement throughout the Test and the ball also kept extremely low on several occasions. The bounce was variable throughout as 16 wickets fell on the first day and 17 on the second," he said.

"There was simply an over-balance in favour of ball against bat caused by the pitch," Pycroft said about the Lord's pitch. England defeated New Zealand by 115 runs on Day 4 of the first Test match at Lord's. Set a target of 254 runs to win, the tourists were bowled out for 138 in their second innings, giving England a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

On the Gaddafi Stadium surface, La Brooy said the pitch was slow and low, making it difficult for batters to score runs and unsuitable for a One-Day International. "It did not suit an ODI game as batters had to spend more time to settle in. It helped spin very early in the match and continued the same way throughout," La Brooy said. The reports have been forwarded to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), who have 14 days to appeal against the sanctions.

## Hardik, Rohit get all-clear for ODI return from CoE

KUSHAN SARKAR ■ Mullanpur

Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya and senior batter Rohit Sharma have been cleared by the Sports Science team of BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) to participate in the upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan starting on Sunday in Dharamsala.

Both Pandya and Rohit missed quite a few IPL matches for Mumbai Indians due to their respective issues. While Pandya was battling back spasms, Rohit had a hamstring niggle. Hardik has been at the CoE in Bengaluru since June 2.

"Hardik was on a holiday abroad before he checked in at the CoE on June 2. Over the next five days, he did several match simulations and even bowled 10 overs," a BCCI source said.

"There has been no discomfort and the information is that his fitness data for various parameters has been okayed by Strength and Conditioning coaches at the CoE," the source added.

Former skipper Rohit was also at the CoE to assess his hamstring niggle and he too has been given the go ahead after an examination. On Monday, India's assistant coach Sitanshu Kotak had said that although he

doesn't have an update on Pandya's fitness status, he believed the all-rounder was doing fine.

Pandya is an important cog in India's white ball set up given the balance he lends to the side with his pace bowling and lusty hits during the death overs.

The most relieving aspect is that Pandya is bowling 10 overs in training session which means that he is ready for the rigours

of 50-over cricket.

It is, however, not clear whether Pandya will join with the team in Chandigarh for a training session under lights or directly link up in Dharamsala which was the original plan. Star batter Virat Kohli is already missing the series owing to a hamstring injury. Apart from Dharamsala, the rubber features games in Lucknow and Chennai on June 17 and June 20 respectively. (PTI)

## Rain washes out the 3rd ODI between West Indies, Sri Lanka

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Kingston (Jamaica)

The third one-day cricket international between West Indies and Sri Lanka went the same way as the second and was washed out Monday without a ball being bowled. Umpires made the decision just after 6 p.m. local time to call off the match because the outfield couldn't be made ready for play even if the rain abated.

Sri Lanka won the first match of the series by 41 runs for its first ODI win in the Caribbean in 13 years. The two subsequent washouts have given Sri Lanka a 1-0 series victory. "We're very happy to win the series," Sri Lanka captain Kusal Mendis said. "We did really well in that one game in all three departments."

"There's not a lot of matches ahead of next year's World Cup and I'm happy with my first series victory as captain." The series win was also the first for Sri Lanka's new coach, former South Africa star Gary Kirsten. "You can't control mother nature," West Indies captain Shai Hope said. "Credit must be given to the Sri Lankan team for the way they played in the first game."

**यूनियन बैंक**  
UNION BANK OF INDIA  
Regional Office : Bhopal Central

**UNION BANK OF INDIA**  
Regional Office : Bhopal Central

### POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule – 8 (1)]

WHEREAS, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Union Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated mentioned below calling upon the Borrower's/Guarantor's to repay the Amounts (mentioned below) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrower's/Guarantor's as well as guarantors having failed to repay the full amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower's / Guarantor's & the public in general that the undersigned has taken 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 of the said rules on dates mentioned below. The Borrower's/Guarantor's in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the below mentioned properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Union Bank of India, Concern Branch for an amount mentioned herein below & interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of the Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets/.

Name of Borrower	Description of Property of Borrower	Demand Notice Date	Outstanding Amount as per demand notice
<b>Bhagwan Ganj Branch, Sagor</b>			
Borrower : Shri Harish soni s/o Shri Ram Chandra Soni & Smt. Nidhi Soni w/o Shri Harish Soni	All the piece and parcel of Property Residential House no. 111, ward No. 31, Gandhi Chowk having ground floor (Shop) and first floor (Residential) having total area 122.60 Sq. ft. and built up area 245.20 Sq.ft. at Sagor (M.P.) and bounded by Owners: Shri Harish soni s/o Shri Ram Chandra Soni Boundaries: East: Property of Ram kishan soni, West: Property of Lachhu sahu, North: Property of Ramkisan, South: Road	<b>20.12.2025</b> <b>05.06.2026</b>	<b>₹ 13,01,351.39</b> + Interest & Charges
Date : 05.06.2026, Place : Bhopal Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India			

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**Bank of Maharashtra**  
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)  
www.bankofmaharashtra.in

**Bank of Maharashtra**  
ZONAL OFFICE,  
1/14, ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE,  
ARERA HILLS, BHOPAL, 462011.

### POSSESSION NOTICE [Rule – 8 (1)]

WHEREAS, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Maharashtra under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (12) of Section 13 read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated mentioned below calling upon the borrower and guarantor to repay outstanding Amount (mentioned below) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The notice was sent by Regd AD Post and hand delivery. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, the undersigned has taken 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 of the said rules on dates mentioned below. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of Bank of Maharashtra, Concerned Branch for an amount herein above mentioned. The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of sub-section 8 of Sec 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name & Address of Borrowers & Guarantor (s)	Details of Property	Outstanding Amount ₹
<b>Govindpura Branch, Bhopal</b>		
Borrower: 1. M/s Goyal Industries (Partnership Firm) Address:- Plot no. 91, Sector-B, Industrial Area Bagrodha Tehsil Huzur Dist. Bhopal.M.P.-462026	All those pieces and parcels of leasehold One Industrial Plot No. 91 admeasuring Plot Area 930 sq.mtr., Sector B, Bagrodha at Bagrodha, P. H. No. 24, Tehsil-Huzur, Dist.- Bhopal and within the jurisdiction of the Sub Registrar Bhopal Boundaries: North:-24 mtr. wide road, East:-Plot no. 90, West:-Plot no. 92, South:-Plot No.78 Cersai ID- 200079353190	<b>9,009, ₹ 78</b> + applicable unapplied interest and penal charges thereon w.e.f. 06/04/2026
Name of the Partners - a) Mr. Rajesh Goyal S/o Late Mr. Om Prakash Goyal b) Mr. Yogesh Goyal S/o Late Mr. Om Prakash Goyal Guarantor: 2. Mr. Rajesh Goyal S/o Late Mr. Om Prakash Goyal 3. Mr. Yogesh Goyal Address of All: G-11 Shalimar Park, Sarvadharm Colony Near Vishal Mega Mart, Kolar Road Bhopal, M.P.- 462042	This property is owned by M/s Goyal Industries.	Demand Notice Date <b>06/04/2026</b> Possession Notice <b>09/06/2026</b>
Date : 10.06.2026 Place : Bhopal		
(Amrreet Kumar Mishra) Chief Manager & Authorised Officer, Zonal Office Bhopal		

### The Pioneer Classified

**CHANGE OF NAME**

I, Ashok Raikwar S/o Nathu Raikwar R/o Lidhaura Tal, Sagarwara, Jatar, Lidhouratal, Sagarwara, Jatar, Tikamgarh, Madhya Pradesh-472118 have changed the name of my minor daughter Bhagyati Raikwar aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as Bharti Raikwar.

PD(1323)C

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**Jagmohan Verma Advocate**  
262, Bhagya Shree Colony, Vijay Nagar, Bhopal, India. Ph: 0755-2570500

**UTTARAKHAND SEEDS AND TARI DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.**  
PANTNAGAR, P.O. HALDI PATAH, DIST. UDHAM SINGH NAGAR  
Email: tdc@usaeedsandtardc.com

**E-TENDER NOTICE NO.R05/SP/2026**  
**PURCHASE OF Thiram 75% WDP**

**Cost of Tender Form Rs. 2000.00 + GST 18% (Non Refundable).**  
**EMD From Rs.1.00 Lac to 25 Lacs 3% & Above Rs. 25 Lacs 2% (Minimum Rs. 75000.00)**

Date of Publication on E-Procurement Portal : 10.06.2026 03:00 PM  
Starting Date of Tender Document Upload : 10.06.2026 03:00PM  
Last Date of Tender Document Submitted : 17.06.2026 05:00PM

**Note:- Futher Details can be seen from the E-Procurement portal-[www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) & Mob-9568995689, 7830664580**

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नोट:- उपरोक्त वर्गित सामग्री निगम में क्रय की जा रही है जिसकी गुणवत्ता जॉन हेनु अपनी दरे बन्द लिफाफे में निगम के पंजीकृत कार्यालय पर दिनांक: 17.06.2026 तक उपलब्ध कराने का कष्ट करे। अधिक जानकारी के लिये E-Procurement portal-[www.uktenders.gov.in](http://www.uktenders.gov.in) पर देखी जा सकती है।

Sr. No.	Loan Account Number	Borrower's Name	Outstanding Amount as on 07 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	Date of Sale Notice
1	XXXXXXXXXX1580	KARENDRA GANESH KARAMBELKAR	88,892.00	08-06-2026
2	XXXXXXXXXX0139	AKHILESH BAJPAI	4,676.69	06-06-2026
3	XXXXXXXXXX5465	DAVINDR KAJUR GULATI	4,24,493.55	08-06-2026
4	XXXXXXXXXX7557	ANJU MEHRA	4,311.54	06-06-2026
5	XXXXXXXXXX9426	VYANKTESH MURTHY	32,433.00	08-06-2026
6	XXXXXXXXXX3546	NANDKISHOR D CHANDEKAR	3,40,859.40	08-06-2026
7	XXXXXXXXXX7456	KRISHNA VERMA	99,651.09	06-06-2026
8	XXXXXXXXXX0513	SUSHIL KUMAR CHOUKSEY	33,264.14	06-06-2026
9	XXXXXXXXXX1107	VISHNU PRASAD DUBEY	2,44,122.67	08-06-2026
10	XXXXXXXXXX8745	AKBAR ALI MITHAIWALA	5,92,984.32	06-06-2026
11	XXXXXXXXXX2730	VINOD KUMAR DIXIT	1,61,123.60	08-06-2026
12	XXXXXXXXXX8160	NAMRATA PATEL	1,02,622.20	06-06-2026
13	XXXXXXXXXX1381	NIKHIL JAIN	2,035.12	06-06-2026
14	XXXXXXXXXX5928	MEENA AIREN	4,35,332.90	08-06-2026
15	XXXXXXXXXX6880	NIRMAL KUMAR KOTHARI	1,891.53	06-06-2026
16	XXXXXXXXXX3421	OMNARAYAN DUBEY	1,878.75	06-06-2026
17	XXXXXXXXXX6604	SEEMA SINHA	8,12,959.80	08-06-2026
18	XXXXXXXXXX9714	RAMESH CHANDRA SONI	10,03,392.60	06-06-2026
19	XXXXXXXXXX1514	RAJENDRA KUMAR BANSAL	7,25,479.00	08-06-2026
20	XXXXXXXXXX6399	DEEPESH SEN	2,01,555.78	08-06-2026
21	XXXXXXXXXX9073	GEETA AGRAWAL	959.82	06-06-2026
22	XXXXXXXXXX7480	MEHMOOD AHMAD KHAN	3,31,524.26	08-06-2026
23	XXXXXXXXXX1782	HIMANSHU KHANDEKAR	5,09,206.82	06-06-2026
24	XXXXXXXXXX4904	SUNITA KHANDEKAR	5,562.65	06-06-2026
25	XXXXXXXXXX4558	MUFAZZAL SAIFEE	6,30,925.85	08-06-2026
26	XXXXXXXXXX6190	ANKIT TIWARI	10,02,577.00	08-06-2026
27	XXXXXXXXXX8072	ASHISH GOYAL	4,41,380.80	06-06-2026
28	XXXXXXXXXX3032	POONAM DUBEY	2,50,588.81	06-06-2026
29	XXXXXXXXXX4045	NIYATI PURSWANI	20,03,962.06	06-06-2026
30	XXXXXXXXXX7352	ROMA SHAH	1,927.60	06-06-2026
31	XXXXXXXXXX5232	DIVYA VIJAY SHAH	4,277.00	06-06-2026
32	XXXXXXXXXX5413	RAJENDRA SINGH	12,03,359.82	06-06-2026
33	XXXXXXXXXX3098	NIKITA BHATNAGAR	2,37,363.00	06-06-2026
34	XXXXXXXXXX0809	SAYARABANO ANSARI	2,05,100.67	08-06-2026
35	XXXXXXXXXX4268	RAJKUMAR RAJPUT	2,37,326.10	08-06-2026
36	XXXXXXXXXX3303	KESHAV DAYAL	10,06,943.52	06-06-2026
37	XXXXXXXXXX8604	PAYAL RAHUL KANUGO	5,06,081.82	08-06-2026
38	XXXXXXXXXX4919	LAKSHMAN SINGH	10,09,126.82	08-06-2026
39	XXXXXXXXXX2561	AMIT MAHESHWARI	1,759.82	06-06-2026
40	XXXXXXXXXX2726	GAURAV JAIN	2,692.82	06-06-2026
41	XXXXXXXXXX7239	MANJU JAIN	1,603.82	06-06-2026
42	XXXXXXXXXX7145	HIMANSHU KUNDAL	10,02,802.82	08-06-2026
43	XXXXXXXXXX2310	RANJANA TOMAR	6,74,576.82	08-06-2026
44	XXXXXXXXXX8080	MANISH MAHESHWARI	13,443.38	02-06-2026
45	XXXXXXXXXX3702	AMIT KUMAR MISHRA	7,59,366.90	28-04-2026

DATE : 10.06.2026 | PLACE : MADHYA PRADESH Sd/- HDFC BANK LTD.