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MP marks PM Modi’s birthday with 3.55 crore diyas across 845 locations



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Ujjain

Madhya Pradesh marked the launch of the Seva Sankalp campaign on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday with a massive statewide lamp-lighting programme on Thursday, with organisers claiming that around 3.55 crore diyas were lit across all districts and 845 prominent locations.

Ujjain emerged as the centre of the celebrations, where 33.27 lakh earthen lamps were lit simultaneously along the Shipra river ghats and at Shri Mahakal Mahalok. The organisers said the feat created a world record, surpassing previous large-scale lamp-lighting events held in the city.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, BJP national president Nitin Nabin, state BJP president Hemant

Khandelwal and state in-charge Mahendra Singhi joined residents and volunteers at Ramghat for the programme.

At 7 pm, a siren signalled the start of the lamp-lighting exercise, following which thousands of volunteers, devotees and residents began lighting diyas simultaneously across Ramghat, Dutt Akhara, Kedareswar Ghat, Sunhari Ghat, Bhukhi Mata Ghat and Mahakal Mahalok.

More than 25,000 volunteers participated in the exercise, helping illuminate the ghats within minutes.

Yadav, Nabin, Khandelwal and other leaders also participated in the Shipra Aarti and offered prayers for the prosperity and well-being of the people of Madhya Pradesh.

The programme was organised as part of the Seva Sankalp campaign launched

on Modi’s birthday. Similar lamp-lighting events were held at prominent locations across the state, with participation from local residents, public representatives and volunteers.

According to organisers, 845 locations were identified for the statewide programme. These included sites across Gwalior, Shivpuri, Guna, Ashoknagar, Datia, Bhind, Morena, Indore, Dhar, Khargone, Bhopal, Sehore, Raisen, Vidisha, Sagar, Rewa, Jabalpur, Chhindwara, Balaghat and several other districts. Betul accounted for 144 identified locations, while 80 locations were selected in Sheopur.

The Ujjain event drew large crowds along the Shipra river as millions of diyas illuminated the ghats and Mahakal Mahalok, forming the centrepiece of the statewide campaign.

CM Yadav to pitch MP’s semiconductor potential at SEMICON India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n New Delhi

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav will attend SEMICON India-2026 in New Delhi on Friday, September 18, as the state seeks to attract investment and build international partnerships in the semiconductor and electronics sector.

Yadav is scheduled to visit the Madhya Pradesh State Pavilion at Yashobhoomi and hold one-to-one meetings with Swedish and Japanese delegations. According to the state government, the discussions will focus on investment opportunities, technology cooperation and potential partnerships in semiconductor manufacturing, electronics and allied sectors.

Representatives of companies and organisations including Oxide Corporation, Scale Photonics, Impute Inc., Acritik, Canon, MacDermid Alpha, Hanwha, Kaijo and Genesem Inc. are expected to participate in the meetings.

Madhya Pradesh is participating in SEMICON India-2026 as a State Partner. MPSeDC has said the state pavilion, located at Booth H3005 in Hall 2, will showcase opportunities across semiconductor design and intellectual property, manufacturing, packaging and testing, equipment and materials, and electronics system design and manufacturing.

The Chief Minister is also expected to interact with industry representatives, researchers and academic institutions at the pavilion. Paras Semiconductor, HLBS, CastNX and Secure Meters are among the industry participants associated with the state’s presence, while IIT Indore, IIIT Gwalior, IT DAVV and SGSITS Indore represent its academic and research ecosystem.

Madhya Pradesh has been stepping up its efforts to attract semiconductor investment. In July, the state government signed an MoU with Paras Semiconductors for a proposed Rs 6,200 crore advanced semiconductor packaging and Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test facility on the Ujjain-Indore corridor. The project is proposed to create more than 2,500 direct jobs.

SEMICON India-2026 is being held at Yashobhoomi from September 17 to 19 and brings together governments, global semiconductor companies, investors, technology institutions, start-ups and academic organisations. The event is jointly organised by the India Semiconductor Mission and SEMI and is intended to facilitate collaboration across the global semiconductor value chain.

The programme includes sessions on semiconductor manufacturing, advanced packaging, research and development, electronics systems, supply chains and international collaboration. Country roundtables are also being held to facilitate dialogue between policymakers, industry, academia and research organisations on investment, innovation, resilient supply chains and talent development.

MP to expand zero-interest farm credit, daytime power supply: CM Yadav

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has said the state government is focusing on zero-interest farm credit, modern agricultural equipment, drone technology, irrigation facilities and allied activities as part of its decision to observe 2026 as ‘Krishak Kalyan Varsh’ or Farmer Welfare Year. The state’s official agriculture programme for 2026 envisages coordinated initiatives across departments to raise farm incomes and strengthen the rural economy.

Virtually addressing farmers in Sagar district during the state-level Balram Krishi Mahotsav, Yadav said the government’s objective was not only to make farming more remunerative but also to strengthen alternative sources of income for agricultural families.

He said the Ken-Betwa river-linking project would open new opportunities for the Bundelkhand region by expanding irrigation and supporting agricultural development. The project is expected to provide irrigation facilities to around 8.11 lakh hectares in 10 districts of Madhya Pradesh, including Sagar, Panna, Damoh, Tikamgarh and Chhatarpur.

Yadav said the government was also working to promote food-processing units in Sagar and other parts of Bundelkhand so that farmers growing wheat, paddy, jowar, cash crops

and other produce could access greater opportunities for value addition and better returns.

The Chief Minister said farmers were being provided loans through Kisan Credit Cards at zero per cent interest, while changes in the repayment system were intended to give cultivators greater flexibility. Similar measures, including zero-interest credit and an extension of crop-loan repayment periods, have been highlighted by the state government during Balram Krishi Mahotsav programmes this year.

He said work was underway to provide farmers with 10 hours of electricity during the daytime from the coming crop season, particularly to meet irrigation requirements. The state government has previously announced the same objective at other Balram Krishi Mahotsav events. Yadav also said an e-token system was being introduced for fertiliser distribution to reduce queues and improve access for farmers, while steps would be taken to curb black marketing. He urged farmers to adopt modern machinery, drone technology, horticulture and fruit cultivation to improve productivity and diversify earnings.

The Chief Minister said farmers should supplement crop income through animal husbandry, dairy farming, fisheries, goat rearing and poultry. He encouraged farmers to form dairy cooperative societies and supply

milk to Sanchi, saying this could provide both regular income and additional benefits.

The government is also working with the National Dairy Development Board to expand milk production in Madhya Pradesh, he said. Yadav added that greater use of solar pumps would be encouraged in the coming season to reduce farmers’ dependence on conventional electricity for irrigation.

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Minister Govind Singh Rajput said irrigation, electricity, roads and other infrastructure were being expanded to support the agricultural sector. He said the state had procured a record 104 lakh metric tonnes of wheat from farmers at the minimum support price during the Rabi procurement season. The same procurement figure has also been cited by the Chief Minister at other farmer outreach programmes this year.

Naryawali MLA Pradeep Laria said the Balram Krishi Mahotsav was intended to ensure that government schemes and information on modern farming practices reached farmers directly. He said natural farming, organic cultivation and production of millets were also being promoted.

Agriculture scientists and progressive farmers also addressed the gathering, while public representatives and a large number of farmers attended the programme.



Devotees light earthen lamps during 'Aashirwad Ka Diya' programme under Seva Sankalp Abhiyan to commemorate the 76th birth anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at historical Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh on Thursday.

Pioneer photo

Case filed against 12 after hostel students’ protest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Barwani

Police have registered a case against 12 named persons and several others in connection with a protest by more than 200 students of the Kasturba Gandhi Girls’ Hostel in Niwali, Barwani district.

The accused have been booked for allegedly instigating the students to leave the hostel, stage a protest and block the road.

Niwali police station in-charge Veer Singh Chauhan said the case was registered on Wednesday evening on the complaint of hostel superintendent Savita Bariya.

Those named in the case include Jai Adivasi Yuva Shakti (JAYS) district general secretary Deepak Nigwal, Vikas Brahmane, Manish Brahmane, Deepak Brahmane, Madan Senani, Bhim Kanoje, Prem Chauhan, Dev Jamre, Suvalal Kharte, Dilesh Solanki and Dadu Jadhav, among others.

Police have invoked Section 223 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Section 83(2) of the Juvenile Justice Act. Further investigation is underway.

The incident took place on

the evening of September 15, when more than 200 students left the hostel and began walking nearly five kilometres to meet the district collector over alleged lack of basic facilities and mismanagement at the hostel. The students were also demanding the removal of the superintendent and assistant warden.

Officials attempted to stop the students and assured them that senior officers would hear their grievances. Police, however, alleged that some people encouraged the students to continue the march.

On the collector’s instructions, senior officials, including District Project Coordinator Sonalika Achale, Pansema SDM Ramesh Sisodia and Rajpur SDOP BL Atode, reached the spot and held talks with the students.

The protest continued till midnight and the students also blocked the road.

Later, the hostel superintendent and assistant warden Sadhna Sahu were removed from their posts. Naib Tehsildar Archana Grewal has been given charge of the hostel pending inquiry.

BTech student ends life by hanging

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhopal

A 20-year-old first-year BTech student died by suicide at her home in Bhopal’s Awadhपुरi area on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, police said.

The student, identified as Saumya Tiwari, lived at Nakshatra Complex and was studying at a private college. She was alone at home when the incident occurred. Her brother, who had gone out for some work, found her on returning and rushed her to a hospital with help from neighbours, where doctors declared her dead.

Awadhपुरi police reached the spot, registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem examination. No suicide note was recovered. Police have seized her mobile phone as part of the investigation.

Her father is a bank employee posted in Uttar Pradesh, while her brother recently returned after completing MBBS studies in Ukraine. Police said the reason behind the suicide remains unclear so far. Police are awaiting statements from family members to ascertain the circumstances leading to the incident.

BJP leader Jaspal Arora targets Owaisi over Bhopal remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Sehore

BJP state working committee member Jaspal Singh Arora has reacted sharply to recent remarks made by AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi in Bhopal, saying that political statements made in the Madhya Pradesh capital would be answered in Owaisi’s home turf of Hyderabad.

Speaking to reporters in Sehore, Arora criticised Owaisi’s comments and accused him of trying to provoke the Muslim community. He said such attempts would not succeed and maintained that Bhopal has long been known for its “Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb”, with Hindu and Muslim communities living together peacefully.

His remarks came amid an ongoing political row involving Owaisi and BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma over a “missile” comment linked to Qazi Camp. Sharma had made the remark during an event on September 6 and later clarified that he was referring to a Qazi Camp in Islamabad and not the Bhopal locality. Owaisi subsequently challenged Sharma over the state-

Over 7 lakh diyas lit in city as Seva Sankalp campaign begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhopal

More than seven lakh earthen lamps were lit across Bhopal district on Thursday evening as the ‘Aashirwad Ka Diya’ programme marked the launch of the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, organised on Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s birthday. The campaign is being held across Madhya Pradesh from September 17 to October 17, with lamp-lighting among its opening activities.

According to organisers, collective lamp-lighting was held at 17 locations in urban Bhopal and 11 in rural areas. Around five lakh diyas were lit in the city and more than two lakh in rural areas, covering monuments, major intersections, ghats, temples, public spaces, village religious sites, ponds and community premises.

In the Narela Assembly constituency, Cooperation, Sports and Youth Welfare Minister

Vishvas Kailash Sarang lit a diya atop a 25-foot-high lamp pillar at his residence. Organisers said 9,125 lamps were lit there to symbolise 9,125 days of Modi’s public service, while around 1.25 lakh lamps were illuminated at temples, intersections and public places across Narela. An exhibition highlighting Modi’s 25 years in public life was also organised at Sarang’s residence, while a blood donation camp was held in Aishbagh.

At Bhawani Chowk, a programme led by Bhopal MP Alok Sharma saw 5,151 lamps lit. Participants also paid tribute to Deendayal Upadhyaya and Syama Prasad Mookerjee at Lalghati before the event. Stalls distributing around two quintals of sweets were set up, while shehnai performances, a police band, fireworks and balloons added to the celebrations.

MLA Rameshwar Sharma participated in lamp-lighting

programmes with his family at his residence and at other locations, including Yuva Sadan, Manuabhan Tekri’s Mahavir Temple and a filter plant built under the AMRUT scheme.

Bhopal Municipal Corporation chairman Kishan Suryavanshi lit a diya near Durga Temple at Geetanjali Square. Fireworks were also organised and sweets were distributed among participants. At the Housing Board headquarters, Paryavas Bhawan, officials and employees lit lamps and arranged diyas and flowers in the shape of the number ‘76’.

In Jagdishpur, villagers participated in the programme in the presence of district panchayat CEO Ila Tiwari and other officials. Similar events were held at Central Library, New Market, Roshanpura, MP Nagar, Red Cross Square, the municipal corporation headquarters and TT Nagar Stadium.

In rural Bhopal, lamp-light-

ing programmes were organised at religious and community locations in Chanderi, Aredi, Imalia, Patania, Intkhedi Sadak, Amoni, Sikandrabad, Bagroda, Barkhedi Bajyaf, Barkheda Bondar and Phanda Kalan.

Earlier, at the municipal corporation, Mayor Malti Rai and other public representatives handed over house keys to 51 beneficiaries and permanent allotment letters to 80 beneficiaries under housing projects in different parts of the city.

Government buildings, including the municipal corporation headquarters, were illuminated for the occasion. Organisers said the lamp-lighting activities were intended to convey themes of service, social harmony and public welfare. Residents, party workers, public representatives and local officials participated at different venues, with several programmes continuing into the evening.

Youth Dharma Parliament begins in Ujjain on Friday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Ujjain

The sixth edition of the Youth Dharma Parliament, organised by Sevagya Sansthanam, will begin in Ujjain on Friday, with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Dr Mohan Bhagwat scheduled to inaugurate the three-day national conclave as the chief guest at 11 am.

Acharya Mithileshnandini Sharan, patron of Sevagya Sansthanam, will preside over the inaugural session. More than 1,700 young participants from 24 states are expected to attend the gathering, which will feature discussions on religion, culture, education, technology, family values and the role of youth in nation-building.

The event formally began on Thursday with the inauguration of a book fair and exhibition. After the opening ceremony on Friday, participants will interact with eminent thinkers, scholars and experts during a series of sessions.

Among those scheduled to address and interact with the youth are Prof Srinivas Varkhedi, Vice-Chancellor of

Central Sanskrit University, New Delhi; Sevagya Sansthanam president Ashish Kumar Ashu; Juna Akhara Acharya Mahamandaleswar Swami Advdeshanand Giri; screenwriter and lyricist Manoj Muntashir; Smriti Anantlakshmi, co-founder of Anish Foundation; journalist Vishnu Prakash Tripathi; and Prof Himanshu Rai, director of IIM Indore.

Organisers said the Youth Dharma Parliament has been designed as an interactive platform where young participants can raise contemporary questions before the speakers and engage in discussions on issues concerning society and culture.

Sessions will examine the relevance of religion and human values amid rapid technological change, while also focusing on cultural awareness, education, family structures and the responsibilities of young people in social and national life.

The three-day conclave will conclude on September 19. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Dr Mohan Yadav is scheduled to attend the concluding ceremony as the chief guest.

MP records 33.1 inches rainfall, fresh spell likely soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh has received an average of 33.1 inches of rainfall so far this monsoon season, amounting to nearly 89 per cent of its seasonal normal of 37.3 inches. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), 23 districts have already recorded normal or above-normal rainfall.

The weather department has indicated that another active spell of the southwest monsoon could affect the state before its withdrawal, with stronger rainfall activity expected during the last week of September. However, no warning for heavy or very heavy rainfall has been issued anywhere in Madhya Pradesh until

September 20.

A monsoon trough is currently passing through the northern parts of the region, while a low-pressure area remains active over the Arabian Sea. Meteorologists said these systems are unlikely to have a major impact on Madhya Pradesh for now, although local weather systems may trigger isolated spells of moderate to heavy rain in some districts.

Rainfall was recorded in 32 districts during the past 24 hours. Bhopal, Sehore, Raisen, Vidisha, Jabalpur, Katni, Chhindwara, Mandla, Balaghat, Dindori, Bhind, Morena, Sagar, Damoh, Panna, Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Maihar, Rewa, Singrauli, Sidhi, Satna, Mauganj, Shahdol, Umaria, Anuppur, Ashoknagar, Dhar, Kargone, Khandwa, Dewas

and Shajapur witnessed light to intense showers at different places.

Hatpipliya in Dewas recorded nearly 1.75 inches of rain during the period.

The IMD said no major spell of heavy rainfall is expected until September 20, but weather activity could intensify after September 21 with the possible development of cyclonic circulation and low-pressure systems.

The official monsoon season runs from June 1 to September 30. With less than two weeks remaining in the season, weather experts expect further rainfall before the southwest monsoon begins withdrawing from the state. In some districts, however, withdrawal could extend into the first week of October.

Rainfall received after

September 30 is not counted as part of the official monsoon-season rainfall total, even if monsoon conditions persist into October. Weather expert Shailendra Kumar Nayak said the monsoon could withdraw around its normal period this year, though another spell of rain is likely before that.

Rainfall distribution has remained uneven across Madhya Pradesh. Several districts in the eastern divisions of Jabalpur, Rewa, Sagar and Shahdol continue to report a shortfall, although the situation improved considerably following widespread rainfall over the past week.

Parts of western Madhya Pradesh have also recorded below-normal rainfall, with deficits varying substantially between districts.

According to IMD figures

cited in the rainfall assessment, districts including Anuppur, Chhatarpur, Maihar, Mauganj, Niwari, Panna, Satna, Shahdol, Sidhi, Singrauli, Tikamgarh, Umaria, Agar Malwa, Bhind, Bhopal, Burhanpur, Datia, Guna, Gwalior, Rajgarh, Sheopur and Shivpuri are among those that have received relatively higher rainfall this season.

Madhya Pradesh began the monsoon season with a rainfall deficit in June. Strong showers in early July improved the overall figures, but subsequent breaks in the monsoon slowed the recovery. Repeated active weather systems during July and August helped narrow the gap, though rainfall distribution across the state continues to remain uneven as the season approaches its final phase.



BJP National President Nitin Nabin, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, during a roadshow in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on Thursday.



BJP MLA Bhagwan Das Sabnani, Collector Priyank Mishra, BMC Commissioner Sanskriti Jain and others light lamps during 'Aashirwad Ka Diya' programme under Seva Sankalp Abhiyan to commemorate the 76th birth anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in Bhopal on Thursday.

Pioneer photo

CM inaugurates blood donation camp in Bhopal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhopal

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav inaugurated a blood donation camp organised under the 'Seva Mera Yogdan' programme at Government Jaiprakash Hospital in Bhopal as part of the 'Seva Sankalp Abhiyan' being held on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday.

During the programme, Yadav interacted with blood donors, enquired about their well-being and presented certificates to participants. He also encouraged the donors for contributing to the initiative.

The Chief Minister said blood donation camps had been organised at more than 290 locations across Madhya Pradesh under the campaign marking 25 years of public service by Prime Minister



Modi.

According to Yadav, 6,744 units of blood had been collected at the camps till the time of his visit, with the number expected to rise further by the evening.

"Blood donation is the greatest form of service. It ensures timely medical assistance to those in need and can help save many lives," Yadav said while interacting with the media at the hospital.

He also extended birthday greetings to Prime Minister

Modi and prayed to Baba Mahalak for his good health and long life. Yadav said the country had witnessed changes across several sectors under Modi's leadership.

The blood donation programme formed part of a series of activities being organised across the state under the Seva Sankalp Abhiyan.

Bhopal Mayor Malti Rai, MLA Bhagwandas Sabnani, state general secretary Rahul Kothari, other public representatives, doctors and medical students were present at the programme.

The initiative aims to promote voluntary blood donation and strengthen the availability of blood for patients across the state.

Row over venue fee ahead of Rahul Gandhi's Indore programme

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Indore

A dispute has emerged between the Congress and the Indore Development Authority (IDA) over charges for the venue of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's proposed 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' programme in Indore on September 19.

The Congress has claimed that it has already paid Rs 10.08 lakh to the IDA for the venue and was later asked to deposit an additional Rs 4 lakh towards preparations. The party said the additional amount has also been paid.

Reacting to the controversy, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav targeted state Congress president Jitu Patwari, saying the Congress had initially complained that permission for the programme was not being granted and was now raising objections over the fee after receiving approval.

Patwari had questioned the decision to charge more than Rs 10 lakh for the programme. He said that even during British rule, fees were not imposed for

protests and public meetings, and also raised questions over the treatment of RSS programmes.

Responding to Patwari, Yadav said the Congress had earlier alleged that permission was being denied but had shifted its objection to the charges after approval was granted. He said the party had earlier indicated that it was prepared to pay even if the cost was Rs 1 crore, but was now questioning a fee of around Rs 10 lakh. According to the Congress, a ground measuring around 12,000 square metres opposite Regional Park has been booked for three days. The party said Rs 10.08 lakh had already been deposited with the IDA.

Indore city Congress president Chintu Chouksey alleged that the IDA chief executive officer later issued a letter seeking another Rs 4 lakh towards preparation-related expenses. He said the additional amount had also been deposited.

Chouksey claimed that the venue charge was initially indicated to be around Rs 2 lakh but was subsequently

increased to nearly Rs 10 lakh.

He also questioned the dates used for calculating the additional charges, saying permission for the programme was issued on September 15, while the preparation fee had been calculated from September 14. The Congress has termed the charges unfair and alleged that the administration is acting under pressure from the BJP.

Chouksey said the 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' programme is focused on issues concerning students, youth and future generations. He alleged that hurdles related to permission and venue charges were affecting preparations for the event.

Yadav, meanwhile, said the Congress should "look within" and referred to the Emergency while criticising the party's record on democracy.

Commenting on Rahul Gandhi's proposed visit to Indore, the Chief Minister said the Leader of Opposition should offer constructive suggestions on development projects being undertaken in MP.

HC seeks state reply on suspended CSP Pachisia plea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Jabalpur

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Thursday directed the state government to file its response on a petition moved by suspended Katni City Superintendent of Police (CSP) Neha Pachisia, who is facing a criminal case over alleged misuse of office and a disputed land transaction.

A single bench of Justice Himanshu Joshi fixed September 21 as the next date of hearing and said Pachisia's application seeking interim relief would also be considered that day. The court said it would be appropriate to have the state government's response on record before considering interim or final relief.

Pachisia has challenged the FIR registered against her at Kuthla police station in Katni. Police have booked her and others in connection with allegations of fraud, coercion and misuse of official position in a land deal. Pachisia, alleged financier Kshitij Raj Barapatre and Maruf Hanafi are among the accused in the case.

According to the prosecution, the case relates to land owned by the family of an accused in a murder case. Investigators have alleged that presentation of the chargesheet in the murder case was delayed and that the family was subsequently pressured in connection with the land transaction.

The prosecution has alleged that land valued at around Rs 1 crore was transferred for about Rs 15 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. Earlier investigation findings cited by police put the guideline value of the land at about Rs 82.86 lakh and the transaction value at Rs 18.20 lakh.

Following a departmental inquiry, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav had ordered Pachisia's suspension in August. Police later announced a reward of Rs 10,000 for information leading to her arrest. Authorities have also been pursuing measures to prevent the absconding accused from leaving the country.

Appearing for Pachisia, senior advocate Anil Khare and advocate Priyank Agrawal argued that she had been falsely implicated and that the FIR did not disclose any direct criminal role or conspiracy on her part.

WCD Dept moves to ensure timely settlement of staff dues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh Women and Child Development Department has decided to organise regular grievance redressal camps at divisional and district levels to ensure timely resolution of service-related issues faced by its officers and employees.

Women and Child Development Commissioner Sandeep G.R. has directed that the camps be held on the first and third Wednesday of every month from 2 pm to 5 pm. Detailed instructions have been issued to officials for implementing the initiative.

Anganwadi workers and helpers, as well as officers and employees posted at the district level, will be able



to submit applications and raise service-related grievances at the camps.

Cases related to appointment, time-scale pay, promotion, compassionate appointment, post-retirement pension and other service benefits will be taken up for hearing. Officials have been instructed to ensure that action on such matters is taken within a prescribed timeframe and in accordance with applicable rules.

Central Bank of India wins First Rajbhasha Kirti Award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Central Bank of India has been conferred the First Rajbhasha Kirti Award for outstanding implementation of Official Language Hindi at the All India Rajbhasha Conference organised by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs, in Navi Mumbai on September 14 and 15.

The Rajbhasha Shield, presented as the first prize, was received by the bank's Managing Director and CEO Kalyan Kumar from Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Deputy



Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Sumitra Panwar were also present on the occasion.

The award recognises the bank's sustained efforts towards effective implementation of the Official Language Policy, along with the promotion and wider use of Hindi

across its operations.

During the conference, a special 'Heritage Edition' of the bank's bilingual in-house magazine 'Centralite' was also released to mark 100 years of the publication. The edition was released by Union Ministers of State Nityanand

Rai and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, along with Department of Official Language Secretary Anshuli Arya.

The special edition highlights the bank's heritage, institutional values and growth journey over the years.

Central Bank of India also set up a special exhibition at the conference showcasing its 115-year journey. Through models and presentations, the exhibition highlighted the bank's history, innovation initiatives, achievements in the field of Official Language and its development over the decades.

The display also presented the bank's approach towards modern banking and its future vision.

Momos vendor attacked with hot oil in Indore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Indore

Four men allegedly created a ruckus in Indore's Bajrang Nagar area on Wednesday night after a momos vendor refused to give them money for liquor. The accused allegedly assaulted the vendor and threw boiling oil from a frying pan on him. A neighbour who intervened was also attacked with a knife.

According to a complaint lodged by Bajrang Nagar resident Sameer More, he was selling momos at his shop around 9.30 pm when four men arrived on two motorcycles.

The men first allegedly demanded momos for free and later asked Sameer for money to buy liquor. When he refused, they allegedly abused and assaulted him. During the altercation, one of the accused allegedly threw hot oil from a pan at Sameer, leaving him injured.

At the time of the incident, neighbour Harsh Gangore had come to the shop with his sister to buy momos. When he tried to intervene and rescue Sameer, two of the accused allegedly attacked him with a knife, inflicting injuries on his hands and legs. The four men then attempt-

ed to flee the spot. Local residents managed to catch one of the accused, identified as Shubham Pandit, and allegedly thrashed him. The other three — Aman Gele, Piyush and Pawan Gurjar — managed to escape.

Police later detained some other suspects during the night and are questioning them. Officials are also examining whether any other persons were involved in the incident and further investigation is underway. The incident triggered panic in the locality, with residents gathering at the spot soon after the attack.

Police crack moving-truck theft racket on Mhow-Neemuch highway

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Ratlam

Police have busted a gang allegedly involved in stealing agricultural produce from moving trucks on the Mhow-Neemuch highway and arrested four of its members, officials said on Thursday. Seven other accused, including the alleged mastermind, are absconding and efforts are underway to trace them.

Police said the gang allegedly used stolen motorcycles to conduct reconnaissance along the highway before targeting tarpaulin-covered trucks carrying agricultural produce. When a truck slowed down at speed breakers or on hilly stretches, one of the accused would

GANG TARGETED TARPULIN-COVERED TRUCKS

allegedly climb onto the moving vehicle with the help of a rope, cut open the tarpaulin and throw sacks of produce onto the roadside.

Other members of the gang, following behind on motorcycles, would then collect the stolen goods and transport them to a house located on a farm around 500 metres from the highway, where the produce was allegedly concealed before being sold.

Addressing a press conference at Namli police station, Additional Superintendent of Police Rakesh Pandro said Superintendent of Police Amit Kumar had directed officers to identify and arrest gangs involved in targeting trucks

on highways in the district.

Acting on a tip-off received on September 16, police learnt that some suspicious persons were staying near a house built on Dharmendra Bapu's farm in Mewasa village under Namli police station limits.

A police team, working under the guidance of Ratlam Rural SDOP in-charge Ajay Sarawan and led by Namli police station in-charge Amit Kori, cordoned off the area and conducted a raid.

Police arrested Aman Sisodia, 22, Rahul Hada, 30, and Nikhil Hada, 23, all residents of Ukhediya village, from the spot. During further questioning, another

accused, Sonu Sisodia, 22, a resident of Mewasa, was also arrested.

Police seized four unregistered motorcycles, around 30 litres of illicit country liquor, a country-made pistol and two live cartridges from the accused.

During interrogation, the arrested men allegedly told police that they had stolen 14 sacks of garlic from a truck around 20 to 25 days ago and 13 sacks of mustard from another truck four days ago after cutting their tarpaulin covers.

The stolen garlic and mustard, valued at around Rs 5.35 lakh, were later recovered from a concealed location.

Seven other accused — Anish Hada, Chintu Hada,

Amit Hada, Abhishek Sisodia, Ashish Chauhan, Rajkumar Ranawat and Dharmendra Singh Sisodia — are being searched for, police said.

Cases have been registered against the accused under relevant legal provisions at Namli police station.

Police are now questioning the arrested men to determine whether the gang was involved in other similar highway thefts. Investigators are also examining whether the motorcycles recovered in the raid had been stolen and used in earlier incidents.

Police said further investigation is focused on tracing the absconding accused, identifying possible buyers of the stolen produce and establishing the gang's wider network in the region.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav pays tribute to former Speaker Srinivas Tiwari on his birth anniversary at the State Assembly in Bhopal on Thursday.

Pioneer photo

DTC strike strands Delhi commuters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n New Delhi

Contract drivers and conductors of Delhi Transport Corporation buses strike continued on Thursday, pulling buses off the roads and parking them idle at depots, leaving passengers across the capital struggling to find alternative transport.

The workers said the strike will continue until their demands are met. With DTC buses off the roads, commuters turned to autos, taxis and Gramin Seva vehicles, only to find fares had shot up sharply as demand outstripped supply.

Contract drivers and conductors are protesting to demand a salary hike, medical facilities and accident insurance, none of which they currently receive.

Speaking about their grievances, drivers said they earn only around Rs 22,000 a month, with no medical coverage or life insurance provided. "We should get medical and life insurance benefits along with a salary hike. We will continue the strike



DTC electric buses are parked at a depot during the ongoing corporation drivers' strike over daily-wage hikes, medical facilities and overtime payment, in New Delhi, Thursday

until our demands are met," several drivers said. Contract driver Vipul Singh said the workers were demanding a wage increase, saying they currently receive `862 per day, an amount he said was simply not enough to survive on. Another driver,

Vinod, said he earns `22,000 a month, which he said makes it impossible to manage household expenses, while permanent DTC employees earn `80,000 a month for comparable work.

He said their demand was for daily

wages to be raised to `1,500.

The strike's ripple effect has hit commuters hard. Passengers said routes that normally cost around Rs 20 were being quoted at `100 or more by alternative transport operators. On some routes, fares ranging from `50 to `300 were being demanded, with commuters travelling to areas like Palam reportedly being asked to pay `250 to 300 for journeys that would typically cost a fraction of that.

The disruption has not been limited to office commuters alone. People travelling to hospitals for medical appointments have also been affected, with some saying the sharp rise in auto fares had forced them to rely on cycles instead, out of sheer necessity, to reach their destinations.

The standoff highlights a widening pay gap within DTC's own workforce, with contract staff earning a fraction of what permanent employees receive for similar duties, a disparity that has become the central grievance driving the strike.

Satish Salian sues Thackeray for `500 crore, seeks apology

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE n Mumbai

Satish Salian, the father of dead celebrity manager, Disha Salian has filed a defamation claim worth `500 crore against Aaditya Thackeray of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and former home minister of Maharashtra, Anil Deshmukh, for their comments on him.

The notice requires both leaders to withdraw their statements, publish an unconditional written and public apology and pay `500 crore as compensation. The notice gives them an ultimatum of seven days to comply, and the apology, if issued, must be released through major print, television and digital media.

The notice says Thackeray



Aaditya Thackeray FILE

regarded Salian's call for an inquiry into his daughter's death as politically motivated, malicious and aimed at damaging his reputation. It also adds that statements made on Thackeray's behalf asserted that Salian was being used to harass him. The notice calls these allegations defamatory, adding that they

cast doubt on the integrity of a father who is seeking a proper investigation into the death of his daughter.

The notice also mentions a statement that Deshmukh made on March 23, 2025, in which he called the Disha Salian case a conspiracy aimed at defaming Aaditya Thackeray. Salian's lawyers claim that the remark attracted extensive publicity and presented her as a litigant acting out of political motivation. This notice follows the CBI filing of a first information report (FIR) last week, after the Bombay High Court directed a comprehensive investigation. Disha, the former manager of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, died on June 8, 2020, when she fell from a residential building in Malad, Mumbai.

Delhi hits back at US sanctions threat

It also gives the US President powers to impose substantial tariffs on countries that continue to rely on Russian oil and gas, with India and China among the major economies potentially affected. The House vote followed an 86-11 approval of the measure in the Senate last month. While the legislation received support from lawmakers across party lines, opposition in the House was particularly focused on the extent of tariff powers that would be available to the President.

Democratic lawmakers have argued that granting additional tariff authority to Trump could have wider economic consequences. Congressman Richard Neal was quoted during the House debate as saying that the objection was to giving the President greater authority over tariffs. Supporters of the legislation, meanwhile, have argued that stronger economic pressure is necessary to reduce Russia's ability to finance its war effort in Ukraine.

Russia has criticised a new US sanctions package, warning that additional measures against Moscow could complicate efforts to reach a peace settlement in Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia was monitoring the legislation and described the additional US sanctions as "unfriendly actions." "We are, of course, monitoring the progress of this document. It falls under the category of unfriendly actions, and of course the imposition of any additional sanctions by the US would certainly complicate efforts to find a peace settlement in Ukraine," Peskov told reporters.

The sanctions package targets Russia's energy and defence industries, Russian officials and financial institutions, as well as vessels forming part of what Washington describes as the country's "shadow fleet" of tankers used to maintain energy shipments despite existing Western restrictions. The legislation aims to increase economic pressure on Moscow over its war in Ukraine, which has entered its fifth year. US-mediated efforts to end the war have been stalled for months. President Trump sent two envoys to Moscow and Kyiv earlier this month as part of efforts to restart the peace process.

PM invites tech giants to build chips in India

He framed the push within a broader narrative of economic momentum, citing 7.8 per cent quarterly GDP growth, a recent sovereign rating upgrade by a Japanese credit rating agency, and the New Delhi Declaration adopted at the BRICS summit India hosted this month. "India's economy is growing, and on the other hand, the world's trust in India is also increasing," he said.

The PM said the development of a semiconductor ecosystem required capabilities spanning chip design, equipment, materials, testing and packaging. He urged industry leaders to deepen domestic research and development and encouraged Indian researchers working overseas to contribute to advanced technology development in the country.

"Young talents who are researching in India should come forward; the youth who are researching abroad should also join the development of advanced technologies in India," Modi said. He called on semiconductor companies to expand research partnerships with Indian institutions and universities, saying greater industry-led R&D would benefit both companies and the country's technology workforce.

Modi said the government was advancing the second phase of its semiconductor programme and had introduced regulatory changes intended to facilitate collaboration among global companies, startups and design firms. The government approved the second phase of the Semicon India programme in July with an outlay of Rs 1.275 lakh crore.

The PM also called for a deeper domestic supply chain, including more fabless semiconductor companies, locally developed intellectual property and greater use of silicon photonics for artificial-intelligence infrastructure.

He urged companies producing semiconductor equipment, chemicals, gases and materials to expand in India, saying the country had an opportunity to build an ecosystem spanning the semiconductor value chain.

India slams Pakistan at UN over safe havens...

Senior al-Qaeda operative Walid bin Attash, who helped select and prepare several hijackers, was captured separately. Mustafa Ahmed al-Hawsawi, a key financial and logistical facilitator of the 9/11 operation, was captured under similar circumstances, he said.

"In each case, these were not fugitives hiding

in caves or badlands, they were men who had long evaded detection. Draining this swamp that provided an enabling environment for such monsters of humankind to prosper is important," Parvathaneni said, in a thinly-veiled reference to Pakistan. He said that "the same permissive environment that sheltered the architects of 9/11 has, in the years since, continued to provide space, support, and impunity to affiliates of al-Qaeda such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed and their like, acquiring different identities to escape this Council's sanctions framework and whose leadership and terror training infrastructure have been shielded from consequence. "The international community must join hands to address the continuity of such sanctuary to ensure that more such individuals are not thrust upon any country or its citizens and no one loses family and loved ones," he said.

Last week, as the world marked 25 years of the September 11 terror attacks perpetrated by al-Qaeda, UN Security Council members, including Pakistan, visited the 9/11 memorial in Lower Manhattan. While bin Laden was captured and killed in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad in 2011, Mohammed was captured in March 2003 in Rawalpindi and is currently detained at Guantanamo Bay.

Binalshibh and bin Attash were captured in Karachi within a span of months, while al-Hawsawi was captured in Pakistan in March 2003. "Last week, we honoured the memory of those taken mercilessly away by the scourge of terrorism 25 years ago in this very city. Earlier this month, the Council members visited the site of this horrible tragedy. May the memory of these victims always remain a motivation to not only fight against all such individuals who are the worst of humanity, but also those who aid, abet, finance and support their crimes," Parvathaneni said. US Ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz had taken his fellow Security Council Ambassadors to the 9/11 memorial.

"We reinforced our shared commitment to peace, security, and a world free from terror," Waltz had said. Pakistan currently sits in the Security Council as a non-permanent member, and its envoy Asim Iftikhar Ahmad was among the UN ambassadors who visited the 9/11 memorial site. On the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the UN Security Council also adopted a Presidential Statement which reaffirmed the Council's "unequivocal condemnation" of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The PRST adopted under the French Presidency was the Council's first presidential statement on counter-terrorism in five years. India also reiterated its deep concern at the humanitarian plight of the Afghan returnees.

The Secretary General's Report on Afghanistan mentions that in 2025, 2.9 million Afghans were returned, and until August 22, 2026, another 1.15 million Afghans were returned, most of which were involuntary.

"A forcible return of this nature that is neither safe nor dignified, of over three million individuals, in any other part of the world would have elicited a political outcry in this Council, urgent provision of large-scale humanitarian support and efforts to ensure better re-integration and assimilation. That there is no such reaction is a sad reflection on the times," Parvathaneni said.

India reaffirmed that returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified, and reintegration should receive sustained international support. To this end, India is cooperating with the UN agencies and the Afghan authorities to make provisions for housing, food and other essential items to ease the immense pain and hardship the returnees are suffering.

India said it also strongly condemns the "trade and transit terror inflicted" on Afghanistan in violation of UN declarations on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), WTO norms, provisions of the UN Charter and international law, and the tenets of basic human compassion. (PTI)

Tata board backs Chandrasekaran

Tata Trusts rejected the outcome outright.

In a statement, the Trusts said Chandrasekaran's August 12 decision "has been duly accepted and has attained finality", noting they had already asked Tata Sons to set up a selection committee for a successor under the company's Articles of Association.

It argued the reappointment vote "was a legal nullity", saying the Articles require both Trust-nominated directors to back any chairmanship resolution - and since Noel Tata voted against it, "it was rendered legally void and without any basis". The Trusts said Noel Tata had also submitted a legal opinion from former Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud supporting their position, which "was not taken note of by the Board".

In a detailed statement to the board, Noel Tata went further, arguing the question was premature because his own status as a director was

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unresolved after a general meeting "was not able to proceed for want of quorum".

A vote taken under that cloud, he warned, "would be open to serious legal challenge by any shareholder who chose to bring it".

He also urged the board not to conflate the reappointment fight with the separate, pending question of Tata Sons' listing status with the RBI.

"It would not serve this company for a regulatory development to determine the outcome of a succession process," he said, adding that "the page has turned" on Chandrasekaran's original decision to step down.

According to a statement issued by Tata Sons, the reappointment saga traces back to July 28, 2025, when Tata Trusts passed a unanimous resolution expressing "appreciation" for Chandrasekaran's stewardship of the group since 2017 and resolving that he "be re-appointed as Executive Chairman for a further term of five years" once his current tenure expired.

Tata Sons' board agreed in principle the following September, and set out to secure formal approval in February 2026.

That approval never came cleanly. "In February 2026, in the absence of unanimity, the resolution was deferred for decision," the company said. The matter resurfaced at board meetings in May and June without resolution.

Then, on August 12, Chandrasekaran informed the board that he would not put himself forward for reappointment when his term expires on February 20, 2027.

Three weeks later, on September 3, the board's Nomination and Remuneration Committee met to consider the fallout. It "unanimously resolved to request him to reconsider his decision and to recommend him for re-appointment at the next Board meeting", Tata Sons said. That meeting came on Thursday.

"Chandra acceded to the Board's request to reconsider his decision," the company said, and the board "thereafter resolved by a majority vote to re-appoint him as Executive Chairman for a further term of five years".

Four directors voted in favour; Noel Tata, chairman of Tata Trusts, voted against.

Tata Trusts moved immediately to repudiate the outcome. In a statement headlined declaring the resolution "illegal", the Trusts said Chandrasekaran's August 12 decision not to seek reappointment "has been duly accepted and has attained finality" and that they had already directed Tata Sons "to initiate the process for setting up a Selection Committee for appointing a successor". The Trusts disclosed that Noel Tata had submitted a legal opinion from Justice DY Chandrachud, the former Chief Justice of India, backing their position.

The Trusts said they "remain committed to ensuring an orderly and timely leadership transition" and confirmed a fuller statement by Noel Tata to the board was annexed to their release.

In that annexed statement, delivered directly to directors, Noel Tata laid out his objections point by point. He stressed that Chandrasekaran's August 12 letter "was freely taken and clearly expressed", was not requested by the board, and was "not the outcome of any process of review" - yet was made public "without prior deliberation with the shareholders," including Tata Trusts, which holds "approximately 66 per cent of its equity". Once made public, he argued, the decision "has consequences which this Board cannot afterwards undo", noting that "the Group's employees, its lenders, its counterparties and the market have all proceeded upon it. So, has the majority shareholder. The page has turned". He argued a reappointment vote asked the board "to set aside three things at once: the Chairman's own stated decision, the acceptance of that decision by the majority shareholder, and the further process which that shareholder has asked this company to set in motion".

Noel Tata also raised a procedural objection: his own standing as a director, he said, was "presently uncertain" after a general meeting "was not able to proceed for want of quorum", meaning any vote on the chairmanship "rests upon a foundation which has not yet been laid".

He warned that a decision taken under that uncertainty "would be open to serious legal challenge by any shareholder who chose to bring it" — a risk, he said, the company could ill afford "at a moment when it has matters of far greater consequence pending before its regulator".

He urged directors not to let the reappointment question bleed into the separate, unresolved dispute over Tata Sons' listing obligations to the RBI. "It would not serve this company for a regulatory development to determine the outcome of a succession process, and it would not serve this company for a succession process to shape its regulatory posture," he said, adding that each matter "is entitled to be decided upon its own merits". He closed by asking that his statement "be recorded in full in the minutes of this meeting". With Tata Sons treating

Chandrasekaran as reappointed and Tata Trusts treating the vote as a nullity - and a selection-committee process already under the Trusts' direction - the dispute appears headed toward further confrontation.

The next showdown may happen at the company's AGM, which has to ratify the appointment. Neither side's statement indicated any immediate legal filing had been made as of Wednesday. The shift in Tata Sons board's position followed the RBI's rejection last week of Tata Sons' application to surrender its registration as a non-banking financial company - a decision that revives the prospect of a stock listing the company had spent more than a year trying to avoid, including by repaying more than Rs 21,000 crore in debt.

Board members reasoned that continuity of leadership would reassure prospective investors ahead of any listing process, according to sources. Potential investors typically seek assurance on management continuity once a company embarks on an initial public offering.

The listing push followed the Reserve Bank of India's rejection on September 11 of Tata Sons' application to surrender its registration as a core investment company, an exemption that would have let the company avoid a stock-market debut. The RBI classified Tata Sons as an "upper layer" non-banking financial company in 2022, a designation that requires listing within three years; that deadline lapsed in September 2025 while the deregistration request was under review. Tata Sons had repaid its outstanding debt in an earlier bid to qualify for the exemption.

The listing decision exposed a rift even within the Trusts. The Sir Dorabji Tata Trust sought to bind nominee director Venu Srinivasan to vote against the listing, but Srinivasan refused, citing his independent duty as a director sitting on the board as a joint nominee, according to people familiar with the matter.

Any legal challenge to the RBI's rejection can only be pursued by Tata Sons itself, not by the Trusts directly, according to sources.

Chandrasekaran has led Tata Sons since February 2017, when he succeeded Ratan Tata as interim chairman after the board's ouster of Cyrus Mistry. He was unanimously reappointed for a second five-year term in 2022.

Tata Trusts backed a third term for him as early as 2025, but the proposal stalled in February 2026 after Noel Tata raised concerns over losses at businesses like Air India and Tata Digital and set out conditions, including keeping Tata Sons unlisted, for supporting the renewal.

Thursday's vote appears to resolve the succession question that had been running in parallel: the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust had initiated a formal process to identify Chandrasekaran's replacement, with Tata Steel chief executive TV Narendran, Tata Sons group chief financial officer Saurabh Agrawal and National Stock Exchange chief executive Ashish Chauhan as contenders. That process is now expected to be paused or discontinued.

The Shapoorji Pallonji Group, which holds about 18 per cent of Tata Sons and has pushed for a listing to unlock value from its stake and support its own debt repayment.

An eventual Tata Sons listing could rank among the largest IPOs in Indian history. Even a 1 per cent stake sale has been valued at an estimated Rs 15,000-20,000 crore, implying an overall valuation near Rs 20 lakh crore - roughly USD 230 billion - for the conglomerate, which holds controlling stakes in more than a dozen listed companies across steel, automobiles, software services, hospitality and aviation.

IRS officer caught in CBI net for graft

The money was reportedly intended to influence the outcome of a tax appeal. The Income Tax Department arrested Lavidiya and four others while he was Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals) for Units 7 and 8 in Hyderabad. At the same time, searches at 18 locations in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Khammam, Visakhapatnam, and New Delhi led to the seizure of about Rs 69 lakh in cash, along with trap money, documents, and digital records.

The May 2025 searches started the current case over disproportionate assets. At Srivastava's home in Delhi, investigators found Rs 54 lakh in cash and notes listing various properties. They also collected documents about assets in Lavidiya's name and her family members' names. The earlier bribery complaint had already mentioned alleged benami holdings, including a Mumbai flat worth about Rs 2.5 crore, reportedly received in exchange for favours and registered under someone else's name.

The CBI looked at the period from 1 April 2022 to 10 May 2025. During this time, the couple's known income was `1,95,74,358, but their assets and spending totalled `3,07,52,247. The difference

of `1,11,77,889 was called disproportionate assets, making up 57.10 per cent of their declared income. By the end of this period, the family's assets were valued at `4,31,60,820. After considering legitimate income and expenses, the agency found that over `1.11 crore could not be explained. Lavidiya has been charged under Section 13(2) and Section 13(1)(b) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. These sections address criminal misconduct by public servants whose assets exceed their known sources of income. Srivastava has also been charged under Section 12 of the same law for allegedly helping to acquire the wealth. Inspector Naveen Kumar is now leading the investigation. The accusations claim that officials used their authority over tax appeals to get cash, property, and unaccounted assets, keeping money and records at family homes. Lavidiya is the son of Ramulu Naik, a former BRS legislator from Wyr in Khammam district. Both officers left their jobs at the end of the inspection period.

The CBI is investigating where each asset came from, the wife's involvement in acquiring or hiding them, and whether the unexplained money meets the legal standard for conviction. This case adds another layer to the original bribery scheme, focusing on wealth and keeping two senior officers from different central services under ongoing anti-corruption scrutiny.

MP begins special village camps to issue free...

Yadav and Nabin also handed over free registered property deeds to three beneficiaries during the programme.

The registration exercise will be carried out through special camps at the village and gram panchayat levels in three phases. The first phase is scheduled from September 17 to 19, the second from September 24 to 26 and the third from October 1 to 3. Patwaris have been designated as execution officers, while tehsildars, naib tehsildars, revenue inspectors and other authorised officials will handle registration-related work.

According to the state government, beneficiaries will have to complete land-linking of their residential plots and e-KYC through their Samagra IDs. The execution process will be carried out through the SARA mobile application, while registration of deeds will be completed through the SAMPADA platform. After registration, the deed will be sent to beneficiaries on their registered mobile numbers through WhatsApp.

The government says formal registration will also enable property holders to use ownership documents while seeking institutional credit for housing, business, agriculture and other economic activities. The broader SVAMITVA programme is intended to provide formal ownership records for residential properties in rural inhabited areas and facilitate their use as financial assets.

Nabin described the initiative as an important step towards securing property rights for rural families. He said registration documents were more than paperwork and could provide families with formal recognition of ownership. He also referred to the legacy of Devi Ahilyabai Holkar, saying it was significant that the campaign was being launched from Indore.

Yadav said the campaign formed part of the state's wider Seva Sankalp activities launched on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. He also spoke about state welfare initiatives for women, workers and other sections of society.

Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish Devda and state BJP president Hemant Khandelwal also addressed the programme and highlighted the potential of formal property documents to strengthen rural households' access to financial services.

1,498 treasured mementoes gifted...

The entire statue is richly detailed, showcasing intricate designs that enhance its spiritual significance and aesthetic appeal, according to the e-auction website.

Also on offer is a model replica of HMS Victory. This model faithfully captures Lord Nelson's famous vessel, featuring detailed multi-tier gun decks painted in its iconic yellow and black stripe configuration. The ship is mounted securely on brass supports over a polished wooden plinth, complete with an official metal nameplate, and is accented with miniature Indian flags for premium presentation. It has a base price of `2.25 lakh, the website says.

Besides, sports memorabilia containing a pair of running spike shoes, gifted to PM Modi by a Paralympic silver medalist, and a meticulously handcrafted commemorative artwork (base price `1.20 lakh) showcasing an architectural depiction of the modern convention centre in Daman, using zardozi embroidery, also figure in the auction.

ECI bars TMC factions from using party name, symbol in bypolls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
n New Delhi

The Election Commission has directed rival factions of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC) not to use the party name and “Flowers and Grass symbol” during the West Bengal bypolls, and asked them to submit their preferred names and symbols by Friday morning.

In its interim order issued on Thursday night, the Commission, after hearing leaders of the two factions led by Mamata Banerjee and Arup Roy, said the matter requires substantive determination by the poll body under provisions of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order 1968.

“On due consideration of the totality of information available on record... the commission is of the opinion that there are two rival groups in the All India Trinamool Congress, one led by Ms. Mamata Banerjee and the other led by Shri Arup Roy,” the interim order said.



“Each group is now claiming to be the party, and therefore the matter requires a substantive determination by the Commission under Para 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation & Allotment) Order 1968,” it said.

Accordingly, the commission said, to place both the rival groups on an even keel and to protect their rights and interests and going by the past precedent, the Commission gave its interim order to cover the purpose of the current by-elections and to continue till the final determination of the dispute in the matter.

“Neither of the two groups led by Shri Arup Roy (Petitioner) and the other led by Ms. Mamata Banerjee (Respondent) shall be permitted to use the name of the party ‘All India Trinamool Congress’

“Neither of the two groups shall also be permitted to use the symbol ‘Flowers and Grass’, reserved for ‘All India Trinamool Congress’,” the Commission said.

The poll body said both the groups shall be known by such names as they may choose for their respective groups, and if they so desire, linkage with their parent party ‘All India Trinamool Congress’ and both the groups shall also be allotted

such different symbols as they may choose from the list of free symbols notified by the ECI for the purposes of the current by-elections.

“Accordingly, both the groups are hereby directed to furnish, latest by 11:00 am on 18.09.2026: The names of their groups by which they may be recognised by the commission and, to this end, give three options in order of preference, any one of which may be approved by the commission and the symbols which may be allotted to the candidates set up, if any, by the respective groups.

“They may indicate the names of three free symbols, in the order of their preference, any one of which may be allotted to their candidates by the commission,” the ECI said.

Both the factions had presented their cases for claim on party name and symbol ahead of the October 6 bypolls in the Nandigram and Rejinagar Assembly constituencies of West Bengal.

Congress jabs Union Govt as US passes Russia sanctions bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Congress on Thursday took a swipe at the Modi Government after the US House of Representatives passed a bill that would authorise President Donald Trump to impose steep tariffs on Russia's trading partners in oil and gas, saying appeasement has never paid and will never pay.

The Opposition party also demanded that the Government clarify its stance on the issue at the earliest, and ensure India's energy security is not sacrificed.

The Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, passed by the US Senate last month, was approved by the House in a 262-159 vote on Wednesday and will now go to Trump to be signed into law.

The bill seeks to impose sanctions not only on Russia's leadership and energy sector, but also on the “shadow fleet” of vessels that enable Moscow to evade sanctions on oil deliveries.

It also seeks to authorise Trump to impose stiff tariffs on China, India and other



Congress leader Jairam Ramesh

countries to reduce their dependence on Russian oil and gas, as well as additional sanctions on Iran.

Reacting to the passage of the bill, Congress general secretary in charge of communications, Jairam Ramesh, said on X, “Appeasement has never paid and will never pay.”

Congress general secretary, in-charge organisation, KC Venugopal, also targeted the Government.

“Will the PM find the guts to stand up to the US' latest Senate resolution? Will India's foreign policy and energy sovereignty be controlled from Washington?

The PM was boasting that the BRICS Joint Declaration was a symbol of the world trusting India, but soon after, we are seeing such aggressive bullying from a strategic partner,” he said on X.

“Just this week, we saw the Centre bow to US pressure and impose MDR on UPI transactions, and now we are facing renewed pressure on oil purchases. Given the Compromised PM's track record, we are likely to see the Centre toe the US' line and surrender to Washington,” Venugopal said.

“We demand that the Modi Government clarify its

stance on this at the earliest, and ensure India's energy security is not sacrificed,” he added.

The Ministry of External Affairs said it will take all necessary steps to protect its economic interests and ensure energy security after the US House of Representatives cleared the bill.

The MEA said the Indian side is monitoring further developments in the matter following the passage of the Act in the US Congress.

Besides 203 Republicans, 58 Democrats and one Independent voted in favour of the legislation. Seven Republicans and 152 Democrats opposed it.

Democratic opposition largely centred around the tariff authorities provided to Trump.

The bill is named after Senator Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who died in July after spending more than a year building support for it.

“China and India, you better buy your oil and gas somewhere else,” Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal told reporters after the passage of the bill.

Reporter TV MD held for keeping 67 litres of liquor in Kerala

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Kochi

The Managing Director of a private Malayalam news channel was arrested by Excise officials from Kochi in the wee hours of Thursday after liquor above the permissible limit was recovered during a police search at his ancestral house in Wayanad, Excise officials said. The Excise department registered a case against Anto Augustine based on the police report after they recovered liquor above the permissible limit during the search, they said, adding that 67 litres of liquor was found at his home in Wayanad.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Wednesday searched the office and residences of Augustine and his two brothers in Kochi and Wayanad as part of a probe into alleged irregularities in a failed football event featuring Argentina's star player Lionel Messi sponsored by Reporter Broadcasting Company. The Excise case was registered under various non-bailable sections of the



Anto Augustine during arrest

Abkari Act for possessing liquor in excess of the permissible quantity, officials said. He was arrested and later shifted to Wayanad, Excise officials said.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala said the SIT had not done anything wrong as the searches were conducted after obtaining warrants.

“Home Minister won't interfere in any police investigation. Let the investigation go on. The law will take its course,” he said. He denied opposition allegations that there was an emergency-like situation in Kerala and said several media persons had been booked during the previous Pinarayi

Vijayan Government. “If anyone did anything illegal, there will be action from the part of the police,” he said.

Anto Augustine and his brothers were involved in so many controversies before entering into the media business. They acquired Reporter TV five years ago. Earlier, they were arrested for illegal tree felling in a forest in Wayanad. They were also involved in cheating people by launching a fake mobile phone company - Mango Phone. Anto was involved in several criminal cases before entering the media business and was declared a history sheeter by the local police station.

Two JeM terrorists killed in J&K encounter

MOHIT KANDHARI
n Jammu

A joint team of security forces led by an elite group of Para Commandos have neutralised two heavily armed Pakistani terrorists affiliated with the proscribed Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, without causing any collateral damage, in the general area of Brattal, Udhampur on Thursday.

During ongoing searches in the thickly forested area, the security forces also detained a suspected overground worker (OGW). They escorted him for further interrogation to establish any links and whether he was sheltering the foreign terrorists and providing logistics to sustain them inside their hideout.

It was the second major encounter in Udhampur district this year. On February 4, a dreaded commander of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Rubani alias Abu Mavia, along with his associate, was neutralised inside a natural cave during a 20-hour-long operation in the Basantgarh area of Udhampur. The JeM commander was active in the area for several years before



he was gunned down.

The anti-terrorist operation was going on in the area, and on Wednesday evening the security forces recorded a suspected movement of terrorists. “Around 9.00 pm, at least 4-5 rounds from a rocket launcher were fired by the special forces, targeting the safe hideout of JeM terrorists in the Brattal /Khubban area under the jurisdiction of Majalta police station in Udhampur district”. On Thursday, the Army confirmed the killing of two terrorists in the operation.

“In a joint intelligence-based operation during the

intervening night of September 16-17, confirmed inputs indicated the presence of terrorists in the general area of Brattal, Udhampur.

“Despite hostile weather, difficult terrain and poor visibility, troops of White Knight Corps, Police and CRPF launched a targeted counter-terrorism operation, resulting in the neutralisation of two terrorists.

“The operation is still in progress, with search and surveillance continuing in the area. Security forces remain deployed to track and neutralise any remaining threat,”

the Jammu-based White Knight Corps said in a post on X. The slain terrorists have been identified as Saddam and Mustafa by Jammu and Kashmir Police.

An AK Assault Rifle (with 4 mags), one M4 Carbine (with 3 mags), a Glock Pistol (with 2 mags) and 4 grenades have been recovered from their person, police said in a post on X.

Security forces have been maintaining a hawk's eye in the region to prevent Pakistan-based JeM terrorists from carving out safe hideouts in the upper reaches of Udhampur.

West Bengal to observe PM birthday as Annapurna Diwas

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
n Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Thursday greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 76th birthday, announcing the day would be celebrated every year as Annapurna Diwas, marking the distribution of a monthly allowance of 3000 to women that was once guaranteed by the Prime Minister before the Bengal elections. More than 1.6 crore women have been receiving the monthly allowance, Government sources said.

Referring to the Prime Ministerial announcement that a list of 50 lakh beneficiaries of the PM housing scheme was being prepared, Adhikari said all the allottees in that respect would be women. In what could



West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari was presented a memento by State MoS Malati Rava Roy during the Annapurna Diwas event, to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 76th birthday in Kolkata on Thursday

further cement BJP's stranglehold on Bengal, Adhikari, during a programme, said, “the Prime Minister has announced that a list of beneficiaries is being prepared who will get new houses under the PM Awas Yojana... These 50 lakh allotments will be made in favour of

women who will own them,” adding “this day will be celebrated as Annapurna Diwas in Bengal every year ... We all wish our *Yashaswi* (celebrated) Prime Minister a long and prosperous life.”

The new Government had come not only to distribute allowances to women, he

said, “we have come promising an all-round reform where no woman will be at the receiving end of any kind of discrimination or torture... No one will be spared if found guilty of torturing women... That is our priority,” announcing that the State had set up a commission chaired by retired Justice Samapti Chattopadhyay to provide justice to oppressed women. “We will not tolerate even a single case of cruelty or torture on women... That is our commitment,” he said.

The Chief Minister was addressing a 60 thousand strong crowd at Central Park in Salt Lake, with many more thousands joining virtually from 500 locations across the State. Bengal was celebrating the Prime Minister's birthday with illumination of lamps throughout the State.



Grand opening of art exhibition “Celebrating Leadership, Vision & Service through Art” dedicated to PM Modi's life and service held at Dr Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC) in New Delhi

PIONEER PHOTO

ED raids former Haryana minister Gopal Kanda in Gurugram over real estate fraud

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
n Gurugram

On Thursday, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) searched the home, farmhouse, and office of Gopal Goyal Kanda, a former Haryana minister, in Gurugram. Officials said the searches are part of an investigation into money laundering linked to an alleged real estate fraud involving Vatika Limited. The ED's office in Gurugram carried out the searches pursuant to Section 17 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

Officials said the operation began early and involved

both state police and security personnel. The teams examined financial records, documents related to transfers between companies, and papers related to the projects under investigation. The case concerns four commercial projects carried out by Vatika Limited.

The agency said it had raised about Rs 248.46 crore from 661 investors, promising timely handover of the properties, guaranteed returns, lease rentals, and sale deeds. However, an official noted that possession had not yet been handed over and that the promised sale deeds are still incomplete. Officials also

added that the searches at Kanda's properties were intended to trace the movement of funds.

The agency stated that it suspects the money taken from the real estate company was forwarded to companies associated with the former minister. This follows searches by the same agency on August 25 at seven homes and businesses linked to Vatika Limited and its promoter-directors in the Delhi-NCR area.

The ED has taken action against Vatika Limited and its promoter-directors, Anil Bhalla, Gautam Bhalla, and Gaurav Bhalla, along with



Representative image

others. This step follows the Economic Offences Wing of the Delhi Police filing FIRs alleging fraud and failure to deliver the residential plots in question, along with other similar offences. In August, the agency obtained documents, digital devices, audited financial statements, and accounting records. It also seized or placed under freeze assets amounting to approximately Rs 33 crore, comprising three luxury cars, jewellery, bank accounts and securities.

The ED said it had identified a pattern in transactions related to the Vatika India Next and Vatika India

Next-2 projects. The agency said it received about Rs 260.30 crore from complainants between 2010 and 2012 but supplied only plots worth about Rs 120 crore. In some cases, the plots promised were not delivered by the agreed deadlines. Officials said the searches carried out on Thursday were linked to the commercial projects under investigation and the suspected transfer of funds to companies associated with Kanda.

Kanda previously held the position of MLA for Sirsa and is currently the president of the Haryana Lokhit Party. He previously served

as a minister in Haryana for home, industries, and urban local bodies. In the 2024 Assembly election, he was defeated by Gokul Setia, a Congress candidate. In August 2023, the ED also searched properties associated with him as part of a separate money-laundering inquiry.

In 2023, a court in Delhi freed him in the matter involving the suicide of Geetika Sharma, a former air hostess with MDLR Airlines that he set up. Kanda or his legal team could not be contacted for comment. Authorities said the investigation is still ongoing.

States Focus



TN LEADERS PAY TRIBUTES TO PERIYAR ON BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Political leaders across party lines in Tamil Nadu on Thursday paid tributes to social reformer and Dravidar Kazhagam founder EV Ramasamy, revered as 'Thanthai Periyar', on his 148th birth anniversary.

September 17 is observed as Social Justice Day in the State, reaffirming its commitment to the principles of equality, self-respect and rationalism championed by Periyar. Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay led the State in paying homage to the social reformer, saying Periyar had spent his entire life fighting to eradicate social divisions and protect people's rights.

In a post on the microblogging platform X, Vijay said Periyar had sown "progressive thoughts anchored in self-respect, social justice and rationalism" in the minds of the people. He highlighted the reformer's lifelong struggle against discrimination based on caste and religion and his efforts to secure the fundamental rights of the people. (PTI)



MANIPUR CM HOLDS SECURITY MEET TO REVIEW LAW & ORDER

Manipur Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh on Thursday held a meeting with senior security officials, and discussed measures to maintain law and order in the northeastern State.

The meeting comes days after six people, including four women, were gunned down in separate incidents in Tamenglong and Noney districts. "During the security coordination meeting held at the CM Secretariat, officials discussed the stringent steps that should be taken to maintain law and order in the State, and discussed in length the new vulnerable areas and how to deploy security personnel there," an official release said.

It also said that with the construction season approaching, authorities of the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) are gearing up to intensify work in the next six months. (PTI)

Leaders wish PM on his birthday

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Leaders across the political spectrum greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 76th birthday on Thursday. Union ministers and senior BJP leaders also congratulated him on 25 years in public life and highlighted Modi's contribution to development, welfare and governance.

Born on September 17, 1950, in Vadnagar, Gujarat, Modi turned 76 on Thursday. He completes 25 uninterrupted years in public office on October 7, having first taken the oath as Gujarat chief minister in 2001 before becoming prime minister in 2014.

While President Droupadi Murmu hailed his record on governance, Home Minister Amit Shah invoked Modi's journey from an ordinary BJP volunteer to the nation's highest political office.

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan credited Modi with presiding over India's emergence as one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, while Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said his journey from



Union Home Minister Amit Shah Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and others during a visit to the Jagannath Temple on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday in Ahmedabad on Thursday

Gujarat chief minister to prime minister had given "a new momentum to India's growth story".

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said India was forging a new identity on the global stage under Modi's leadership and making progress in development, self-reliance, innovation, digital technology, infrastructure and public welfare.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also wished Modi a long and healthy life.

Home Minister Shah described Modi as a symbol of tireless hard work, sacrifice and foresight, saying his

life is an "epic tale of penance, sacrifice, and unwavering resolve".

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said India is marching forward with full confidence towards the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' under Modi's leadership, with progress in infrastructure, digital connectivity, welfare, innovation and entrepreneurship.

BJP president Nitin Nabin described Modi as a symbol of national service and dedication and a leader of 140 crore countrymen, saying India is scaling new heights of development and self-reliance under his guidance.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal

described Modi as a "karma yogi" who has dedicated every moment of his life to national service and public welfare.

Union minister Kiren Rijiju expressed hope that Modi continues to lead the country towards the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Union minister CR Patil said Modi's commitment to public service, good governance and development, while placing national interests above all else, has infused new momentum and a broader vision into India's progress. BJP chief spokesperson and MP Anil Baluni said Modi has dedicated his entire life to public service, national service and the welfare of every individual.

BJP MP Sambit Patra said Modi's journey from an ordinary family to the position of prime minister is an inspiring story of struggle, hard work, discipline, and dedication to national service. BJP Rajya Sabha MP Tarun Chugh paid obeisance at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, praying for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's long life. JD(U) chief and former Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar also extended his greetings, wishing Modi a healthy and long life.

Nitin Nabin slams Opposition over BRICS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Indore

BJP president Nitin Nabin on Thursday launched the Madhya Pradesh Government's scheme for free registration of rural properties to mark Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday, and criticised the Opposition for 'ignoring' India's rising global stature as seen at the recent BRICS Summit.

Speaking after launching the 'Swamitva Adhikar Abhilekh Nispadan evam Panjiyan Yojana 2026', Nabin said the scheme would enable rural people to register their properties and live with a sense of dignity and self-respect.



BJP president Nitin Nabin

Officials said around 50 lakh private properties in rural areas would be registered free of cost under the scheme, the first of its

kind in the country. Highlighting Modi's contribution to the country's development, Nabin said, "While carrying forward

India's heritage, Prime Minister Modi has connected 140 crore people with development."

India's influence is being felt across the world under Modi's leadership, he said.

The Opposition was only indulging in politics, the BJP chief said, alleging that Opposition parties were talking about the menu rather than India's stature as seen at the recently concluded 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi.

"Those who walk shoulder to shoulder with the people seeking to divide the country are today talking about uniting the nation," Nabin said. The function was attended by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, among others.

ED raids 4 States in money-laundering probe linked to Ranchi RSS office attack

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
n New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday searched locations in Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Karnataka as part of a money-laundering investigation linked to a petrol-bomb attack on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh office in Ranchi. This action was taken under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and followed an NIA case that began with a special investigation by the Jharkhand Police.

The attack happened early on 17 June at the RSS regional office in Ranchi's Nivaranpur area, which is under the Chutia police station. Two makeshift petrol bombs, reportedly made in bottles, were thrown at the building around 12:30 am One landed on the roof and caused a small fire that went out on

its own, while the other fell near the entrance. No one was hurt, and the damage was minor.

RSS members said the attack was planned. Police found glass fragments and called in a forensic team. Jharkhand Police arrested three men, Saif Ansari, Aman Ansari, and Sayam Sujan, within hours. Police caught two trying to escape by train, and later found the third in Ranchi. One of the accused tried to escape from custody, grabbed a weapon, and was shot in the leg.

Investigators said the suspects used a hired cab, checked out the area in advance, and sent video of the incident to their handlers. Technical evidence and CCTV footage helped with the arrests. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) later took over the case and filed an FIR, which now forms the basis of the Enforcement



Directorate's PMLA investigation. Agencies are focusing on alleged links between the accused and the Pakistan-based Shahzad Bhatti Network.

Officials said at least one of the arrested men had spent time in Dubai, where he reportedly met a handler

known as "Rana Sahib," an associate of Shahzad Bhatti. They allegedly communicated through encrypted messaging apps. Early police reports also suggested links to an ISI-backed group called Tehreek-e-Taliban Hindustan.

The Ministry of Home

Affairs issued a gazette notification under Section 35(1)(a) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, adding the Shahzad Bhatti Network to the First Schedule of banned terrorist organisations. The Centre stated that the group's objective is to recruit gullible youth and local criminals to smuggle arms, explosives and narcotics across the border and to carry out terrorist activities that threaten India's democratic system, communal harmony and internal security.

The notification further alleged that the network radicalises young people through allurements, motivates them for anti-national acts and mobilises resources in collusion with other banned outfits. Shahzad Bhatti, a Pakistani gangster described as operating from the UAE, is identified as the key figure. Security agencies had already conducted a large

multi-state operation against the network around Independence Day, resulting in hundreds of detentions and more than 80 FIRs across 14 States.

The ED is now the second central agency, after the NIA, investigating the group's activities. They are focusing on the financial trail that may have supported the Ranchi attack and related operations. These searches show the Government's policy of investigating both the operational and financial sides of alleged cross-border terror groups.

Investigators are still looking into whether money was sent to local people and how the network used social media and overseas trips to recruit and radicalise others. More information from the raids and ongoing NIA and ED investigations is expected as both agencies work together on the case.

Rahul attacks MP Government over death of tribal children



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday launched a blistering attack on the BJP Government in Madhya Pradesh over the death of more than 30 tribal children due to various diseases in Balaghat district, claiming that the state Government is India's most corrupt and incompetent.

Gandhi also slammed Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and said if he finds time after lighting lamps and holding celebrations, he must take a look at the ground reality in the State.

"In Balaghat, more than 30 tribal children have died amid illness, malnutrition and a lack of basic health facilities. The extent of the callousness is such that innocent lives kept slipping away, yet the response remained sluggish, and the Government kept sleeping," the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha said in a post in Hindi on X.

"Chief Minister ji, if you've found time after lighting lamps and holding celebrations, take a look at the ground reality in the State," he wrote.

Lack of disease control, nutrition and clean water, along with a crumbling health system, is claiming the lives of children, he alleged.

Adulterated medicines and poisonous illegal liquor are devastating hundreds of families, Gandhi added.

"I am heading to Indore and I am continuously gathering feedback from students, youth and common people across the state. The horrific incidents coming to light are

revealing that Madhya Pradesh's education system is today the most ruined in the entire country," he said.

Students, children, the poor, Dalits, tribals, backward classes or women - every section is being tormented and no one is happy, the Congress leader claimed.

"The Madhya Pradesh Government is today India's most corrupt and most incompetent Government - that is the truth," Gandhi said.

Later, in a post on his WhatsApp channel, Gandhi claimed that Madhya Pradesh is the RSS-BJP's laboratory, where an experiment to increase illiteracy and unemployment is underway.

"I am coming to Indore - to expose this experiment, explain this game of stealing the future, and unveil the truth. We will not allow anyone to play with students' lives under any circumstances. We are determined to secure the right to education and employment," Gandhi said, referring to his Chhatron Ki Goonj programme on Saturday.

The Congress on Wednesday had demanded the resignation of Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Rajendra Shukla over the death of tribal children in Balaghat.

Last week, the Madhya Pradesh High Court had sought a response from the state Government over the deaths while hearing a PIL.

The petition alleged inadequate treatment and claimed that around 400 children were being treated at a hospital with a capacity of 50 beds.

Top Maoist leader held in West Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
n Kolkata

In a major breakthrough, the Special Task Force of the West Bengal Police has arrested senior Maoist leader Asim Mondal alias Akash. The central committee member and State secretary of the Communist Party carried a reward of "2.20 crore out of which Jharkhand Police had declared a bounty of "1 crore, and the remaining amount was declared by Odisha Police.

Akash was arrested in East Midnapore district after his location was tracked down. Incidentally, East Midnapore is the home district of Bengal Chief Minister Sudendu Adhikari. He had been operating for more than 15 years, and his name came to the fore during the closing years of the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee Government in Bengal. He was



Maoist leader Asim Mondal

an acquaintance of slain Maoist leader Kishenji alias Koteswar Rao, who operated from the Jangalmahal area of Bengal. After Kishenji's death, Akash took control of the organisation, and since then he has been underground.

Akash's arrest comes close on the heels of a surrender of a number of Maoist leaders in the State, sources said, adding that he was being interrogated regarding the operational, organisational and strategic preparedness of the Red extremist group.

Ex-BJP MLA, dismissed cop booked for gangraping woman at gunpoint

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Thane

A former BJP MLA and a dismissed constable have been booked for allegedly gangraping a 22-year-old woman after holding her captive at gunpoint, a Thane police official said on Thursday. He identified the accused as Narendra Pawar, former BJP MLA from Kalyan West constituency, and Shailesh Patil, a dismissed police constable.

Citing the woman's complaint, the official said she was held at gunpoint at a farmhouse in Baggaon in Bhiwandi, where she was forced to consume alcohol and then sexually assaulted. "The woman is married and is facing marital disputes. Pawar allegedly invited her to his office under



Ex-BJP MLA Narendra Pawar

the pretext of mediation. On September 13, Pawar and Patil brought her to the Baggaon farmhouse, allegedly threatened her with a firearm, coerced her to drink alcohol, and sexually assaulted her," the official said.

After Pawar left the premises, Patil allegedly sexually assaulted her again, following which an associate of the accused dropped the survivor off at her residence, the official said. The woman first approached Congress

corporator Kanchan Kulkarni via her Instagram contact number on September 16, disclosed the ordeal and shared supporting evidence, including video footage and WhatsApp chat records. "The victim reached out to me on social media. Hearing her account was horrifying, and after reviewing the video and chat evidence she provided, we immediately took her to Padgha police station," said Kulkarni.

Following intervention by Director General of Police Sadanand Date, Padgha police station senior inspector Pankaj Giri verified the details and registered an FIR against Pawar and Patil under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for gangrape, brandishing weapons and other offences, the official said.

Anti-drug warning made part of film certification guidelines

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Films depicting consumption, use or trafficking of narcotic drugs will have to carry an anti-drug warning, with the Centre making the requirement part of the guidelines governing certification of films for public exhibition.

Under the revised guidelines, scenes depicting or involving the consumption, use or trafficking of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances will have to carry the warning: "Illicit Narcotics Destroy Health and Guarantees Imprisonment. Say No to Drugs."

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting notified the amended guidelines on September 16 under the Cinematograph Act.

The move marks a change from the earlier certification guidelines, which required the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to ensure that scenes tending to "encourage, justify or glorify drug addiction" were not shown, but did not prescribe such a specific on-screen warning.



Representative image

Last month, the ministry asked OTT platforms to prominently display the same warning during scenes depicting consumption or use of narcotic drugs.

A similar advisory was issued to private satellite television channels.

The film certification guidelines lay down the principles the CBFC must follow when examining films for

public exhibition under the Cinematograph Act.

The guidelines were last amended in May 2025, when the Government incorporated the three age-based parental guidance categories — U/A 7+, U/A 13+ and U/A 16+ — into them. The categories, introduced following amendments to the Cinematograph Act in 2023, advise parental guidance

for children below seven, 13 and 16 years, respectively.

Among other things, they require the board to ensure that anti-social activities such as violence are not glorified or justified, criminal methods likely to incite offences are not depicted and scenes encouraging, justifying or glamorising drug addiction are not shown.

The guidelines also address depictions of violence, cruelty, sexual content and matters that could affect public order, the security of the State or India's relations with foreign countries.

On Wednesday, the Centre reconstituted the CBFC, bringing actors Preity Zinta, Pankaj Tripathi, Suniel Shetty, Pallavi Joshi and Prosenjit Chatterjee, filmmaker Priyadarshan and Grammy-winning musician Ricky Kej, among others, onto its new 18-member board.

The CBFC is headed by chairperson Shashi Shekhar Vempati. The reconstituted board has been given a three-year term or will continue until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Stem cell therapy advisory issued

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

The Union Health Ministry has advised States and Union territories to ensure that stem cell therapy is offered as standard clinical care only for approved disease conditions, while its use for autism remains restricted to duly approved clinical trials.

The advisory, issued on September 16 to states and UTs that have adopted the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010 regarding the regulation of stem cell therapy, follows a Supreme Court judgment delivered on January 30 in Yash Charitable Trust and Ors v Union of India and Ors.

The advisory reiterates the existing framework governing stem cell research and therapy and seeks to ensure that stem cell therapy is per-



mitted as standard care in routine clinical practice only for disease conditions/indications included in the list approved by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

For Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), the advisory stipulates that the therapeutic use of any type of stem cell in autism is to remain restricted to duly approved clinical trials, in accordance with the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research, 2017, issued jointly by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and

the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and other applicable Government instructions issued by the Government of India from time to time.

The ministry has requested States and Union territories to disseminate the Supreme Court's directions to all state and district regulatory authorities and Government and private clinical establishments involved in stem cell research, treatment, promotion or administration, for strict compli-

ance with the applicable framework. The advisory also draws attention to the consequences of non-compliance with the framework governing stem cell therapy.

The Supreme Court, in its judgment dated 30 January, held that non-compliance with the statutory mandate must attract consequences, including professional misconduct under Regulation 7.22 of IMC Regulations, 2002.

The ministry has accordingly requested the concerned state and district regulatory authorities and clinical establishments to ensure strict compliance with the applicable framework governing stem cell research and therapy.

Reinforcing the regulatory position, the National Medical Commission, in its advisory 5 September, reiterated that stem cell therapy may be offered as clinical care only for the approved indications.

Congress gets a late boost in Rajasthan civic polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Jaipur

The Congress on Thursday won six of the nine wards where repolling was held across four urban local bodies of Rajasthan, while the BJP secured three, with the results for all 10,244 wards that went to polls now declared.

Repolling was held on Wednesday at 10 polling booths after technical problems in EVMs had prevented completion of counting in the affected wards earlier.

The Congress swept all four pending wards in Jaipur Municipal Corporation and also won one ward each in Kota Municipal Corporation and Suket municipality.

The BJP won two of the three pending wards in Kota Municipal Corporation and the lone pending ward in Jodhpur Municipal Corporation.



With the nine results, the BJP's final tally stands at 4,182 wards, while Congress has won 3,619 and Independents 2,273.

RLP won 63 wards, AAP 42, CPI(M) 38, BSP 19 and Bharat Adivasi Party eight.

Rajasthan has a total of 10,245 wards across 309 urban local bodies, but polling was held in 10,244. No election was held in Ward 2 of Tonk Municipal Council after all four candidates in the fray withdrew their nominations. A bypoll will be

held in the ward later.

The BJP surged ahead of the Congress in the urban local body elections, while Independents registered a strong presence across several civic bodies.

Meanwhile, the process for electing mayors and chairpersons is underway in 305 urban local bodies. Elections for mayors and chairpersons will be held on September 21, followed by elections for deputy mayors, deputy chairpersons and municipal vice-

presidents on September 22.

The State Election Commission on Thursday issued a separate schedule for Jaipur, Jodhpur and Kota municipal corporations and Suket municipality, where the process had been held back due to the repoll.

The public notice for election of mayors and chairpersons in these four bodies will be issued on September 18, nominations can be filed till September 19 and polling will be held from 10 am to 2 pm on September 25, followed by counting immediately thereafter.

Elections for deputy mayors, deputy chairpersons and vice-presidents in the four bodies will be held on September 26.

In the previous municipal election cycle held between November 2019 and February 2021, Rajasthan had 196 urban local bodies comprising 7,500 wards.

Punjab farmers protest on rail tracks, demand talks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Ferozepur

Farmers squatted on rail tracks at four places on Thursday to pressure the Punjab Government to hold talks with them and resolve their 12 demands, including a loan waiver and procurement of basmati, maize, moong, mustard, and potatoes at minimum support prices. The Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), which is leading the protest, said farmers sat on rail tracks in Mallanwala, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Moga.

The KMM said they started the protest after issuing the state Government an ultimatum on Wednesday to meet their demands by 12 noon on September 17. The



organisation said if the state did not accept their demands, they planned to squat on the railway tracks. Among the demands, farmers want withdrawal of cases registered against farmers and workers who participated in previous agitations. On August 31, the farmers protested outside the offices of Deputy Commissioners across

Punjab and submitted a memorandum to the state Government listing its demands. Also, they staged 'dharnas' outside the residences and offices of several Cabinet ministers in the state. In Ferozepur, KMM leaderINDERJIT SINGH BATH said that despite peaceful demonstrations, the Government failed to take effective steps on issues concerning farmers

and workers. Farmers' 12-point charter includes a complete loan waiver for farmers and farm workers, along with adequate compensation and Government jobs for families of farmers and workers who died by suicide.

They demanded an effective policy to tackle floods, groundwater depletion, and air and water pollution, as well as the distribution of river waters according to the riparian principle.

The protesters sought resolutions in the Punjab Assembly opposing the Seed Act, 2025; the Cooperative Act, 2026; the VB-G RAM G Act; and the Electricity Amendment Bill, 2025. They demanded an immediate halt to installing prepaid electricity metres in Punjab.

EPFO wage revision too little, too late: AITUC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n NEW DELHI

Terming the Union Cabinet's decision to hike the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) wage ceiling from `15,000 to `25,000 as "too little and too late", the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) has demanded that the limit be further raised to `30,000 to ensure broader social security coverage. In a statement issued here, AITUC General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur stated that the revision — coming after a 12-year gap since September 2014 — is a belated response to persistent demands from trade unions and employee representatives. AITUC noted



AITUC General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur

that the frozen limit of `15,000 had long become completely out of sync with rising wages, inflation, and the cost of living, thereby depriving millions of workers earning just above the earlier threshold of

mandatory social security.

While advocating for a `30,000 ceiling, the trade union expressed serious concern over the potential impact on workers' monthly take-home pay. AITUC insisted that an

employer's statutory EPFO contribution must be paid over and above an employee's Cost to Company (CTC) structure, rather than being adjusted or deducted from their agreed wages.

To avoid similar delays in the future, the union urged the Central Government to establish a regular, automatic mechanism for the periodic revision of the wage ceiling instead of waiting for over a decade.

Furthermore, AITUC cautioned that expanding EPFO coverage should not remain a mere numerical exercise, calling for strict enforcement of statutory contributions to ensure meaningful pension, insurance, and provident fund benefits for the workforce.

Odisha BJP Govt failed to curtail price rise: BJD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Bhubaneswar

The Opposition BJD in Odisha on Thursday accused the BJP Government in the State of failing to control the rising prices of essential commodities that caused hardship to people.

Addressing a press conference, BJD spokesperson Mihir Ray pointed out that a report in August said the country's inflation rate stood at 4.82 per cent while the ratio was 5.52 per cent in Odisha.

"Among all the States in the country, Odisha's inflation rate was the fifth highest. Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana had higher inflation rates than Odisha," Ray claimed.

The BJD spokesperson said rural areas of Odisha have recorded a higher inflation rate at 5.90 per cent as compared to 4.47 per cent in urban localities. Due to the higher inflation rate, the prices of essential commodities,



ties, such as sugar, onions and edible oil, have increased substantially in the state, causing immense hardship to consumers, he claimed.

"The State Government is showing no urgency in taking effective measures to bring the rising inflation rate in Odisha under control," the BJD spokesperson said.

During the 2024-25 financial year, the national inflation rate stood at 4.6 per cent, while that of Odisha was 6 per cent, Ray claimed.

"Odisha's inflation rate has consistently been higher than the national inflation rate, while rural inflation has regularly remained higher than that of urban," he noted.

Disha Salian case: Uddhav warns action over character assassination

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar

Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday said he would take legal action if the "character assassination" campaign targeting his family over the 2020 Disha Salian death case did not stop.

The former Maharashtra Chief Minister spoke on the issue days after the Bombay High Court ordered a CBI probe into Salian's death in response to her father's petition. The Central agency subsequently registered a case without naming any accused.

"We have no connection with this case. Aaditya (Thackeray) has also said so. This issue is not merely about me. Such character assassination can take place with you people too," Thackeray said, replying to reporters' questions here.

"If such allegations are made continuously, how long should one tolerate it? I am



wondering why the names of Modi and Trump are absent in this case," he said on a sarcastic note.

Salian's death was an unfortunate incident, but his family had no connection with it, Thackeray reiterated. "It is politically motivated. We were quiet because an SIT (Special Investigation Team) was probing the case. Those who want to investigate, they can keep investigating. But enough of this pointless character assassination, or else we will initiate legal steps," the Sena (UBT) chief said. On Wednesday, his son and MLA

Aaditya Thackeray had claimed that he had never met Disha Salian.

"I have never met or known Disha Salian. Linking my name to this tragic case is a deliberate, evidence-free attempt at character assassination by a few individuals with clear political and personal motives, for almost six years," Aaditya said in a post on X. Salian, 28, former manager of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, died on June 8, 2020, after falling from the 12th floor of a residential building in Mumbai's Malad residential area.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Beed

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange on Thursday called off his 20-day-old fast, and warned the Maharashtra Government that he would take the protest to Mumbai if his demands over Maratha reservation were not considered in three months.

Jarange made the announcement after talks with a Government delegation which included ministers Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil, Dada Bhuse, MLC Prasad Lad and MLA Suresh Dhas and senior officials, at Patoda in Beed district.

The development came days after Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said the Government won't tolerate any intimidating tactics and questioned the timing of the agitation during the ongoing Ganesh festival.

Fadnis on Thursday welcomed Jarange's decision to end his fast, saying the



Government has already accepted 12 of his 13 demands and will fulfil each of them. During their meeting with Jarange in Patoda in Beed district, where the activist had halted on the way to Mumbai, the delegation members informed him about the steps initiated by the state Government for the Maratha quota.

Vikhe Patil suggested that Jarange should depute three representatives to monitor the progress of official work for considering his demands. "It will take around three to four months to act on the Kolhapur and Satara gazette

after a written comment is received from the advocate general," the minister said, and urged Jarange to call off his hunger strike.

Jarange said he is firm on his demand for "official recognition" of historical administrative records like the Hyderabad Gazette, Satara Gazette, and Aundh Gazette so Marathas can prove Kunbi lineage and claim OBC reservation benefits.

"The Government should give in writing that not a single 'Kunbi' record will be ignored. The chief minister should sign that paper," Manoj Jarange said.

State Govt to unveil master plan of future City at Invest Telangana Global Summit: CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Hyderabad

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday said that the State Government would unveil the master plan of the Bharat Future City at the 'Invest Telangana Global Summit-2026' to be organised in December this year.

Speaking at the 'Praja Palana Dinotsavam' celebration organised here by the State Government to mark the anniversary of the merger of erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad under Nizam rule with the Indian Union, he said the 'Future City' (coming up on city outskirts) would feature specialised zones such as the Young India Skills University, a Life Sciences Hub, an EV Park, an AI City, a Health City, and an Education City.

He said TCS has come forward to build the country's largest AI data



centre in Future City with an investment of `70,000 crore. Amazon has already commenced the construction of a data centre with an investment of `one lakh crore. Recalling the merger of the Nizam's Hyderabad State with the Indian Union, he said the country's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his deputy Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel "enforced" military action known as 'Operation Polo' after recognising the aspirations and respecting the movements of the people of Hyderabad.



On the occasion of PM Narendra Modi's birthday, Surat youth Siddharth Doshi organised a special puja and darshan at the sacred Kedarnath Dham. He offered prayers for the Prime Minister's long life, good health and continued strength to serve the nation, as well as for India's peace, prosperity and welfare. For several years, Doshi has marked this day with special worship at major Jyotirlinga temples, including Kashi Vishwanath, Somnath and Ujjain Mahakaleshwar. This year he chose Kedarnath. He said India is advancing towards a developed nation under Modi's leadership, and that youth must uphold national service and pride. His aim is to inspire patriotism and the resolve of Viksit Bharat. Nation First. Service Supreme. Viksit Bharat is our resolve.

PHOTO PIONEER

MADHYA PRADESH URBAN
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

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No. MPUDC/UDHD/2026/9542 Dated :16.09.2026

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Madhya Pradesh Urban Development Company Limited (MPUDC) invites online bids on www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app MPUDC-MDB tenders from eligible bidders for the following sub-projects :-

S. No.	Description	Probable Amount (In Cr.)	Bid Start Date	Bid Closing Date
1.	RFP (Request for Proposal) for Procurement of Fire Tender (Nos. 127)	127.00	17.09.2026	15.10.2026
2.	RFP (Request for Proposal) for Procurement of Mini Water Tender with Mist Technology (Nos. 111)	33.30	17.09.2026	15.10.2026

2. Interested bidders may visit the website www.mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app MPUDC-MDB tenders for further information and details. Invitation for Bids (IFB) for above packages can be viewed on website of MPUDC www.mpudc.co.in and on UDHD website www.mpurban.gov.in.

3. Any clarifications/further information or addenda to the Bidding Document shall be uploaded only on the above website and shall not be published separately in the newspapers.

M.P. Madhyam/128114/2026

CHIEF ENGINEER



Editor's
TAKE

Modi at 76: From longevity to legacy

As the BJP begins a month-long celebration of Modi's 25 years in power, the milestone invites a larger reckoning: what has his tenure changed, and at what cost?

Narendra Modi turned 76 on September 17th, and the BJP has converted the date into a month-long liturgy. The Seva Sankalp Abhiyan, launched on the birthday and running to October 17, pairs blood donation camps and cleanliness drives with bike yatras linking Vadnagar, his birthplace, to Varanasi, his constituency. The arithmetic behind the campaign is real: on October 7, he completes 25 years as a head of government - Gandhinagar from 2001, New Delhi since 2014. An unbroken quarter-century in executive office is rare in any democracy. Rarer still is the scale on which one man has rewritten the terms of a nation's politics. The ledger has substantial entries. Bank accounts, cooking gas, toilets, piped water and houses reached households that had waited three generations for the state to notice them. Digital public infrastructure - Aadhaar, UPI, direct benefit transfer - turned welfare from patronage into plumbing, and is now studied from Lagos to Lima.

Highways, ports and airports were built at a pace the licence-permit republic could not imagine. Article 370, the Ram temple, Chandrayaan-3, the G20 presidency and Operation Sindoor supplied the emotional grammar of a self-assured India. The economy grew 7.8 per cent in April-June, the fastest of any major economy, through a tariff war that was supposed to break it. In May, the BJP took West Bengal and a third term in Assam.

However, there have been gaps as well. Growth has not translated into work: unemployment among graduates under 25 runs near 40 per cent, and a quarter of India's youth are neither studying, training nor employed. Parliament legislates with less debate than it did in 1952. Investigative agencies move with a partisanship the opposition calls persecution, and the Election Commission's roll revisions have drawn charges the ECI has failed to convincingly answer. Federalism has shrunk to an argument over transfers.

Polarisation has been an instrument rather than an accident, and minorities have been at the receiving end. Demonetisation remains the costliest experiment no one has been held accountable for. Then came June. A satirical outfit calling itself the Cockroach Janta Party turned an exam-leak scandal into the largest youth mobilisation in decades, and a government famous for never conceding, conceded - a minister resigned, demands were met, a task force was announced. It was the first genuine retreat since the farm laws. It exposed the single constituency that remains defiant: young Indians who have known no other prime minister and cannot find a job.

But then such challenges are part of the deal. What occupies him now? Viksit Bharat 2047 is the stated horizon. The nearer list is harder - closing the American trade agreement without surrendering agriculture; the 2027 census and the delimitation that follows, which risks setting a growing North against an already resentful South; and the succession he refuses to discuss, the seventy-five rule he once applied to Advani having quietly lapsed for himself. Longevity is not legacy. The question at 76 is whether the coming years are spent consolidating what he built, or making it survivable without him.

The NE borders need eyes in the sky

The Northeast's borders cannot always be secured with fences. Shifting rivers, porous terrain and difficult frontiers demand something more agile: space-based surveillance that can turn satellite data into timely, actionable and legally usable intelligence. Assam's experience shows why the next frontier of border security is not more fencing, but faster information



BHASKAR
JYOTI
MAHANTA

In a riverine char (sandbar) of the Dhubri sector, perhaps 400 families might live in one season, but by the next season, it could be completely obliterated. The Brahmaputra creates and destroys land at its own will. When the char disappears, the families move away, and with them, the border too changes. This is the actual functional reality of approximately 61 kilometres of Assam's border with Bangladesh, where electronic surveillance has to be adopted instead of fencing, because there is no hard soil there to erect a fence. You cannot put a fence in water. You can only monitor it.

I was reminded of this while chairing a recent discussion organised by SIA-India in Guwahati on 'Space Technology for National Security and Border Protection'. This panel included a former Army Commander of the Eastern Theatre, a senior telecom administrator and scientist, a national security expert, and representatives of two new Indian satellite-manufacturing enterprises - institutions that did not exist a decade ago.

Assam has approximately 263 kilometres of border with Bangladesh, a large portion of which is riverine. To our east, we have a 1,643-kilometre border with Myanmar, where governmental authority has largely collapsed, and the resulting drug economy fuels insurgency. To our north, we have a neighbouring country that refuses to recognise Arunachal Pradesh as Indian and has established 628 border villages near the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the majority of which are located opposite Arunachal. And this country plans to construct a dam on a river upon which 70 million Indian people depend.

Three borders, three distinct problems. Our difficulty is not a lack of military strength. Our primary problem is 'latency' - that is, the time gap between an event occurring on the ground and the right person becoming aware of it. This is where aerospace or space technology becomes necessary.

What would remain if space-based communications, navigation and imaging technologies were disrupted for 72 hours in the Eastern Theatre? If the adversary is using state-of-the-art satellite systems and we revert to older methods in an eventuality, the enemy won't even need to defeat us; rather, we ourselves would be handing them the initiative.

Satellite-derived information today is neither intelligence nor evidence for a police officer. In the sense an operational officer understands it, it is not intelligence, because intelligence must arrive in a timely manner and have someone



ASSAM HAS APPROXIMATELY 263 KILOMETRES OF BORDER WITH BANGLADESH, A LARGE PORTION OF WHICH IS RIVERINE. TO OUR EAST, WE HAVE A 1,643-KILOMETRE BORDER WITH MYANMAR, WHERE GOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY HAS LARGELY COLLAPSED, AND THE RESULTING DRUG ECONOMY FUELS INSURGENCY

The writer is a former DGP of Assam

operational domain. The Indian Space Policy of 2023 and IN-SPaCe opened this sector to private-sector capabilities, and 52 satellite surveillance programmes are currently underway. A decade ago, none of this was clear. But for reaching the 'last mile', the robust management of institutional rules and procedures is essential. Two mishaps this year make this clear:

In January, due to a launch failure, a DRDO Earth observation system was lost.

Two months after entering orbit, a historic Indian private satellite (the world's first to combine radar and optical sensors) was destroyed due to a geomagnetic storm.

Self-reliance is not just the ability to build a satellite once; it is the ability to rapidly replace new satellites, coupled with indigenous launch speed, domestic hardware and procurement processes completed in 90 days instead of 90 weeks.

What should this region do?

The Northeastern states should issue a standing order by allocating budgets for all-weather radar coverage of rivers and flood-prone areas from Indian satellites. For this necessary platform for geo-stationary satellites/constellations must be put in place. Demand builds an industrial base, and at the state level, 'self-reliance' begins with a purchase order for satellite products.

Leverage Existing Infrastructure: Instead of building a new centre from scratch, work upon the existing mechanism. The North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), based in Umiam, is already serving these eight states; provide it with a border-and-disaster wing operated jointly by the state police, border security forces and disaster management teams.

Build a Geospatial Cadre: Develop our own analysts and commentators through a geospatial cadre trained in our own institutions, because sovereignty depends equally on people as it does on hardware. Enforce Sovereign Contracts: Incorporate sovereignty conditions into contracts; there should be no 'shutter control', no geographical restrictions, or any such conditions that give a foreign supplier the authority to dictate what and when we see.

The satellite surveillance system that exposes illegal infiltration or crossing can also reveal the condition of river embankments and the likelihood of breaches. The same imagery that serves border agencies in January can assist District Commissioners (DCs) in August. In a state where floods render more people homeless every year than any enemy attack could, this is not a minor facility to be mentioned in passing. The necessity of satellites in the Northeast should not only be proven in a 'war room'; it should also be considered an integral part of wartime preparations to be undertaken during the monsoon season.

Daiv Vani

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

The Boy Who Won by Staying Home

Once, Ganesha and his brother Kartikeya were challenged to a race around the world, with the prize going to whoever completed the circuit first. Kartikeya immediately set off on his peacock, eager to cover every continent and ocean.

Ganesha, instead, simply walked around his parents, Shiva and Parvati, seated together, and declared himself finished, explaining that they represented the entire universe to him, making a literal journey around the world unnecessary. His parents, moved by the depth of his understanding, declared him the winner.

We often equate achievement with distance covered, hours logged, or effort visibly displayed, mistaking motion for meaning. Ganesha's wisdom lay in recognizing that some truths do not require circling the globe to be understood, only clarity about what truly matters.

We chase external milestones, promotions, recognition, achievements, believing they will bring us closer to fulfilment, while overlooking the people and truths already within our reach.

Today, pause and ask whether what you're chasing is truly necessary, or whether what matters most is already present, closer than you think.

-DAIV

When community ends at the gate



SANJAY
CHANDRA

2ND OPINION

We recently attended a few Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations at the homes of friends in our condominium complex. Tower lobbies were buzzing with people in their best ethnic wear, carrying offerings for Lord Ganesh. At one home, our host had invited a flautist friend, who rendered a few bhajans on his flute. These intimate gatherings also allowed guests to mingle. Such gatherings at home are, of course, nothing new. What made me think was something else. The larger community celebration itself appears to be changing. Increasingly, in our urban centres, it seems to be moving from the wider neighbourhood into gated residential complexes. I remember that the only large community celebration during my childhood was the Ram Leela, held on whichever was the biggest available ground in the neighbourhood. Much later, I witnessed the Durga Puja

pandals in the east, Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations in the west and Dussehra festivities in the south. Beyond their religious and cultural significance, they performed another function. Minor acquaintances, or even strangers, bumped into each other. Conversations began. Some developed into lifelong relationships. There were no gates defining who belonged to that community.

Urban living has changed since then. High-rise condominium complexes have created neighbourhoods of their own, comprising hundreds or thousands of families. Almost everything we need is available within the boundaries. Groceries and meals arrive at our doors. There are shops, clubs, gyms and play areas. We want entertainment within the complex and, increasingly, even religious places and festivities within walking distance of our homes.

Convenience is undoubtedly a part of this change. Security is another. After a tiring day, few of us want to travel across the city for something that can be found downstairs. But I sometimes wonder whether, without consciously intending it, we are also shrinking the boundaries of what we consider our community. The neighbourhood once extended beyond the people we knew. A festival took us into public spaces where we encountered people from different backgrounds and circumstances. Today, the gates of a condominium can quietly determine whom we meet, whom our children play with and, increasingly, whom we celebrate with.

Digital technology may be reinforcing this tendency in another way. Residential groups allow us to communicate

instantly and have made community management far easier. But they have also given everyone the ability to critique virtually every decision immediately. Resident welfare associations can consequently find themselves trying to accommodate every demand and appease every section, forgetting that this is rarely possible. The discussion then becomes increasingly about what should or should not happen inside our gates.

None of this means that condominium communities are undesirable. They provide companionship, security and a sense of familiarity that is valuable in increasingly impersonal cities. Nor is there anything wrong with celebrating festivals within them. The issue is whether these communities are becoming substitutes for the wider neighbourhood rather than a part of it. Perhaps the change is subtle enough for us not to notice. The neighbourhood becomes the condominium, the condominium becomes the tower, and gradually our social world begins to end at the gate.

I enjoyed those intimate Ganesh Chaturthi evenings immensely. Yet they left me with a question quite unrelated to the celebrations themselves. Are the gates around our homes also slowly becoming gates around our idea of community? And if everything we need - social, cultural, recreational and even religious - must increasingly come within those gates, are we developing an exclusivity without even recognising it?

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bamboo can build a greener future

As we approach World Bamboo Day on September 18, it is time to recognise a remarkable plant that holds immense cultural and ecological value. Known variously as 'green gold' and 'poor man's timber', bamboo is an environmental powerhouse, with over 1,500 species capable of thriving across diverse climates.

Globally, bamboo is deeply woven into human traditions, symbolising uprightness in China, friendship in India, prosperity in Japan, and standing proudly as the national plant of St Lucia.

Economically, China leads global production, closely followed by India. Beyond traditional uses such as construction, paper and furniture, bamboo serves as food, medicine, musical instruments, martial arts equipment and even a medium for seawater desalination. More importantly, it is a vital ally in combating climate change. Bamboo absorbs carbon dioxide, improves soil health and prevents erosion.

To fully harness these benefits, institutions such as India's Forest Research Centre for Bamboo & Rattan (FRCBR), established in Aizawl, Mizoram, in 2004, are leading crucial research into sustainable cultivation. Promoting bamboo is not just an ecological choice; it is an economic necessity for a truly greener tomorrow.

M PRADYU | KANNUR

Celebrating service through action

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday on September 17 has been accompanied by several programmes centred on public service and social welfare. Across the country, activities related to cleanliness, health, voluntary service and community participation are being organised. Such initiatives provide an opportunity to draw attention to issues that directly affect everyday life.

The observance also coincides with the nationwide Swachhata Hi Seva campaign, which seeks to encourage citizens to participate in cleanliness drives and improve public spaces. Special attention to sanitation workers is another important aspect of the programme. Clean surroundings require regular public participation and cannot be achieved through government efforts alone.

Service-oriented activities such as blood-donation drives and community programmes can encourage citizens, particularly young people, to contribute to society. Participation by students, voluntary organisations and local communities can also strengthen awareness of civic duties and social responsibility.

Their impact should extend beyond the celebrations. Sustained attention to cleanliness, public health and community service can give greater meaning to public service.

RUKMA SHARMA | JALANDHAR

Youth campaign takes aim at UP

"Uttar Pradesh, once known for its culture, struggle and unity, has today become identified with hatred and bulldozers," AISA president Neha Bora said in a speech in Lucknow on Wednesday, September 16, launching a fresh attack on the Yogi Adityanath government as her 'Gen Z Rising' campaign drew a large gathering of young people. Bora's remarks came at a programme at Gandhi Bhawan, where the sizeable gathering raised slogans in her support. Her campaign, which began at Allahabad University last month, has travelled through several districts and is now seeking to build wider youth mobilisation across the state.

Bora has emerged as one of the more visible young voices directly challenging the state government through the campaign. The campaign is also attempting to move beyond campus politics by taking up wider issues concerning young people, including education, employment and governance.

Its progress through different districts is aimed at creating a network that can sustain the mobilisation beyond individual programmes. The campaign's focus on youth participation reflects an effort to bring education, employment and governance into broader public discussion.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

PICTALK



Priests perform 'abhishek' during the Maha Kumbabishekam ceremony, of the renowned Sri Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple, in Madurai

PHOTO: PTI

Delhi’s unsafe buildings: Disaster is round the corner

Delhi’s recurring building collapses expose gaps in enforcement, emergency access and disaster preparedness. The article argues for identifying high-risk structures, strengthening safety regulations, using technology for monitoring, and training local communities so that disasters can be prevented rather than managed afterwards



SATENDRA SINGH

A building has collapsed in Satya Niketan, there have been casualties, and rescue operations are on in full swing. But soon enough, as always happens in such situations, debris will be cleared and media attention will shift to something else. However, what needs to be asked is: “Does the risk apply only to the collapsing building, or does it also involve all the other buildings which still stand strong?”

In case another building were to collapse, or in case another fire or earthquake were to occur in this area, would Delhi’s emergency services machinery be able to respond in time to save those caught inside? This is precisely what went through my mind when I visited Satya Niketan after the last incident. What I saw was very disturbing indeed: densely populated buildings, narrow pathways which appear to be obstructed, and no open ground where fire engines, ambulances or any other emergency vehicle can rush to the spot. The tragedy, thus, may not just be one of a collapsed building but much more than that.

Building collapses, fires and other disasters of the kind have been happening too frequently in our national capital. From our analysis of several such disasters in the past that took place in the Delhi/NCR region, we know that the same story keeps repeating itself — the lack of authorisation in construction, alterations in the structure, extra floors, poor-quality materials, overcrowding, lack of fire safety measures and, most importantly, the failure of enforcement. While each such incident brings about shock, statements from politicians, investigations and promises, the truth is that the risk does not stay confined to the particular structure.

The issue is not that there are not enough rules in Delhi. There are the Unified Building Bye-Laws, the Fire Safety Regulations, the Planning Provisions and the Disaster Management Act. There are municipal corporations, development authorities, fire services and other organisations charged with responsibility for the respective urban security issues. However, the frequent emergencies demonstrate a critical lack of correlation between the written laws and their enforcement. It may happen that a construction begins without appropriate permission, a building is given extra floors, a residence is turned into a business place, or structural modifications are done without the necessary technical assessment. Sometimes, complaints have been filed and notices have been sent, but there is no effective reaction. The outcome is a dangerous situation in which the private gain from hazardous construction is achieved by a few individuals, while the threat itself is faced by residents, students, neighbours, firefighters and the whole community.

The problem is much more acute in crowded areas. A building may look sturdy under ordinary circumstances, but could become highly susceptible under the effect of fire, rain, an earthquake or any such sudden impact. Narrow alleys or crowded roads could exacerbate the situation. An emergency vehicle such as a fire engine, an ambulance or heavy machinery would not be able to access the building in time. If there are no available exits, or stairways are insufficient or crowded, then even a minor incident could cause a catastrophe. The crucial minutes at the beginning are those that could be lost because of a lack of proper planning and preparation.

This is precisely why Delhi needs to shift gears from the reactive mode to the preventive mode. Emergency operations are required but should not be the primary means to address the problem of unsafe buildings. It is impossible to fix an unsafe building by conducting a better rescue operation once people get stuck inside. What needs to be done is to pinpoint the potential risk areas prior to any accident. High-risk buildings and clusters of high-risk populations need to be identified and tested for structural soundness and fire safety standards. Defective buildings will need to be either fixed, strengthened, modified or even demolished. These assessments should not degenerate into just another paperwork exercise. There has to be accountability and timeliness attached to



SATYA NIKETAN IS NOT MERELY AN EXAMPLE OF YET ANOTHER COLLAPSE; IT IS ALSO A REMINDER OF THE TYPE OF URBAN GROWTH WE ARE SEEING IN DELHI. THE CITY CANNOT AFFORD TO ACCEPT HAZARDOUS BUILDINGS AS A PART AND PARCEL OF URBAN GROWTH. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SAFETY ARE TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT CONCERNS; IN TRUTH, THERE CAN NEVER BE ANY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT STRUCTURAL AND FIRE SAFETY MEASURES

The writer is Former Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management, Government of India

them. These processes can become more streamlined with the use of technology. Plans and permissions granted for construction must be digitised and easily verifiable. Any construction that violates the approved plan must attract an immediate inspection. Where negligence can be proven, liability must extend beyond the owner of the property to include the approving agencies, among others. Enforcement cannot be selective or based on the level of media interest after an accident.

But there is one more aspect that cannot be neglected - the community. In every disaster situation, local residents become the first responders. Before the arrival of fire services, policemen, ambulances or any rescue team, local residents may be involved in rescuing people, giving first aid, informing the services about the situation and finding out who could still be trapped. Their reaction in the initial minutes of a disaster can determine whether people will survive. But the preparations of communities to respond to disaster situations in most vulnerable localities remain mostly informal and disorganised.

Thus, Delhi needs to build the capacities of community-based organisations, local residents, volunteers, market associations and other local networks in disaster-prone areas. They do not need much equipment in the beginning. What they require is some basic training in evacuation, first aid, dealing with fires, emergency communications, identification of vulnerable people and coordination with services such as policemen, firemen and health professionals. They should practise emergency drills in schools, markets, residential colonies and other crowded places. Volunteers should be aware of the emergency numbers, access roads and safe assembly points in their area. This is a relatively inexpensive but effective measure.

The government should not only focus on individual buildings but also consider neighbourhood risks. In cases where new high-density developments and activities need to take place, the local authorities should consider some very basic questions: Can emergency vehicles reach the building? Are there any safe means of evacuation? Can firefighters go up the floors in case of an emergency? Are the buildings strong enough to withstand the stress? What will happen if more than one building is affected in the event of an earthquake or fire?

Satya Niketan is not merely an example of yet another collapse; it is also a reminder of the type of urban growth we are seeing in Delhi. The city cannot afford to accept hazardous buildings as a part and parcel of urban growth. Economic growth and safety are two entirely different concerns; in truth, there can never be any economic development without structural and fire safety measures.

Disaster readiness is not about how quickly we manage to rescue people from a collapsed building; it is about preventing a disaster before the collapse. Satya Niketan should not end up being another entry on Delhi’s list of tragic stories. It should be a lesson that results in change. The next building should not collapse before we find out its dangerous condition.

India’s energy transition: Managing redistribution



JAY GANESH PANDEY

GOPAL K SARANGI

India’s energy transition discourse is often portrayed as a singular shift away from a fossil-centric energy regime towards a low-carbon energy system. In reality, it is a far more complex transformation, dynamically unfolding across resources, technologies, industries, markets and regulations. Coal is being gradually replaced (and often supplemented) by solar and wind; internal combustion engines are giving way to electric mobility; centralised electricity systems are evolving towards distributed,

decentralised energy systems; industries are adopting cleaner and more efficient production processes; and governance is shifting from state-led planning towards competitive markets, private finance and carbon-based investment mechanisms.

Policy instruments for renewable energy have also undergone a profound transformation, from historical incentive structures such as accelerated depreciation (AD) and generation-based incentives (GBI) to feed-in tariffs and, more recently, market-determined reverse auctions. However, these transition pathways are disruptive in nature, often dismantling existing fossil-based supply-chain architectures and forging new supply-chain linkages. For instance, India’s existing energy regime is slowly and systematically becoming disconnected from fossil-heavy energy pathways, shifting towards low-carbon options such as moving from coal to renewables, from traditional cooking fuels to modern cooking options, and from diesel-based irrigation facilities to solar PV-based irrigation systems. At the same time, new linkages are being established in many distinct ways, such as through the electrification of transport systems using electric vehicles (EVs), sourcing critical minerals for batteries, and forging new resource linkages for green hydrogen systems.

Each of these transition pathways, while generating new opportunities for economic growth and climate action, also disrupts socio-economic structures and functions by redistributing costs, risks and benefits across workers, communities, firms and regions. These effects appear in the form of both first-order and second-order impacts, often conceptualised as implementation risks and consequential risks.

Effects of the transition

The first-order effects of India’s energy transition are relatively visible, direct and immediate. They arise directly from changes in resources, technologies, policies and markets. When coal production declines, miners, contract workers, transporters, coal-bearing districts and state governments dependent on mining royalties face immediate socio-economic losses. Around 13 million workers are tied to the coal value chain in India and are expected to bear the brunt eventually. In the same vein, such a shift in resources from fuels to metals could generate stranded assets. Estimates suggest that close to 10 per cent of new coal units in India will remain unused by 2030. Conversely, renewable energy developers, equipment manufacturers, financial institutions, technology providers and regions endowed with high solar and wind potential become the primary beneficiaries of new investment flows. The more consequential risks often emerge as second-order effects that unfold over time. The loss of coal-based livelihoods can weaken local economies, reduce public revenues and trigger migration, potentially disturbing existing local economic structures. Meanwhile, renewable investments may generate jobs in different regions and require entirely different skill sets, potentially widening regional inequalities. Battery energy storage systems require adequate supplies of scarce critical minerals, which are largely imported by India. This could aggravate supply-security risks for a country like India. The production of green hydrogen is contingent upon a continuous supply of green energy, adequate supplies of pure water and other associated resources, which are again either inadequate or scarce. Competing demands for such resources could generate negative spillover effects for India if not managed well.



Managing the redistribution

As the energy transition is fundamentally a redistribution of economic value, policy must focus beyond carbon accounting towards distributional governance. The redistribution is not limited to income; it encompasses employment, investment, public revenues, assets, economic opportunities and transition risks. These are likely to shift across sectors, regions and communities. A robust institutional framework is therefore required to assess not only the aggregate impacts of the transition, but also their magnitude, distribution and incidence. Given that coal still accounts for around 70 per cent of India’s electricity generation, it is also important to mainstream distributional impact assessments into energy policymaking, ensuring that the economic winners and losers of major energy reforms are identified before implementation. Coal also makes significant contributions to the government’s exchequer. In 2024-25, coal mining generated around `110 lakh crore in royalties, DMF, NMET, GST, coal cess and other payments. A transition benefit-sharing framework needs to be developed that channels a part of clean-energy dividends into coal-dependent regions through investments in economic diversification, skills, social protection and local infrastructure.

Equally important is investing in people rather than just projects by supporting reskilling, local enterprises and regional supply chains so that transition benefits remain embedded within affected communities.

History reminds us that no great economic transformation has ever been neutral. When factories replaced farms during the Industrial Revolution, prosperity grew, but so did inequalities. When India liberalised its economy in 1991, new industries flourished, cities expanded and millions found opportunities, while others struggled to adapt to a rapidly changing marketplace. India’s clean-energy transition is writing the next chapter of that story. It promises cleaner air, energy security and new economic opportunities. Its success will ultimately be measured not only in gigawatts installed or tonnes of carbon avoided, but also by whether the prosperity it creates is as widely shared as the climate benefits it delivers.

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BRICS Summit success reflects India’s rising global leadership



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

decisive leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, under whose guidance India has increasingly emerged as a confident and constructive voice on the world stage.

Held under the theme “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability”, the summit brought together leaders of the expanded BRICS grouping at a time when the world is facing geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, technological disruption and growing challenges to multilateral cooperation. The adoption of the New Delhi Declaration by consensus was one of the most significant outcomes of the summit and a strong endorsement of India’s leadership. The success becomes even more significant considering the diversity of the expanded BRICS grouping. Its members have different political systems, economic structures, strategic interests and regional priorities. Bringing such a diverse group together around a common agenda requires sustained dialogue, mutual respect and the ability

to build consensus. India demonstrated precisely these qualities during its chairship.

Prime Minister Modi has consistently advocated a foreign policy based on dialogue, cooperation and strategic autonomy. This approach was clearly visible during the BRICS Summit. Rather than allowing differences among member countries to overshadow areas of common interest, India focused on practical cooperation in areas that directly affect the lives and livelihoods of people.

The scale of India’s BRICS chairship itself underlines the seriousness with which the country approached the responsibility. More than 400 meetings and engagements were held across 30 cities, involving ministers, parliamentarians, officials, experts, businesses and civil society representatives. The wide geographical spread of these engagements helped take BRICS beyond a leaders-only platform and brought different sections of society into the process.

A particularly important aspect of India’s leadership was its emphasis on the Global South. India has repeatedly argued that developing and emerging economies must have a stronger voice in institutions of global governance. The New Delhi Declaration reaffirmed the BRICS commitment to greater representation of emerging markets and developing countries in global decision-making structures. It also called for reforms in institutions such as the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO.

This is consistent with Prime Minister Modi’s



broader vision of India as a bridge between developed and developing nations. India’s own development experience gives it credibility when it speaks about digital inclusion, financial inclusion, technology, sustainable development and affordable solutions for developing societies.

Economic cooperation was a major pillar of the summit. Under India’s chairship, BRICS advanced work on the Economic Partnership Strategy 2030, resilient global value chains and greater economic cooperation. Discussions on cross-border payments and local currencies also continued.

India’s emphasis on innovation was equally significant. Technology and science are increasingly important to economic competitiveness and social development. The summit placed innovation, science and technology at the heart of BRICS cooperation, including emerging technologies and knowledge sharing.

particularly important in maintaining India’s ability to engage simultaneously with countries that may have competing interests. India’s approach has been to keep channels of dialogue open, protect national interests and seek areas where cooperation is possible. This balanced diplomacy has enhanced India’s credibility as an independent and reliable partner.

The New Delhi Summit therefore represents more than the successful hosting of an international event. It is a reflection of India’s changing place in the world. The fact that BRICS leaders specifically commended India’s 2026 chairship and expressed gratitude to the Government and people of India for hosting the summit is an important recognition of the country’s stewardship.

The summit has also strengthened the idea that the Global South need not remain merely an observer in the making of the international

order. India has increasingly sought to ensure that developing nations have a meaningful voice in discussions on global finance, trade, technology, climate change, development and international security. For Prime Minister Modi, the successful BRICS Summit is another milestone in India’s continuing diplomatic journey. His emphasis on consensus, cooperation, innovation and inclusive development has helped India project itself as a country willing to shoulder greater responsibility in global affairs. The message from New Delhi is clear: India is no longer simply responding to changes in the international system; it is increasingly helping shape the conversation about its future.

The successful conclusion of the BRICS Summit, the unanimous adoption of the New Delhi Declaration, the extensive programme conducted during India’s chairship and the broad agenda covering economic growth, technology, sustainable development and Global South cooperation together make the summit a significant achievement. It is, above all, a testament to India’s growing diplomatic confidence and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership at a time when the world needs greater dialogue, cooperation and trust.

The New Delhi Summit has strengthened India’s position as a key voice of the Global South and as an important force in building a more balanced, inclusive and cooperative global order.

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Order Order

SC asks medical body to explain delay in stipend

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the National Medical Commission to submit an affidavit and explain why the stipend to foreign medical graduates is not being given in some colleges.

A bench comprising Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M Pancholi also asked the Rajasthan Government to disperse the stipend to students within two weeks.

The top court warned that in case of non-compliance, the state secretary will be summoned to the court.

During the hearing, advocate Tanvi Dubey, appearing for the petitioners, submitted a chart stating that there are certain colleges which are not paying any stipend to the foreign medical graduates.

She further submitted that there is a circular of the National Medical Commission (NMC) itself which provides that there has to be parity between the Indian and foreign medical graduates.

However, despite that, there is no parity in most of the states when it comes to payment of stipend to the foreign and Indian medical graduates while they are doing the same kind of duties and putting in the same kind of hours.

The top court has now posted the matter for hearing after two weeks. The NMC had earlier informed the top court that seven out of 756 medical colleges have not been paying stipends to interns, junior residents or senior residents, and show-cause notices have been issued to them. (PTI)

Kiran Bedi moves Delhi HC in building collapse case

Retired IPS officer Kiran Bedi on Thursday approached the Delhi High Court seeking to be made a party in a matter concerning the collapse of a hostel building in Satya Niketan that left seven people dead.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma, appearing for the Centre, Delhi Government and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), however, opposed Bedi's application and sought time to file objections. "What reply will you file? She is a conscientious citizen of the country. She has administrative experience. The matter is in larger public interest," a bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia told the law officer.

The bench said that Bedi, who also served as the lieutenant governor of Puducherry, was seeking to intervene in the case only to assist the court and her "long experience" could always be utilised.

ASG Sharma submitted that while he held Bedi in "great esteem", her application seeking intervention demonstrated that she was "pre-judging" the matter in which the authorities were yet to file status reports.

Asking them not to view it adversarially, the court gave the authorities three days to file their replies to Bedi's plea and listed it for hearing along with the main matter on September 25. The building at Satya Niketan, which housed a boys' paying-guest accommodation near the Delhi University's South Campus, collapsed on September 6 while repair work was underway. Seven people died in the collapse, while several others were injured. On September 7, the high court ordered a high-level MCD inquiry into the building collapse and made it clear that the Government cannot evade responsibility. (PTI)

Graham Staines murder case: Rejected convict Dara Singh's remission plea, Odisha tells SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New delhi

The Odisha Government on Thursday told the Supreme Court that it has rejected the remission plea of Ravindra Pal alias Dara Singh, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of Australian missionary Graham Stuart Staines and his two minor sons in 1999.

"You take whatever grounds you want to take to challenge it. Amend your petition and then argue," a bench of Justices Manoj Misra and Vijay Bishnoi told the counsel appearing for Singh.

The bench noted that a copy of the August 31 order rejecting the remission plea has been supplied to Singh's counsel.

The counsel representing the petitioner (Singh) prays for and is allowed two weeks to file an appropriate amendment application," the bench said, while posting the matter after three weeks.

At the outset, the counsel



appearing for the Odisha Government told the bench that the state has rejected Singh's remission plea.

The top court had earlier pulled up the Odisha Government for not taking a decision on Singh's remission plea. Singh, 63, has been in jail for more than 25 years.

He approached the top court in 2024 seeking premature release on the ground that he had served over 24 years in jail and "repented" for his action taken in a fit of "youthful rage".

In his plea, Singh said he



SC suggests 3-language policy from class 6

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the CBSE to consider implementing its policy mandating the study of three languages, including two native Indian languages, for Class 6 students from the next academic session starting 2027.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), represented by Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, told the bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joydalya Bagchi and V Mohana that it would consider the suggestion. Justice Bagchi, at the outset, said that just to comfort the children, the CBSE should

consider deferring the implementation of the three-language policy from the next academic year.

If the students, who are in Class 6 at present, want to study three languages from this year, they can also be allowed, Justice Bagchi added.

The law officer said that the CBSE would consider the suggestion and come back with a fresh note on the issue.

The bench said its suggestions were without prejudice to the rights and contentions of the parties and the real issues may be decided later.

Earlier, the Centre and the CBSE told the bench that they were working on its suggestions on implementing the policy mandating the study of three languages, including



two native Indian languages, for Class 6 students.

On May 27, the top court agreed to examine a plea challenging the policy and issued notices to the Centre, the CBSE and the NCERT seeking their responses.

According to a circular issued by the CBSE, the study

of three languages, including at least two native Indian languages, has been made compulsory for Class 9 students beginning July 1.

"Every student in Class 9 would study three languages. Out of the three languages, at least two would be Bhartiya Bhashas. Examples of Bhartiya

Bhashas: Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati, Odia, Assamese, etc. Examples of non-native languages: English, French, German, Arabic, Spanish, etc.," the CBSE had said in its statement.

Two Indian languages have been made mandatory for Class 6, with some relaxations for Classes 7, 8 and 9 students, who were studying two non-native languages.

The move is part of the CBSE's alignment of its scheme of studies with the National Education Policy-2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education-2023.

According to the circular issued on May 15, students

opting for a foreign language may do so only as the third language after studying two native Indian languages, or as an additional fourth language.

"With effect from July 1, 2026, for Class 9, the study of three languages (R1, R2, R3) shall be compulsory, with at least two languages being native Indian languages," the circular said.

The board said till the dedicated R3 textbooks are available, Class 9 students shall use Class 6 R3 textbooks (2026-27 edition) of the chosen language. The CBSE said that to keep the focus on learning and reduce any undue pressure on students, no board examination shall be conducted for R3 at the Class 10 level.

Former Keralam DGP sentenced to four years' RI in disproportionate assets case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Kottayam (Keralam)

A court on Thursday sentenced former state DGP Tomin J Thachankary to four years of rigorous imprisonment in a case related to amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income.

This is the first case in Keralam in which an officer of DGP rank has been sentenced for possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income, according to reports.

Kottayam Vigilance Court judge K V Rajanish found Thachankary guilty under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The court also imposed a fine of `30.84 lakh on the former IPS officer. The court ordered Thachankary to be shifted to Poojapura Central Jail in Thiruvananthapuram where he can approach the Kerala High Court with an appeal against the verdict.

During the final hearing, Thachankary requested that the court consider his health condition while pronouncing the sentence. The prosecution, however, submitted that no leniency should be shown



considering the post he had held. As many as 96 prosecution witnesses and 271 documents were examined during the trial, while 23 defence witnesses were examined and 55 defence documents were marked.

The Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (VACB) Special Cell, Ernakulam, had registered the case against Thachankary for allegedly amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income.

According to the prosecution, the VACB investigation found expenditure amounting to `64.70 lakh for which Thachankary could not account for corresponding sources of income.

The investigation team

found that he had allegedly acquired assets `135.80 per cent in excess of his known sources of income during the period between 2003 and 2007.

Vigilance Public Prosecutor K K Sreekanth appeared for the prosecution in the case.

"It is a serious crime that a high-ranking police officer, who is bound to protect the life and property of the public, illegally acquired wealth in this manner," Sreekanth said. He welcomed the verdict. "At this moment, this verdict is most favourable to the prosecution. Further actions will be decided in the coming days in consultation with the Vigilance Director," he said.

He said that all the contention of the prosecution was accepted by the court.

"Today's ruling further proves that no matter how high-ranking an officer is, they are bound by the law under the Vigilance. Equal justice for everyone," he said.

Bobby Kuruvilla and Alexander Kuruvilla, the complainants in the disproportionate assets case against Thachankary said they were satisfied with the verdict.

SC expresses shock over deaths in relief camps for IDPs in Manipur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New delhi

Expressing shock over scores of deaths in relief camps meant for the internally displaced persons (IDPs), the Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Manipur chief secretary to apprise it of the steps taken to probe, initiate criminal proceedings and ensure the safety of those living there.

Cautioning the top bureaucrat of the state, a bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and justices Joydalya Bagchi and V Mohana asked why no significant steps were taken on the information provided by the Justice Gita Mittal committee relating to deaths, including unnatural ones, of IDPs in relief camps.

"We direct the chief secretary of Manipur to file an affidavit on deaths, especially unnatural deaths, at relief camps in Manipur," the bench said in the order and asked why postmortems were conducted in 20 out of 34 death cases.

"The state is also obliged to explain as to why only `20,000-30,000 as compen-



sation was paid to internally displaced persons who met with unnatural deaths while sheltered in relief camps," the bench said.

It also directed the Manipur State Legal Services Authority (MSLSA) to file a separate status report on the issue. The CJ asked the MSLSA to see that FIRs are registered in all the unnatural death cases.

The bench also asked the MSLSA to see that the FIRs are investigated expeditiously and the safety of internally displaced persons staying in relief camps, besides their dignity, is ensured.

The order came from the bench after it perused the reports of the Justice Mittal committee and an IAS

officer that there had been more than 30 deaths in the relief camps in Manipur and one of the deaths occurred following alleged sexual assault.

Besides, the bench expressed hope that the two special trial courts, set up to exclusively hear CBI and NIA cases arising from the 2023 ethnic violence in Manipur, will conclude their trials expeditiously.

Referring to reports, the bench said the details of the cases have been provided to the legal services counsel, and the petitioner victims can avail them for pursuing their matters.

It also noted that the details were provided by the state Government and Dattatray Padsalgikar, a former IPS officer who is monitoring the probe by the CBI in Manipur violence cases.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the CBI and the state Government, said the federal probe agency has investigated 31 cases, with final reports filed in 28.

She said three CBI cases are still being investigated.

Patna HC quashes anti-social tags against two, orders compensation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New delhi

The Patna High Court has quashed the Bihar Government's branding of two persons as "anti-social elements" and restricting their movement, holding that the move had been taken without proper verification and directing the administration to pay a compensation of `1 lakh each to the men.

A division bench of Justices Rajeev Ranjan Prasad and Sunil Dutta Mishra, in an order dated September 11, also awarded `10,000 each for litigation costs.

The petitioners Shashi Kumar alias Fukan and Ajay Singh had challenged proceedings initiated against

them after the Nalanda superintendent of police recommended that they be noted as "anti-social elements" based on a report submitted by the Rajgir sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) during last year's assembly polls.

They contended that they had been falsely implicated in criminal cases and were already on bail. Cases under the Bihar Crime Control Act (BCCA) were registered, following which the Nalanda district magistrate issued show-cause notices to the petitioners on September 10, 2025 for appearing before competent authorities.

"It was further stated that the petitioners failed to submit any cogent material in



support of their defence before the DM, and accordingly, it was held that the free movement of the petitioners would cause problem to law and order in the locality," the court order said.

"We have noticed from the pattern of the order(s) passed by the DM, Nalanda that his orders are in the nature of cut-and-paste as similar kind of words and grounds have been men-

tioned in various orders which this court has/had occasion to go through. The DM passed similar kind of order in almost similar words which instantly gives us an impression that the orders have been passed with total non-application of judicious mind," the order added. It is evident that while issuing the show-cause notices or at the time of passing of the final orders, the DM has not gone through the definitions of the word "anti-social element", the court observed.

The DM had proceeded on "surmises and conjectures" that the petitioners might disturb law and order during the assembly elections, without material showing

that they had previously disturbed public order, it said.

The court also noted that the men had been ordered to mark their attendance at Silao police station, about 40 km away, thrice a week and had their movements restricted for three months.

It further observed that no verification report or other material had been produced to substantiate allegations recorded in the police diary.

The court said the SP, SDPO and SHO concerned had acted "in haste" without verifying the allegations and directed the state Government to recover the compensation and litigation costs from the erring officials after giving them an opportunity of hearing.

Change your mindset: SC asks Tamil Nadu to comply with direction to identify land for Navodaya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Tamil Nadu Government to comply with its December 2025 direction to identify land for establishing Navodaya Vidyalayas in each district of the state.

"There has to be cooperative federalism," a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih observed while hearing the Tamil Nadu Government's plea. "Tomorrow, if the central Government comes up with any policy in the Concurrent List and if each of the states start saying that I don't accept your policy, then what will happen to our federal structure," the bench observed.

The top court was hearing the state's plea challenging the Madras High Court's September 2017 directive to facilitate the establishment of Navodaya Vidyalaya in every district there.

The bench also asked the



state Government to change its mindset over the issue.

During the hearing, senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, appearing for Tamil Nadu, told the bench that an application has been filed for recall of the apex court's December 15, 2025 order.

In its December last year order, the top court had directed the state to identify the requisite extent of land that is necessary for establishing Navodaya Vidyalaya in each of its districts. It had said that the exercise be carried out within six weeks.

"We are not recalling that order," the bench observed on Thursday.

The bench noted that between December 15 and today, there has been a change in the Government in the state. "Be that as it may, we direct the petitioner state to comply with our order dated December 15, 2025 in so far as identification of the requisite extent of land that is necessary for establishing Navodaya Vidyalaya in each of the districts of the petitioner state," the bench said.

It said the direction is always subject to the result of the special leave petition filed by the state.

"In the circumstances, we grant the state Government three months time to comply

with the aforesaid direction," the bench said. It asked the representatives of the state and the Centre to have further discussion with regard to the establishment of these schools there.

During the hearing, the bench told the state's counsel, "Your mindset must first change. If you say I don't want Navodaya Schools because I don't want Hindi to be taught on the soil of Tamil Nadu..." Gupta said the state was not at all opposing study of Hindi in Tamil Nadu.

"There are substantive number of schools (in Tamil Nadu) where Hindi is taught," he said. Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, said the requirement of the state is only to provide land. "Rest everything will be taken care of by the central Government."

There will be no burden at all on the state Government," he said, adding that the issue regarding language policy can be worked out.

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BUSINESS

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Lock-in for chip plants announced

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Approved chip plants under the Semicon 2.0 programme will not be allowed to sell or mortgage any part of the project till the declaration of commercial production of the entire project, according to the scheme's guidelines issued on Thursday.

The government had notified Semicon 2.0 with an incentive outlay of `1.27 lakh crore. Till declaration of the commercial production of the entire project, the company shall not sell or dispose of the project assets or any part thereof or create thereon any mortgage, lien or charge by way of hypothecation or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of business, without prior approval of the Nodal Agency, the guideline said.

The scheme has six pillars to boost the semiconductor ecosystem in the country comprising — design, machines and materials, setting up more fabs, further strengthening the ATMP and OSAT industry, research and development and talent development.

Out of the six pillars, guidelines have been published for three pillars - machines and materials, setting up more fabs, further strengthening the ATMP and OSAT industry.

Applicants under the machines and materials pillar can also receive production-linked incentives (PLI) benefits under the scheme for domestic sourcing of components and sub-assemblies that are produced in India.

As per the guidelines, units receiving fiscal support under the scheme shall have to remain in commercial production for a period of at least (three) years from the date of commencement of commercial production of the entire project and provide an undertaking to the same.

Expenditure incurred on

land and its development, temporary structures, site offices, temporary office space, and other temporary facilities created at the project site will not be considered as eligible capital expenditure or investment under the scheme.

As per the norms, cost incurred for technology transfer, interest during construction (IDC), and research and development will not be considered as part of capital expenditure or investment under Semicon 2.0.

Applicant and promoter or group applying for the incentive under the scheme

should hold at least 51 per cent of the total equity share capital with equivalent voting rights in the project company at all times during the term of the fiscal support agreement (FSA), including its three years of operation after the commercial operation date.

The controlling entity must be identified at the application stage itself, and its continuity is a condition for continued fiscal support and fulfilment of other conditions as per the FSA. Any change in shareholding must be reported to the Nodal Agency during this period, the guidelines said.

RBI cancels registration of five NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday said it has cancelled the certificate of registration of five non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), according to a release.

Separately, the central bank said eight NBFCs have surrendered their licences due to various reasons, including exit from Non-Banking Financial Institution (NBFI) business.

The RBI has cancelled the licence of Dar's Financial Services, Rolta Holding and Finance Corporation, Vasudeo Securities, Parsoli Corporation, and A C Choksi Financial Services, as per the release. Further, Anupam Mercantile, Grand Motor and Finance, Sky Limit International Finance, and ASA International India Microfinance have surrendered their licence due to exit from NBFI business. Shivam Securities Pvt Ltd, and April Investment and Finance Pvt Ltd have surrendered their licence as they ceased to be a legal entity due to amalgamation/ merger/dissolution/ voluntary strike-off, the RBI said.

Coal ministry launches 16th round of commercial auctions

The coal ministry on Thursday launched the 16th round of commercial coal mine auctions inviting stakeholders to participate in the bidding of the blocks. In the latest round, the ministry has put 25 coal blocks on sale. Of these, 21 are fully explored and 4 partially explored mines spread over Odisha, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Bihar, Telangana and Arunachal Pradesh.

"We invite investors to participate in this round of auction. The new round has potential to generate huge employment and attract new investments into the sector," Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey said. Commercial coal mining was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020. Over the past six years, across 15 completed rounds, 147 coal mines have been successfully auctioned, bringing 44 new companies into the sector. The auctioned mines are expected to generate annual revenue of approximately `47,500 crore, attract capital investment of nearly `55,000 crore and create around 4.9 lakh employment opportunities across coal-bearing states.

Rupee settles 3 paise lower at 95.94 against US dollar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai

The rupee, which slipped below the 96 level in intraday trade, ended Thursday's session with a loss of just 3 paise at 95.94 (provisional) against the US dollar, paring initial losses on likely RBI intervention. The rupee ended almost flat amid a slight fall in the dollar index and crude oil prices, which supported investor sentiment despite global geopolitical volatility. According to forex analysts, the local currency, however, stayed under pressure due to outflows of foreign funds and global trade uncertainties after the House of Representatives cleared a law authorising President Donald Trump to impose up to a 100 per cent tariff on India and other countries importing Russian oil.

The domestic unit was also weighed down after the US Federal Reserve hiked interest rates for the first time in three years amid rising inflation, they

said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.88 and

hit the intraday low of 96.10, breaching the 96 level for the first time since July 24. The unit recovered during the session and touched the high of 95.78 before settling at 95.94 against the US dollar, 3 paise lower than the previous closing level. "The Indian rupee experienced a highly volatile trading session on Thursday, initially buckling under a hawkish Fed onslaught and weaker Asian currency sentiment.

However, those early losses proved fleeting as aggressive central bank intervention swooped in with heavy-handed dollar defence, pulling the local unit off the canvas to secure marginal gains," Dilip Parmar - Senior Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. Parmar further noted that "turning to the technical outlook, the spot USD/INR pair remains in an overall upward trend following its recent surge, though we anticipate a period of short-term consolidation with key support around 95.45 and resistance capped at 96.30."

Stock markets close flat after US Fed rate hike

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly flat on Thursday as caution prevailed after the US Federal Reserve increased its interest rates and indicated further tightening in monetary policy.

Giving up intraday gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 21.86 points, or 0.03 per cent, to settle at 74,314.59. During the day, it climbed 341.11 points, or 0.45 per cent, to 74,677.56. The 50-share NSE Nifty closed higher by 53 points, or 0.23 per cent, at 23,270.60. The index hit a day's high of 23,363.55.

Among the 30 Sensex firms, HDFC Bank, Titan, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank were the major laggards.

Tata Steel, Bharat Electronics, InterGlobe Aviation, Eternal, Maruti and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

"Indian equities ended mixed on Thursday after a range-bound session. The Nifty edged up to 23,270, while the Sensex slipped marginally to 74,314 and Bank Nifty declined to 56,055. Selective buying supported the Nifty, but weakness in private-sector banks and IT stocks limited the broader recovery," said Hariselman Radhakrishnan, Founder & CEO of HST Wealth, a Research Analyst firm.

Market sentiment remained cautious after the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates by 25 basis points and signalled that another increase could follow this year.

Gold falls `600 on weak domestic demand

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Gold prices fell by `600 to `1.55 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday as weak domestic demand weighed on the precious metal.

The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at `1,55,600 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Silver, however, held steady at `2.42 lakh per kilogram, inclusive of all taxes, according to local traders. Traders said weak demand in the domestic market weighed on gold prices. "Gold edged lower on Thursday, tracking overnight weakness in international

markets after the Federal Reserve delivered a hawkish policy message," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

The US Federal Reserve raised its benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to

3.75-4 per cent, as widely expected, marking its first rate increase in three years.

Fed Chair Kevin Warsh's emphasis on persistent inflationary pressures, along with stronger-than-expected August core inflation, reinforced expectations that

monetary policy could remain restrictive. However, bullion found some support in global markets on Thursday as Treasury yields, crude oil prices and the dollar index pulled back slightly. Spot gold rose \$2.85, or 1.24 per cent, to \$4,317.11 per ounce, while silver gained nearly 2 per cent to \$64.06 an ounce.

"Spot gold is staging a recovery and traded over 1 per cent higher around \$4,310 an ounce in global markets as crude oil, treasury yields, and dollar index have pulled back slightly," Praveen Singh, Head of Commodities at Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said.

Trust is invisible foundation of every healthy economy: Ram Nath Kovind

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n New Delhi

Ram Nath Kovind, Former President of India on Thursday while addressing the FICCI-CASCADE 'MASCRAD 2026' (Movement Against Smuggled and Counterfeit Trade), said that trust is the invisible foundation of every healthy economy and smuggling, counterfeiting gradually erode that trust. "Consumers trust manufacturers, manufacturers trust the supply chain, investors trust their institutions and their regulators. Smuggling and counterfeiting gradually erode that trust. The entire economic system is based on trust. Therefore, the movement against counterfeiting and smuggling is about protecting the trust in the systems and institutions that allow an economy to function," he added.

Kovind further stated that in today's world, illicit trade has taught us a lesson that a supply chain is only as secure as its weakest point. Highlighting the importance

(L-R) Anant Swarup, Secretary General, FICCI; Vivek Chaturvedi, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs; Ram Nath Kovind, Former President of India; Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE and Kapil Hathi, Member, FICCI CASCADE and CFO, Amazon India at the inaugural session of 12th edition of FICCI CASCADE's flagship event MASCRAD 2026

of the conference's theme - 'One World, One Fight: Eliminating Counterfeiting and Smuggling Through Collective Action', he said that the theme of this conference has a sense of resonance with India's largest vision for the world. "Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi has articulated the principle of one earth, one family, one future as a guiding commitment for India. There is a natural connection between that vision and the idea of one world, one fight. Both remind us of a simple truth, our challenges are interconnected and so are our destinies," he noted.

Kovind added that India today is at an important moment in its economic journey. "We are witnessing transformation across manufacturing, infrastructure, technology, entrepreneurship and global trade. Indian enter-

prises are increasingly becoming part of global value chains, while our digital economy is creating new opportunities for businesses and consumers. With this growth comes a responsibility to protect the ecosystem that makes such growth possible," he emphasised.

"There are three ideas about India that we must defend together," Kovind said. "The first is of Bharat as Vishwaguru; second is India as a global centre of enterprise, manufacturing and innovation, reflected in our aspirations for Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat and the third idea is of Indian citizen as a discerning and empowered consumer, who has every right to expect that what is purchased is genuine, safe and what it claims to be. Illicit trade undermines all three," he highlighted.

Speaking on the role of technology in fighting the menace of illicit trade and smuggling, Kovind said that technology offers us powerful new tools. "Data analytics can

help identify unusual patterns, AI can help agencies assess risks more intelligently. Digital systems can improve transparency and make enforcement more effective. But technology by itself is not enough. We need technology, but we also need inter-agency and international cooperation in intelligence sharing," he added.

Vivek Chaturvedi, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said that the illicit economy is no longer simply about bringing prohibited goods across the border. It is increasingly about creating an entire parallel supply chain using legitimate logistics infrastructure, documentation, financial channels, and digital platforms to disguise such illicit activity.

Anil Rajput, Chairman, FICCI CASCADE, said, "The fight against illicit trade is not merely an economic imperative, nor should it be viewed simply through the lens of revenue loss. It is a security imperative. It is a governance

imperative and, ultimately, an imperative for peace and stability of nations across the globe." Anant Swarup, Secretary General, FICCI said that illicit trade networks are increasingly sophisticated, technology-enabled, and borderless. Their impact goes far beyond revenue losses, undermining investments, employment, consumer safety, innovation, and fair competition. "For a fast-growing economy like India, trusted markets and secure supply chains are indispensable. Our response to illicit trade must therefore go beyond seizures alone," he added.

Kapil Hathi, Member, FICCI CASCADE and CFO, Amazon India said that the sophistication of counterfeiters has grown exponentially, and the only way to stay ahead is to invest in advanced technology and tools that can detect what the human eye cannot. FICCI-KPMG report on 'Illicit Trade in India: Economic Impact, Enforcement Challenges and the Path Forward' was released.

Indian Bank honoured with Rajbhasha Kirti Award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai

Indian Bank, one of the leading Public Sector Banks of the country has been honoured with the "Second Prize" under "Rajbhasha Kirti Award" for the year 2025-26 at the Hindi Diwas Celebration, organised during the 6th All India Rajbhasha Conference 2025 held in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Indian Bank has received this award for the third consecutive year in recognition of its "Outstanding Performance in the field of Rajbhasha Implementation". Shiv Bajrang Singh, Executive Director, Indian Bank received the award from Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar & Nityanand Rai in the presence of Secretary, Rajbhasha Ms Anshuli Arya on the first day of the two-day 6th All India Rajbhasha Conference at the Sidco Exhibition Centre, Navi Mumbai. On this occasion, the coffee table book "Main Dilli Hoon" published by Indian Bank was also released.

This honour demonstrates the Bank's strong commitment to the successful implementation of the Official Language Policy and the promotion of Hindi in banking operations. Indian Bank remains dedicated to providing banking services across the country with the spirit of "Customer Service in the Customer's Language."

On the second day of conference September 15, 2025, Indian Bank's Corporate Office Chennai the convener of the Town Official Language Implementation Committee (Banks/FIs)

Chennai was honoured in the "Best Category" under the TOLIC RAJBHASHA SAMMAN for its outstanding performance in implementing the Official Language Policy of the Union in its jurisdiction. The award was received by VN Maya, Chief General Manager, Indian Bank, Corporate Office and Rajesh Kumar Singh, Assistant General Manager (OL) and Member Secretary of TOLIC. Indian Bank, Zonal Office, Kanchipuram convener of the Kanchipuram Town Official Language Implementation Committee and Indian Bank, Zonal Office, Puducherry convener of the Puducherry Town Official Language Implementation Committee (Bank) were honoured in the "Commendable Category" under the TOLIC RAJBHASHA SAMMAN for their outstanding performance in implementing the Union's Official Language policy of the Union in their respective jurisdictions. The award for Kanchipuram NARAKAS was received by Gopa Kumar GS, Zonal Manager, Indian Bank, Kanchipuram & Chairman, NARAKAS and Suraj Prasad Saw, Senior Manager and Member Secretary, NARAKAS. The award for Puducherry NARAKAS was received by Rajesh Kumar Singh, Assistant General Manager (OL) Indian Bank, Corporate Office & Sumit Saw, Member Secretary, NARAKAS.

Pranesh Kumar, Field General Manager, Mumbai and office staff members were also present at the event. Indian Bank set up a stall for the Official Language exhibition, which was highly appreciated by everyone.

Gold jewellery demand softens

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
n Mumbai

Gold jewellery demand has softened in recent weeks after a strong run-up ahead of the festive season, with sharp price swings prompting consumers to defer discretionary purchases and wait for greater price stability, the World Gold Council said on Thursday.

However, demand is expected to improve as the festive and wedding season progresses, supported by steady investment demand and resilient wedding-related buying, though elevated prices and volatility may continue to constrain discretionary buying, according to blog post by WGC.

In the blog, WGC Research Head, India, Kavita Chako stated that according to industry feedback, the strength in gold jewellery demand seen in the run-up

to the festive season, has softened over recent weeks.

The sharp gold price rally in August, followed by the subsequent pullback, has left many consumers in a wait-and-watch mode, delaying discretionary purchases, she said. Retailers have also been cautious about inventory building, preferring to replenish based on realised demand, while some manufacturers have reported delays in uptake of orders by retailers. Wedding-related demand has remained relatively resilient, although anecdotal reports point to a structural shift towards lighter-weight jewellery.

FROM THE WORLD

NEPAL

Flood death toll surges to 1,410

The death toll from the devastating flash floods in Nepal surged to 1,410 on Thursday, with over 6,100 people still missing, according to the country's disaster management authorities.

Flash floods, triggered by an ice-rock avalanche near the Nepal-Tibet border on August 26, devastated towns and villages in northern and central Nepal.

The Bhotekoshi River, which flows south from the Himalayan border region, carried the floodwaters downstream, sweeping away homes, vehicles, roads and bridges and damaging hydropower projects.

According to the data issued by Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority on Thursday evening, 1,410 people have been killed in the floods so far, with 6,145 people still missing. (PTI)

ROMANIA

Drone alerts spark fear

The text alerts blare first, then the blasts arrive. For 48-year-old Robert Marian, who lives in Iscea, a small Romanian border town in eastern Tulcea County along the Danube River with a crossing into Ukraine, the proximity of Russian drone strikes - just hundreds of meters across the river - has become a source of constant fear.

"There are alerts warning us that something is coming," he said. "It happened two weeks ago, maybe three. I was asleep at midnight. One was quieter, but another was really loud. I got scared and ran out of the house." As Russia's war in Ukraine grinds on, drone incursions into Romania's airspace have increased significantly. The blasts just across the Danube are a reminder of how close war is to NATO territory - at a time many fear Putin might want to test the alliance's resolve. (AP)

Energy security of India's people comes first: Kwatra

SAGAR KULKARNI
n Washington

India is guided by the principle of "people first" in matters of energy security, Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra said on Thursday, hours after the US Congress passed a bill to impose steep tariffs on buyers of Russia's energy.

His remarks came after the US Congress passed the Lindsey O Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act that would authorise President Donald Trump to impose sanctions on Russia and steep tariffs on its trading partners in oil and gas, including India and China.

"The energy security of India's people comes first," Kwatra said in a post on X. "Our choices are guided by availability, affordability, market conditions and commercial viability," Kwatra said, noting that India



imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil and around half its natural gas.

He said when recent conflicts squeezed global supplies, India acted decisively to protect its people from price shocks. "That also helped steady global energy markets and prevent a deeper crisis," Kwatra said.

"Our sourcing reflects a fundamental national responsibility: looking

outside our borders to secure adequate, affordable and uninterrupted energy for our people," the Indian envoy said.

India buys from a diverse range of partners across the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, Eurasia and the United States, he said.

"India is the world's fastest-growing major economy and its third-largest energy consumer. Yet the average Indian consumes less than one-third of the global average and one-tenth of the average American.

Our energy needs will, and must, grow," he said.

Reliable and affordable supplies power homes, farms, hospitals, schools, factories & transport; protect livelihoods, and sustain growth, the Indian envoy said. (PTI)

Intercepted Houthi drone debris killed one, says Saudi

ASSOCIATED PRESS n Cairo

The Saudi civil defence said Thursday that debris from an intercepted Houthi drone has killed one person and injured two others.

One Yemeni was killed, and a Saudi citizen and a Pakistani national were injured in Taif province in the western part of the country, officials said. The debris also damaged vehicles and buildings, according to the civil defence. The statement didn't give details on when exactly this happened.

The update comes amid an ongoing escalation between the Iran-backed Houthi rebels and Saudi-backed Government forces in Yemen. Government forces



have launched attacks against Houthi rebels along the Red Sea and Houthis have fired into neighbouring Saudi Arabia, which supports Yemen's Government. (AP)

Prime Minister Carney backs EU ties to protect Canadian sovereignty

ROB GILLIES n Strasbourg

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Thursday embraced the prospect of his country becoming the European Union's first associate member, saying closer ties with the continent would ensure no country could control Canada's markets or undermine its sovereignty.

Carney's speech to the European Parliament repeatedly extolled cooperation between Europe and Canada



UN-backed experts cite possible US war crimes in Iran strikes

JAMEY KEATEN n Geneva

Human rights experts commissioned by the UN's top human rights body say they have found "reasonable grounds" to believe the United States committed war crimes in two strikes in Iran, including on a school in the southern city of Minab.

They also accuse Iran's theocratic Government of carrying out crimes against humanity against its own people in a report published on Thursday.

The report, while not binding, adds to international evidence gathered about crimes in the war in Iran, and could eventually be used in efforts to reach justice in international courts. The fact-finding mission on Iran, chaired by jurist Sara Hossain of Bangladesh, is made up of independent experts and was created in 2022 by the Human Rights Council, the UN's top human rights body, which is based in Geneva. The experts were expected

to present their findings on Monday to the council, which is made up of 47 UN member countries.

The international fact-finding mission says its findings on US war crimes center on a pair of US airstrikes that killed at least 178 civilians, including women and children. At the start of the US-Israeli war against Iran in February, at least one US missile hit the Shajareh Tayyebah school in Minab, according to an Associated Press investigation. There has been no final accounting of what happened.

Iranian state media have said 168 people were killed in the strike, most of them children. "Following the United States and Israeli attacks on 28 February, the mission found reasonable grounds to believe the United States committed the war crime of launching indiscriminate attacks resulting in the loss of life or injury to civilians or damage to civilian objects," a UN statement about the team's

findings said. The US State Department did not immediately respond to a request from *The Associated Press* seeking comment.

In their report, the experts concluded that "the building of the school was the intended point of impact" and the resulting damage wasn't the result of an errant strike or collateral damage from an attack on a compound of Iran's Revolutionary Guard next to the school.

The Trump administration has yet to directly accept responsibility or release the findings of a Pentagon investigation into the school bombing.

The UN-backed team based its allegations on two strikes — one involving Tomahawk missiles that hit the "clearly identifiable" school, and another in which Precision Strike Missiles dispersed tungsten pellets over a "clearly identifiable sports complex and residential area" in the southern city of Lamerd, also on February 28. (AP)



A man reacts to the camera while driving past a monument depicting the clenched fist of the late Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. (AP)

Sweden's opposition wins election with narrow majority

ASSOCIATED PRESS
n Stockholm

Sweden's left-leaning opposition won a narrow majority in the country's national election, a complete vote count showed on Thursday.

The Swedish Election Authority said the four opposition parties won 176 seats in the 349-seat Riksdag, Sweden's parliament, in Sunday's election. The four parties that make up or support the outgoing conservative-led Government took 173 seats. Centre-right Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson posted a letter on X shortly after the final results were announced, saying he would resign from his position as the head of Government. Magdalena Andersson, the



opposition leader and a former prime minister, said that "the Swedish people have voted for a new direction for our country, voted for cohesion and against division," Swedish news agency TT reported. It was not immediately clear exactly what Government NATO's newest

member will get for the next four years. Sweden, a country of about 10.6 million inhabitants, is also a member of the European Union. Andersson hopes to regain the prime minister's job, which she lost in 2022. Her centre-left Social Democrats finished as the biggest single

party with 99 seats, despite losing eight seats. But she will still face a complicated task to turn the result into a Government because of tensions within the left-leaning bloc.

The opposition's small lead was initially uncertain but was confirmed after early votes that didn't arrive at polling stations by Election Day, including overseas ballots, were counted.

Kristersson has led Sweden with a three-party, centre-right coalition. The parliamentary majority relied on outside support from the Sweden Democrats, an anti-immigration party that has far-right roots but has moved toward the political mainstream. Kristersson had held out the prospect of

Cabinet seats for the Sweden Democrats this time, if the governing coalition won. However, it was a disappointing election for the Sweden Democrats, who dropped into third place behind the outgoing prime minister's Moderates and took 62 seats, 11 fewer than in the last parliament.

Andersson faces the task of overcoming differences in the opposition bloc.

The Centre Party, which aligned with the left because it does not wish to govern with the Sweden Democrats, also doesn't want to go into Government with the Left Party at the other end of the spectrum. (AP)

France hosts Lebanon security talks on post-UN mission

KAREEM CHEHAYEB n Beirut

The heads of state of Lebanon, France and Jordan met on Thursday as part of an effort to drum up support for the struggling Lebanese military.

Ahead of the talks in Paris, a statement from the office of Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said the three leaders would discuss the situation in southern Lebanon and plans for an international presence there after the mandate of the UN peacekeeping force, known as UNIFIL expires at the end of the year.

A donor conference for Lebanon's cash-strapped



army was initially set to take place in February, led by France, Saudi Arabia and the United States. However, it was postponed following

the eruption of the Iran war and the latest round of the Israel-Hezbollah war.

A new date for the conference was not immediately

announced following Thursday's meeting between French President Emmanuel Macron, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Aoun.

Lebanon's army now finds itself caught between the Israeli military - now occupying much of southern Lebanon - and the militant group Hezbollah, which has refused calls to give up its weapons.

In June, the Lebanese and Israeli Governments announced a framework agreement under which Israel would withdraw gradually from southern Lebanon and the Lebanese army would assume control, while Hezbollah would be dis-

armed. Implementation of the deal has stalled.

Hezbollah was severely weakened in the last war that ended in November 2024, and Lebanon subsequently elected Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam, who committed to disarming Hezbollah and other non-State armed groups in the country. Lebanon has been criticised by Israel and the United States for not taking direct military action to force the militant group to disarm.

Lebanese officials are wary of a confrontation between the army and Hezbollah, fearing it could spiral into a civil war.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोटा
Bank of Baroda

BHEL BRANCH : BHOPAL

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties)

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated **04.07.2026** to the following borrowers/guarantors, calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notices within 60 days from the date of receipt of said notices.

The under mentioned borrowers/guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that undersigned has taken **possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on them under section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this **17th day of September of the year 2026**.

The borrowers/Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of **Bank of Baroda, BHEL Branch, Bhopal** for an amount herein below mentioned & interest thereon.

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 of Account / Borrower/ Guarantor	Description of Property	Amount outstanding as per Notice
Borrower: Mr. Shivam Chandraprakash Mahendra S/o Chandraprakash Mahendra Flat No. 206, 2nd Floor, Indus Colony, Indus Super Near Mittal College of Technology Navibagh Karond Bhopal - 462038	Equitable Mortgage of Residential Property Situated at -Flat no.206, 2nd Floor, INDUS SUPER, village -Navibagh, Tehsil Huzur, District Bhopal (MP), Area 700.00 sq.feet. Boundary Description as under: East: Flat No. 203 West: Road, North: Flat No. 205 South: Flat No. 207	as on 03.07.2026 ₹ 26,95,556.00/- interest & other charges

Date : 17-09-2026, Place : Bhopal
Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda



ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL

LOANS INVESTMENTS INSURANCE PAYMENTS

ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL LIMITED

Registered Office : Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat-362266. Branch Office : 2nd Floor, Vijaya Building, 17, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001.

DEMAND NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT - 2002

You the below mentioned borrower has availed loan by mortgaging the schedule mentioned property and you the below mention has stood as borrower / Co - borrower / Mortgage for the loan agreement. Consequent to the default committed by you, your loan account has been classified as NPA under the provisions of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (in short SARFAESI ACT). We **Aditya Birla Capital Limited** has issued Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of the SARFAESI Act to the address furnished by you. The contents of the said notices are that you had committed default in payment of the various loans sanctioned to you. Therefore, the present publication carried out to serve the notice as per the provision of Section 13(2) of SARFAESI Act and in terms of provision to the rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Loan Account No./ Name and Address of the account Borrower(s) & Co-Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s)	Date of Demand Notice	Amount due as per Demand Notice
Loan Account No. ABINDLAP000000756770 1.M/s. Priya Collection, Through its Proprietor Mr. Sumit Singh, 62/2, Nazar Bagh, Shanker Market, Indore, Madhya Pradesh- 452001. Also At - Plot No. 860, Sector-A, Sudama Nagar, Indore, Madhya Pradesh- 452012. Email: sumitsingh08thakur@gmail.com. 2.Mr. Sumit Singh, 247/1, Patimpura, Indore, Madhya Pradesh- 452010. Also At- Plot No. 860, Sector-A, Sudama Nagar, Indore, Madhya Pradesh- 452012. Email: sumitsingh08thakur@gmail.com. 3.Mrs. Ayushi Thakur, 247/1, Patimpura, Indore, Madhya Pradesh- 452010. Also At- Plot No. 860, Sector-A, Sudama Nagar, Indore, Madhya Pradesh- 452012 Email : sumitsingh08thakur@gmail.com.(hereinafter collectively referred to as 'Borrower/s, Guarantor/s, Mortgageor/s')	27.08.2026 NPA Date 03rd August 2026	Rs. 76,58,352.84/- (Rupees Seventy-Six Lakhs Fifty-Eight Thousand Three Hundred Fifty-Two and Paise Eighty-Four Only) as on 05.08.2026

Description of Immovable Property - All that piece and parcel of property bearing no : "Residential Plot No. 860 located in "Sudama Nagar" Sector-A of Indore City admeasuring 1500 sq. feet, or 139.40 sq. mtrs., owned by Sumit Singh Thakur, together with all buildings, erections, structures, godowns and constructions of every description which are standing, erected or attached or shall at any time hereafter during the continuance of the security hereby constituted be erected and standing or attached to the aforesaid lands and premises or any part thereof and all rights to use common areas and facilities and incidentals attached thereto, together with all trees, fences, hedges, ditches, ways, sewers, drains, waters, watercourses, liberties, privileges, easements and appurtenances whatsoever to the said lands, hereditaments or premises or any part thereof whether presently in existence or in the future belonging to or in anyway appurtenant thereto or usually held, occupied or enjoyed therewith or expected to belong or be appurtenant thereto and all plant and machinery attached to the earth (if applicable), which is bounded as mentioned hereunder: - East: Other's Property, North: Plot No. 861, West: Road, South: Plot No. 859 (as per Sale Deed dated 17.01.2014), East: Other's Property, North: Plot No. 859, West: Road, South: Plot No. 861 (as per MOE dated 16.11.2023).

You are hereby called upon to pay **Aditya Birla Capital Limited** within the period of 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice the aforesaid amount with interest and cost falling which **Aditya Birla Capital Limited** will take necessary action under the Provisions of the said Act against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of secured assets of the borrower / Co - borrower / Mortgage. The power available to the **Aditya Birla Capital Limited** under the said act include (1) Power to take possession of the secured assets of the borrower / Co - borrower / Mortgage including the rights to transfer by way of lease, assignment of sale for releasing secured assets (2) Take over management of the secured assets including rights to transfer by ways of lease, assignment or sale and realize the secured assets and any transfer as of secured assets by **Aditya Birla Capital Limited** shall vest in all the rights and relation to the secured assets transferred as if the transfer has been made by you. In terms of the Provisions of the Section 13(13) of the said act, you are hereby prohibited from transferring, either by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the normal course of your business), any of the secured assets as referred to above and hypothecated / mortgaged to the **Aditya Birla Capital Limited** without prior written consent of the **Aditya Birla Capital Limited**.

Date : 18.09.2026, Place : Indore
Authorised Officer, Aditya Birla Capital Limited

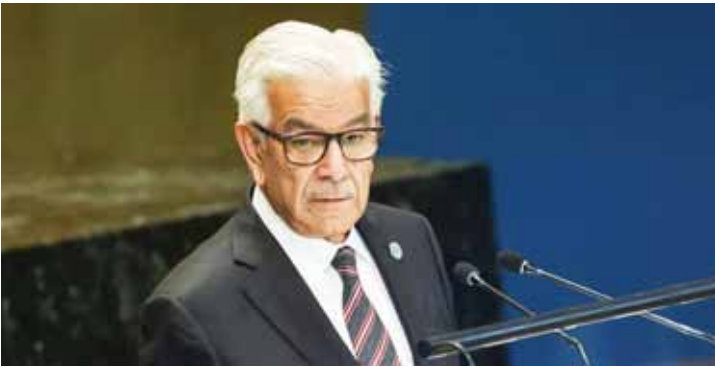
Amid Gulf tensions, Pakistan backs Makkah pact

SAJJAD HUSSAIN n Islamabad

Pakistan on Thursday said it was committed to implementing the Makkah defence agreement amid raging tensions in the Gulf region after what Saudi Arabia described as an attempted drone attack by Yemen's Houthis against the Muslim holy city.

The trilateral defence agreement, involving Pakistan, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia, was inked last month. The pact establishes a framework for collective deterrence and stipulates that an armed attack against any one of them would be regarded as an attack against all.

Speaking to *Geo News* on Wednesday, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that Pakistan is fully prepared to fulfil its obligations under the Makkah agreement. The



Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif

"Makkah Agreement applies to us, and we will fulfil our duty," he was quoted as saying by the news channel. Asif's statements came after Saudi authorities claimed that their air defences had intercepted and destroyed a Houthi

drone south of the city. The drone was destroyed before it entered Mecca's prohibited airspace, according to Saudi authorities.

The Houthis, however, denied targeting Mecca or any Islamic holy site. "If Makkah is attacked,

there is no need for an agreement to protect it," Asif was quoted as saying by the channel.

He said Pakistan did not need an agreement to protect the holy sites, as safeguarding them was a duty even in the absence of the pact. During his weekly briefing on Thursday, Foreign Office spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan reiterated the intent and spirit to uphold the defence deal.

Responding to a query on whether any mechanism had been devised as to how Pakistan will ensure that recent Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia were thwarted, Khan said that Pakistan was committed to "implementing" the agreement.

"However, when, how, where and what force will be used against what objectives, in which modes and matters - operational confiden-

tiality requires us to be discreet at this stage," he added.

He said that Pakistan has for a long time shared the perspective of having peace and stability in the region because "this is not only in the interest of Pakistan and Iran, but also the entire region and beyond." He also termed the Bab el-Mandeb situation as "exceptionally serious" and went on to call on the Houthis to stop their activities.

"In this regard, our discussions basically revolve around bringing peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy and not through coercive measures," he said.

On Wednesday, Asif had said the Makkah pact provided for mutual defence if the territorial integrity or geographical boundaries of any of the three countries were violated. (PTI)

Ramaphosa booked off work due to ill health after BRICS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n Johannesburg

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has been booked off from public engagements due to "ill health", his office said on Thursday.

"President Ramaphosa, who returned from the BRICS Summit in India on Monday, has been advised by his medical team to rest and recover," the Presidency said.

It said that the 73-year-old leader has currently been booked off from public engagements "due to ill health." His office, however, did not provide further details on the president's condition.

It said the President has asked the respective ministers to represent him at scheduled public engagements.

During the BRICS summit on September 12 and 13 in New Delhi, Ramaphosa participated in discussions on global governance and multilateralism and addressed the India-South Africa Business Leadership Roundtable.

He also held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the margins of the summit and exchanged views on the multi-faceted strategic partnership between India and South Africa. (PTI)

China opposes US Congress sanctions Bill

KJM VARMA n Beijing

China on Thursday rejected the US "long-arm jurisdiction" to impose tariffs on purchases of Russian oil and gas, saying its normal trade and economic cooperation with other countries should not be subject to interference or coercion by third parties.

The US House of Representatives passed the Lindsey O Graham sanctioning Russia and Iran Act 2026 that authorises Trump to impose sanctions on Russia and steep tariffs on its leading trading partners such as India and China.

Asked about the bill, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun

told a media briefing that China opposes any action that lacks UN Security Council authorisation. "China consistently opposes long-arm jurisdiction that lacks a basis in international law and is not authorised

by the United Nations Security Council," Guo said.

He said that China has always carried out normal economic and trade cooperation with countries around the world based on equality and mutual benefit.

"Such cooperation neither targets any third party nor is subject to interference or coercion from any third party", he said.

Beijing has repeatedly opposed unilateral sanctions. It also defied US sanctions against buying oil from Iran. China, along with India, is one of the largest buyers of oil and gas from Russia.

Much of China's imports are transported through pipelines crossing its land border.

According to official data, China's imports of Russian oil and gas amounted to \$64 billion last year, and its imports from January to August this year crossed over \$70 billion. (PTI)

Pakistan, China start boundary joint commission in Islamabad

SAJJAD HUSSAIN n Islamabad

Pakistan and China have operationalised a joint mechanism for managing their common border, a move rejected by India, which said that the body has no legal basis to decide on arrangements related to Indian territory under illegal occupation.

The inaugural meeting of the Commission — based on the 2013 Agreement on the Boundary Management System — was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad on Wednesday, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Office. India on Wednesday rejected the "so-called"



boundary joint commission set up by Pakistan and China, saying that the body has no legal basis to decide on arrangements related to Indian territory under illegal occupation.

India has been consistently maintaining that Pakistan's handing over of certain territories such as Shaksgam Valley to China in 1963 was illegal and unacceptable.

Russian missile attacks injure 19, including children in Ukraine

SAMYA KULLAB n Kyiv

A Russian barrage of missiles and drones targeting Ukraine's capital and the surrounding region injured at least 19 people overnight and into Thursday morning, authorities said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces carried out overnight strikes against targets in Russia, including an oil refinery in Yaroslavl and a military airfield in the Rostov region.

The Kyiv City Military Administration said the overnight attacks were recorded at more than 10 locations in the city, while 33 sites were damaged in the wider region. A 10-year-old girl and a 12-year-old boy

were among the injured, the administration said in a statement on Telegram.

Peace efforts to end Russia's 4 1/2-year full-scale invasion have stalled, with the issue of territorial concessions in eastern Ukraine among the central sticking points. Successive rounds of US-brokered talks have failed to produce a breakthrough. Ukraine is also seeking security guarantees from partners for a deal.

US President Donald Trump claimed in a post on social media on Monday that Russia and Ukraine had mutually agreed to cease attacking each other's energy facilities, strikes that have led to significant supply issues in both countries. In an inter-



A man inspecting damage to his apartment after a Russian missile exploded near his home in Kyiv, Ukraine

AP

view with CBS News on Tuesday, Zelenskyy pushed back on Trump's claim, saying that while an energy truce was discussed during a recent meeting in Kyiv with

Trump's representatives, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, he would only enter such an agreement if Russia ceases its attacks on Ukrainian energy sites. A

Nepal Army Chief meets Chinese defence minister

SHIRISH B PRADHAN n Kathmandu

Nepal Army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel paid a courtesy call on Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun in Beijing and discussed matters relating to mutual interest and military relations, the army said here.

Sigdel is on a week-long visit to China. He left for Beijing on September 13 at the invitation of the Chinese Government and is scheduled to return to Nepal on September 19.

During his meeting with Dong on Wednesday, the two sides discussed issues relating to mutual interests and bilateral military relations, the Nepal Army headquarters in Kathmandu said in a statement. Sigdel also inspected the National Defence



Nepal Army chief Ashok Raj Sigdel with Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun in Beijing

University of China and attended the inaugural session of the 13th Beijing Xiangshan Forum on Wednesday. The Xiangshan Forum, being held from September 15 to 17, is a key platform for international security and defence dialogue and brings together senior defence officials, military leaders and experts.

During his visit, Sigdel is also expected to meet senior Chinese military officials and discuss future military cooperation, including preparations for the next edition of the joint Nepal-China military exercise, Sagarmatha Friendship.

Nepal and China have been conducting the Sagarmatha Friendship exercise since 2017, focusing on counter-terrorism. (PTI)

India firmly committed to Bhutan's progress: EAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n Thimphu

India stands firmly committed to Bhutan's progress and prosperity, said External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday after meeting with Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay in Thimphu.

Jaishankar arrived in Bhutan on Wednesday on a two-day official visit aiming to further strengthen the bilateral ties and cooperation between the two countries.

"Delighted to call on PM @tsheringtobgay of Bhutan, in Thimphu today. Conveyed warm greetings of PM @narendramodi," Jaishankar posted on X after the meeting.

"Deeply value his sentiments for our unique ties of friendship and cooperation. India stands firmly committed



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar hands over electric vehicles to Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay during his visit in Thimphu

PTI

to Bhutan's progress and prosperity," he said.

EAM Jaishankar handed over 54 Made in India electric vehicles to Bhutanese PM Tobgay on the occasion.

"India is supporting Bhutan's advances towards e-mobility and sustainability

transport," he posted on X.

The EAM also launched the second phase of the international UPI for Bhutanese citizens to make payments while visiting India.

"Together with the use of UPI in Bhutan, this completes two-way UPI-based digital

payment connectivity between India and Bhutan," he posted on X. Bhutanese PM Tobgay and Jaishankar oversaw the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding on extending the Nehru Wangchuck Scholarship Scheme for higher education by Bhutanese students at Indian institutions.

Jaishankar received a warm welcome from his Bhutanese counterpart DN Dhungel on his arrival in the valley town of Paro. The talks between the two ministers focused on advancing multifaceted engagement in development partnership, energy, trade, connectivity, culture and people-to-people ties. EAM also inaugurated 65-bed Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Mother and Child Hospital in Mongar.

Heavy rain and floods in northern Vietnam submerge homes, disrupt economy

ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL n Hanoi

Heavy rain caused flooding across parts of northern Vietnam on Thursday, disrupting travel, inundating homes and pushing several rivers above dangerous levels, authorities and state media said.

Rain has fallen across northern and north-central Vietnam this week, with some areas receiving more than 50 centimeters (19.7 inches), according to the disaster prevention department said.

More than 2,000 homes have been submerged, many key transportation routes blocked and more than 1,000

households isolated. Ninh Binh and Thanh Hoa provinces, which include lowland and hilly areas south of the capital Hanoi, have been among the hardest hit.

Vietnam is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries and prone to flooding.

A series of severe storms last year spurred the country to find new ways to prepare for and manage floods.

In Thanh Hoa province, authorities told students to stay home because flooding had made travel to school dangerous, state media said.

Heavy rains and flooding have submerged or

damaged about 10,014 hectares (24,745 acres) of rice and other crops, with the largest losses reported in Ninh Binh, Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces. Thousands of livestock and poultry also have been killed.

"The flood happens every year," Ninh Binh resident Tran Ngoc Tai told national broadcaster VTV, adding that people were prepared with fresh water and food.

Many streets in Hanoi were deeply flooded Thursday morning, with water nearly a meter (3.2 feet) deep in some places, disrupting traffic and making it difficult for resi-



Vietnamese army troops preparing boats for rescue works in flooding areas in Thanh Hoa province, Vietnam

dents to get to work, take children to school or leave their homes.

Rainfall from Wednesday night to Thursday morning exceeded 15 centimeters (5.9 inches) in some areas, state media said.

Many high schools and universities in Hanoi remained closed or switched to online classes Thursday afternoon as heavy rain caused widespread flooding.

The rising waters of Bui River in the southwest outskirts of Hanoi threatened to flood homes, prompting authorities to deploy hundreds of soldiers to help residents move belongings to higher ground, state

media said.

A cold air mass moving south is expected to bring five days of heavy rain to southern Vietnam including flood-prone Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's financial Capital, starting September 17, according to the Southern Regional Hydro-Meteorological Center.

Forecasters predict widespread rain through September 21. Authorities have warned of flooding in low-lying areas and along waterways. Ho Chi Minh City is forecast to receive 10 to 20 centimeters (4 to 8 inches) of rain, with some areas getting more. (AP)

Beyond Babur: How India and Uzbekistan are reconnecting through culture

GAYANE UMEROVA

When Babur left the Fergana Valley for India in the early sixteenth century, he could hardly have imagined the empire he founded would leave so deep a mark on India's history, culture and architecture. Five centuries later, his birthplace in present-day Uzbekistan remains a reminder that ties between our two countries run deeper than diplomacy or trade, rooted instead in a shared cultural story.

That story is entering a new chapter. Last weekend, the state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tashkent saw India and Uzbekistan elevate ties from a Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

A broad set of agreements included a three-year programme of reciprocal cultural weeks, joint film festivals, new tourist routes and a 30-day visa-free regime for travellers from each country.

Prime Minister Modi also

pledged support for restoring Uzbekistan's Buddhist heritage sites, announced Hindi-language scholarships, and proposed translating the Tamil classic Tirukkural into Uzbek.

As Uzbekistan marks the 35th anniversary of its independence, this again shows the significant role played by culture in my country's transformation. Uzbekistan is investing heavily in heritage, museums and creative industries, recognising that culture generates opportunity, strengthens communities and connects nations.

For India, this should feel familiar. Both countries are home to ancient civilisations, and both know heritage is most valuable when part of contemporary life. India's success in protecting its cultural assets has made it one of the world's most compelling destinations, and Uzbekistan is similarly pairing infrastructure investment with a renewed commitment to contemporary creativity.

The connections between

our histories extend well beyond the Mughal period. Long before Babur, Buddhism travelled from India to ancient Termez in southern Uzbekistan, where monasteries such as Fayaz Tepe and Kara Tepe testify to centuries of exchange across Central and South Asia.

Indian cinema built another bridge with affection for Raj Kapoor running so deep that a statue of the actor was unveiled in Tashkent in December 2024. Prime Minister Modi observed last year that India and Uzbekistan are "bound by a dynamic partnership that continues to expand across culture, economy and people-to-people ties."

Culture is not the only element in the relationship, but it is often the one that creates the deepest connections. In February 2025, I attended the India Art Fair in New Delhi, focused on links between Central and South Asia. That spirit was again evident at last year's Bukhara Biennial, established by the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev during talks

Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation (ACDF), drawing artists, craftspeople and musicians worldwide, and 1.8 million visitors.

Indian artists, including Subodh Gupta, worked alongside Uzbek collaborators on new commissions. Gupta's pavilion, Salt Carried by the Wind, echoed a mosque that

once stood on the site of a spice market where Indian merchants traded, pairing his own cooking with tableware made by Uzbek ceramicist Baxtiyor Nazirov. As Gupta observed ahead of the Biennial, "There are many similarities in our cultures, from the artisans and their ceramics to the food and architectural traditions that

travelled across borders."

Museums and archives in both countries have long collaborated, from India's National Museum work on artefacts linked to Babur and the Mughal era to the India-Uzbekistan: Dialogue of Cultures exhibition in New Delhi, showcasing manuscripts, paintings and objects spanning centuries of

exchange.

Uzbekistan is also investing in future infrastructure. The Bukhara region has attracted more than \$8 billion over eight years in a wider heritage, industry and tourism drive, while a former Tashkent power station has become the Centre for Contemporary Arts, and a new National Museum of Uzbekistan, designed by Tadao Ando, is rising in the capital. Since 2021, ACDF has commissioned Uzbekistan's national pavilions at the Venice Art and Architecture Biennales. Its projects have reached more than five million visitors across 17 countries through collaborations with over 40 institutions, including the Louvre, the Uffizi Galleries and the British Museum.

This visibility is fuelling one of the world's most remarkable tourism booms with a record 11.7 million international visitors in 2025, and arrivals up 37 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 compared with the same period

last year, placing Uzbekistan among the world's fastest-growing destinations. India plays a growing role in that success. More than 80,000 Indian visitors travelled to Uzbekistan in 2025, aided by expanding air connectivity and growing cultural awareness. What they find is world-famous monuments coexisting with a vibrant contemporary scene, new museums, exhibitions and festivals alongside the legacies of the Silk Roads.

India has been woven into Uzbekistan's cultural story for centuries, including through a children's book about Babur produced by the ACDF. As the Prime Minister signalled on his visit to Tashkent, the opportunity now is not merely to celebrate that shared inheritance, but to build upon it together.

The writer is head of the Department of Creative Economy and Tourism of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Chairperson of the Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation.

More than 58,000 Divyangjan, senior citizens receive assistive devices at nationwide camps

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

More than 58,000 Divyangjan and senior citizens across India received assistive devices worth approximately `68 crore free of cost as part of nationwide Samajik Adhikarita Camps organised on Thursday at 76 locations across 21 states.

The initiative was organised by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, through the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO). The camps were aimed at enhancing mobility, independence, dignity and self-reliance among beneficiaries by providing assistive devices based on their assessed individual requirements.

The main programme was held at Lav-Kush Ramliila Maidan near the Red Fort in New Delhi, with Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar as the Chief Guest. The programme was virtually connected with camp locations across the country, bringing beneficiaries, public representatives, District Administration officials and ALIMCO officials together on a common nationwide platform.

Also present at the New Delhi programme were Praveen Khandelwal, Member of Parliament from Chandni Chowk; Kishor Makwana, Chairman, National Commission for Scheduled Castes; Manmeet Nanda, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice &



Empowerment; and Praveen Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director, ALIMCO, along with other senior officials and dignitaries.

Assistive devices as enablers of independent living

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Virendra Kumar reiterated the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas", and emphasised that Divyangjan and senior citizens must remain active participants in India's development journey.

The Minister said assistive devices are not merely instruments of support but important enablers of mobility, confidence, self-respect and independent living. He stressed the Government's commitment to ensuring that welfare schemes and assistive technologies reach eligible beneficiaries at the last mile.

Kumar also highlighted the expansion of Pradhan Mantri Divyasha-Vayoshri Kendras (PMD-VKs), with 109 centres currently operational across the country. These centres

bring services under the ADIP Scheme and Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) closer to beneficiaries.

He also referred to the establishment of 28 Single Window Cross-Disability Early Intervention Centres (CDEICs), rehabilitation services provided through National Institutes and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs), and initiatives aimed at promoting Divyang sportspersons, including the Divyangta Sports Centre at Gwalior.

Call for wider participation in empowerment initiatives

Virendra Kumar emphasised that empowerment of Divyangjan and senior citizens is a shared social responsibility and called for greater participation from State Governments, District Administrations, civil society organisations, NGOs, social and religious institutions and the corporate sector.

He acknowledged the contribution of organisations including Tara Sansthan, Narayan Seva Sansthan and the Luv-Kush Ramliila

Committee.

The Minister also called upon cultural and social organisations to create more platforms for Divyangjan to showcase their artistic and creative abilities. Referring to Divya Kala Melas, he highlighted their role in promoting entrepreneurship, livelihoods and economic independence among Divyang artisans and entrepreneurs.

He further stressed the need for continued efforts to make Government offices, hospitals, educational institutions, public spaces and transport systems barrier-free, describing accessibility as a shared responsibility.

ALIMCO stresses quality and technology

Speaking on the occasion, ALIMCO Chairman and Managing Director Praveen Kumar highlighted the Corporation's focus on the quality, utility and design of assistive devices.

He said efforts were being made to ensure that beneficiaries receive appropriate solutions suited to their individual requirements. He also highlighted ALIMCO's increasing adoption of digital technology to make service delivery simpler, more efficient, transparent and beneficiary-centric.

"ALIMCO remains committed to the empowerment and welfare of Divyangjan and Senior Citizens. Our endeavour is to ensure that quality assistive devices reach beneficiaries in a timely manner and contribute meaningfully towards strengthening independence, self-reliance and dignity in their lives," he said.

Sewa Diwas exhibition celebrates 25 years of PM's public service at PMML



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

An exhibition titled "Sewa Diwas: 25 Years of Public Service", commemorating the birth anniversary of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and marking 25 years of his public service, was inaugurated at Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya (PMML) today.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Nripendra

Misra, Chairman, Executive Council, Pradhanmantri Sangrahalaya.

The exhibition brings together a curated selection of paintings inspired by themes and ideas from Mann Ki Baat, along with 3D art installations featuring portraits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It also includes the philatelic display "The Man & His Mission" and selected

Tools and Equipment Expo 2026 kicks off

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

The three-day 'Tools and Equipment Expo 2026' kicked off on Thursday at Bharat Mandapam in the national capital.

The expo will showcase cutting-edge solutions across hand tools, power tools, smart automation, and cutting and welding technologies.

Speaking at the event, deputy director, NPC-DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Yadu Kumar Yadav said, "Over the past decade, efforts have focused on integrating MSMEs' prod-



ucts, processes and systems through lean manufacturing, and the focus is now shifting towards the next level of digital integration.

Under the Ministry of MSME's RAMP scheme, more than 750 units are currently being integrated into an Industry 4.0 ecosystem in Gujarat, with similar ecosystems envisaged across the

country." Managing director, Informa Markets, the organiser of the expo Yogesh Mudras said, "With India's hand and power tools exports currently at around US\$1 billion, and the potential to scale this to more than US\$25 billion by 2035, the opportunity to strengthen India's manufacturing and export capabilities is significant."

Over 300 exhibitors, over 2,000 products on display over 150 new product launches and over 8,000 industry professionals with participation from leading domestic and international brands.

Safety of doctors who protect others is crucial: Kiran Bedi



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

In recent years, doctors have increasingly faced situations involving violence, threats, and harassment. This initiative was launched by Dr Kiran Bedi (IPS), former Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry, who attended a special event at the India International Centre as the chief guest.

Dr Kiran Bedi stated, "The legal and social protection of doctors—who safeguard the lives of others—is crucial; 'Ozone Pharmaceuticals' stepping forward for this cause is a commendable initiative."

In light of the rising violence, threats, harassment, and baseless legal cases against doctors, Ozone Pharmaceuticals has launched 'Ozone Shield'. Speaking on the need for Subash Sehgal, Founder and Managing Director, said, "It is our responsibility to stand by doctors when they face violence or unwarranted legal complications."

Recent data also highlights concerns regarding the safety of doctors. A nationwide survey conducted this year by experts from AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital, and VMCM among more than 1,500 healthcare workers revealed that 78.4 per cent had received threats while on duty.

77th Raising Day of IDSE Cadre celebrated at Air Force station Palam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

The 77th Raising Day of the Indian Defence Service of Engineers (IDSE) cadre under the Military Engineer Services (MES), Ministry of Defence, was celebrated on 17th September 2026 at the Jumbo Mazumdar Centre, Air Force Station Palam, New Delhi.

The officers marked the occasion by organising a one-day conference with the central theme: "Ethics, Accountability and Excellence towards achieving the aim of Viksit Bharat @ 2047." The conference was attended by



dignitaries from various departments and ministries, including the Ministry of Railways, Central Vigilance Commission, Defence Accounts Department, National Highway Authority, and Public Sector Undertakings.

Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh conveyed their greetings and messages to IDSE officers on the 77th Raising Day. In their messages, they laid emphasis on ethics, transparency and accountability.

AK Jain, IDSE, DG (Pers), delivered the welcome address. He emphasised that as professionals entrusted with public works and Government construction, IDSE officers carry a responsibility that goes beyond engineering excellence. "Ethics, Integrity, Accountability and Transparency must remain the cornerstone of every decision and every project undertaken. A culture of transparency and accountability not only strengthens public confidence but also reinforces the credibility and reputation of the engineering profession and the government," he said.

In Next-Gen push, Chhattisgarh widens road to jobs, skills

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

With its youth-centric development agenda, the Chhattisgarh Government is making a concerted push on skills, employment, higher education, entrepreneurship and sports.

Around 9,000 vacant Government posts are being taken up for direct recruitment. A new Chhattisgarh Staff Selection Board has been constituted to make Class III and IV recruitment integrated, transparent and time-bound, according to an

official statement.

To restore confidence in recruitment system, tough provisions to curb paper leaks, impersonation and electronic cheating have been introduced with 3-10 years' imprisonment, fines of `10 lakh to `1 crore and property confiscation for offenders.

The push extends to competitive examination preparation, with the government's CG-ACE initiative providing free coaching for NEET, CLAT, JEE, UPSC, CGPSC, banking, SSC and railway examinations through a Rs 33-crore allocation.



"Our youth are Chhattisgarh's biggest strength and hope for the future. We want to ensure that every one gets access to

quality education, skills, opportunities and a transparent system. Youth empowerment is central to our vision of a developed Chhattisgarh, in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed India," said Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai.

Budgetary allocation for higher education has risen by nearly 50 percent, from `1,212.75 crore in 2023-24 to `1,822.75 crore in 2025-26.

Five Government colleges are being developed as Centres of Excellence at Jashpur, Raipur, Durg, Baloda Bazar and Raigarh.

Chhattisgarh Institutes of Technology (CGIT) have been developed in Kawardha, Jashpur, Raigarh and Jagdalpur on the lines of premier institutions such as IITs. Further expansion is planned at Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg under the new fiscal budget.

Equal importance has also been given to the technical education ecosystem. An amount of `484.22 crore has been sanctioned to transform 160 ITIs in the state into state-of-the-art Model ITIs, while 17 ITIs are being modernised under the STRIVE project.

IEI to host Engineering India's Global Footprint summit in Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

n New Delhi

The Institution of Engineers (India) (IEI) will host the "Engineering India's Global Footprint: Technology, Talent and Trust" summit on September 19 at the SCOPE Convention Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, academicians and engineering professionals to discuss India's growing role in the global engineering and technology landscape.

The full-day summit will also feature the presentation of the 18th IEI Industry Excellence Award and the 5th IEI Engineering Education Excellence Award. A Union Minister is expected to address the inaugural session, which will also feature senior representatives from industry, academia and government.

The summit will include three technical panel discussions focusing on India's transition from Atmanirbhar Bharat towards a globally competitive engineering economy,

strengthening engineering education and research capacity for Viksit Bharat, and fostering collaboration among industry, academia and startups to develop internationally competitive products.

A business connect session, networking dinner and the evening awards ceremony will form part of the programme. Instituted in 2008, the IEI Industry Excellence Award recognises engineering organisations for sustained performance in areas including operations,



innovation, quality and governance. The 2026 awards cover categories such as engineering manufacturing and processing, engineering services and consultancy,

construction, MSMEs, startups, industrial innovation, emerging technology leadership, sustainable engineering practices, and defence and aerospace.



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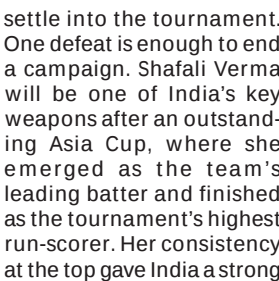
EMPLOYMENT NOTICE NO. A-32/2026 (for Backlog Posts)

Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar invites applications from eligible candidates for selection to the backlog vacant posts of Associate Professor (Academic Level-13A) and Assistant Professor (Academic Level-10) for reserved categories in different disciplines of various colleges. Details of the Posts, Pay Scales, General Instructions and Application Forms are available on the website <https://www.gbpuat.ac.in>. Last date for the receipt of application form is **21.10.2026 upto 05:00 PM** at **Chief Personnel Officer's Office, Personnel Management Section-A (Recruitment Section)**, Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar, District - Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand, PIN - 263145.

CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
n Nagoya

Eight teams are competing in the women's event and the competition starts directly with the quarterfinals, meaning there are no group stage matches to provide teams with time to



start in the UAE. Smriti Mandhana, however, endured an inconsistent campaign and will be eager to rediscover her touch as India embark on another title bid. Much of India's bowling will revolve around experienced all-rounder Deepti Sharma and left-arm spinner Sree Charani, who

has rapidly established herself as an important member of the attack. Charani was among India's standout performers in the Asia Cup and reached the landmark of 50 20th wickets in only her 30th appearance. The 22-year-old's ability to control the middle overs could prove important. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur will also be looking for a better outing after an indifferent Asia Cup, with her experience in pressure situations likely to assume greater significance in a tournament where every game is a must-win. India have plenty of bowling resources at their disposal, with Nandini Sharma, Renuka Thakur and Kranti Gaud offering pace options.

Deepti, Charani, Radha Yadav and Shreyanka Patil, who has recovered from her ankle injury, give the side multiple spin choices. The batting, too, has depth beyond the opening pair. The wicket-keeper-batter Richa Ghosh is capable of providing impetus in middle and lower-order. India will hope that Shafali and Mandhana can set the platform, allowing their middle order to play with greater freedom.

Japan, playing on home soil, will be looking to make the most of the occasion against a superior opponent. The hosts face a formidable bowling attack and will need to negotiate India's spin options effectively while restricting their aggressive top-order batters.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
n Raipur

Khalin Joshi fired a one- under 33 to retain a one-shot lead over the field after the third round of the inaugural Nava Raipur Open 2026 here on Thursday.

The 34-year-old Bengaluru golfer (29-30-33), who began the day with a two-stroke advantage, mixed two birdies with his first bogey of the

week to reach 10-under 90 heading into the final round. Joshi, a two-time winner of the DP World PGTI this season and currently 12th in the Race to DP World India Championship, has dropped only one shot through the opening 27 holes.

Heavy rain left the course unsuitable for full 18-hole rounds, prompting the Tournament Committee to stage each of the tourna-

ment's four rounds over the back nine.

Chandigarh's Angad Cheema (34-29-30) emerged as Joshi's closest challenger after producing a bogey-free four-under 30. The 36-year-old climbed from tied 13th to second at nine-under 93.

Seven players shared third place at eight-under 94, leaving eight golfers within two shots of the lead ahead of the final nine holes.

US Open runner-up Ben Shelton withdrew from the Laver Cup and will be replaced by 16th-ranked Brandon Nakashima on Team World, organizers announced Thursday.

No reason was given for Shelton's withdrawal but he's slated to play Davis Cup for the United States in the Czech Republic starting on Friday - less than a week after losing to Alexander Zverev in the U.S. Open final. Shelton is up to a career-high No. 4 in the rankings after reaching his first Grand Slam final.

It will mark Nakashima's Laver Cup debut. He joins Alex de Minaur, Taylor Fritz, Alexander Bublik, Learner Tien and Francisco Cerundolo on Team World, which has Andre Agassi as its captain. Yannick Noah's Team Europe features Zverev, Carlos Alcaraz, Flavio Cobolli, Rafael Nadal, Jakub Mensik and

India's Declan Mshall Gonsalves and Mohamed Anas Imran Beg bowed out of the medal race in the men's doubles Tiegball competition at the Asian Games after losing both their group matches here on Thursday. Placed in Group B, the 31-year-old Gonsalves and Beg, 26, both hailing from Mumbai, lost their matches 0-2. The Indians first lost 10-12 8-12 against Vietnam's Truong Giang Ba and Anh Khoa Le before going down 4-12 7-12 against South Korea's Junsuk Lee and Taebene Lee.

Gonsalves, who started the game five years ago, is the defending national champion in the men's doubles category for five consecutive years and also won national championship in the men's singles in 2025. At international level, he has won a bronze medal in the men's doubles category at the World Teqball Championships held in Vietnam in 2024. This was India's first medal in the event. Beg, on the other hand, remained undefeated from 2021 to 2026 at the domestic level, winning six national gold medals across men's doubles and mixed doubles categories.

His outstanding domestic record translated into international success when he won a bronze medal in men's doubles at the 2024 Teqball World Championships in Vietnam. Teqball is one of the six sports alongside Mixed Martial Arts (MMA), Padel, Surfing, BMX Freestyle and Virtual Taekwondo which are making their debut in the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

I, **Anmol S/o Amit R/Indira** Colony Kasba Jobat, PO Jobat, Dist: Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh - 457990 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **Anmol Vaskala**

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the office of Bajaj Life Insurance Limited located at Near Katni River Bridge, Dr. Chandan Chowk, C.S. Azad Ward, Katni (Dist.), Madhya Pradesh - 483501 will be shifted to its new address at Bajaj Life Insurance Limited Shop No. 1 and 2, Second Floor, Astha Plaza in front of Sardar Mata Mandir, Jabalpur Road, Katni, Madhya Pradesh - 483501 with effect from 20-11-2026.

We are closing our office situated 16-C, 3rd Floor, Above Central Bank
Near Reliance Trends, Indrapuri, Bhopal-462002 Madhya Pradesh on
23rd September, 2026.

Our office at 1st Floor, Ambika Arcade, Plot No. Z 19, MP Nagar Zone-1, Bhopal - 462011 Madhya Pradesh is the nearest operational office. However, our business including website, email addresses and telephones are fully operational and no changes/delays is being experienced in servicing our customers.

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प्रधान कार्यालय : 204, द्वितीय तल, सी-21 बिजनेस पार्क, सी-21 चौराहा, होटल रेडिसन ब्लू के सामने, एम.आर. 10, इन्दौर (म.प्र.) 452010
 क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय : बिजावर नाका, सगार रोड, छतरपुर (म.प्र.) पिन 471001, ईमेल:आर्डीई - rochhatarpur.mpgb@mpgb.bank.in

In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, notice is hereby given that the accounts of the borrowers listed below—who had availed loans from Madhya Pradesh Gramin Bank—were classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). Consequently, a 60-day notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act was served upon the borrowers and guarantors, requiring them to repay the outstanding loan amount, future interest, and expenses. However, as the borrowers failed to make the payment even after the expiry of 60 days from the receipt of the said notice, the borrowers, guarantors, and the general public are hereby informed that, in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, symbolic possession of the properties listed below has been taken on the dates specified against them. The borrowers and guarantors, in particular, and the general public, in general, are hereby cautioned against dealing with the properties described below. Any dealings with these properties shall be subject to the charge of Madhya Pradesh Gramin Bank for the said loan, the interest payable thereon, and other expenses.

Date- 18-09-2026

MP/JBR/STNA/A000000156 Mr. NARENDRA KUMAR SHUKLA, Mrs. SHILPI SHUKLA DROPTI DROPA	13-04-2026 Rs. 1804402/-	Khasra No. 188/29 Mauza Amarpattan Ward No. 4, P H N Old 26 New 29, Satna, MP- 485775 Total Area- 1500 Sq Ft. Boundaries: North : House Of Maya Gautam, South: Rcc Road, East: Arazl Of Maya Gautam, West: Rcc Road	11-07-2026 Rs. 4333000/- Rs. 433300/-
MP/KTN/SOKA/A000000023 Legal Heirs of Mr. ARUN KUMAR LODHI Mrs. KERA BAI	13-04-2026 Rs. 548041/-	Gram Madiya, Ph N 28 R N Ritthi , Tehsil Ritthi Khasra No. 604 (b) Patta No. 39 (p), Katni, MP- 483990 Total Area- 185 Sq Ft. Boundaries: North : Village Road, South: Personal Land, East: House Of Shakuntala Bai, West: House Of Ramprasad	11-07-2026 Rs. 1318000/- Rs. 131800/-
MP/JBR/BLGT/A000000139 Mr. Fajjan Khan Mrs. Afsari Khan Mr. Mohammad Nahid Khan	07/11/2025 Rs. 10,04,710/-	All the Piece & Parcel of Property being Plot Mouza – Balaghat Ward No.03, PH.N No. 13/2, R.N.M Balaghat - 2, Thesil & Dist. Balaghat Khasra No 242/3/2/22, 243/8/kha/ 22 Admeasuring Area- 675 Sq Ft. Bounded As - East: Plot of Abdul Gaffar Khan, West: Plot of Hari Soni, North: Rest Land of Seller, South: Road	17-01-2026 Rs. 2248500/- Rs. 224850/-
MP/JBR/BLGT/A000000259 Mr. Maha Nand Bopche Mrs. Sangeeta Choudhary Mrs. Bhayalal Bopche	07/11/2025 Rs. 24,17,570/-	All The Piece & Parcel Mouza –property Khasra No. 298/1 Situated At Gudma Ph.n. No. 103 R.n.m Tehsil & Dist Seoni Admeasuring Area- 0.045 Hect Bounded As - East: Kachha Road, West: Kachha Road, North: Govind Kishore S/o Tiyatal Pawar, South: Sabji S/o Shobharam Pawar	16-01-2026 Rs. 2686000/- Rs. 268600/-
MP/KTN/SHDL/A0000000372 Mr. SANDEEP KUMAR SHARMA Mrs. ARTI DUBEY, LOKNATH SHARMA, KIRTI SHARMA	19-05-2026 Rs. 9,54,173/-	Khasra No.353/2/1 Gram Pinaura Dist Umaria, Tehsil Narojabad, Madhya Pradesh, India - 484555 Total Area- 4000 Sq Ft. Boundaries: East: House Of Tingu Sen, West: Plot Of Lekhni Prasad Dubey, North: Road, South: Land Of Loknath Sharma	07-08-2026 Rs. 1864500/- Rs. 186450/-
MP/SGR/SAGR/A0000000326 & MP/SGR/SAGR/A0000000654 Ms. POOJA TIWARI Mr. RAGHVENDRA TIWARI	28/10/2024 Rs. 21,29,601/-	Khasra No 286, Ph No.53, Ward No.36,Plot No F-3 Ravindra Nath Tagor Ward, Near Shiv Mandir, Golden City, Deri Road, Aurang, Chhatpurat , Madhya Pradesh, India - 471001 Total Area- 2000 Sqft. Boundaries: East: Land of Seller, West: Land of Seller, North: Road, South: Road	03-02-2025 Rs. 3920000/- Rs. 392000/-

conditions of the sale, please refer to the link website ie. <https://www.bankeauctions.com>
 Date- 18.09.2026 Authorised Officer

India crush Afghanistan by 127 runs in 3rd T20I to take series 3-0

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
n New Delhi

Abhishek Sharma brought a dead rubber to life with a breathtaking 30-ball century as India completed a series sweep over Afghanistan with a dominating 127-run win in the third and final T20 here on Thursday.

Abhishek blew Afghanistan attack into smithereens en route to a 30-ball hundred, the fastest by an Indian, firing his team to 221 for seven after the opposition decided to field.

Afghanistan, whose batting let the team down in the first two games, once again were not able to challenge India with the bat, getting bowled out for 94 in 14.1 overs. Both teams head to the Asian Games from here. India gave the opening over of Afghanistan's chase to all-rounder Nitish Reddy, who conceded 15 runs before coming back to pick three wickets later in the innings. Rahmannullah Gurbaz (15 off 11) and Sediqullah Atal (1 off 3) fell to a slog sweep in the same over from Axar Patel in the powerplay.

Jasprit Bumrah bowled a crushing yorker to dismiss Darwish Rasooli while Yash Thakur accounted for Ibrahim Zadran in the sixth over, leaving Afghanistan at 47 for four. The door was as



good as shut on Afghanistan. The night well and truly belonged to Abhishek who hammered as many as 11 sixes in his 108 off 34 balls for his third hundred in T20 Internationals.

The sizzling century was also the fastest by a cricketer from a Test-playing nation against a Test-playing nation, surpassing the 33-ball effort from New Zealand's Finn Allen against South Africa earlier this year. For the fasted hundred by an Indian, he broke Rohit Sharma's record of 2017 when he achieved the feat in 35 balls. Majority of Abhishek's thundering strikes sailed over the bowler's head.

With India already securing the series, Abhishek added the much-needed zing to a dead rubber with his sensational hitting. The

sixes kept coming, whether he made room to play an inside out stroke or stayed still to dispatch the bowler down the ground.

It was the first time in the series that India batted first, allowing Abhishek to make most of his time in the middle. Thanks to his six-hitting spree, India raced to 100 for no loss in the powerplay, their highest in T20s in the first six overs.

Sanju Samson did not get to do much while Abhishek was going hammer and tongs in the powerplay but went on to make a fluent 50 off 35 balls, his second successive fifty plus score.

With both the openers in top form, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi will need to warm the bench for the foreseeable future.

Abhishek was unstop-

pable from the get go, maintaining same intensity against the fast bowlers and spinners. Afghanistan, who have not been able to compete with India in the latter's own backyard, had their task cut out with Abhishek disdainfully slaying Azmat Omarzai and Fazalhaq Farooqi, who conceded 17 and 23 runs in the second and third over respectively.

Captain Ibrahim Zadran tried spin early in the powerplay but that also did not work against a rampaging Abhishek. Samson got going with a couple of straight sixes off Mohammed Nabi before Abhishek too cleared the fence twice in the same over that went for 29 runs.

Samson was also dropped on 22 at mid-off by Zadran.

Abhishek's fifty came off 16 balls before he completed his memorable hundred in the ninth over. He got to 99 via a pulsating pull off Abdullah Ahmadzai and got to three figures with a rare single. He celebrated his milestone with a seated meditation pose as the crowd duly stood on their feet after witnessing a special knock.

In the end, Afghanistan did well to restrict India to a sub 250 total. India only managed 37 runs in the last five overs with the loss of four wickets.

Zimbabwe's Mukuhliani succeeds Singapore's Khwaja as new ICC deputy chairperson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA n Dubai

Zimbabwe's Tavengwa Mukuhliani, on Thursday, was named as the new Deputy Chairperson of ICC until November 2027 after the all powerful Board of Directors gave green-light his appointment, replacing Singapore's Imran Khwaja.

"Mukuhliani, who is the Chairman of Zimbabwe Cricket and represents it on the ICC Board, succeeds Khwaja following his departure from the Board. "Mukuhliani currently serves on the ICC Finance and Commercial Affairs Committee (F&CA) and the Nominations Committee, and chairs the HR and Remuneration Committee," an ICC release stated on Thursday. The appointment comes at a significant time for African cricket, with Zimbabwe preparing to co-host the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2027 alongside South Africa and Namibia.

ICC chairman Jay Shah said, "I warmly congratulate Tavengwa Mukuhliani on his appointment as Deputy Chair of the ICC. His experience in cricket administration, understanding of the global game and commitment to its development will be invaluable to the ICC Board. "Tavengwa has earned the confidence of his fellow Directors, and I look forward to working closely with him to strengthen cricket across our Members and create greater opportunities for the game to grow worldwide.

PCB to decide on action against Rizwan, Imam-ul-Haq after court rejects petition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
n Lahore

The Pakistan Cricket Board will decide on whether to initiate any disciplinary action against senior players Muhammad Rizwan and Imam-ul-Haq after the Lahore High Court dismissed the wicket-keeper batter's petition challenging notices issued to him by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA).

During Thursday's hearing, Lahore High Court Chief Justice Aalia Neelum dismissed Rizwan's petition after hearing arguments from both sides. Advocate Qazi Umair Ali, appearing for Rizwan, told court that notices had been issued to his client.

"You should go and respond to the notice. On which date was the notice issued to you?" Chief Justice Neelum remarked.

The petitioner's lawyer replied that after the Lord's Test, the petitioner was called to the hotel lobby, interrogated without a notice, and his mobile phone was confiscated.

He further stated that the petitioner handed over the mobile phone on the assurance that it would be returned after three hours; however, the phone has not been returned to



the petitioner to date, which demonstrates bad faith. Rizwan's lawyer argued that the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit is the appropriate forum to protect cricketers from corruption, and the matter against the petitioner was not referred to the ICC Anti-Corruption Unit. Rizwan's lawyer in his petition challenged the NCCIA summons while questioning the jurisdiction of the NCCIA and the nature of the investigation.

A reliable source aware of the developments said the NCCIA was currently carrying out a forensic examination of the mobile phones taken from Rizwan and Imam and would submit its findings to the PCB by next week.

"How the PCB decides to move against the two players will now depend on what findings the NCCIA submits to the PCB. If nothing out of the ordinary is found in the forensics examination they will probably get reprieves," the source said.

Asian Games a teaser to 2028 Los Angeles Olympics: India Women's head coach Amol Muzumdar

AJAI MASAND n Nagoya

(PTI) India women's head coach Amol Muzumdar on Thursday termed the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games a "teaser" for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, where women's cricket will make its debut, with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur echoing the sentiment and saying the team will carry the same winning mindset into the global showpiece as it does at the Asian Games.

Defending champions India begin their campaign against hosts Japan here on Friday, with all eight teams eyeing a place in the semifinals. Fresh from their Women's T20 Asia Cup triumph and having gone from one tournament to another, travelling from Dubai to Nagoya, India will look to maintain their momentum and clinch a second Asian Games gold.

"I think this (Asian Games) is a great teaser towards the Olympic quest for the Indian women's team. We are getting used to certain things in the Asian Games. Just touring a different part of the cricketing world, which is Japan... never before been in this country," said Muzumdar.

"The same would probably be true for most of us in LA. So, I guess the players would have a different kind of an experience. I think it (Asian Games) is a great learning experience for everyone of us and I'm really looking forward to this Asian Games," added Muzumdar. Harmanpreet said the team is looking forward to playing are not used to the conditions; we are carrying those learnings into the



Olympics. "I'm sure how we enjoyed the last time in China (2022 Hangzhou Asian Games), the same way we are going to enjoy here (in Nagoya). As a team, we are looking forward to the Olympics, and hopefully going with the same mindset and the same approach... these two tournaments (Asian Games and Olympics), especially as a cricketer, we are really looking forward to," added Harmanpreet.

She said playing at Japan and Los Angeles, which are not traditional cricket hubs, would be an interesting and valuable learning experience for the team. "The countries like Japan and LA, we haven't seen much cricket, but as a cricketer, we are going to experience something totally different. We are not used to the conditions; we are not used to the grounds. It's a com-

pletely different feeling," she added. Muzumdar said the players had literally lived out of their suitcases in recent weeks, travelling from Dubai for the Asia Cup to Delhi for just a night, before flying to Tokyo and then Nagoya for the Asian Games. (PTI)

"We spent a night in Delhi and from Delhi we have come here to Tokyo and then to Nagoya. It's been a long journey. There has been a time difference in the three countries that I was in in the last three days. But really happy and delighted to be here," said Muzumdar. He added that the women's team had faced hardly any hiccups on its journey to Nagoya, with the hotel arrangements and overall stay proving seamless, unlike several other Indian contingents who have faced delays and hours-long waits for accommodation.

अमर बलिदानी

राजा शंकर शाह

कुंवर रघुनाथ शाह

को कृतज्ञ मध्यप्रदेश का शत-शत नमन

बलिदान दिवस

समारोह

नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

डॉ. मोहन यादव, मुख्यमंत्री

मुख्य अतिथि

डॉ. मोहन यादव

मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश

18 सितम्बर 2026 | जबलपुर

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अमर शहीद राजा शंकर शाह, कुंवर रघुनाथ शाह का अदम्य साहस और मातृभूमि के लिए सर्वोच्च बलिदान हमें सदैव स्वाभिमान और राष्ट्रभक्ति की प्रेरणा देता रहेगा। मध्यप्रदेश सरकार जनजातीय गौरव को संजोते हुए प्रदेश के लिए संकल्पित है।

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