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Sheikh Hasina plans December 16 return to Bangladesh

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A journey with Bhupen Hazarika

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Former-CJI Gavai writes to President

PAGE 12 / SPORTS



Akash Deep shines for India

Cabinet clears Delimitation Bill

SHARAD PAWAR BACKS IT, DMK AND BRS TO FOLLOW SUIT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Union Cabinet on Friday cleared a fresh Delimitation-linked Women's Reservation Bill to effect a uniform 50 per cent rise in Lok Sabha seats in all States and is likely to bring it before the special sitting of Parliament beginning next week. The Cabinet meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A two-thirds majority in both houses of Parliament is required for a Constitutional Amendment Bill to pass. Sources said the DMK and NCP, along with the BRS, are expected to support the bill.

The Opposition INDIA Bloc is against the legislation and will be meeting on Saturday to discuss its strategy. The Government has called for a four-day special sitting — November 30 and December 1 in Lok Sabha, and December 2 and 3 in Rajya Sabha.

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi has accused the BJP of seeking to redraw the country's electoral map to its advantage ahead of the 2029 elections. The Government has rejected such apprehensions. Congress held its own huddle at Chairperson Sonia Gandhi's residence here. Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, has invited all Opposition floor leaders for a meeting at his residence here on Saturday to devise a joint strategy.

Sources said the Union Cabinet accorded its nod to the fresh bill, with some amendments, to ensure that no State loses its representation in the Lok Sabha relative to other States after delimitation. They said that the Government has agreed to raise the Lok Sabha seats by 50 per cent for every State to address the concerns of southern States. There will be a freeze on seats till 2051.

The fresh bill seeks to use the 2011 Census to redraw the increased seats. The Government has proposed to redraw Parliamentary constituencies without altering the number of seats for each State, sources said.

The proposed amendment seeks to increase the strength of the Lok Sabha from the present 543 seats to a maximum of 850 through delimitation. The treasury benches said the move will pave the way for the implementation of 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State legislative Assemblies ahead of the 2029 general election.

CONTINUED ON >> P4





THE BILL

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— RAHUL GANDHI



Has invited all Opposition floor leaders for a meeting at his residence here on Saturday to devise a joint strategy
— MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

THE TREASURY BENCHES SAID THE MOVE WILL PAVE THE WAY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 33% RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT AND STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES AHEAD OF THE 2029 GENERAL ELECTION

SC orders lamp lighting, slams Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Slamming the Tamil Nadu Government, led by Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, the Supreme Court on Friday ordered that the lamp be lit on Saturday at Thiruprankundam Hills, took over the temple trust, and ordered CRPF protection. The apex court issued a contempt notice to the Tamil Nadu Chief Secretary and other officials for "willful and brazen" violation of its order on the lighting of the Karthigai Deepam. It said the executive authorities acted on the diktat of their political bosses.

The top court suspended the board of trustees of the Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy temple in Madurai and ordered the lighting of the lamp at the disputed Deepathoon stone pillar atop the Thiruprankundram hill on Saturday using the flame lit at Uchaipillaiyar mandapam on November 24.

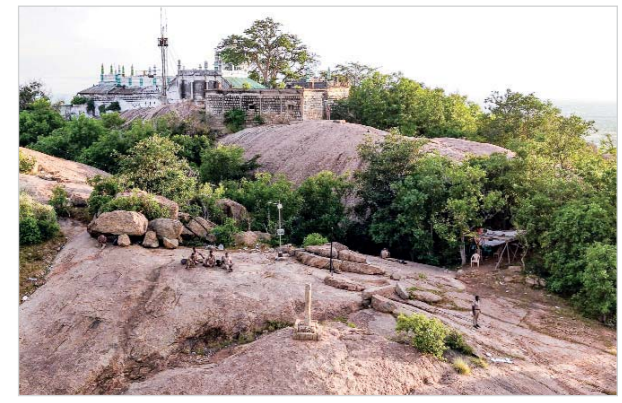
Asking the Tamil Nadu chief secretary to appear personally before the court, a bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M Pancholi directed him to file an affidavit detailing emails, calls, and messages exchanged between officials.

"The wilful non-compliance of orders of the court, especially by the executive authorities, cannot go unnoticed and it has to be dealt with an iron hand," the bench said, issuing contempt of court notices to the Tamil Nadu chief secretary, director general of police, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments secretary and commissioner, Madurai district collector, commissioner of police, superintendent of police, temple authorities and others.

The top court also handed over the security of Tamil Nadu's Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy temple and the Thiruparankundram hill to the CRPF, citing the failure of the state police to implement its orders.

The top court said the conduct of the officers prima facie reveals a state of administrative chaos in Tamil Nadu, or at least in Madurai district. "The conduct alleged, as borne out by the record, would prima facie disclose a brazen and wilful disobedience of this court's order, a flagrant disregard of the undertaking given before the high court and a calculated affront to the authority of both constitutional courts," the bench said.

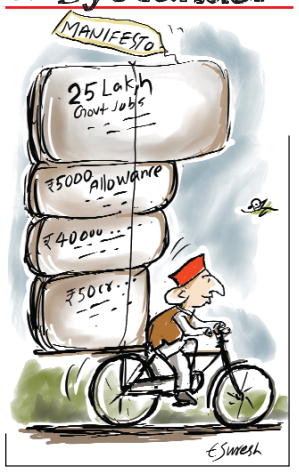
CONTINUED ON >> P4



Security personnel at Thiruparankundram hill, following a High Court order to light a lamp atop it in Madurai, Tamil Nadu on Friday PTI

> Article 144 of the Constitution mandates that all authorities, civil and judicial, in the territory of India shall act in aid of the SC — BENCH

The ByStander



PIONEER IN SHORT

GADKARI CALLS FOR INTENSIVE WATER CONSERVATION

Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said irrigation was the biggest problem facing the farmers of Vidarbha, and made a pitch for intensive water conservation at the village level. He was speaking at the inauguration of 'Agrovision 2026', an agricultural exhibition, and the Water Conference here.

The theme of the event was 'Combating Drought: Water Management and Crop Planning'. The BJP leader is the chief promoter of Agrovision. Following deficient rainfall during the monsoon, Maharashtra is facing a severe drought.

"Not a single drop of water should go to waste. Every drop must be harnessed to increase storage," the Union Minister said.

FULL REPORT ON >> P4

Gujarat ATS foils JeM plot to attack Vadodara IAF station

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH ■
New Delhi/Gandhinagar

A 22-year-old man from Assam was arrested by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad late on Thursday night near a hotel on the Halol-Vadodara road, bringing to a close what was alleged to be a plot to attack the IAF station in Vadodara. Mohammad Saharul Islam Kabiruddin, a resident of Karimganj, was arrested as he was on his way back from Dahod, having picked up an automatic assault rifle via a dead drop.

The operation followed a tip-off that a man from outside the State, linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), was in contact with a handler and planning attacks on security establishments.

The recovery comprised an AK-47 assault rifle, two empty magazines, three live rounds, a JeM flag, two mobile phones, SIM cards and ₹20,000 in cash. The weapon was left at the pre-agreed location for Kabiruddin to pick up as part of the plan to minimise contact and avoid exposure. He went from Assam to Bhopal and then to Vadodara, staying at a hotel near the Sayajigunj railway station, before travelling to Dahod to collect it.

During questioning, it emerged that Kabiruddin had been in regular contact for about a year with a handler in Pakistan, known as Mufti Rafiq (also known as Ibn Abdullah). His phones contained several WhatsApp images of the Vadodara IAF station gate and other buildings, all marked with red crosses.

The ATS officials said that the images were indicative of a targeted attack and that the accused had been specifically tasked with the attack on the main gate of the air force station. He had also been watching YouTube tutorial videos on how to use an AK-47.

Kabiruddin said he'd been given ₹50,000 to buy a new mobile phone and to help with the logistics of the attack. He planned to go ahead and carry out the attack and then head to Pakistan to join JeM ranks and become a martyr.

CONTINUED ON >> P4





KABIRUDDIN SAID HE'D BEEN GIVEN ₹50,000 TO BUY A NEW MOBILE PHONE AND TO HELP WITH THE LOGISTICS OF THE ATTACK. HE PLANNED TO CARRY OUT THE ATTACK AND THEN HEAD TO PAKISTAN TO JOIN JEM'S RANKS AND BECOME A MARTYR

BSF shifts parade to Delhi amid security concerns

PRAMOD KUMAR SINGH
■ New Delhi/Imphal

The Border Security Force (BSF) has called off its plan to hold the 62nd Raising Day parade in Manipur's Churachandpur district at the last minute and will hold it in Delhi instead. The decision follows security concerns raised by the central intelligence agencies.



The annual regimental celebration, scheduled for December 1 at the BSF Subsidiary Training Centre (STC) in the ethnic-strife-hit state, was cancelled following the intelligence inputs. The BSF, which has about 2.65 lakh personnel, was raised on December 1, 1965, and guards more than 6,000 km of India's borders with Pakistan on the western side and Bangladesh on the eastern flank.

Senior officers said the decision to cancel the Manipur event came after central agencies conveyed security concerns. Manipur has witnessed intermittent violence between the valley-based Meitei and hill-based Kuki communities since 2023.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

HC overturns Ritabrata's appointment as LoP



Ritabrata Banerjee

SAUGAR SENGUPTA
■ Kolkata

A single Bench of the Calcutta High Court on Friday set aside the decision of Bengal Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose to appoint Democratic Trinamool Congress leader Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) and Akhruzzaman as the Chief Whip of the original outfit. The ruling comes as an apparent setback to the rebel Trinamool Congress camp, currently known as the Democratic Trinamool Congress, following an Election Commission of India directive.

The Court asked the Speaker to take a fresh, reasonable decision on the LoP and the Chief Whip within ten days — ahead of the December 4 winter session — by which time the two Opposition posts would remain suspended. The High Court order followed a petition by Mamata Banerjee loyalist MLA and former State Parliamentary Affairs Minister Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay.

The Court of Justice Krishna Rao held the Speaker's appointment order for Ritabrata Banerjee as unsustainable after hearing the two sides.

Ritabrata Banerjee was picked as the LoP by a rebel group of around 60 TMC MLAs in June, soon after the BJP came to power in Bengal. TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and, through him, Mamata Banerjee had chosen Sobhandeb Chhattopadhyay as the LoP following schisms within the party, which the pro-Mamata group interpreted as the handiwork of the new Suvendu Adhikari Government.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

Strobe Talbott, architect of India-US ties, passes away

SAGAR KULKARNI
■ Washington

Former US diplomat Strobe Talbott, who, along with the then External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, played a key role in bridging the chasm between the US and India after the 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests, breathed his last.



Talbott, the former US Deputy Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton, passed away at his home in East Hampton, New York, on Thursday after a long illness, his son Devin Talbott said. He was 80.

Caught off guard by India's five nuclear tests on May 11 and May 13, 1998, the US imposed sanctions on New Delhi, and it was the Talbott-Singh duo who held a series of meetings over the next two years to put the bilateral relationship between the estranged democracies back on track.

CONTINUED ON >> P4

CM Mohan Yadav reaches out to youth, seeks active participation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Dewas

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday emphasised the importance of direct communication between the government and young citizens, urging them to actively participate in policymaking, entrepreneurship and the state's development.

Addressing the 'Yashasvi Yuva Samvad' programme organised under the Mukhyamantri Jan Vishwas Abhiyan 2026 in Dewas district, Yadav said democracy required continuous dialogue between the government and people. He said conventional public meetings often involved leaders speaking while citizens listened, but his government was promoting interactive platforms where young people could freely express their opinions, aspirations and suggestions.

"Dialogue and cooperation are equally essential for effective governance," he said, adding that constructive ideas from young citizens could open new avenues for development. Encouraging entrepreneurship, Yadav urged young people to become job creators rather than merely job seekers. He highlighted government initiatives offering incentives and subsidies to employment-generating industries, aimed at expanding industrial activity and creating livelihood opportunities. During the interaction, young entrepreneur Mihir Karnawat shared his experience of establishing a manufacturing unit in the agricultural and food processing sector through financial and technical assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises scheme. Yadav also emphasised the growing importance of sports as a viable career option, observing that changing attitudes had transformed sporting achievements into opportunities for professional advancement. Citing hockey player VivekSagar's accomplishments, he said the state government had rewarded him with a Deputy Superintendent of Police appointment, ₹1 crore and housing assistance. The Chief Minister announced that the coming year would be observed as 'Youth Year', featuring programmes designed to encourage innovation, skills development and youth participation.

He said the current year was being observed as 'Farmer Welfare Year', focusing on integrated agricultural development, dairy production, animal husbandry and initiatives to enhance farmers' incomes. Yadav reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening infrastructure, including roads, electricity and water supply, while expanding educational and employment opportunities. He encouraged young people to contribute innovative ideas and participate actively in Madhya Pradesh's development.

Chief Secretary Ashok Barnwal, DrSudamKhade, senior officials and a large number of young participants attended the programme.

The interaction formed part of the Government's broader efforts to engage youth directly across districts.



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CM highlights farmers' welfare as irrigation coverage crosses 60 lakh hectares

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Sehore



Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday inaugurated both phases of the Rs 536.23 crore Seep-Amber Micro Irrigation Project at Bhairunda in Sehore district, promising assured irrigation to more than 8,000 farmers across 76 villages.

The project will cover 30,091 hectares in the Bhairunda development block of Budhni Assembly constituency. Narmada water will reach farmland through underground pipelines, enabling efficient irrigation using sprinkler and drip systems.

Addressing a public gathering, Yadav said reliable irrigation was central to increasing agricultural income and strengthening rural prosperity. He maintained that the government was committed to bringing water to every field and reducing farmers' dependence on uncertain rainfall.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated nine completed development works worth more than Rs 575 crore and performed bhoomi pujan for 10 projects costing Rs 2.61 crore. Together, the 19 works are valued at Rs 577.67 crore.

Yadav said Madhya Pradesh's irrigated area had expanded from 7.5 lakh hectares in 2002-03 to 40 lakh hectares by 2023. He claimed another 20 lakh hectares had been added over the past two and a half years, taking the total beyond 60 lakh hectares.

The government was working towards daytime electricity supply for irrigation, alongside roads, schools and industrial investment, he added. Describing the current year as Farmer Welfare Year, he said agriculture needed support from allied activities including dairy farming, fisheries, poultry and animal husbandry.

Yadav said cooperation with the National Dairy Development Board had helped Sanchi Dairy farmers receive Rs 5 to Rs 8 more per litre of milk. He reiterated the state's ambition to become India's leading milk producer, from its current third position.

Farmers practising natural farming would receive Rs 1,000 monthly assistance per cow, he said, while grants to recognised cow shelters had risen from Rs 20 to Rs 40 per animal. Large shelters accommodating 10,000 cattle were also being developed in municipal corporation areas.

On broader welfare measures, the Chief Minister said eligible Ladli Behna beneficiaries were receiving Rs 1,500 each month, with Rs 60,000 crore transferred since the scheme began. He also cited expanding Sandipani Schools, recruitment against 85,000 government posts and plans to hold the MPPSC examination twice next year.

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, joining virtually from New Delhi, described the irrigation project as the fulfilment of a long-standing promise to farmers. He called for an additional phase to serve villages in the Ichhawar region and said completion of the Chhipaner project would benefit Khategaon.

Chouhan said the Centre and state would jointly prepare an agricultural development roadmap and explore a pilot initiative linking villages with self-employment opportunities to improve livelihoods and reduce poverty.

Water Resources Minister Tulsiram Silawat said the state aimed to expand irrigation coverage to 100 lakh hectares.

Temperatures plunge across state

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh continues to experience intense winter conditions, with Bhopal recording a colder night than hill station Shimla. While Shimla registered a minimum temperature of 9 degrees Celsius, Bhopal recorded 8.6 degrees.

Cold wave conditions have persisted across Bhopal district for three consecutive days, intensifying morning and evening chill. The Meteorological Department issued another cold wave alert for Friday, warning of chilly winds in Katni, Damoh and Shajapur.

On Thursday night, nine cities recorded temperatures below 10 degrees Celsius, while 32 cities registered minimum temperatures below 15 degrees.

Bhopal has experienced unusually severe November cold for three consecutive years. The temperature dropped to 8.2 degrees on November 23–24, followed by 8.8 degrees the next night.

Weather officials attributed the conditions to snowfall in northern hill states and cold northerly winds.

Temperatures could decline by another two degrees within two days, bringing intensified cold, morning haze and chilly daytime winds.

Bhopal's November temperature record remains 6.1 degrees, registered on November 30, 1941. The cold spell has also prompted changes in school timings to protect students from the morning chill.



Students present a cultural programme during the 59th annual function of PM Shri Primary Section Demonstration Multipurpose School in Bhopal on Friday.

State to integrate government portals with JanParichay

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

Additional Chief Secretary, General Administration Department, Shiv Shekhar Shukla on Friday said the JanParichay National Single Sign-On (NSSO) platform would simplify access to government services by allowing citizens to use multiple portals through a single login.

Addressing a state-level workshop on 'JanParichay – Meri Pehchan' at RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration and Management in Bhopal district, Shukla emphasised that digital governance must save citizens' time while ensuring data privacy and security.

Organised by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, the workshop focused on effective implementation and technical integration of the platform.

Shukla said secure automation would reduce repeated registrations and authentication requirements, including frequent OTP verification. Once authenticated, citizens could access integrated services without maintaining separate credentials for each department.

He stressed that verified citizen information could facilitate efficient service delivery across departments while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

NIC Madhya Pradesh Deputy Director General and State Informatics Officer Sunil Jain said the platform would provide access to integrated portals of the state government, Central government and other states through one account.

He announced that departmental portals and applications would be reviewed over the next one to two months for integration, with technical teams providing necessary assistance.

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection Commissioner Dinesh Jain said major departmental applications covering the Public Distribution System and minimum support price procurement would also be integrated within the prescribed timeline.

Technical sessions demonstrated registration, Know Your Customer verification, single-click onboarding, user-profile mapping and authentication procedures.

NIC experts explained plug-and-play authentication, reducing the need for departments to develop separate login, OTP and password-recovery systems.

Presentations covered OAuth 2.0, OpenID Connect, SAML, API-based integration, token management, cybersecurity compliance and testing in staging environments.

The platform supports identity verification through Aadhaar, PAN, driving licences and application-based credentials, alongside multifactor authentication using OTPs, backup codes and tokens.

Officials were also briefed on real-time session analytics designed to identify suspicious activity and strengthen account security.

NIC experts VTV Ramana, Dayal Khandelwal and Sanjay Sharma addressed technical integration, system architecture and practical implementation challenges.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav releases a commemorative postage stamp on Acharya Vidyasagar ji Maharaj at Vidyoday Teerth Parisar in Bhopal on Friday. Pioneer photo

Ajay Singh's photograph with CEC sparks political row

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Bhopal

A photograph showing senior Congress leader and former Leader of Opposition Ajay Singh Rahul alongside Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar at a wedding reception has sparked a political controversy in Madhya Pradesh, with the BJP questioning Singh's claim that he did not recognise the election official.

The photograph was taken during the November 23 wedding celebrations of Divyanshu, son of Economic Offences Wing Director General Upendra Jain, in Bhopal district. Singh uploaded pictures from the function to Facebook, including one featuring Kumar, Assembly Speaker Narendra Singh Tomar and Jain.

Asked about the photograph while attending the Congress Constitution Protection March in Jabalpur, Singh said he had shared it himself and was unaware that the man standing nearby was the Chief Election Commissioner.

Explaining his presence at the function, Singh said Jain had served as the first Superintendent of Police of Sidhi district and that he had attended the family celebration because of their longstanding association. According to Singh, Tomar and several other guests were standing together when a photograph was taken, but nobody introduced Kumar to him.

Singh maintained that his position on the Election Commission had not changed. He reiterated the Congress demand for Kumar's resignation and said there was no question of holding discussions with him before he stepped down.

The controversy comes amid protests by Congress leaders who have accused the Election Commission of favouring the BJP and raised allegations of electoral irregularities and bias in the Special Intensive Revision exercise. Those allegations remain disputed.

Kumar arrived in Bhopal on November 23 and reportedly left for Delhi on the morning of November 25. Later that day, Congress workers gathered outside the state party headquarters and burnt his effigy during a protest.

The reception was also attended by Congress leaders Kamleshwar Patel and women's wing president Reena Borasi Setia, along with several prominent BJP figures and public representatives.

Reacting to Singh's explanation, BJP state vice-president Surendra Sharma questioned why a photograph taken at a private function required any clarification. In a post on X, he argued that political opponents could attend the same social gathering without compromising their positions.

Sharma mocked Singh's assertion that he had not recognised Kumar and urged him to acknowledge the meeting without hesitation. He also questioned whether pressure from the Congress leadership had prompted the explanation.

The exchange has added another dimension to the continuing political confrontation over the Election Commission. No discussion between Singh and Kumar was reported publicly.

The controversy has also intensified political debate over the interaction between opposition leaders and constitutional authorities amid ongoing disputes over electoral transparency.

Neck injuries raise murder suspicion in woman's death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhind

A 20-year-old woman was found dead on National Highway 552 near Fardua turn in Bhind district early Friday, prompting an investigation into the circumstances of her death.

The deceased was identified as Reena Vishwakarma, a resident of Kurchaniya Mohalla in Daboh. Passersby noticed her body on the road around 4 am and alerted police. Lahar Sub-Divisional Officer of Police Praveen Tripathi visited the scene, while Daboh police secured the body for examination.

Police found marks on the woman's neck and her clothes in disarray, raising suspicions of foul play. Investigators are examining whether she was killed elsewhere and her body subsequently brought to the highway. However, officers stressed that the cause of death remains unconfirmed pending postmortem findings.

Reena had left her home around 6 pm on Thursday without taking her mobile phone. Her family had not filed a missing-person complaint before the body was discovered.

Her father, Jagmohan Vishwakarma, had died earlier. She lived with her mother in Ward 15 of Daboh, while her two brothers reside in Maharashtra. Her marriage had reportedly been arranged for April in Madhogarh, Uttar Pradesh.

Family members have expressed suspicion about a man with whom she was reportedly in a relationship. Police have not established his involvement and are questioning relatives to reconstruct her movements after leaving home.

Daboh station in-charge Ravi Upadhyay said an unnatural-death inquiry had been registered and conclusions would depend on the postmortem report.

Investigators are examining her phone records, last calls and footage from nearby CCTV cameras to identify people she contacted and establish how she reached the highway.

Police are also investigating whether a vehicle was used to transport or abandon the body.

More staff for temple counters

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Ujjain

Mahakaleshwar Temple Management Committee Administrator and Additional Collector Pratham Kaushik inspected facilities near Avantika Gate No. 1 at the Mahakaleshwar temple complex in Ujjain district.

During the inspection, Kaushik reviewed darshan arrangements, cleanliness, drinking water facilities and the functioning of the reverse osmosis (RO) plant.

He examined various counters operating within the temple premises and directed officials to improve their capacity to ensure convenient movement of devotees.

Special instructions were issued to expand mobile phone locker facilities, quick darshan ticket counters and the free shoe-stand facility to prevent overcrowding and inconvenience.

Emphasising efficient management, Kaushik directed authorities to deploy additional staff at counters and ensure employees discharge their responsibilities diligently.

PC Sharma under scrutiny over alleged fake video of BJP chief

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

The Bhopal Crime Branch is preparing to question senior Congress leader and former minister PC Sharma over allegations that he shared a manipulated video of BJP national president Nitin Nabin on social media. Police will issue a notice seeking his appearance as part of the investigation.

The development follows a complaint lodged by a BJP delegation with Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime and Cyber) Akhil Patel on November 24, demanding action against Sharma for allegedly circulating misleading content.

According to Crime Branch officials, Santosh Verma, 57, a resident of Chhatrasal Nagar Phase-2 in Piplani, Bhopal district, submitted a complaint alleging that a fabricated video featuring Nabin was being circulated across social media platforms.

The complainant alleged that Sharma had also shared the disputed clip through his Facebook account, potentially misleading viewers and hurting the sentiments of BJP workers.

Verma provided investigators with what he described as the original recording, claiming that the viral version had been created by manipulating its contents.

In the disputed video, Nabin is purportedly heard speaking at an event in Chandigarh about Pakistani ministers visiting India as delegates and suggesting that the decision was taken under pressure from China.

Police said the authenticity of the recording and the circumstances surrounding its circulation would be examined during the investigation.

Investigators plan to compare the original footage with the viral clip to establish whether any alterations were made and identify their possible source.

Sharma will also be questioned about how he obtained the video, whether he verified its authenticity and why he shared it on social media.

The Crime Branch has registered a case following the complaint and initiated further proceedings.

Man gets 120 years in fraud case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Betul

A special court in Betul district on Thursday sentenced a man to 120 years of rigorous imprisonment for cheating retired coal mine employees of Rs 1.13 crore by promising to double their investments.

Convict Chandrakishore Deshmukh, a resident of Mathardev Colony in Sarni, received sentences under 20 separate counts, with the court ordering consecutive imprisonment.

The court also imposed a fine of approximately Rs 1.13 crore, to be distributed among the victims as compensation.

Special Public Prosecutor Shashikant Nagle said Deshmukh impersonated a bank field officer and persuaded retired employees to invest their retirement savings by promising unusually high returns.

The fraud surfaced after retired employee Navtaram lodged a complaint on April 19, 2018, alleging that Deshmukh had taken Rs 15 lakh from him. Several other retirees were similarly cheated of substantial amounts.

Six excise personnel injured in attack during liquor raid

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Ujjain

Six excise department personnel, including a woman sub-inspector, were injured after villagers allegedly attacked a raiding team in Salnakhedi village under Makdon police station limits in Ujjain district on Thursday. Three personnel sustained serious injuries in the violence.

The attackers allegedly assaulted officials, pelted stones from rooftops, vandalised government vehicles and snatched seized illicit liquor, cash, wallets and official identity cards.

Police have arrested two persons, identified as Jagdish Chauhan (43) and his son Kuldeep Chauhan (19), both residents of Salnakhedi, while efforts are underway to identify other suspects.

According to police, Sub-Inspector Rani Singh of the Tarana Excise Circle was conducting a patrol with approximately 15 personnel on November 26 when the team received information about illegal liquor being transported from Jagdish Chauhan's residence.

Acting on the tip-off, officials reached the location and allegedly found Jagdish carrying a bag containing pouches of illegally manufactured country liquor.

However, when the team initiated seizure proceedings, Jagdish allegedly summoned family members and associates, who launched an attack on the officials.

Several attackers reportedly hurled stones from nearby rooftops, forcing excise personnel to flee for safety. Police suspect that some women also participated in the assault.

The accused allegedly damaged official vehicles, forcibly recovered the seized liquor and snatched personal belongings from the personnel. They also reportedly threatened officials and obstructed them from discharging their duties.

Following a complaint lodged by Sub-Inspector Rani Singh, Makdon police registered a case under relevant legal provisions. The arrested father-son duo was scheduled to be produced before a court on Friday, with police seeking remand for further questioning.

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The Pioneer
BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

Two cops face action over medical lapse

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Gwalior

Two police personnel have been suspended after repeated failures to provide security escorts prevented a cancer-stricken prisoner at Gwalior Central Jail from attending a scheduled follow-up appointment at AIIMS, Delhi, despite 34 requests from prison authorities.

The lapse came under judicial scrutiny after the matter reached the High Court. Senior Superintendent of Police Dharmveer Singh submitted an affidavit acknowledging that the complete circumstances and relevant records had not been brought to his attention. He offered an unconditional apology for any inadvertent lapse.

The prisoner, Narhari, has been undergoing treatment for cancer at AIIMS. Following an examination on December 4, 2025, doctors scheduled his next consultation for March 12, 2026. However, the required police escort was not arranged, preventing him from travelling to Delhi.

According to the affidavit, Gwalior Central jail authorities sent 34 letters between March 10 and November 3 requesting armed or ordinary security personnel for the journey. Copies of the correspondence were available in police records, but no guards were provided.

A preliminary inquiry found that constable Devendra Bhadoria failed to forward the relevant file after the letters reached the police lines. Reserve Inspector Ranjit Singh Sikarwar was also found to have failed to discharge his responsibilities.

Both officials were suspended on November 26 and attached to the police lines. The Additional Superintendent of Police, Rural, has been directed to submit a detailed inquiry report within seven days.

Singh told the court that he had been attending training at the National Police Academy in Hyderabad from October 26 to November 20 and resumed duty on November 21. On November 24, he directed officials to place the complete preliminary inquiry record before him.

He also informed the court that guidance had been sought from the Director General of Police regarding allegations that facts were withheld in reports forwarded to police headquarters. Explanations are being sought from officials concerned before further action.

The episode has raised serious questions about coordination between prison and police authorities when inmates require specialised medical care. Narhari later received a referral to AIIMS from doctors at Jayarogya Hospital, but the missed follow-up remains central to the proceedings.

The investigation will examine why requests went unanswered and whether supervisory failures contributed to the delay in treatment. The incident has highlighted the urgent need for stronger accountability and coordination between police and prison authorities to ensure timely medical treatment for seriously ill inmates.

Blaze destroys stored materials

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Sagar

A fire broke out at a closed incense stick factory on Vijay Talkies Road in Sagar district on Friday night, destroying cardboard and other stored materials.

Residents noticed smoke and alerted police and firefighters. Two municipal fire engines rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after nearly two hours of firefighting.

The cause remains unclear, although residents suspect that firecrackers set off near the factory may have triggered the blaze.

Kotwali police have launched an investigation to establish the exact cause of the incident. No injuries were reported in the incident.



Players compete during the second semi-final match played between India and Malaysia at the ninth edition of the Madhya Pradesh Asian Women's Hockey Championships Trophy-2026 at Nathu Barkheda Stadium in Bhopal on Friday. India beats Malaysia 6-2. Pioneer photo



Sringeri Sharada Peetham Jagadguru Shankaracharya Anant Shri Vibhushit Vidhushekhar Bharti Mahaswamiji during a visit to Mahakaleshwar Temple Jyotirlinga in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh on Friday. Pioneer photo

Digvijaya demands dissolution of Ram Temple Trust, targets BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Orchha

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh demanded the dissolution of the existing Ram Temple Trust during his Satya Sanatan Swabhiman Yatra in Orchha, Niwari district, alleging irregularities in the management of temple affairs and questioning the role of organisations associated with the Ram temple movement.

Bihar folk singer Neha Singh Rathore also participated in the programme, performing songs that criticised alleged irregularities in donations collected in the name of religion. Singh was seen enjoying her performances alongside supporters.

Addressing the gathering, Singh alleged that those responsible for the alleged theft involving Lord Ram should not continue as members of the temple trust. He called for its dissolution and demanded accountability from those managing religious institutions.

The Congress leader also questioned claims made by the BJP and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh regarding their contributions to the Ram temple movement, arguing that several other organisations and individuals had played significant roles.

Referring to historical developments, Singh claimed that the foundation stone ceremony for the Ram temple took place during Rajiv Gandhi's tenure. He also highlighted decisions taken by the PV Narasimha Rao government concerning 67 acres of land and the proposed involvement of religious organisations in temple administration.

Singh accused the BJP and Vishva Hindu Parishad of exploiting religious sentiments for political gains. He urged devotees to question leaders collecting donations in the name of faith.

He also referred to a signboard outside his residence declaring that alleged donation thieves were prohibited from entering.

During his address, Singh narrated the legend associated with Orchha's Ram Raja Temple, explaining how the Bundela queen brought Lord Ram's idol from Ayodhya following her devotion and penance.

According to the traditional account, Lord Ram appeared in her dream and directed her to retrieve the idol, stipulating that it would remain wherever it was first installed.

Singh said this belief explained why Lord Ram is worshipped as a king in Orchha.

A lighter moment occurred when Singh referred to the royal palace where the idol was installed. His wife, Amrita Singh, interrupted to remind him that the palace also belonged to the queen, prompting laughter and applause.

The programme included religious ceremonies at the Ram Raja Temple, where Singh offered prayers alongside devotees.

Thousands of participants also gathered at Kanchana Ghat on the Betwa River for the preparation of Parthiv Shivlings. Shiva worship and Kanya Bhoj were among the activities organised during the yatra.

Computer Baba also shared the stage with Singh during the programme, which combined religious observances with political criticism. Singh's allegations against the temple trust and political organisations remain his claims.

Family alleges police assault during daughter's last rites

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

A Pardhi community family has accused police personnel and villagers of assaulting them during a ceremony to bury their deceased daughter's ashes at Kadaiyashah village under Berasia police station limits in Bhopal district.

Krishna Bai, the girl's mother, submitted complaints to the Collector and DIG, alleging that police personnel, including Sub-Inspector Kaurav, attacked family members with sticks during the ceremony.

She alleged that a pregnant woman was struck in the abdomen and her 20-year-old son, Rajiv, was forcibly taken away by police personnel. The family claims Rajiv remains missing and fears he may have been abducted or killed.

According to the complaint, Krishna Bai's 14-year-old daughter had earlier suffered alleged mistreatment. The family claimed that despite approaching police authorities, the girl received no protection and was instead subjected to intimidation.

The mother and daughter subsequently moved to Rajasthan, where the teenager allegedly stopped eating because of psychological distress and later died.

Following her death, the family returned to Kadaiyashah to perform traditional rituals involving the burial of her ashes.

Krishna Bai alleged that three family members were assaulted during the ceremony and that police ignored their emergency call. She demanded an impartial investigation, action against those responsible and immediate efforts to locate Rajiv.

However, Berasia police station in-charge Rambabu Choudhary presented a different account.

He said the family's five-acre property had been sold three years earlier for Rs 7 lakh, following which they relocated to Guna.

According to Choudhary, the family attempted to bury the girl's ashes on the previously sold land, prompting objections from its current owners.

He alleged that landowners Govardhan Meena, Ghota Meena and Jagdish Meena, along with their associates, attacked Krishna Bai's husband.

Police personnel intervened following a Dial 112 emergency call to prevent further violence and disperse the gathering, he said.

Senior officials ordered an inquiry on November 27 to examine the conflicting allegations and establish the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The inquiry will also examine the family's allegations concerning Rajiv's disappearance.

Uma Bharti clarifies poll ticket remarks, denies arrogance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Uma Bharti on Friday clarified her controversial remarks about receiving a ticket for the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, saying her statement at Gwalior railway station in Gwalior district reflected reality rather than arrogance.

In a post on X, the senior BJP leader maintained that the party had never simply handed her an election ticket. Instead, she said, party leaders had repeatedly persuaded her to contest elections.

The clarification followed criticism of her remarks during an interaction with journalists at Gwalior station two days earlier. Asked about her electoral plans, Bharti had sharply questioned who could offer her a ticket, insisting that she alone decided whether to contest.

Bharti said leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had risen from ordinary backgrounds through sustained public service and earned the trust of citizens and party workers. Political responsibilities, she argued, followed from their contribution and public acceptance.

She described the formal allocation of an election ticket as a procedural requirement and said three factors mattered more: an individual's willingness, the need for their participation and their capacity to contribute.

Referring to state politics, Bharti expressed satisfaction with Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's performance but said his success also depended on cooperation from elected representatives at every level.

She also revisited her longstanding campaign against alcohol abuse. Responding to questions about deaths linked to suspected toxic liquor and health camps outside liquor outlets, Bharti praised the liquor policy framed during Shivraj Singh Chouhan's tenure, claiming she had helped shape its provisions in detail.

However, she said enforcement could not depend entirely on police action. Panchayat representatives, legislators and members of Parliament should share responsibility for addressing alcohol-related problems in their communities.

Bharti called for de-addiction centres in every district to assist people seeking to stop drinking.

Her latest statement sought to distinguish personal political independence from disrespect towards the BJP, following speculation generated by the widely circulated railway station remarks.

Mayor orders Rs 5L penalty over slow water tank construction

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Ujjain

Mayor Mukesh Tatwal on Friday directed officials to impose a Rs 5 lakh penalty on a construction agency for slow progress on water tank projects under the Hariyakhedi scheme in Ujjain district.

Accompanied by Water Works Committee in-charge Prakash Sharma, Additional Commissioner Pawan Kumar Singh and officials, Tatwal inspected several construction sites.

These included a 30-lakh-litre tank near Shastri Nagar ground, a 20-lakh-litre facility at Ved Nagar, another 30-lakh-litre tank between Nanakheda and Shanti Palace Road, and 22-lakh-litre tanks in Dussehra Maidan and Revenue Colony areas.

Expressing dissatisfaction with the sluggish progress, the Mayor instructed contractors to deploy additional workers and resources to accelerate construction.

He emphasised that all 16 water tanks being developed under the project must be completed before Simhastha 2028 to ensure adequate drinking water for residents and visiting devotees. MIC member Kailash Prajapat, councillor Abha Kushwaha and Executive Engineer Rahul Suryavanshi were among those present during the inspection.

Central Bank disburses over Rs 80 cr in farm loans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Jabalpur

Central Bank of India organised a nationwide Mega Agricultural Loan Outreach Campaign at Mahakaushal Chamber Trust in Jabalpur district on Friday, sanctioning and disbursing agricultural loans worth more than Rs 80 crore.

The programme, conducted by the bank's Jabalpur Regional Office, aimed to strengthen agricultural financing and improve access to institutional credit for farmers and self-help groups.

More than 150 farmers, self-help group members and banking correspondents participated enthusiastically in the outreach initiative.



The event was attended by Central Bank of India Regional Head Avinash Kumar, Assistant General Manager Sudhir Kumar and Anjula Jha, District Programme Manager of the State Rural Livelihood Mission, Jabalpur.

Special emphasis was placed on sanctioning and distributing loans to self-help groups, reflecting the bank's efforts to support rural livelihoods and expand financial inclusion.

The programme provided an opportunity for farmers and rural beneficiaries to access agricultural credit facilities through the banking system.

Jabalpur Lead District Manager Divakar Thakur and Chief Managers Vivek Kumar, Sanjay Kumar and Amritanshu Jain were also present.

The initiative highlighted the bank's commitment to supporting agricultural activities and strengthening rural credit delivery.

UNICEF calls for an end to child marriage

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal

A gathering highlighting the urgent need to eliminate child marriage and gender-based violence brought together students, social workers, communication professionals and youth volunteers at Kachra Cafe in Bhopal district on Friday.

Organised to promote awareness about girls' rights and their freedom to shape their futures, the programme witnessed participation from around 20 individuals who engaged in discussions, creative activities and symbolic expressions of solidarity.

A colourful rangoli displaying the message, "Let us come together to build a child marriage-free Madhya Pradesh," formed the centrepiece of the event.

Participants also lit candles before dolls symbolising girls forced into marriage before turning 18. The activity highlighted how child marriage deprives girls of education, childhood experiences and opportunities to make independent decisions about their lives.

Addressing the gathering, UNICEF Madhya Pradesh Communication Specialist Anil Gulati emphasised that ending child marriage requires sustained awareness and collective responsibility.

He said families, communities and young people must work together to challenge harmful practices and ensure that every girl receives opportunities to pursue education, develop her abilities and determine her future.



Gulati stressed that meaningful change would emerge when communities collectively rejected child marriage and recognised the importance of protecting girls' aspirations and dignity.

The programme was attended by Atul Vishwakarma from the Bhopal School of Social Sciences (BSSS), communication professional Pinky Tiwari, social worker Deepmala and Ruchika Sharma from Kalakunj Foundation.

Students from BSSS, youth volunteers and social media influencers also participated. UNICEF representatives Amarjeet and Shambhavi were present during the discussions.

The gathering coincided with the first International Day for the Elimination of Child, Early and Forced Marriage, observed on November 27 following its proclamation by the United Nations General Assembly.

The occasion also marked the second anniversary of India's Bal Vivah Mukt Bharat campaign, launched on November 27, 2024, to strengthen nationwide efforts against child marriage.

Held during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, observed from November 25 to December 10, the programme highlighted the importance of safeguarding girls from harmful social practices.

Participants discussed the role of education, community engagement and awareness in preventing early marriage while encouraging girls to assert their rights.

The event concluded with a collective commitment to promote a society where girls can complete their education, pursue personal ambitions and make informed decisions without discrimination or coercion.

Organisers emphasised that eliminating child marriage requires continued dialogue, social participation and shared accountability across communities throughout Madhya Pradesh.

The initiative encouraged communities to safeguard girls' childhood and future opportunities.

Vishwarang emerges as global cultural movement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bhopal



The eighth edition of Vishwarang Pravasi Utsav 2026 commenced at Rabindranath Tagore University (RNTU) in Bhopal district on Friday, bringing together writers, academicians, linguists and cultural representatives from more than 20 countries.

The three-day festival, scheduled from November 27 to 29, focuses on promoting Indian languages, literature, art and culture internationally while strengthening connections with the Indian diaspora.

The inaugural ceremony featured a colourful procession and a Dhrupad group performance. Distinguished literary personalities were honoured with Vishwarang Language Awards and International Hindi Olympiad recognitions.

Addressing the gathering, Vishwarang Director and RNTU Chancellor Dr Santosh Choubey described the initiative as a growing global cultural movement connecting more than one million people.

He emphasised that Vishwarang was promoting not only Hindi but also Urdu, Sanskrit and other Indian languages and dialects, while providing an international platform for literary expression.

Pro-Chancellor Dr Aditi Chaturvedi Vats said Vishwarang's journey, which began with participation from 15 countries, had expanded to more than 70 nations, reaching over five crore people through digital and cultural platforms.

She stressed the importance of engaging younger generations with Indian languages and expanding collaborations with international universities and cultural institutions.

Dr Jawahar Karnawat highlighted Vishwarang's contribution to diaspora literature, noting that more than 100 literary works had been published through the initiative.

Several thematic sessions examined the contribution of overseas Indians to India's freedom struggle, preservation of cultural identity among younger generations and the evolving role of Hindi journalism.

Senior journalist Vijay Dutt Shridhar said indentured Indian labourers had preserved their cultural traditions while contributing significantly to the development of countries where they settled.

Speakers from Mauritius, the United Kingdom and New Zealand discussed challenges surrounding language preservation, cultural transitions and identity among younger diaspora communities.

A session on the changing role of Hindi media highlighted misinformation, ethical journalism, fact-checking and the increasing influence of digital algorithms on news distribution.

Another discussion explored Hindi's growing importance in international relations, cultural diplomacy and global communication.

Prominent participants included Padma Shri Umakant Gundecha, Professor Uday Narayan Singh, ICCR Deputy Director General Dr Rajesh Ranjan and several international scholars.

The festival will continue until November 29 with discussions aimed at strengthening linguistic diversity, international cultural cooperation and connections between India and its global diaspora.

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IN FOCUS



Women carry kalash on their heads during a religious procession in Amritsar on Friday PTI

Lack of compassion root cause of all problems across globe: Bhagwat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi



Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said the absence of compassion is the root cause of all problems facing the country and the world, and called for "globalisation of compassion".

Speaking at the launch of Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi's book 'Karunanayak Ram', Bhagwat said every problem -- national or international; past, present or future — has its origin in the lack of karuna (compassion).

"Whether it is a problem of the country or outside the country, of today, of the past or of the future, the root of all of them lies in one place: in the absence of compassion," he said. "I heard the idea of the 'globalisation of compassion' for the first time from Kailash ji. There is a great need for this," he added.

Invoking the epic Ramayana, Bhagwat said the difference between Ravan and Ram was that Ravan was driven by ahankar, or ego, while Ram was the embodiment of karuna, or compassion.

Ego, he explained, is the inability to go beyond "I and mine". Bhagwant said people appear different in form, complexion and behaviour, yet the underlying reality is that "we are all connected from within" and form one whole.

"This oneness is the absolute and permanent truth," the RSS chief said, adding, "Until the world and the environment are happy, no individual or nation can remain truly happy."

He described compassion not as a special quality but as the natural expression of humanity that arises from the realisation of oneness.

"Wars and conflicts stem from the narrow sense of 'I and mine'," he added.

Referring to India's civilisational ethos, Bhagwat said the eternal form of dharma is compassion and that the country now has the responsibility to lead by sharing and giving.

Tripura civic polls record 80.69 per cent turnout



Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha shows his ink-marked finger and a victory sign after casting his vote for the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) elections at a polling station in Agartala PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Agartala

Nearly 81 per cent of voters exercised their franchise in elections to 16 urban local bodies in Tripura on Friday, with polling passing off largely peacefully barring a few sporadic incidents in Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC) areas, an official said.

The ruling BJP has already won five civic bodies unopposed. "An average 80.69 per cent voting was recorded in the elections to 16 urban local bodies. The final polling percentage will be shared later. Polling was largely peaceful barring a few incidents in AMC areas," State Election Commissioner Pradip Kumar Chakravarty said.

He said the state election commission had received complaints from various political parties and individuals alleging threats, attacks and intimidation on polling day. "We are examining these complaints for taking lawful action," he said, adding that DGP GS Rao had been asked to take action against masked political activists allegedly moving around polling booths. Congratulating the electorate for joining the voting process, BJP state president Abhishek Debroy said polling was largely peaceful, with people turning out in large numbers to exercise their democratic rights.

"There was no violence or bomb blast during the polling day, unlike during the Communist regime. A few untoward incidents may take place in an election, but police have been asked to act as per law," he told reporters. Asked about allegations of threats, attacks on some CPI(M) candidates and intimidation, Debroy said the State Election Commission would examine the complaints. Alleging largescale rigging across the state, the Left Front demanded re-election in seven civic bodies, including AMC.

"A large number of voters were dragged out of the queues from polling booths and many electors were not allowed to proceed toward the booths to cast votes.

At least nine Left candidates of AMC, including seven women, were physically assaulted by ruling party-backed goons," Left Front convener Manik Dey said during a press conference. Dey said considering the large-scale rigging, violence, attacks on candidates, threats and intimidation, the Left Front and the CPI(M) have written a letter to the SEC demanding repoll in seven civic bodies including AMC. Describing the voting as 'farce', senior Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman accused the state poll panel and police of failing to perform their duty.

Thousands of voters were pushed out of queues in front of polling booths in the presence of security personnel.

Jalgaon-linked ₹50 lakh insurance fraud may be behind Surat canal murders, say cops

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Surat



A suspected ₹50 lakh insurance fraud in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district could be the motive behind the killing of five members of a family in Gujarat's Surat district on November 21, police said on Friday.

Four bodies have been recovered from a canal here, while one remains missing. A 13-year-old boy, the sole survivor of the incident, had alerted the police about the crime on November 21, an official said.

One person has been arrested in the case, while a search for three other accused is underway, he added. It is suspected that the family was murdered to prevent them from revealing details of an alleged insurance fraud in which some of the accused were involved, Bardoli rural police inspector PN Jadeja said.

"There could be a connection. We will know the complete picture only after we go to Maharashtra and arrest the other accused. We suspect this was done specifically over an insurance fraud," Jadeja said.

Jadeja said Kavita Patil, one of the victims, was previously married to Sanjay alias Sanju Patil, whose death was allegedly staged as a fatal road accident to fraudulently claim insurance money. Nitin Patil, who later married Kavita, had lodged a complaint in connection with the alleged insurance fraud involving Sanjay's death, Jadeja said.

"Nitin and Kavita were subsequently living together. It is suspected the accused, who wanted to claim Rs 50 lakh as insurance over Sanjay's death, feared the couple could expose the alleged insurance scam and lead police to other people involved in it. Two FIRs relating to alleged insurance fraud were recently registered in Jalgaon district, in which Nitin and Kavita were made co-accused," Jadeja said.

One of the cases was registered at Mehunbare police station on November 19 on a complaint by an insurance consultant. The case was registered under Sections 318(4) and 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for cheating and criminal conspiracy. The FIR alleges that four persons, including Kavita, conspired to raise a fraudulent motor accident insurance claim of ₹50 lakh by submitting fabricated documents in connection with the death of Sanjay Patil in an alleged road accident on June 9, 2025. The insurance company had reportedly disbursed Rs 10 lakh against the claim, according to the complaint.

"The accused may have felt the insurance fraud would come to light as Kavita and Nitin have been named as co-accused, and so decided to eliminate the labourer couple and their children to prevent them from disclosing details of the alleged conspiracy," he said.

The murders took place on November 21 in the Sejwad canal area under Bardoli rural police station limits here.

The family was allegedly lured to Surat on the pretext of arranging accommodation and an auto-rickshaw for their livelihood. The accused allegedly threw them into the canal in Bardoli, as per the police. So far, the bodies of Nitin, Kavita, their 9-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son have been recovered, while the eldest son remains missing.

A 13-year-old boy managed to swim ashore and narrated the incident, following which a murder case was registered on the complaint of his elder sister. Jadeja said the boy identified one of the accused, Dayanand Bhadane, as an acquaintance of his father.

"Bhadane, a resident of Jalgaon district, was arrested on Thursday and has been remanded in 8-day police custody. Three others are absconding," Jadeja said.

A joint team of Gujarat and Maharashtra police is investigating the case, with the probe now focusing on the alleged insurance fraud angle and the possible involvement of other persons in the conspiracy.

FROM PAGE - 1

BSF shifts parade to Delhi amid...

The clashes have claimed at least 306 lives, left thousands homeless, and left 49 people missing.

"The Raising Day event could now be held in Delhi. The cancellation of the event will incur a high cost in terms of monetary expenditure and workforce movement," a senior officer said.

The force had already undertaken large-scale logistical preparations, moving around 3,000 troops and officers, along with weapons, artillery, and camel, horse, and canine units, from different parts of the country to Manipur for the parade. The event typically features a grand ceremonial parade in which troops march in full regalia before a VIP, usually the Union Home Minister or the Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Preparations had been publicly highlighted earlier. On November 12, the BSF stated on its social media handles that the Director General had visited the STC in Churachandpur to assess arrangements for the Raising Day celebrations. "He reviewed the arrangements and expressed satisfaction that all preparations are progressing as per schedule. Concerted efforts are underway to ensure the seamless conduct of the parade and celebrations, befitting the traditions and ethos of the Force," the force said at the time.

A senior officer also pointed out the huge cost and logistical difficulty of moving troops, equipment, and special units back across the country.

BSF Raising Day is a big annual event for the force. It celebrates the force's foundation and showcases its operational capability through a parade. With the Manipur plan now off the table, the event is proceeding as planned, with a parade in Delhi on 1st December.

The cancellation follows the ongoing ethnic violence in Manipur, which has completely disrupted life in several districts, including Churachandpur. Security agencies are, of course, keeping a close eye on the situation, and the fact that intelligence informed the venue change clearly shows how fragile the state's security remains.

Cabinet clears Delimitation Bill

The bill was brought in Parliament by the Government during a special sitting in April, but it could not be passed as the ruling dispensation could not muster strength in the Lok Sabha. The Government has now claimed that it has the numbers to get the legislation through.

The proposed expansion of the Lok Sabha and delimitation of constituencies have triggered wide-ranging debate centred on the representation of States-fears of a widening north-south divide, for instance, going up against the argument that more seats would mean smaller constituencies and therefore make MPs more accessible.

While the Government has made a case for increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha and facilitating the rollout of the women's quota in 2029, its critics have questioned the need for a sweeping expansion and raised concerns over the distribution of additional seats among States and the redrawing of constituency boundaries.

The current allocation of Lok Sabha seats among States remains broadly based on the 1971 Census, when India's population stood at around 55 crore. The country's population has since nearly tripled without a corresponding increase in the strength of the Lower House.

Article 81 of the Constitution envisages, as far as practicable, a uniform population-to-seat ratio across States. In 1976, the Indira Gandhi Government froze the allocation of Lok Sabha seats among States based on the 1971 Census to ensure that States pursuing population control were not disadvantaged. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government extended the freeze in 2001 until the publication of the relevant figures of the first census conducted after 2026.

The government's fresh legislative proposal seeks to address a key concern of the southern states by providing a uniform 50 per cent increase in the Lok Sabha seats for all states and extending the freeze on their relative share in the House until 2051. Clearing the air about its stand, NCP(SP) leader NCP(SP) said, "Pawar saheb told us that as per constitutional provisions, delimitation has to be done. Supriya tai and the MPs have taken a decision. Our party will support the delimitation."

Earlier in the day, NCP(SP) working president Supriya Sule said she would not attend the INDIA bloc meeting as her father, Sharad Pawar, was ailing. The party will send its MPs for the meeting. The NCP (SP) on Friday issued a whip directing its Lok Sabha MPs to remain present in the House from November 30. NCP (SP) has eight MPs in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha.

The Opposition bloc is looking to close ranks and fight the Government's move unitedly. It would be interesting to see whether non-INDIA bloc parties such as DMK, AAP and BJD respond to Kharge's invite.

DMK president MK Stalin on Friday asserted that Tamil Nadu's existing 7.18 per cent share of seats in the Lok Sabha should not be reduced under any circumstances.

SC orders lamp lighting, slams Govt

The court said the executive authorities in Tamil Nadu cannot decide whether judicial orders deserve to be obeyed. It underscored that the rule of law is supreme and all authorities, civil and judicial, in the territory of India should act in aid of the Supreme Court. "The concept of the rule of law is supreme in a democratic society.

The Preamble of the Constitution reflects the contours under which the people of India have solemnly resolved to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Article 144 of the Constitution mandates that all authorities, civil and judicial, in the territory of India shall act in aid of the Supreme Court," the bench said.

"An order of this court is not an invitation to negotiate. It binds the State, its officers and every statutory or religious institution functioning under the State's law until this Court itself modifies it. Any attempt to pollute the stream of justice by any person, however high he may be, would not be tolerated. This is the message which we intend to convey in this order," the apex court said. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Archaeological Survey of India, told the bench that the ASI was informed by the temple trustees that they had received no instructions from higher officials regarding their entry.

"My respectful submission is... this is a case of aggravated contempt and administrative arrogance. The government has been opposing from the beginning," the SG said.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the Madurai collector, contradicted Mehta's submission, saying ASI officials were consulted and multiple meetings were held with them. He said the top court should first decide whether any prima facie contempt was committed. Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for the Madurai police commissioner, told the court that over 5,000 personnel were deployed to ensure no breach of law and order occurred, and that prohibitory orders were issued.

"We will see whether you are shedding real or crocodile tears," the bench told the Madurai police commissioner.

As the hearing commenced, the top court clarified that it would not go into the main matter and would confine itself to the non-compliance of its November 20 order permitting the lighting of the Karthigai Deepam lamp at Deepathoon as a one-time measure on November 24.

The court was hearing contempt petitions and other applications on the controversy surrounding the non-lighting of the ceremonial lamp at Deepathoon.

Senior advocate S Guru Krishna Kumar, appearing for contempt petitioner Karthikeyan, submitted that the Tamil Nadu government had decided at the outset that it would not permit the lighting of the lamp and the preliminary report submitted by them was like a confession.

Advocate Devyani Gupta appeared for Hazrat Sultan Sikandar Badusha Avuliya Dargah.

Despite the apex court's permission, the Karthigai Deepam was lit only at its customary Uchipillayar mandapam at Thirupparankundram on November 24 and not at Deepathoon.

Strobe Talbott, architect of India-US ties...

Their 14 meetings in seven countries across three continents laid the groundwork for President Clinton's 2000 visit to India. This was the first visit by a US president to India in 22 years, which helped end fifty years of estrangement between the world's two largest democracies.

The Talbott-Singh talks also laid the foundation for a civil nuclear agreement between India and the US, thus ending New Delhi's long nuclear winter. During his discussions with Singh, Talbott underscored five "benchmarks" for India: sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), halt production of fissile material, show restraint in deploying missiles and warheads, tighten export controls, and resume dialogue with Pakistan.

Talbott wanted a time-frame set for producing substantial results from the dialogue, but Singh managed to turn these ideas away without antagonising his American interlocutor.

"By weathering the storm of US disapproval - by outlasting and outtalking the Americans in the marathon of diplomacy spurred by the test, in short, by not compromising - the Indians would prove their resolve and their resilience, thereby giving a boost to their national self-esteem and self-confidence," Talbott wrote in his book Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy and the Bomb. "As one of the architects of the Indian strategy, Jaswant Singh came closer to achieving his objective in the dialogue than I did to achieving mine," the American journalist-turned-diplomat said about his two-and-a-half-year discussions with Singh. Born in Dayton, Ohio, in 1946, Talbott was a journalist at Time, where he focused on Soviet-American relations and held positions including Washington bureau chief and a foreign-affairs columnist. Talbott joined the US State Department in 1994, swiftly becoming deputy secretary of state. In that role, he was the architect of the Clinton administration's approach to Russia and other formerly Soviet countries. Afterwards, he served as the president of Brookings from 2002 to 2017. In that time, he also chaired the US State Department's Foreign Affairs Policy Board.

Gujarat ATS foils JeM plot to attack...

"The case against him is built on several pieces of evidence: a military-style weapon, surveillance of a sensitive site and a relationship with a handler which lasted for a full year", an ATS officer said.

Police have filed a case under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita relating to criminal conspiracy and conspiracy to wage war against the state, as well as under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Arms Act. The ATS says it will continue the investigation by identifying other people who were involved, working out how the weapon was obtained and delivered and mapping the wider network which may have supported the plot in Gujarat.

The Assam-Bhopal-Vadodara-Dahod sequence of movements has become a major line of probe. Investigators are examining the phones and SIM cards for any further contacts, travel, or instructions from the handler. The JeM flag that was recovered along with the rifle and the ammunition is also now part of the material being examined for any links to the banned organisation.

The fact that the accused had spoken of his intention to go to Pakistan after the attack and to 'blend in' with the group indicated a longer-term intention rather than a one-off operation. There were live rounds and empty magazines with the rifle, which would suggest he had been in the process of preparing to use it. Investigators say, for now, their main focus is on evidence connected to Kabiruddin and the digital trail that led officers to suspect a specific plan targeting the Vadodara IAF station.

HC overturns Ritabrata's appointment as LoP

"Considering the above facts and circumstances, this court finds the interim order passed by respondent 1 dated June 3, 2026, by recognising respondent 5 as the Leader of Opposition and respondent number 6 as chief whip in the 18th West Bengal legislative assembly is not sustainable under law; accordingly, the interim order of June 3 is set aside and quashed. The respondent number one is directed to reconsider the issue afresh for the appointment of the Leader of Opposition and chief whip in accordance with law within 10 days from the receipt of this order," the Court said.

Reacting to the Friday's order, the Chief Minister said that the Speaker should act according to law and recognise the person who has the backing of more MLAs as the LoP, adding that no Trinamool Congress exists as of now.

"There is no Trinamool Congress; now there are two TMCs - D TMC and Mamata AITC. So the question raised by the TMC does not exist. As far as I know, D-TMC has more MLAs. To my knowledge, the party which has a higher number of MLAs gets the LOP," he said.

The Mamata TMC however, welcomed the order, slamming the rebel camp hard for "getting sold out to the ruling party", even as senior pro-Mamata MLA Kunal Ghosh said, "The BJP Government, with the help of its money and administrative powers, had put pressure on the MLAs and forced them to defect to raise a phoney Opposition group that would take all the orders of the State Government ... lick their feet."

Ritabrata Banerjee, however, downplayed the High Court order, saying there was nothing unusual about it as the Court had to pass an order following a petition filed by the other side. "When Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay was appointed the LoP by the party on June 3 there was no dispute within it ... but things came to the fore only after the party elected Arup Roy as its chairman on June 22 ... and the matter went to the ECI which accepted that there was a dispute and even granted two separate names to the two groups difference " till the ownership of the party's name and symbols were finally decided, Ritabrata Banerjee said adding "there are clearly two groups now one is DTMC - which chose me and Akhruzamman as the LoP and Chief Whip - and the other is MAITC."

The Pioneer
BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

Mumbai beefed up security for Diljit concert after bomb threat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Mumbai



More than 500 Mumbai police personnel will be deployed at Mahalaxmi Racecourse here for actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh's concert on Friday following a threat email warning of possible attacks on the venue and Metro stations, officials said.

Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) teams have swept the venue, they said, adding that entry checks will be carried out across all five gates instead of three.

Private security personnel have also been roped in to assist police, an official said.

An email threatening blasts, grenade attacks and planting of IEDs at the mayor's office, metro rail stations and Dosanjh's concert was received on Thursday, the anniversary of the devastating 26/11 terror attacks.

The email, sent by an individual identifying herself as Hannah Meler, contained references to Khalistan, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots as well as threats of violence linked to a programme involving Dosanjh and people associated with the event. In view of the threat, the Mumbai police has deployed around 200 constables, 150 women constables and 75 officers, besides plainclothes personnel stationed around the singer. Dog squads and an Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) team will also remain present at the venue, an official said.

He said that a no-car zone extending 500 to 700 metres around the racecourse will be enforced, and parking will not be permitted at the event, though no road diversions have been announced.

Organisers have been instructed not to disclose details of the singer's hotel or arrival time as part of security protocol, sources said.

CDS flags changing nature of warfare, electronic warfare upgrade underway

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi


CDS Gen NS Raja Subramani

Distinction between war and peace is "blurring" today, and there is a "continuous state of contestation", CDS Gen NS Raja Subramani said on Friday, even as he asserted that efforts are on to modernise the electronic warfare architecture of the military.

Delivering an address here on the 'Future of warfare and India's preparedness to conduct multi-domain operations', without elaborating, he also said "we are being subjected to cognitive warfare by adversary in an insidious way", and emphasised bolstering capabilities in all domains.

He also cited Operation Sindoor, terming its second phase an excellent example of joint, integrated, multi-domain operations, and asserted that India not only had control over the escalation matrix and escalation dominance, but it also resulted in a "decisive victory" for India. Former CDS, Gen Anil Chauhan (retd), who was the Chief of Defence Staff during Operation Sindoor last year, moderated the session hosted by think-tank Vivekananda International Foundation in Delhi.

Gen Raja Subramani, in his address, underlined the evolving nature of technology and the warfare, however, cautioning that technology superiority is "only transitory" and this will need constant improvement to stay prepared for future wars.

He emphasised that a whole-of-nation approach is needed to fight and sustain a prolonged war.

Panna tense over suspected tigress poaching

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Panna


Representative image

The suspected poaching of a tigress in Panna district triggered tension on Friday after villagers surrounded Forest Department personnel and prevented them from removing the animal's carcass. Police intervened to pacify the protesters, allowing officials to complete the necessary formalities.

The tigress was discovered dead on Thursday in the Manki Beat of the North Panna Forest Division, near the core area of Panna Tiger Reserve. Forest officials found a broken clutch-wire snare around its neck, raising suspicions that the animal had become trapped in a device intended for hunting wildlife.

Preliminary findings suggested that the snare had remained around the tigress's neck for several days, possibly preventing it from hunting. Officials suspect that prolonged starvation contributed to its death, although the precise cause remains subject to postmortem findings.

Following the discovery, forest authorities launched an investigation with assistance from dog squads deployed from Panna and Satna. Search teams reportedly followed leads towards agricultural land and a nearby hut, identifying several individuals for questioning.

Five suspects were subsequently detained, including Rammu Adivasi and Dildar Adivasi, along with three associates. Their detention triggered protests by villagers, who surrounded the forest personnel and demanded the release of those taken into custody.

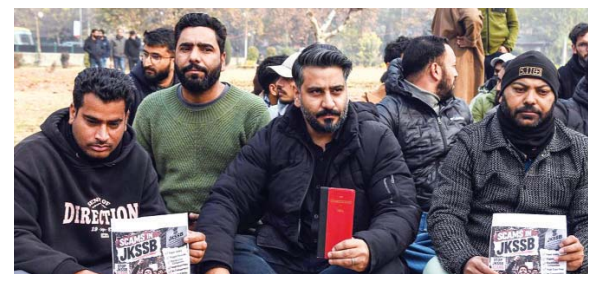
The protesters allegedly prevented officials from removing the tigress's carcass and deflated the tyres of government vehicles. As tensions escalated, Panna Kotwali station in-charge Hemant Nayak reached the location with police personnel. Police and Forest Department officials held discussions with the villagers, explaining the circumstances of the investigation and appealing for cooperation. The protesters eventually dispersed, allowing the authorities to proceed. The forest team subsequently transported the carcass to Smriti Van, where veterinary experts began the postmortem examination.

Forest officials said the investigation was focused on establishing who had placed the wire snare and whether it had been intended to trap wild boars or other animals.

The incident has renewed concerns over illegal trapping near protected forest areas, where indiscriminate snares pose serious risks to tigers and other wildlife.

JKSSB rules out postponement of SI examination amid aspirants' protests

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Jammu



Amid ongoing protests by job aspirants, demanding postponement of the Jammu and Kashmir Police Sub-Inspector (JKPSI) examination and completion of the investigation into alleged irregularities in another recruitment examination, the Jammu & Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) has decided against postponing the exam scheduled for November 29, 2026.

In a statement issued on Friday, JKSSB informed the concerned candidates and the general public that the OMR-based written examination for the post of Sub-Inspector (Home Department), Jammu & Kashmir Police, will be conducted strictly as per schedule on Sunday, November 29, 2026. The aspirants are demanding a thorough investigation into the alleged irregularities in the Finance Accounts Assistant (FAA) recruitment examination and postponement of the PSI examination scheduled for November 29, citing concerns over transparency and fairness in the recruitment process.

In an Original Application bearing O.A. No. 1326/2026 titled Bilal Ahmad Khoja and Others versus Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir & Others, some contesting applicants approached the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Srinagar Bench, seeking interim directions to defer the upcoming J&K Police Sub-Inspector examination scheduled to be held on November 29, 2026, and to stay further recruitment procedure of the Finance Accounts Assistant (FAA) examination which was held on November 15, 2026, expressing apprehension over the fairness, transparency and sanctity of the examination process.

JKSSB, in order to ensure the highest standards of fairness, transparency and sanctity for the upcoming Sub-Inspector examination, placed on record existing Government Protocols, Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) alongside additional preventive measures recently notified by the Controller of Examinations, JKSSB.

Taking note of the Board's proactive safeguards, CAT declined to grant any interim relief for staying the selection process of the posts of Finance Accounts Assistant (FAA), Finance Department and also decided against deferment of the examination of Sub-Inspector (SI), Jammu & Kashmir Police, Home Department, scheduled to be held on 29 November 2026.

JKSSB reiterates its unwavering commitment to the conduct of free, fair and transparent examinations. It advised all the aspiring candidates to focus on their preparation for the forthcoming examinations, rely exclusively on the information published on the official website of JKSSB and refrain from paying heed to false, misleading or fabricated rumours.

Earlier in the day , leaders of several political parties, including the Congress, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) and Apni Party extended their support to the job aspirants and demanded an impartial probe in matter.

Six eateries sealed in Dehradun for environmental violations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Dehradun

The Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board has sealed six restaurants in Dehradun, including a KFC outlet, for violating environmental norms, an official said on Friday.

Naresh Goswami, a regional officer for the board, said authorities issued show-cause notices to six restaurants located on Rajpur Road a month ago regarding the violations. Since the outlets didn't give any satisfactory response, the administration sealed the establishments on November 25," he said.

Goswami said the officials disconnected electricity connections to establishments following directives from board and then sealed KFC (Safeyure Food India), Mojo Resto Bar & Party Lounge, Lifestyle (Playboy), Level One Resto, AS 4 Integrated Facility Management Services Pvt Ltd, and Diablo Restaurant & Bar.

Omar inaugurates ₹9.69 cr projects in Bani

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Jammu

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday reaffirmed the Government's commitment to equitable development across Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that no region, particularly far-flung areas, would be left behind.

The chief minister said this while inaugurating development projects worth ₹9.69 crore, besides laying foundation stones for new infrastructure in education and healthcare sectors, in Bani tehsil of Kathua district.

At Government Degree College (GDC), Bani, he laid the foundation stone of a 50-bedded girls' hostel, estimated to cost ₹3.40 crore, and inaugurated a laboratory block constructed for ₹2.60 crore. The facility will provide laboratories for chemistry, botany and physics, enabling students to pursue science education locally.

At Sub-District Hospital, the chief minister laid the foundation stone of doctors' residential quarters worth ₹1.62 crore and inaugurated an OPD complex of approximately ₹1.80 crore and a dialysis unit established at ₹27 lakh. He also dedicated two ambulances to strengthen emergency healthcare services. Addressing a large public gathering during his visit, he said the government was conscious of the healthcare challenges in remote areas and acknowledged the shortage of doctors in Bani.

He also assured that the demand for a degree college at Lohai-Malhar tehsil would be examined on a priority basis. He appreciated Health Minister Sakina Itoo for facilitating the deployment of seven doctors to the area.

JECRC develops affordable AI-powered CPR mannequin

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Jaipur



In a remarkable innovation, JU Makerspace at JECRC University has unveiled an affordable AI-enabled CPR mannequin, setting new benchmarks in medical training technology. While commercially available CPR mannequins typically cost between ₹70,000 and ₹80,000, JU Makerspace has developed a model for less than ₹10,000 while retaining all essential functionalities.

This innovative mannequin provides real-time feedback and incorporates advanced sensors to enhance the effectiveness of CPR training.

The mannequin is equipped with a Force-Sensing Resistor (FSR) sensor to measure the force applied during chest compressions and a laser sensor to accurately measure compression depth. Both features are crucial for effective CPR training. These capabilities are integrated with a mobile application and web interface, enabling users to access precise, real-time data on applied force and compression rate.

Such features are often limited or unavailable in conventional high-cost models, particularly those lacking AI support and real-time feedback.

JECRC University plans to provide CPR training to 21,500 students using this innovative mannequin, with the aim of equipping thousands of students with essential life-saving skills.

Looking ahead, JU Makerspace aims to further reduce the manufacturing cost to less than ₹1,000, making the mannequin widely accessible to schools, colleges, and communities. The university envisions making CPR training mandatory across all educational institutions.

Assam waged sustained battle against child marriage since 2021, over 6K held: Himanta

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Guwahati


Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday said a sustained campaign against child marriage has been launched in the state since 2021, with over 6,000 arrests and firm action against offenders. Sarma asserted that his government's resolve to end the social evil remains unwavering and the dignity, rights and future of daughters will be safeguarded.

"Today, marks the first-ever International Day for the Elimination of Child, Early and Forced Marriage, adopted by the United Nations," he said in a social media post.

"For Assam, this day holds special significance. Since 2021, we have waged a sustained battle against child marriage, with over 6,000 arrests and firm action against offenders, which continues to date," the Chief Minister said. No child should ever have to sacrifice her childhood to a forced marriage, he said.

In another post, Sarma said: "Today, as the world marks the first International Day for the Elimination of Child, Early and Forced Marriage, Assam celebrates it as a state which has championed this cause for a sustained period now." Since 2021, the state government has confronted the social evil head-on through decisive enforcement, sustained awareness and "above all, the empowerment of our daughters", he said.

"This is a cause that has always been very close to my heart and one I have taken up with unwavering conviction. Our approach has never been limited to arresting offenders and taking strict action, which has yielded us results as we have arrested over 6,000 offenders in the last 5 years. We have simultaneously worked to create an ecosystem where our girls are empowered to choose their own futures," the CM said.

Sarma also cited the 'Mukhya Mantrir Nijut Moina Asoni' scheme, and said it is perhaps the biggest lever in this endeavour. By providing monthly financial assistance of up to Rs 2,500 to girl students until they complete their postgraduate education, "we are helping them stay in classrooms, pursue their aspirations and delay marriage until they attain greater maturity. The scheme's marriage-related eligibility condition reinforces this objective", he said.

Alongside this, the Assam Government is strengthening adolescent nutrition and education, deploying officials at the grassroots to spread awareness and empowering mothers through schemes such as Orunodoi and MMUA, so that they can support their daughters' aspirations without being financially dependent on others, Sarma said.

"We will continue this fight until every girl in Assam is free to learn, grow and choose her future and until we achieve Zero Child Marriage," Sarma asserted.

IFFI celebrates silver jubilee of *Dil Chahta Hai, Lagaan, Chandni Bar*

ASHOKE RAJ ■ Goa/Panaji



The 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) marked a special milestone on its eighth day with a masterclass titled 'The Legendary 25s', bringing together acclaimed filmmakers Farhan Akhtar, Ashutosh Gowariker and Madhur Bhandarkar to celebrate 25 years of three landmark films — Dil Chahta Hai, Lagaan and Chandni Bar.

Held at Kala Academy, Panaji, the session revisited the creative journeys behind the films that left a lasting impression on Indian cinema. Moderated by actor Khushbu Sundar, the discussion explored the directors' inspirations, filmmaking challenges, character development and the changing landscape of the Indian film industry.

Recalling the creative vision behind Dil Chahta Hai, Farhan Akhtar spoke about his desire to present friendship, relationships and love through a fresh cinematic language, moving away from conventional storytelling and exaggerated portrayals.

He revealed that Mansoor Khan's *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* (1988) had been a major influence on him. The film introduced him to a refreshing approach to romance, family relationships and youthful emotions, inspiring him to explore a similar storytelling sensibility when writing Dil Chahta Hai.

Akhtar also reflected on the film's unconventional portrayal of relationships, particularly the emotionally layered romance between Akshaye Khanna and Dimple Kapadia's characters. At a time when a younger man falling in love with an older woman was rarely explored in mainstream Hindi cinema, the storyline challenged prevailing social attitudes and brought a different dimension to the film.

He further highlighted the importance of understanding audience expectations, expressing concern over the industry's increasing preoccupation with box-office figures at the expense of the cinematic experience.

Sharing insights into the making of Lagaan, Ashutosh Gowariker discussed the extensive research and preparation that went into bringing the period drama to life. He emphasised the importance of historical accuracy and explained how experts, including historians, contribute to creating authenticity in films.

Addressing the growing influence of technology and artificial intelligence in filmmaking, Gowariker maintained that such advancements should serve as creative tools rather than replace the human imagination and emotional depth that form the foundation of storytelling.

Madhur Bhandarkar, meanwhile, revisited the making of Chandni Bar, revealing the painstaking research undertaken before bringing the story of Mumbai's dance-bar culture to the screen. He recalled spending nearly six months understanding the lives, circumstances and struggles of people associated with that world.

For Bhandarkar, the film represented cinema's ability to reflect uncomfortable social realities through authentic characters and grounded narratives. He stressed that technological advancements could transform filmmaking techniques, but the human experiences at the heart of a story would remain irreplaceable.

The masterclass also highlighted a shared belief among the three filmmakers: while cinematic techniques, technology and audience preferences may continue to evolve, compelling stories rooted in genuine human emotions remain timeless.

As Dil Chahta Hai, Lagaan and Chandni Bar complete 25 years, their enduring relevance stands as a reminder of how distinctive storytelling can shape popular culture, challenge established conventions and leave a lasting legacy in Indian cinema.

The session offered audiences more than a nostalgic celebration, providing a glimpse into the creative thinking and conviction behind three films that continue to be remembered for their individual contributions to Hindi cinema.

The Pioneer
BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

Editor's TAKE

Packaged food or packaged health hazard?

The Supreme Court's directive on warning labels is timely, but weak testing and enforcement continue to expose consumers to unsafe packaged foods

Public health in India is in decline, and children exposed to fast food are at the highest risk. Companies selling packaged food in attractive packets care little about the ill effects their products can have on people. Many chemicals that go into its making are a known health hazard. Though there is a health regulator, it is ineffective in dealing with these companies. On Constitution Day, the Supreme Court made a beginning. It did what the food regulator had put off for years. It directed the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to require separate hexagonal warnings, reading HIGH SUGAR, HIGH FAT or HIGH SALT, on the front of packaged foods that breach prescribed limits. Total sugars and saturated fat must be counted, not merely what manufacturers add.

How safe, then, is packaged food? The danger of excess sugar, salt and fat is slow: diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. The Economic Survey 2025-26 records that retail sales of ultra-processed foods rose from $0.9 billion in 2006 to nearly $38 billion in 2019, while obesity almost doubled.

Contamination is the other danger, and the Bisleri row has brought it home. FSSAI has sanctioned prosecution over a sample drawn from the company's Goa plant in September 2025. The first test found bromate, a possible human carcinogen, above the permitted limit.

On appeal, a referral laboratory found bromate within the limit but detected polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, a family of chemicals that includes known carcinogens, and held the sample unsafe. Bisleri disputes the action and says the batch is no longer in circulation. One sample does not condemn a brand, and the charge has yet to be tested in court.

Interestingly, FSSAI slept over it for over a year and suddenly woke in November this year; meanwhile, Bisleri continued to sell its mineral water across the country. This speaks volumes about the efficiency of FSSAI.

Who is to blame? The first responsibility is the manufacturer's. Section 26 of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, obliges every food business to ensure that its products comply with the law at all stages under its control. The second failure is official. FSSAI proposed a star-rating scheme in 2022 that risked flattering unhealthy products, and moved towards clear warnings only under judicial pressure. State food safety departments must answer if the products sold are of low quality. Consumers, who cannot test water at home, carry none of the blame. Testing and appeals need strict deadlines. Adverse results and recalls should be published promptly, with the company's reply alongside. Laboratories and inspectorates need money and manpower. Junk food marketing to children must be curbed as has been done in Chile and several other countries. A warning label is no cure, only an honest sentence on a packet. The court has done its part. Regulators and industry must now earn the trust that every sealed pack asks of us. The Supreme Court has made a beginning; now it is for the Government to make rules to protect its citizens from the greed of profit-hungry companies.

Wang Huning: The brain behind China's rise

From Kissinger's secret 1971 journey to Beijing to Xi Jinping's efforts to manage strategic rivalry with Washington, China's engagement with the world has been shaped by a pragmatic understanding of power. At the heart of its political thinking is Wang Huning, the intellectual who has served three Chinese presidents and helped frame their governing philosophies



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA



Last week, when Pakistan's Muhammad Zeeshan Ali became the first Pakistani astronaut to join China's Tiangong space station, my thoughts went back to Henry Kissinger's secret journey to Beijing in July 1971, which began in Pakistan. He arrived in Rawalpindi under the cover of an official visit, then disappeared from public view and flew to China with President Yahya Khan's assistance. The mission opened the way for Richard Nixon's historic visit and altered the strategic balance of the Cold War. Its diplomatic achievement, however, carried a terrible moral cost. As Pakistan's army waged a brutal campaign in East Pakistan, killing civilians and driving millions from their homes, Washington continued to support Yahya Khan's Government. The Nixon administration knew the scale of the violence but prioritised Pakistan's usefulness as a channel to Beijing. The American Government's own records confirm its tilt towards Pakistan. The secret journey was a triumph of geopolitical calculation, conducted against the background of a human catastrophe.

That contradiction helps explain why Kissinger remains highly regarded in China. His legacy in China rests on a hard diplomatic lesson. Competition need not become a struggle to destroy the other side.

More than half a century after that secret journey, Xi has offered a contemporary demonstration that strategic rivalry cannot eliminate the need for engagement. In San Francisco in November 2023, he announced that China would invite 50,000 young Americans for exchange and study over five years. In May 2026, he reported that the target had been exceeded two and a half years early. During his state visit to Washington in September, he doubled the commitment, inviting 100,000 young Americans over the next five years. The point is not that educational exchanges can resolve disputes over trade, technology, Taiwan or security. They cannot. It is that neither country can defeat the other in any meaningful strategic sense without inflicting immense damage on itself and the wider world. America cannot destroy China's capacity without destabilising the global economy. China cannot displace American power without provoking consequences that would undermine its own development. Their relationship requires difficult political and economic coexistence.

This is where Wang Huning becomes indispensable to understanding contemporary China. He is not a diplomat in Kissinger's mould. He is a political intellectual who has worked inside the Communist Party's machinery of power. His importance lies in helping successive leaders explain, defend and adapt the political foundations of their rule. He has served Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping. That continuity is remarkable in a system where leadership transitions can alter priorities, language and institutional emphasis. Wang has remained relevant through all three. His survival is not simply a story of personal loyalty. It reflects the Party's need for an intellectual able to translate changing political demands into a language of continuity.

> WANG DID NOT ARRIVE IN BEIJING AS A CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL OPERATIVE. HE CAME FROM FUDAN UNIVERSITY, WHERE HE STUDIED POLITICAL THEORY AND WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT. HIS 1988 VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES WAS FORMATIVE. OVER SIX MONTHS, HE TRAVELLED TO MORE THAN 30 CITIES AND VISITED NEARLY 20 UNIVERSITIES

The writer is a columnist based in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Wang did not arrive in Beijing as a conventional political operative. He came from Fudan University, where he studied political theory and Western political thought. His 1988 visit to the United States was formative. Over six months, he travelled to more than 30 cities and visited nearly 20 universities. He examined political institutions, factories, commercial life, homelessness, lobbying and popular culture. In the preface to America Against America, published in 1991, he described his subject as "a history, a culture, a people, a set of institutions".

Wang observed extraordinary technological and economic achievements alongside poverty, inequality and the influence of concentrated economic interests. He questioned whether formal political equality could overcome the power of private wealth. His book was not a systematic empirical study. He described himself as an observer rather than a researcher, and its arguments should be read with that limitation in mind. Yet the questions were substantial. Could a wealthy society become divided by the economic forces that produced its prosperity? Could individual freedom coexist with collective purpose? Could modernisation proceed without adopting Western institutions?

Wang approached modernisation as a political problem, not merely an economic one. He was interested in the State's capacity to coordinate development, contain competing interests and preserve national cohesion. His early writings examined sovereignty, political authority, administrative institutions and the relationship between social change and political order. He did not simply reject Western political science. He studied it and drew on it. His argument was that political institutions could not be transplanted without regard to the historical and cultural conditions in which they operated.

His move to Beijing in 1995 changed the significance of that intellectual project. Wang joined the Central Policy Research Office, which contributes to Party policy, major documents and speeches for senior leaders. He eventually became its director. The academic who had studied the American system was now participating in the production of China's political language. His influence is associated with Jiang's Three Represents, Hu's Scientific Outlook on Development and Xi's Chinese Dream. It would be careless, however, to credit him with sole authorship of these doctrines.

A study in the Journal of Contemporary China by Haig Patapan and Yi Wang describes him as "the hidden ruler". The phrase captures his unusual position. He exercised influence without initially occupying the most visible offices of political authority. His importance grew from problems confronting the Party. Economic reform had transformed Chinese society. Markets created new interests and inequalities. Revolutionary certainties had weakened. The Party needed to justify its authority in a society increasingly shaped by wealth, technology, education and global integration. Wang helped formulate an ideological response. He became a custodian of political continuity when the Party needed to explain why its authority remained necessary. His influence reflected intellectual ability, but also the political circumstances that created a demand for advisers of his kind.

There is a harder question about what Wang's political survival tells us. His passage through three administrations does not prove an infallible understanding of Chinese politics. It may show that he has understood the Party's enduring requirements better than many temporary political fashions. Jiang needed an ideological formula to accommodate new social and economic constituencies. Hu had to address tensions produced by rapid development. Xi has advanced a stronger language of national rejuvenation, Party discipline and central authority. The slogans changed; the institutional problem remained. How could the Party adapt without surrendering its claim to political supremacy? Wang's skill has been to help formulate different answers without abandoning that premise. His significance lies in this unresolved tension. The test is whether the system can accommodate criticism, correct failures and absorb social change without treating disagreement as a threat. Preserving leadership is not proof, by itself, of an ability to resolve contradictions generated by success.

Daiv Vani

WISDOM FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

Seeing God in Every Face

When we see the divine in everyone, every act of service becomes an act of worship.

Recently in Vadodara, I met Dwarkeshlalji Maharajshri, and one sentence of his stayed with me: "I see Krishna in everyone, and I see everyone in Krishna".

My mind went straight to the Vishvarupa Darshan. When Arjuna begs to see Krishna's cosmic form, the Lord says, "Behold in my body the whole universe, moving and unmoving" (Gita 11.7). Arjuna sees gods, sages, kings, creatures and Time itself, all held within one form.

The other half of the sentence comes from Krishna himself: "He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost to him, nor is he lost to Me" (6.30). The two views belong together: God in everyone, and everyone in God.

What changes when we truly believe this? The domestic helper is no longer "the help", the junior colleague is no longer "below us", and the stranger blocking the road is no longer "in the way". Service becomes worship, because we are serving the One in a different form. Respect no longer depends on position, and finding good in others becomes natural, since we look first for the divine spark.

This is not a lofty idea kept for saints. It begins with a small change in how we look at people.

Today, as you meet each person, pause for one second and silently say, "There is God here." Then speak and act accordingly.

– DR. MANASA NAGABHUSHANAM, DAIV

PIC TALK



Yakshagana artists pose for photographs during the 18th BGS Founder's Day and BGS Utsav 2026 in Bengaluru PHOTO: PTI

Who will create tomorrow?



SAKSHI SETHI

2ND OPINION

Artificial intelligence can formulate legal arguments, analyse medical reports and write computer programs within seconds. But how will tomorrow's lawyers, doctors and engineers develop professional judgement if machines or robots progressively execute the very tasks through which competence is acquired? The greatest challenge posed by artificial intelligence may not only be employment but the slow attrition of the mechanism that generates competent experts.

Expertise is not an immediate consequence of acquiring information. It develops through observation, experimentation, mistakes, reflection and years of practical experience. A young lawyer learns from studying precedents, a doctor learns clinical judgment via patient contact, a journalist hones analytical talents through research and investigation. What many organisations consider ordinary labour is an important stage in professional development. The paradox is that they are becoming more and more automated.

Artificial intelligence can make a skilled professional more productive, but too much dependency on technology in the early stages of a career could stunt the development of autonomous judgment.

A person can learn to produce answers without developing the mind to judge whether they are right or wrong. For a country that aspires to be a global knowledge economy, this topic demands significant attention in India. In the past, the educational ecosystem in the country has placed a lot of importance on academic credentials, exam achievement and theoretical understanding. The advent of AI points further to the shortcomings of this method. The more information becomes freely available, the more important it is to be able to examine it, evaluate it, put it in context and use it.

The challenge begins much before young people enter the workforce. In classrooms, students can increasingly complete assignments, solve mathematical problems and produce sophisticated written responses using AI. While these tools offer considerable educational benefits, their indiscriminate use risks separating academic performance from actual intellectual development. Educational institutions must therefore reconsider not merely what they teach but how they assess learning. Oral examinations, experiential learning, independent research, practical demonstrations and problem-solving exercises must receive greater attention. AI literacy must encompass critical evaluation, ethical responsibility and independent reasoning rather than merely the ability to operate digital tools. Industries, too, must accept their share of responsibility. Organisations cannot expect to construct a sustainable talent pipeline while stripping out the underlying responsibilities through which professional competence develops. Workforce development must include structured mentorship, supervised practice and AI-assisted apprenticeships.

Technological progress without a corresponding investment in intellectual growth risks producing a workforce adept at operating intelligent systems yet more reliant on them. The goal is not to battle artificial intelligence but to make sure it is an addition and not a replacement for the intellectual journey of humans. Efficiency isn't the only measure of progress, especially when the processes you're eliminating are the ones that build expertise. India must look beyond the immediate economic benefits of automation and think about its long-term ramifications in terms of intellectual capital. A country may acquire technology, but it cannot afford to outsource the development of human judgment.

The writer is an educator and a councillor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

US tariffs: India must stand firm

A trade war is ultimately a test of economic endurance, and India cannot afford to play the role of a passive victim ('Trump tariffs: India must bargain, not bow', November 27, 2026). Washington's latest tariff proposal is undeniably a calculated arm-twisting tactic.

However, reacting with defensive anxiety or blind anger will not protect our exporters. New Delhi must treat these aggressive demands as opening bids in a high-stakes negotiation, not as an unchangeable verdict.

We must build a strategic response based on hard evidence. Instead of yielding to external pressure, India should aggressively defend its industrial policies and negotiate firmly on core domestic interests like agriculture. Simultaneously, we must aggressively diversify our export markets and reduce our reliance on any single superpower.

Ultimately, the strongest defence against external economic coercion is building a resilient economy at home. By slashing domestic logistics costs, improving credit access, and empowering local manufacturing, India can weather any global storm. We must negotiate from a position of strength.

K. CHIDANAND KUMAR | BENGALURU

Clear front-of-pack labels are vital

The Supreme Court's directive to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to mandate front-of-pack warning labels disclosing total sugar and saturated fat, not merely added sugar and fat, is a landmark step for public health.

For years, manufacturers exploited narrow definitions to mask high overall sugar and fat levels, misleading consumers into believing ultra-processed foods were healthier than they are.

Back-of-pack nutritional tables in tiny print do little to help busy shoppers make informed decisions. Bold, unambiguous front-of-pack warnings are essential because India is facing an alarming surge in non-communicable diseases, including childhood obesity, type-2 diabetes and hypertension, driven largely by high-sugar, high-fat packaged diets.

Equally crucial is the Supreme Court's warning against regulatory loopholes and dilution of thresholds under industry pressure. Transparent labelling is a fundamental right, enabling citizens to protect their long-term health and easing the mounting burden on India's healthcare system. FSSAI must implement these norms swiftly and strictly without compromise.

A.C. VINEETH KUMAR | THRISSUR

Make tax cuts reach the consumer

An equitable tax system relies on progressive rates and transparent pass-through mechanisms so that tax reductions lower retail prices rather than padding corporate margins. Achieving this balance requires addressing both how taxes are collected and how the savings from tax reforms are distributed across the economy.

Making every household's tax burden identical disproportionately harms lower-income families, who spend a higher share of their income on basic necessities. A progressive structure — where higher earners pay a larger percentage and essential goods carry zero or minimal indirect tax keeps the burden reasonable relative to a household's ability to pay.

When Governments cut corporate taxes or reduce indirect tax rates on goods and services, businesses often absorb the difference to boost profits instead of lowering prices.

Ensuring benefits reach consumers requires active market competition, anti-profiteering oversight, and transparent pricing mandates. A fair tax system cannot make every household's burden identical, but it can keep the burden reasonable and ensure that benefits of reforms reach consumers.

C.K. SUBRAMANIAM | MUMBAI

The Pioneer
BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

IRAS: The financial backbone of Indian Railways

As Indian Railways enters a new era of infrastructure expansion and technological transformation, the Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS) remains central to its financial stewardship. Approaching its centenary in 2029, the Service continues to shape investment, accountability and sustainable growth.



MANOJ KUMAR DUBEY



For most Indians, memories of the Railways begin with a journey: the excitement of boarding a train, landscapes changing outside the window, conversations with fellow passengers and the rhythm of wheels on tracks. There were challenges too — long journeys, crowded compartments and uncertain schedules.

Yet Indian Railways remained an enduring part of our lives. Its scale remains remarkable: about 25,000 trains a day, 741 crore passenger journeys and a record 1,670 million tonnes of freight in 2025-26. I have experienced this institution from several vantage points — as an IRAS officer, in the Railway Board, as Director Finance of Container Corporation of India (CONCOR), and now as head of Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC).

Over the years, I have witnessed a remarkable transformation, not only in infrastructure and services but in the financial systems that support its growth. I joined the Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS) of the 1993 batch.

My career began at UTI, introducing mutual fund schemes to rural communities, which showed me how financial institutions can drive wider development. IRAS offered an even larger canvas.

My first 15 years were spent as Head of Finance across Dhanbad, Asansol and Mughalsarai divisions. Dhanbad, at the heart of India's coal belt, taught me early that freight is the Railways' financial lifeline; coal still accounts for nearly half of all cargo carried. These assignments brought me close to train operations, freight loading and resource management.

They taught me that railway finance is not simply about maintaining accounts. It is about deploying resources efficiently, supporting operational priorities and ensuring investments deliver results. This is the distinctive strength of IRAS. Constituted on April 1, 1929, when responsibility for railway accounts passed from the Auditor General to the Financial Commissioner,

Railways, the Service has evolved alongside the network. Now in its 98th year, with its centenary in 2029 just over two years away, its contribution extends far beyond its original accounting mandate. IRAS officers serve as financial advisers to railway management, as officers responsible for accounting and financial control, and as internal auditors.

As advisers, they bring financial discipline and commercial perspective to operational and investment decisions. Through accounting, they ensure accurate reporting and accountability for public resources. Internal audit strengthens controls and improves processes.

Together, these functions ensure that public investment translates into public value. The stakes have never been higher: capital expenditure for 2026-27 stands at a record ₹2.93 lakh crore, with nearly ₹1.2 lakh crore earmarked for safety alone. IRAS officers have also led the modernisation of financial administration.

I participated in this transition through digitisation of salary and contractor payments, e-tendering and e-auctions, and streamlining of employee policies — work recognised with the National Award for Outstanding Service by the Minister of Railways in 2011.

As Director and Executive Director in the PPP and Finance Commercial Directorates of the Railway Board, I worked on setting up locomotive factories through public-private partnerships and foreign direct investment, and on High-Speed Rail and Dedicated Freight Corridors.

Tariff structuring and managing international bids showed how financial expertise turns infrastructure ambitions into implementable projects. That groundwork has borne fruit: Indian Railways produced 1,674 locomotives in 2025-26.

One significant outcome of this financial foresight was the establishment of IRFC in 1986 to mobilise resources for the Railways' growing capital needs alongside budgetary support. Four decades on, more than 80 per cent of Indian Railways' rolling stock sits on IRFC's books. Today, as CMD and CEO of IRFC, after serving as Director Finance and CFO of CONCOR, I have seen how closely transport infrastructure, logistics efficiency and economic growth are linked.

RAILWAYS, THE SERVICE HAS EVOLVED ALONGSIDE THE NETWORK. NOW IN ITS 98TH YEAR, WITH ITS CENTENARY IN 2029 JUST OVER TWO YEARS AWAY, ITS CONTRIBUTION EXTENDS FAR BEYOND ITS ORIGINAL ACCOUNTING MANDATE. IRAS OFFICERS SERVE AS FINANCIAL ADVISERS TO RAILWAY MANAGEMENT, AS OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL CONTROL, AND AS INTERNAL AUDITORS. AS ADVISERS, THEY BRING FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE AND COMMERCIAL PERSPECTIVE TO OPERATIONAL AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS. THROUGH ACCOUNTING, THEY ENSURE ACCURATE REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PUBLIC RESOURCES. INTERNAL AUDIT STRENGTHENS CONTROLS AND IMPROVES PROCESSES.

In March 2025, IRFC was conferred Navratna status, making all seven listed railway CPSEs Navratnas. FY26 proved a defining year: assets under management reached a record ₹4.85 lakh crore, profit after tax touched an all-time high of ₹7,009 crore, and IRFC retained its zero-NPA record. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian Railways has seen an unprecedented thrust on infrastructure, safety, passenger amenities and technology.

Over 160 Vande Bharat services now run across the network, the first Vande Bharat Sleeper entered service in 2026, and 99.6 per cent of the broad-gauge network is electrified, ahead of China, Russia and the United Kingdom.

IRFC has supported this by financing rolling stock and infrastructure. Under IRFC 2.0, we are also financing sectors linked to the railway ecosystem, from power and renewables to ports and logistics parks; in FY26, we met our annual sanction guidance of ₹60,000 crore within nine months.

The larger objective is Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat @2047.

A modern railway is an economic multiplier: it connects markets, strengthens manufacturing, improves logistics and creates employment. The Union Budget 2026-27 has charted the next leap, with seven high-speed rail corridors and a new East-West Dedicated Freight Corridor from Dankuni to Surat.

IRAS will be central to this, keeping financial planning, expenditure management and accountability integral to infrastructure development, while promoting sustainable financing and digital governance.

As IRAS celebrates its Annual Day on November 28, 2026, under the theme 'Legacy of Excellence, Enabling Sustainable Transformation', it is an occasion to recognise a Service that has consistently adapted to the Railways' changing needs, combining financial prudence with an understanding of operations.

From railway divisions and the Railway Board to CONCOR and now IRFC, each assignment has offered me a different perspective on India's infrastructure aspirations.

The Railways I joined in 1995 and the Railways of today are, in many ways, different institutions; what has remained constant is the need for sound finance beneath every ambition.

As the Service counts down to its centenary, the journey towards Viksit Bharat will demand institutions that are financially sound, technologically enabled and accountable.

IRAS has the experience and capability to help Indian Railways meet these aspirations. Nearly a century of financial stewardship is not just a legacy to celebrate; it is a foundation on which to build the next chapter of India's railway transformation.

The writer is an IRAS officer and currently serving as CMD & CEO, Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC).

How good people burn the planet



ACHARYA PRASHANT

Go to a wedding in a small Indian town, and you'll often hear the generator before you hear the band. Somewhere behind the tent, near the cooks, an old diesel set chugs away all night so that the lights never dip and the music never stops. Power cuts are common in such places, and the father of the bride is not going to let one spoil his daughter's evening. Is he a villain? No. Ask him and he'll tell you he's only doing his duty as a father. The smoke drifts over the neighbouring roofs, where old people and small children are trying to sleep. What he burns for his family, another family has to breathe. But how does that matter to him? Inside the gate, light. Outside the gate, the world, and that is not his department. We are nice, but very selectively nice, and that is another name for violence.

Nearly two hundred countries had assembled at Antalya in Turkey for the UN climate summit, COP31. On November 22, after two extra days of negotiations, they went home without an overarching political agreement. About 130 countries had wanted the agreement to speak of moving away from fossil fuels. The final draft didn't even mention coal, oil or gas, the very things principally responsible for global warming. But it did find room to promote carbon capture. Saudi Arabia, backed by other oil-producing countries, had led the resistance. Ireland's climate minister, speaking for the European Union, said the conference had been "hijacked by some oil states." So now we have a villain, and a villain is very convenient. When something goes wrong, we want to blame one moment, one place, one culprit. Why? So that the entire process leading up to that moment remains untouched and unexamined.

If countries could come together to save the ozone layer, why can't they come together now? In 1987, the world signed the Montreal Protocol, which every country has since ratified. Nearly 99 per cent of ozone-depleting substances have been phased out, and the ozone layer is healing. Ozone depletion was one bad leaf on the tree. You could change the product and leave the man who used the product almost as he was. The climate crisis lies at the root of the tree. And which tree am I talking of? Man and his desires. To solve the ozone problem, you didn't have to ask a young man why a two-wheeler was no longer enough and a four-wheeler had become proof that he had arrived. You didn't have to ask a family why the honeymoon must be in Switzerland.



And what did Antalya's last draft have kind words for? Carbon capture. Very well, capture the carbon wherever you can. But the moment you hear that some machine will take care of the carbon, you feel a little more comfortable releasing it. We want to keep the fuel and remove the warming. And isn't that what the ego is always asking for? Leave me intact, but remove my miseries.

In London in May, a man in the audience told me that the real abusers of the climate were not sitting in that hall. They were the rich and powerful. I said, where does the money in their bank accounts come from? They sell products and services, and you are the consumer. They have to produce the consumer. They have to produce somebody who feels incomplete without what they sell. A satisfied customer, remember, is no longer a customer. India imports close to nine-tenths of the crude oil it consumes, and Saudi Arabia has long been among its principal suppliers. The rupees you spend at the petrol pump contribute to the economic power that the oil producers exercise at conferences like Antalya.

India is right to insist that those who used up most of the world's carbon budget must carry most of the burden and honour their financial commitments. Riyadh wants to protect its revenues, Brussels its industries, Beijing its factories, Washington its drilling. And each Government can say with complete sincerity that it is only looking after its own people. Now seat nearly two hundred such decencies at one table. What do you get? Antalya. The problem is that we are people of divided decency, and divided decency can be worse than indecency.

See who is doing all the worrying. Who worries about his house, his family, his neighbourhood, and now the planet? The ego. And who is burning the planet? That same ego. The worrying entity and the damaging entity are one. He worries about the climate report, and he books the flight. The fellow who has created the problem has been sent to negotiate with himself.

Can we first stop doing some of the things that have brought us here? I'm not dissuading you from developing better batteries, solar panels or public transport. But if the fellow using them remains the same, how much will better technology achieve? You have got a more efficient car. Very good. Will you now drive it twice as much?

Does that mean nobody may consume anything? No. The organism is free to consume. The ego is not. A poor family that requires electricity for a fan and clean fuel for its stove is answering a genuine requirement of the body. Surely we must make those available. But what about the fellow who wants a third car, a bigger flat and a foreign holiday every six months? The body eats and is done. The ego eats and is never done, because the ego is not eating food. It is eating a picture of itself. Nobody is asking you to be virtuous or magnanimous, or to develop some great love for the fish in the Amazon. Honesty is asked of you, not virtue. You say you care for a few people. Fine.

See what your care is doing. If what I call my love for these few can survive only through violence towards everybody outside my circle, what kind of love is it, even for these few? Look at the generator at the wedding. Look at the car bought to impress. Look at the flight to Switzerland. Which of them are you ready to give up?

Acharya Prashant is a philosopher and author whose work centres on self-examination and its application to contemporary life.

COP31: What does it mean for India and the UAE?



MINIYA CHATTERJI

COP31 has collapsed. After 2 weeks and 44 hours of overtime of agonising discussions amongst world leaders at the largest and longest COP, it still did not deliver a climate deal. The danger of fancy pavilions with micro-stages, corporate sponsorships, hawking wares in a costume of climate care, branding and logo displays in exchange for 'Blue Zone Badges' to gain access to policymakers, and the 'photo-ops' taken for LinkedIn, can create an illusion of 'a successful COP'. But the only real success is a COP that solves enough to make it the last one we ever have to hold. Instead, COP31 in Antalya commenced by delivering a sobering update of failure — the world was on track this year to temporarily overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C warming limit. 31 years of discussions, and yet we did not manage to keep planetary temperatures within limits.

This breach of the warming limit meant that the Earth's average surface temperature has risen more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, crossing the primary safety guardrail set in the 2015 Paris Agreement. It marks a critical transition where climate risks escalate sharply, and some environmental damage becomes irreversible. However, natural climate cycles combined with human-driven warming can push a single calendar year above 1.5°C. Therefore, the Paris Agreement target measures warming over a 20- to 30-year average, instead of expecting a year's breach to trigger a sudden planetary collapse. UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned leaders that emissions had to fall drastically within the decade to keep this overshoot brief. So the bottom line is - that we could still fix this! But in the idyllic town of Antalya, the world chose not to. Talks collapsed because leaders failed to reach a consensus to transition away from fossil fuels. The UAE Consensus, agreed by 198 Parties at COP28 in Dubai in December 2023, had explicitly agreed to "transition away from fossil fuels" in energy systems.

Yet the draft agreement on the scheduled last day of COP on Friday had removed any mention of the transition. In a dramatic sequence of events, climate activists gathered to stand outside the negotiations hall on Friday evening calling for world leaders to step up. Overnight, by Saturday morning, the EU gathered 130 countries to oppose the omission. Saturday night, world leaders were summoned into plenary at 11.30 pm. Back-and-forth discussions continued all night between country delegations. On Sunday, several deliberations and amendments later, the fourth draft agreement that was presented still maintained the omission, to which the EU and several other nations rejected the agreement. What would the outcomes of COP31 mean for India? First, earlier mandates remain intact, including COP28's call to transition away from fossil fuels and COP30's



call to triple adaptation finance by 2035. Second, India's Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupender Yadav, emphasised that the lack of consensus will not slow India's domestic transition, pointing to over 170 GW of solar capacity, while India has already passed 50 per cent non-fossil power capacity ahead of its 2030 goal. Without a new agreement at COP31, funding bankable projects through domestic and bilateral channels —and building state and city resilience — becomes more critical.Third, working alongside BASIC and Like-Minded Developing Countries, India kept equity, Common But Differentiated Responsibilities, and developed nations' Article 9.1 finance obligations central to draft texts, while also emphasising the near-term climate benefits of cutting anthropogenic methane alongside food security concerns.Fourth, procedural Article 6 carbon-market texts were approved without weakening integrity rules. However, unilateral trade measures like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism remain a live pressure point, pushing Indian exporters in sectors like steel, aluminium, cement, and fertilisers — alongside facilities under India's Carbon Credit Trading Scheme — to maintain strong emissions tracking and carbon-pricing readiness.Fifth, unfinished debates on climate finance, adaptation baselines, and energy transition will carry forward to COP32 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

As a long-term resident of Dubai, it also made me think of what the outcomes would reflect on the future of the UAE. First, it leaves the UAE Consensus from COP28 intact as the global benchmark for fossil fuel transition language. It thus strengthens the UAE's COP28 legacy.

Second, the UAE's calm and progressive stance shone through as it reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of the UAE Consensus, in contrast to Saudi Arabia, which lobbied loudly and hard to omit mention in the agreement about transitioning away from fossil fuels, ironically despite the Saudi pavilion being one of the largest and most opulent pavilions showcasing its climate commitment.

Third, the collapse of a climate agreement has now placed greater weight on civil society across countries, including the UAE, for clean energy investments, outside any UN political pact. Fourth, a major highlight of COP31 was its push toward global electrification through renewables. We can expect the UAE to be investing more in clean electricity and supporting startups offering innovative technologies for it.

Finally, COP31 formally launched the second Global Stocktake to drive implementation of national climate plans. The UAE already monitors emissions through a federal MRV system led by the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment. Now we can expect the further strengthening of emissions reporting data in the UAE at the companies' level. On the morning of my last day of COP31, I watched a 19-year-old student at the climate engineering college I had established, adjusting the lanyard around her neck as she entered. She was one of the young delegates attending COP31. At around midday, she took a seat at a roundtable discussion.

She spoke about her own struggles with heatwaves and water shortages. There, she made a friend. I smiled as she introduced me to the young Turkish girl pursuing an affiliated degree in carbon management in Istanbul, whom she had befriended. Perhaps the success of COP is then determined at two levels. First, it is defined by the level of success of country-level negotiations to collectively preserve the planet's ecosystem and the human species. But second, it is also defined by the cumulative value of the micro-progress achieved by friendships at COP. Friendships are built on empathy, understanding, and trust - which are the cornerstones to arriving at an agreement towards climate action amongst world leaders too.Antalya then failed on the first front, and salvaged the second. Things could have been far worse had climate activists and over 130 countries not joined hands to quash a disastrous draft agreement.

The writer is the CEO of Sustain Labs Paris, a Global Leadership Fellow of the World Economic Forum

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IBM ends US visa, green card sponsorship for most consulting roles

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi



Global technology major IBM has decided to discontinue US visa and green card sponsorship for the majority of positions within its consulting division, a business unit employing more than 150,000 people worldwide. The decision comes amid growing scrutiny by the US Government of companies that depend on foreign professionals to fill skilled positions. In a statement, IBM said its participation in US high-skilled visa programmes had gradually declined over the years. The company attributed the decision to changing workforce availability, evolving skill requirements and shifting client demands.

"IBM Consulting participates in US high-skilled visa programmes to address skill shortages. That participation has been declining for a number of years, and as skill availability and client needs have evolved, we have opted to discontinue visa and green card sponsorship for the majority of such roles in IBM Consulting," the company said. Although IBM has not publicly disclosed the full scope of the changes, reports suggest that some employees affected by the decision have been given two options: relocate to an overseas office or leave the organisation by the end of the year.

Posts shared by employees on anonymous professional networking platform Blind indicate that some workers have approximately three weeks to make their decision. Those who choose not to relocate have reportedly been offered severance equivalent to three months' pay, with December 31 set as their final working day.

One employee, describing the situation on Blind, claimed they had been asked to choose between moving to India with an approximately 80 per cent reduction in salary or leaving the company. The employee also expressed concerns about having to abandon a career and personal life established in the US. These accounts have not been independently verified, and IBM has not publicly confirmed the reported relocation terms or severance arrangements. IBM's decision comes against the backdrop of increasingly restrictive US immigration policies and heightened scrutiny of employers hiring foreign professionals.

In September 2026, US President Donald Trump extended for another year the $100,000 fee introduced in 2025 for employers sponsoring certain new H-1B workers from outside the country.

Trump's administration has defended the measure as a way to prioritise American workers and graduates while discouraging companies from using foreign labour when qualified domestic candidates are available.

According to the White House, extending the proclamation would help safeguard US economic and national security interests, improve employment opportunities for American workers and ensure that companies recruit foreign professionals only when their skills are essential. The developments are particularly significant for Indian technology professionals, who represent the largest group of beneficiaries under the US H-1B visa programme.

For years, major technology and consulting companies have relied on skilled workers from India to support their US operations. However, rising immigration costs, stricter visa policies and changing workforce strategies are creating additional challenges for professionals seeking long-term employment in the country.

IBM's latest move also highlights the wider uncertainty facing the technology sector, where employees are already dealing with restructuring, cost-cutting measures and the growing adoption of artificial intelligence.

While the full impact of IBM's decision remains unclear, the shift could signal a broader change in how multinational technology companies approach overseas talent recruitment and US-based employment.

President Zelenskyy urges US to pressure Putin

SAMYA KULLAB/ELISE MORTON ■ Kyiv



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed frustration with the US stance toward Russian leader Vladimir Putin, in the latest sign of deepening tension between Kyiv and Washington just as a question mark appears over Europe's future financial commitments to Kyiv.

Zelenskyy said in an interview with the BBC broadcast Friday that he wants the US to apply more pressure on Putin to stop his invasion of Ukraine, which began almost five years ago and grinds on despite President Donald Trump's efforts to broker a peace deal. The Ukrainian president described Trump calling Putin "my friend" at a recent summit in China as "strange" because the Russian leader is "an aggressor and a killer."

"He can't be a friend," Zelenskyy told the British broadcaster in Kyiv, likening it to Adolf Hitler being viewed as a friend in World War II. The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Putin for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine. The Trump administration, meanwhile, has imposed sweeping sanctions on the court as part of its campaign to dismantle the tribunal over investigations into the US and its allies including Israel.

Zelenskyy's comments were broadcast a day after Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and a US envoy trying to mediate an end to the war, complimented Putin on being a "grandmaster" of politics and weeks after Kushner's partner in peace efforts, Steve Witkoff, described Putin as a "humanitarian." Moscow's invasion has killed hundreds of thousands of troops and thousands of Ukrainian civilians. (*AP*)

UN warns hunger will deepen in West Asia as war, fuel costs, aid cuts collide



HAMZA FAHMY ■ Cairo

Hunger is expected to worsen in 16 countries over the next six months, with war-torn Sudan and Yemen among five nations facing the gravest risk, the United Nations' food agencies warned Friday.

The agencies pointed to conflict, soaring fuel costs linked to war in the Middle East and steep cuts in aid.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Programme's Hunger Hotspots report covers December through May 2026.

The Palestinian territories were moved down one level following the October 2025 ceasefire in Gaza, though 67% of Gaza's population still faces crisis-level hunger or worse, and the report warned that the gains were fragile. In Sudan, a risk of famine is expected to persist through January in 13 areas of North Darfur and South Kordofan, the report said. (*AP*)

Teenage Indian AI entrepreneur takes selfie with Putin, goes viral

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Moscow



A 17-year-old Indian AI entrepreneur's selfie with Russian President Vladimir Putin at an international conference in Moscow has gone viral on social media, turning the teenager into an overnight sensation.

Raul John Aju, founder and Chief Technology Officer of Kochi-based AIRealm Technologies, met Putin at the AI Journey conference, where he got an opportunity to interact with the Russian leader.

Following the meeting, Aju asked Putin for a selfie, and the Russian president readily obliged. "Still trying to process this. From being a little kid making videos for fun to meeting President Putin at 17, life has given me opportunities I never even knew to dream of," Aju posted on social media. Known as the 'AI Kid of India', Aju said he had "so much more to learn, so much more to do", expressing gratitude to everyone who had been part of his journey.

His projects include ThinkCraft (an AI learning platform), RESQ AI, JustEase, NyayaSathi, and Project 47X (aimed at simplifying legal information). Russian Embassy in India said that Raul was among the young AI talents who met with the Presidents of Russia and Kazakhstan.

"During a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian schoolboy Raul John Aju, who created the ThinkCraft platform, took a selfie with the Russian leader," it posted on social media.

AI Journey Conference was held from November 26 to 28, 2026, in Moscow, focusing on how artificial intelligence shapes society, business, and science. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev attended the plenary session on November 26.

Taj Mahal marble slab taken by East India Company officer set for UK auction



ADITI KHANNA ■ London

An intricate floral-bordered marble slab taken from the Taj Mahal in Agra by an officer of the East India Company is set to be auctioned in the UK next month.

The rectangular slab, one of two that Colonel Pownoll Phipps collected in 1816 at the end of his tenure as superintendent of the repairs of the buildings in and around Agra, is estimated to fetch between 20,000 and 30,000 pounds (₹24-36 lakh approximately).

It is being offered as part of the Islamic and Indian Art sale by Lyon and Turnbull auctioneers on December 9.

"The marble slab is accompanied by a vintage black and white photograph of the Taj Mahal and two letters — one printed by the grandson of Colonel Pownoll and one handwritten by the Marquess of Bath," the auction notes State.

The colonel's son's memoirs quote that his father found them in a 'souterrain', or underground area, at the Taj Mahal and that he thought they were intended for the repairs to the iconic Mughal-era monument. (*PTI*)

Armed group kills 13 soldiers in Niger attack

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Niamey(Niger)



Armed men killed 13 members of Niger's National Guard and wounded 20 others in an attack on an outpost in western Niger, the country's defence ministry said.

The attack took place in Sanam, in the Tillaberi region, the ministry said in a statement read on state television late Thursday. Several attackers were also killed and their equipment was destroyed, the statement said.

The ministry said a large group of heavily armed men carried out the assault and that troops were pursuing them. Several of the wounded were in serious condition, it said. Niger and its neighbours Mali and Burkina Faso have for many years battled a jihadi insurgency linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Analysts say Niger's security crisis has worsened since the military toppled the country's Government in July 2023. Following the coup, the new junta turned to Russia as its security partner and ended its military cooperation with the United States and France.

Despite its promise to restore peace in hot spots, the junta's capacity to improve the country's security has increasingly been questioned amid more frequent attacks. In August, aggrieved soldiers staged a mutiny against the military junta. It was repelled by loyalist forces aided by Russian troops.

Nvidia row: Ex-executive under the scanner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington



After Jensen Huang, former Nvidia top executive Jay Puri's relationship with senior tech executive Cenly Chen is under the scanner amid a US investigation into the alleged diversion of the company's servers to China.

Puri, who previously led Nvidia's global sales operations, and Chen, Super Micro's former chief growth officer, dated for several years before marrying on March 7, 2026, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Puri's professional association with Chen has drawn attention because he oversaw Nvidia's global sales and chip allocation. Chen worked closely with the server maker's customers and had regular dealings with Nvidia. "I never had to rely on personal relationships for professional gain," Chen told the Journal by email. The Journal said Nvidia and Puri did not respond to its requests for comment. Chen now runs AI computing provider ChronoScale.

Puri stepped down as Nvidia's executive vice president of worldwide field operations. Nvidia said in a July securities filing that it expected him to stay on in a senior advisory role to help his successor, Nick Parker, take over. Super Micro, meanwhile, told WSJ that Chen "did not manage Supermicro's overall relationship with Nvidia or our procurement of Nvidia graphics processing units (GPUs)". It said that a process involving several departments determined how the company allocated Nvidia chips to its customers.

On March 19, the US Justice Department announced charges against a Super Micro co-founder, a sales manager and a third-party broker. They were accused of conspiring to smuggle more than $ 500 million worth of servers containing advanced Nvidia chips into China.

The investigation also involves allegations that servers worth $2.5 billion were sold to Chinese customers through a Singapore-based front company. The FBI has reportedly questioned a person familiar with Super Micro and sought information about senior executives, including Chen.

Pakistan set to host talks with Saudi, Turkiye under trilateral defence pact

MUNIR AHMED ■ Islamabad



Pakistan is set to host talks on Friday with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye under a trilateral defence pact that treats an attack on any member as an attack on all three, two security officials said.

The talks in Islamabad will focus on developments in the West Asia, including ongoing attacks on Saudi Arabia by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, the officials said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the meeting publicly. Pakistan has said that the agreement is purely defensive in nature and it is not against anyone, including Iran, and that the trilateral alliance reflects a shared desire to strengthen strategic security cooperation.

Senior diplomats as well as defence and military officials from the three countries are expected to discuss ways to deter threats, expand military cooperation, share intelligence and strengthen defence industry ties, the officials said.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir will attend the meeting.

Asif has said that Pakistan will use "whatever means are available" to defend Saudi Arabia against attacks from the Houthis. However, Pakistan is still making efforts with help from countries in the West Asia, including Qatar, to urge the United States and Iran to return to the negotiation table to end the conflict in the region and beyond through talks. (*AP*)

Hasina plans December 16 return to Bangladesh, Awami League eyes massive human chain at border

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi



Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is reportedly preparing to return to Bangladesh from India by December 16, with the Awami League allegedly planning a massive mobilisation of supporters to welcome her at the border.

According to a key aide to the ousted leader, the party is prepared to organise millions of supporters in what has been described as a human chain stretching from the border towards Dhaka.

The reported plan comes amid claims that Awami League leaders have been surveying several possible border locations to prepare for Hasina's return. The development could create a significant political challenge for Bangladesh's interim government, particularly if large numbers of supporters gather to receive the former prime minister.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, a key aide reportedly described December 16 as the target date for Hasina's return, dismissing suggestions that the announcement was merely a political gamble.

"Her return on 16 December has been confirmed by her aide. Is this a gamble? No, absolutely not. This is a carefully thought-out, precise plan. This is serious," the aide said. According to the aide, Hasina is exploring several possible routes to re-enter Bangladesh. The first preference, the aide claimed, would be for the Bangladesh government to arrange a military aircraft for her return. If that request is unsuccessful, she could reportedly consider travelling on a commercial flight or entering the country through a land border.

The aide further claimed that Hasina was prepared to walk across the border if necessary. Nine potential crossing points along the borders of India's northeastern states, including Tripura and West Bengal, have reportedly been identified as possible entry routes. The claims suggest that the Awami League leadership is considering different possibilities for facilitating her return, although no independent confirmation of the alleged arrangements has been provided.

The most striking aspect of the reported plan is the proposed mobilisation of millions of Awami League supporters. The aide claimed that the party has the organisational strength to bring an estimated five million people onto the streets to welcome Hasina. "They cannot arrest her because she has the support of the people. The day she enters Bangladesh, we expect five million Awami League supporters to greet her along the route from the border to Dhaka. It will be a human chain. We have the organisational capacity to make that happen," the aide said. The proposed human chain would reportedly extend along the route from the border towards Dhaka, creating a massive show of political support for the former prime minister. If the claimed mobilisation takes place, it could become a major demonstration of the Awami League's remaining organisational strength.

However, the figure of five million remains an assertion by the aide and has not been independently verified.

The aide also questioned how Bangladesh's interim government would respond if Hasina returned amid a large gathering of supporters. The remarks indicate that the Awami League believes a massive public reception could complicate any attempt by authorities to take her into custody.

"Will the government be able to handle this? How will they arrest her once she enters the country? Our demonstrations in Bangladesh are drawing tens of thousands of people. These are peaceful demonstrations," the aide said. The statement portrays the proposed mobilisation as a peaceful political demonstration rather than a confrontation with the authorities. Nevertheless, the prospect of a gathering on such a massive scale could raise questions about public order, security arrangements and the government's response.

December 16, observed in Bangladesh as Victory Day, carries considerable historical and national significance. The reported decision to target this date for Hasina's return could therefore give the proposed move additional political symbolism.

The Pioneer
BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

A journey with Bhupen Hazarika: Up close and personal with maestro



SABIR NISHAT

As the year-long birth centenary celebrations of Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika draw to a close, I fondly revisit a cherished memory of an almost seven-and-a-half-hour journey with the legendary singer, composer, filmmaker, actor, poet, journalist and author in 1995. It was an encounter that offered me a glimpse of the man behind the music, an experience that remains etched in my memory more than three decades later.

In mid-March 1995, I was transferred from Hatsingimari in Mankachar, then a subdivision of Dhubri district and now a district in its own right, to the Chief Minister's Public Relations Cell in Guwahati during the Government led by Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia. I was placed alongside Anupjyoti Choudhury, the youngest son of eminent dramatist and actor late Lakshyadhar Choudhury, under Chief Information Officer to the Chief Minister, Bimal Bhuyan.

A little over a month later, one late evening in the last week of April, Chief Minister Saikia summoned Bhuyan Sir and me to his official chamber. When we arrived, he was engaged in a meeting with officials. His personal secretary ushered us into an adjoining room, where we waited for nearly an hour. When Saikia finally came in, he asked, in his characteristic manner, whether we had been kept waiting too long. He then explained why he had called us. He wanted both of us to accompany Bhupen Hazarika from Tezpur to Nazira, where the maestro was scheduled to perform at the Basanta Utsav, a spring festival, at the Nazira playground.

The Chief Minister told us that he had already spoken to Hazarika about the programme and that the maestro had agreed to make the journey despite his busy schedule. Saikia instructed us to ensure that he was looked after properly throughout the trip.

The following day, in the early hours of the morning, we set off for Tezpur. After a three-and-a-half-hour drive in an Ambassador car, punctuated by a brief breakfast stop at Amoni, we reached a wooden bungalow nestled amid a lush tea plantation on the outskirts of Tezpur, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra.

The security guard at the gate asked us about the purpose of our visit and whether we had obtained permission to enter. When we informed him that we were officials from the Chief Minister's Office and that our visit had already been intimated, he promptly opened the huge iron gates.

We soon realised why the guard had been so particular. A film shoot was underway inside the bungalow, and strict instructions had been issued to prevent outsiders from entering.

Later, I learnt from members of the crew that Bhupen Hazarika's popularity had made the entire town an extension of their shooting location. Residents readily extended their hospitality to the cast and crew.



Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika

One crew member, whose name I unfortunately cannot recall, told me that every morning scores of people would gather in the hotel lobby, waiting for a glimpse of Bhupen Da. He never disappointed them. It was, he said, almost like a royal durbar, with the maestro meeting people unfailingly each morning.

The bungalow was abuzz with cameras, spotlights and other equipment. Amid the activity, I noticed a woman in a salwar kameez with cropped hair moving around with the crew. I later learnt that she was filmmaker Kalpana Lajmi, Bhupen Hazarika's close companion for many years.

We were ushered into a spacious drawing-cum-dining room and served tea and snacks. I could feel my heart pounding. The man I had been eagerly waiting to meet was about to walk into the room.

I wondered how I should greet him, what I should call him and how I should introduce myself. As footsteps approached, my anticipation grew. I tried to remain calm and composed.

Then, dressed in a spotless white kurta-pyjama, with an Assamese gamocha around his neck and his trademark black Gorkha cap, the maestro entered, accompanied by Kalpana Lajmi.

A disarming smile immediately put us at ease. He shook hands with us and asked us to take our seats. Bhuyan Sir introduced me as a Janasanyog, or Information and Public Relations Department, official working in the Chief Minister's Public Relations Cell.

After spending nearly an hour, Bhuyan Sir asked Lajmi to pack some clothes, medicines and other belongings for the maestro's overnight stay in Nazira. She assured him that she would take little time to get everything ready.

Meanwhile, we walked around the sprawling campus and caught a glimpse of Shahbaaz Khan, the serial's lead actor, dressed in traditional attire.

About 15-20 minutes later, Bhupen Hazarika and Lajmi emerged from the bungalow, carrying a handbag. As we were about to board our vehicle, Lajmi called Shahbaaz and Mona Ambegaonkar, who was dressed in a muga silk outfit, and introduced them to us.

As the driver started the engine, with Bhupen Hazarika and Bhuyan Sir seated at the rear and I occupying the front seat, Lajmi gave Bhuyan Sir a few last-minute instructions. She reminded him to ensure that the maestro took his medicines on time, before and after meals, avoided visitors at odd hours and retired early.

She also whispered something into Bhuyan Sir's ear about not allowing the maestro to indulge too much in drinking, adding that if he insisted, he should not be allowed more than two pegs.

The maestro seemed to catch the gist of her instructions, perhaps through lip-reading, and playfully admonished her not to behave like a good wife by issuing instructions.

As we drove out of the bungalow, he remarked that Lajmi had looked after him like a good wife over the years.Their relationship was a story in itself. Lajmi had met the maestro at her residence in Mumbai, then Bombay, when he visited with her uncle, the eminent filmmaker Atmaram, for whom he was working. She was 17; Bhupen Hazarika was 45.

When the Brahmaputra became his stage

As we crossed the Kaliabhomora bridge over the Brahmaputra towards the south bank, Bhupen Hazarika broke into song. He began singing Bistirno Parore, the haunting composition in which he questions the river's silence in the face of human suffering.

The vast Brahmaputra stretched before us, its waters shimmering in the afternoon sunlight. The panoramic view, the river's immensity and the maestro's voice, singing seemingly without restraint, created an unforgettable moment. It was an experience of a lifetime.

The Brahmaputra, or Burha Luit as it is affectionately known in Assam, was central to Hazarika's imagination. He saw the river not merely as a geographical entity but as a witness to the region's history, culture, struggles and aspirations. His musical relationship with the river found expression in several immortal compositions, including Mahabahu Brahmaputra, Aaji Brahmaputra Hol Barman and Luitar Chaaparit Kore Naooriya.

After a while, the singing stopped, and there was silence. The maestro began narrating his experiences as a jajabor, travelling across continents and encountering people, cultures and music that shaped his worldview.

He recalled his meeting with Paul Robeson, the African-American singer and civil rights activist, whose famous song Ol' Man River inspired him to compose Bistirno Parore in Assamese, subsequently rendered in Hindi as O Ganga Tum and in Bengali as O Ganga Tumi. Through these versions, Hazarika questioned the indifference of rivers to the suffering of people living along their banks.

He spoke of how his journeys and encounters with people influenced his outlook and creative expression. The music of the Brahmaputra, he explained through his compositions, could converse with the Volga and the Mississippi. Bhupen Hazarika and the Brahmaputra seemed inseparable.

The maestro is no longer physically present among us. But his music, his words, his ideas, his compassion and his extraordinary journey continue to resonate across Assam, the rest of India and beyond.

His songs remain a bridge between generations, cultures and communities, reminding us that music can transcend boundaries, give voice to the voiceless and bring people together.

For those who were fortunate enough to encounter him, even briefly, Bhupen Hazarika was more than a cultural icon. He was an experience, a voice and a way of looking at life.

And for me, that journey from Tezpur to Nazira will forever remain a treasured chapter of my life -- a journey in the company of a maestro whose music continues to travel long after he has left us.

The writer is Deputy Director, Assam Information Centre, New Delhi

ITPO presents IITF 2026 awards in New Delhi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) on Wednesday presented awards to outstanding participants and exhibitors across multiple categories at the 45th India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2026 at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi.



Addressing the gathering, ITPO Chairman Jawed Ashraf highlighted a rise in public participation, new initiatives and facility upgrades at this year's edition, while thanking participating States, Union Territories, ministries, public sector undertakings, businesses and other stakeholders for organising the event.

According to Ashraf, ticket sales reached approximately ₹7.5 crore by November 25, up from about ₹5.5 crore during the previous edition. He also pointed to strong interest in the Hall of Inspiration, which featured more than 500 start-ups presenting solutions to practical challenges, alongside over 80 cultural performances held during the fair.

On venue upgrades, the ITPO chairman noted improvements in food court cleanliness, waste management and visitor amenities, as well as the installation of about 600 square metres of LED walls at Bharat Mandapam, with plans to deploy more than 100 LED screens across the complex. He also thanked the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Government, Delhi Police, residents of Delhi, the media and the Central Government for their support.

In the States and Union Territories category, Tamil Nadu won Gold, Kerala took Silver and Madhya Pradesh secured Bronze, while Tripura received a Commendation. Under Thematic Presentation among States, Punjab claimed Gold, Odisha won Silver, Karnataka took Bronze and Gujarat received a Commendation. Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh took part as Partner States, while Assam, Delhi, Jharkhand and West Bengal were Focus States.

Among Ministries and Government Departments, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises won Gold, the Ministry of Railways won Silver and the Ministry of Textiles secured Bronze, with One District One Product (ODOP).

DRDO scientist gets Murli Manohar Joshi award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Outstanding Scientist Prakash Chand Jain has been conferred the Dr Murli Manohar Joshi Award in the Science and Technology category for his work on the structural design of missile systems and contributions to India's defence research and engineering capabilities.



Former Union Minister Murli Manohar Joshi presents the award to DRDO Outstanding Scientist Prakash Chand Jain in New Delhi for his work on missile structural design PIONEER PHOTO

The award was presented to Jain in New Delhi by former Union Minister for Human Resource Development and Science and Technology Murli Manohar Joshi. Based at the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) in the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex in Hyderabad, Jain was recognised for his sustained contributions to aerospace and defence engineering.

Instituted by the Federation for World Academics (FWA) and inaugurated by Joshi, the international award is administered by an independent Honorary Council in New Delhi and honours researchers, scientists, engineers, technologists and innovators whose work advances knowledge, tackles real-world problems and benefits society.

Jain's research spans fundamental vibration problems to complex structural challenges in aerospace engineering, with structural optimisation work leading to significant weight reductions in missile airframes. His record also includes research publications, patents and technology transfers supporting India's missile development programmes.

Expressing gratitude on receiving the honour, Jain said he felt humbled by recognition at the highest level and viewed the award as an added responsibility to serve society and the nation. He thanked his mentors at DRDO, his colleagues at DRDL and his alma maters — SGSITS Indore, IIT Roorkee, IIT Bombay and Penn State University in the United States — while expressing confidence that India would emerge as a global leader in science and technology.

Translator Rauf Rumi on rendering Kerala CM Satheesan's Bible book



Keralam Chief Minister VD Satheesan (left) meets spiritual head, Sri Sri Sachidananda Bharati and others during his visit to Edneer Mutt in Edneer, Kasaragod, Keralam on November 20

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Thiruvananthapuram

Translating a book of Bible-inspired speeches by leader VD Satheesan into English became a journey of exploring another faith and shared human values for translator Rauf Rumi.

Speaking to media on Thursday, the 38-year-old writer and translator said that although she belongs to a different faith, she was moved by the Christian teachings and reflections in Adam, Where Art Thou?, published in English by DC Books on November 5. The experience reinforced her view that one need not belong to a particular religion to respect its scriptures and teachings.

Satheesan had recently remarked at a church programme in Changanassery that such exchanges reflect religious inclusiveness in Keralam, noting that as a Hindu he had delivered speeches on the Bible that were later compiled into a book and translated into English by a Muslim woman.

For Kannur-born Rumi, who has done several translation projects for DC Books, the book drew her interest even before the publisher approached her because she found it unusual for a political leader to release a collection of speeches inspired by the Bible. Having studied English literature at the postgraduate level and built friendships across Christian communities, she had some familiarity with Biblical references and church denominations, and carried out further reading and reference work to preserve the context and meaning of the original text.

Rumi said a note in the book's prelude stood out for her — where Satheesan describes himself as an idol-worshipping Hindu who holds the Bible in deep reverence — as did a passage observing that people who pray are a society's strength and that prayers across communities carry significance. While noting differences in narrative and presentation between the Quran and the Bible, she said both emphasise love for humanity, adding that the book also introduced her to historical episodes, anecdotes and the work of Christian priests across community lines.

According to Rumi, Keralam's secular environment helps foster awareness of other faiths, and Satheesan called her a few days after the English edition came out to say he liked the translation and felt the essence of the Malayalam original had been kept.

The Malayalam original, Adam Nee Evide Aakunnu?, compiles 32 speeches Satheesan delivered at events hosted by Christian organisations in Keralam on Biblical narratives and the teachings of Jesus Christ in relation to contemporary society, all 32 of which appear in the 197-page English edition.

A UGC NET-qualified postgraduate in English language and literature who has taught at colleges in Keralam and Punjab, Rumi is currently on a career break focusing on writing and translation. Her past translation credits include Dhariba Lyndhem's Name Place Animal Things and Sudha Murty's Gopi Diaries series for children.

50 students awarded degrees at JSS University convocation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Noida

JSS University, Noida, held its First Convocation on Friday at its campus in Sector 62, conferring degrees and diplomas on 50 students of its inaugural graduating batch. The ceremony was held in the divine presence of His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji, President of JSS Mahavidyapeetha and Chancellor of the University. Yogendra Upadhyay, Cabinet Minister for Higher Education, Government of Uttar Pradesh, was the Chief Guest and delivered the Convocation Address.



The graduating batch comprised 32 students of the Diploma in Pharmacy (D.Pharm), 16 of the Master of Computer Applications (MCA) and two of the Master of Pharmacy (M.Pharm) programmes — 37 men and 13 women. Gold medals were conferred on Shivam Singh (M.Pharm, Pharmaceutics), Shakshi (MCA) and Hritik Bhati (D Pharm). Shivam Singh also received the Endowment Medal, while Shakshi and Tushar Jain were the first and second rank holders in MCA. Hon'ble Chancellor, His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswamiji, administered the oath to the graduates.

Minister's message: dream boldly, learn continuously, act ethically and serve generously

Describing a first convocation as the moment a University begins to see its promise fulfilled in the lives of its students, Upadhyay said the first graduates would always hold a unique place in the University's history. He recalled his association with the efforts that led to the establishment of the University in Uttar Pradesh, and said the State, under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, held high expectations of its contribution to education, research and regional development.

Urging the graduates to develop the capacity to keep learning, the courage to adapt and the integrity to use knowledge responsibly, he said artificial intelligence would reshape work and research. "Technology can support your judgement; it should not replace your conscience," he said. He called upon the University to focus its research on the needs of Uttar Pradesh, including affordable healthcare, sustainable agriculture, clean energy and digital public services, to nurture entrepreneurship among students, and to contribute to the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047. His message to the graduates was to "dream boldly, learn continuously, act ethically and serve generously."

University report: recognitions, research and partnerships

Welcoming the gathering and presenting the University report, Vice-Chancellor Sanjay Tyagi congratulated the graduates and their parents. "As the first graduates of JSS University, you will always hold a special place in its history," he said.

World Landslide Forum wraps up in India, backs science role

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

As extreme rainfall, expanding infrastructure and changing land-use patterns reshape the risks facing mountain communities worldwide, the Seventh World Landslide Forum

WLF7 concluded on Friday at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Faridabad, with a renewed emphasis on making scientific knowledge central to development and disaster prevention.

Held in India for the first time, the international gathering brought together scientists, engineers, policymakers and disaster management practitioners to examine a question of growing global consequence: how can societies continue to develop in geologically fragile regions without increasing their exposure to disasters?

Organised under the aegis of the International Consortium on Landslides (ICL) and the International Programme on Landslides (IPL), in collaboration with UNESCO and other international organisations, the forum received 700+ research papers and abstracts involving nearly 1,900 authors from 75 countries and regions.

The deliberations extended beyond the mechanics of landslides to examine the decisions that often determine their consequences — where roads are built, how mountain towns expand, how natural drainage systems are altered and whether communities receive warnings early enough to act.



International landslide scientists and distinguished delegates during the concluding day of the Seventh World Landslide Forum (WLF7), hosted by Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham at its Faridabad campus on Friday

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari and Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh addressed the forum, bringing India's infrastructure priorities and scientific capabilities into a broader international conversation on disaster resilience.

Central to the proceedings was the Faridabad Declaration, which sought to strengthen international scientific cooperation and narrow the persistent gap between advances in landslide research and their application in public policy.

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BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

Rural development key to a developed India



ALTAF HUSSAIN HAJI

Rural development is fundamental to India's economic transformation, social progress and the vision of Viksit Bharat. With a substantial proportion of the country's population living in rural areas, the development of villages is indispensable to building an inclusive, prosperous and self-reliant nation.

India's journey towards becoming a developed country must therefore be accompanied by the economic empowerment, social advancement and improved quality of life of its rural communities.

Despite significant progress through various Government initiatives, rural India continues to face challenges such as poverty, unemployment, agricultural dependence, regional inequalities, distress migration and the growing impact of climate change. Addressing these challenges requires effective implementation of development programmes, stronger Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), institutional convergence and meaningful community participation.

India's Progress in Poverty Reduction: A Foundation for Rural Transformation

India has made remarkable progress in poverty reduction over the past decade. According to the World Bank's Poverty and Equity Brief (October 2026), extreme poverty in India, measured at the international poverty line of US$3 per person per day (2021 PPP), declined from 27.1 per cent in 2011 to 2.6 per cent in 2023.

During the same period, the proportion of the population living below the lower-middle-income poverty line of US$4.20 per person per day declined from 57.7 per cent to 16.1 per cent. An estimated 496 million people moved above this poverty threshold.

These achievements represent an important milestone in India's development journey and provide a strong foundation for achieving Viksit Bharat.

However, the next phase of development must go beyond poverty reduction and focus on sustainable livelihoods, income enhancement, productive employment, access to essential services and economic resilience among rural households.

Recent initiatives and schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development also reflect the importance of recognising development achievements while strengthening the empowerment and well-being of rural communities. The reported national-level event organised in New Delhi on 23 November 2026 to highlight India's progress in poverty reduction provides an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of rural development interventions and the road ahead.

Rural Development: Beyond Agricultural Growth

Rural development is not limited to agricultural growth. It encompasses employment generation, education, healthcare, housing, drinking water, sanitation, infrastructure, financial inclusion, women's empowerment and environmental protection. Its ultimate objective is to improve the overall quality of life and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for rural households.

Villages play a vital role in agriculture, food security, employment generation, natural resource management and the preservation of India's cultural heritage. Therefore, national development cannot be achieved without the comprehensive development of rural communities. Agriculture continues to be an important source of rural livelihood. However, dependence on agriculture alone cannot generate adequate employment and income opportunities for the growing rural workforce.

There is a need to diversify the rural economy through dairy farming, fisheries, food processing, handicrafts, rural tourism, small-scale industries and micro-enterprises. Promoting rural entrepreneurship and strengthening market linkages can help generate local employment, enhance household incomes and reduce distress migration.

Infrastructure and Basic Services: Building Stronger Villages

Infrastructure development is equally important for rural transformation. Better roads, reliable electricity, safe drinking water, housing, sanitation and digital connectivity can significantly improve living standards and connect villages with wider economic opportunities.

Government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Jal



Jeevan Mission and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) contribute to different dimensions of rural development.

However, the success of these schemes should be assessed not only by the number of houses constructed, roads completed or facilities provided, but also by their actual contribution to household welfare, income generation, access to services and overall quality of life.

Women's Empowerment: A Key Driver of Rural Transformation

Women's empowerment is one of the most important pillars of inclusive rural development. Self-Help Groups (SHGs), supported through DAY-NRLM, have created opportunities for rural women to participate in savings, credit, entrepreneurship, livelihood activities and collective decision-making.

The emphasis on women's safety, dignity, health and well-being is equally important. In this context, the Nayi Chetna 5.0 campaign, associated with the Ministry of Rural Development and the broader agenda of women's empowerment, can further strengthen awareness and community action towards ensuring a safe and supportive environment for women.

Empowered women contribute not only to household prosperity but also to community leadership, local institutions and the overall development of rural society. Similarly, quality education, vocational training, healthcare and skill development are essential for building a healthy, skilled and productive rural population.

Measuring Rural Development: The Need for a Rural Development Index

While India has made considerable progress in implementing rural development schemes, there is a need for a comprehensive mechanism to measure their actual impact at the grassroots level.

In this context, the development of a Rural Development Index (RDI) could be an important policy innovation. The proposed index may be designed using household-level data collected at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level and covering key dimensions of rural well-being, including:

- **Household income, poverty and livelihood security.**
- **Employment opportunities and financial inclusion.**
- **Housing, drinking water, sanitation and electricity.**
- **Education, healthcare and nutrition.**
- **Women's empowerment and social inclusion.**
- **Agricultural productivity and livelihood diversification.**
- **Road infrastructure and digital connectivity.**
- **Environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change.**

The data collected at the Gram Panchayat level could be consolidated to generate corresponding Rural Development Index scores at the block, district and state levels. This would provide a comprehensive picture of development disparities across geographical areas and help identify regions and households requiring priority attention.

Such an index could serve as a valuable instrument for evidence-based planning, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation. It would also enable Panchayati Raj Institutions, district administrations and state Governments to assess development outcomes, identify gaps and improve the effectiveness of ongoing Schemes.

Most importantly, the Rural Development Index should measure actual improvements in people's lives rather than merely record physical outputs or expenditure. Periodic household-level assessments would help determine whether development interventions are translating into higher incomes, better living conditions, improved access to services and greater livelihood security.

The Way Forward: Towards Viksit Bharat

The future of rural development must focus on sustainable agriculture, rural entrepreneurship, digital connectivity, skill development, women's empowerment and environmental conservation. Greater convergence among Government schemes, stronger local institutions, active community participation and effective monitoring mechanisms will be essential to achieving these objectives.

Gram Panchayats should be empowered to play a leading role in identifying local priorities, preparing development plans and monitoring outcomes. At the same time, partnerships among Government institutions, financial organisations, civil society, private enterprises and rural communities can help create sustainable development opportunities. The approach to rural development must gradually shift from measuring physical achievements to measuring improvements in human well-being, household prosperity and community resilience.

In conclusion Rural development is not merely a Government responsibility; it is a collective national priority involving all stakeholders, institutions and rural communities. India's progress towards Viksit Bharat will depend significantly on the extent to which its villages become economically productive, socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and self-reliant.

Further the Rural Development Index could provide an important framework for measuring this transformation, ensuring that development reaches the grassroots and that its benefits are reflected in the lives of rural households.

A prosperous, empowered and sustainable rural India is essential for building a strong, inclusive and developed nation. One thing remains certain that the future of India depends not only on the growth of its cities but equally on the progress, prosperity and empowerment of its villages.

The writer is a DDG & Statistical Advisor, Department of Rural Development, MORD Government of India

Gold futures rise 3 per cent to ₹1.25 lakh per 10 grams



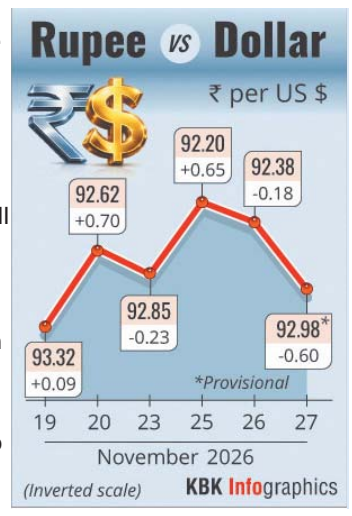
Gold prices staged a sharp comeback on Friday, recovering ₹3,173 to ₹1.25 lakh per 10 grams in futures trade as investors returned after a steep correction and global bullion rates rebounded from their recent lows. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the yellow metal futures for December delivery appreciated by ₹3,173, or nearly 3 per cent, to ₹1,25,445 per 10 grams. It settled at ₹1,22,272 per 10 grams on Thursday. The February contract also advanced ₹3,480, or 3 per cent, to ₹1,28,049 per 10 grams from the previous close of ₹1,24,569 per 10 grams.

"MCX gold futures rebounded firmly on Friday after a fall in the previous session, as buyers returned at lower levels," said Daniel Takieddine, Co-founder and CEO of Sky Links Capital Group, a Dubai-based multi-asset brokerage and financial services firm.

He said in the physical market, buyers and jewellers bought at discounted rates after the global dip, and domestic gold rates rose as international prices stabilised overnight. "Dealers left retail rates unchanged after a heavy drop the day before. The rupee weakened against a firmer dollar and higher crude oil prices. That adds a currency factor to domestic prices alongside global bullion moves," Takieddine said.

In global markets, Comex gold futures for December delivery climbed by $140.30, or 4 per cent, to $3,704.90 per ounce in New York. "Gold futures in overseas trade on Friday have bounced back sharply from the more-than-one-year low it touched earlier this week," said Renisha Chainani, Chief Research Officer at Augmont. (*PNS*)

Rupee falls 60 paise to settle at 92.98 against US dollar



The rupee depreciated 60 paise to settle at 92.98 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, paring its recent gains, amid a surge in crude oil prices and a sharp fall in domestic equity markets.

The local unit was also weighed down by a strong American currency even as the inflow of foreign funds provided support, according to forex traders.

In the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 92.44 and touched the day's low of 93.01 before settling at 92.98 (provisional) against the greenback, logging a steep loss of 60 paise from its previous close.

On Thursday, the rupee settled down 18 paise to 92.38 against the US dollar, a day after jumping 65 paise to reach its highest level this fiscal year so far.

In the past seven months, the rupee became the best-performing Asian currency, recovering nearly 5 per cent from its lowest-ever close of 96.88 against the US dollar recorded on October 8.

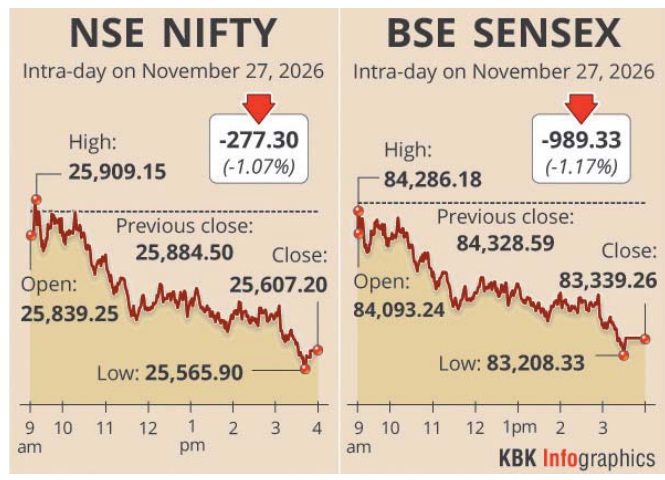
Anuj Choudhary, Research Analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee reversed gains on a sharp fall in domestic markets and a surge in crude oil prices.

"Crude oil prices rose on Houthis attacking Aramco facility in Saudi Arabia. Dollar index, too, recovered from morning lows... Elevated dollar and month-end dollar demand may also pressurise the rupee," Choudhary said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of ₹92.65 to ₹93.20."

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was at 103.77, higher by 0.16 per cent. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.64 per cent higher at $97.19 per barrel in futures trade. (*PNS*)

Sensex snaps 2-day rally, tanks 989 points amid profit booking

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Mumbai



Snapping its two-day rally, benchmark equity index Sensex tumbled 989 points while Nifty fell to near 25,600 on Friday due to profit-taking in IT and banking shares amid rising crude oil prices. The 30-share BSE Sensex tanked 989.33 points, or 1.17 per cent, to settle at 83,339.26. During the day, it lost 1,120.26 points, or 1.32 per cent, to 83,208.33. The 50-share NSE Nifty declined 277.30 points, or 1.07 per cent, to end at 25,607.20.

From the Sensex pack, HCL Tech, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finserv, Tech Mahindra and Axis Bank were among the major laggards. Bharat Electronics, Titan, InterGlobe Aviation, Tata Steel, Power Grid and Trent were the winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, climbed 0.76 per cent to $97.22 per barrel.

"Indian equities took a breather after a strong four-week rally, as higher crude prices, a weaker rupee and rising domestic bond yields prompted profit booking in index heavyweights. "Renewed West Asia tensions pushed Brent higher, raising concerns over supply and domestic inflation. At the same time, a revival in Asian AI stocks could divert some flows away from India, which had benefited from its relatively domestic-oriented growth profile amid crowded global AI trades," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd, said.

Autos and IT were the key laggards, with IT surrendering part of its recent gains, Nair added. Broader markets gained as the BSE SmallCap Select index climbed 0.70 per cent and the MidCap Select index was up 0.45 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, IT dropped 1.53 per cent, Focused IT 1.38 per cent, Realty 1.35 per cent, Auto 1.28 per cent, Financial Services 1.02 per cent and Private Banks index 1 per cent. Capital Goods, Commodities, Industrials, Telecommunication and Metal ended higher.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark fell 580.45 points, or 0.69 per cent, and the Nifty declined 193.4 points. "The main trigger was renewed selling in technology and financial heavyweights following their recent gains, compounded by rising crude prices, a weakening rupee and uncertainty surrounding the proposed US tariffs.

MINI bets on Paul Smith to drive India sales

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

MINI India has launched Paul Smith Editions across its Cooper family. The cars pair the brand's cheeky design with the British designer's "Classic with a Twist" philosophy, and MINI is counting on them to speed up sales. Actress Kareena Kapoor unveiled the cars at an event in Mumbai. The editions cover the MINI Cooper S at ₹55.75 lakh ex-showroom, the all-electric Cooper SE at ₹56.40 lakh and the Convertible at ₹61.50 lakh.

MINI is betting that exclusive, design-led cars can bring buyers into showrooms. "This year we will sell over 1000 units of the MINI but with a renewed brand focus with these new products we aim to dramatically grow MINI sales in the coming year," said Hardeep Singh Brar, President and CEO, BMW Group India. He called the tie-up a meeting of "two British originals" and said the collection offers "wit, colour and character."

The cars come in Midnight Black, Inspired White or Statement Grey. Nottingham Green accents, a nod to Smith's hometown, pick out the grille outline, roof, mirror caps and hub caps. Smith's signature stripes sit on the roof, and the cars ride on 18-inch black alloys. A "Hello" projection in Smith's handwriting lights up the ground as the owner approaches.



Inside, the Nightshade Blue JCW sports seats carry tone-on-tone stripes. The door sills bear Smith's motto, "Every day is a new beginning," and his trademark rabbit appears on the floor mats. The circular OLED display gets its own Paul Smith theme.

Nothing changes under the skin. The Cooper S has a 204 hp turbo-petrol engine and does 0–100 km/h in 6.6 seconds, and the Convertible uses the same engine. The Cooper SE has a 218 hp motor and a claimed WLTP range of up to 402 km.

MINI sells around a thousand cars a year in India, and limited editions are a cheap way to keep buyers coming in. MINI rarely fails to make a special edition stand out.

GAIL and GNFC sign MoU for downstream petrochemical projects

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi



GAIL (India) Limited and Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilisers & Chemicals Limited (GNFC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for jointly evaluating the feasibility of developing downstream petrochemical projects.

The MoU was formally signed by Sanjay Agarwal, ED (BD, Start-up & R&D) of GAIL and DV Parikh, Executive Director & CFO of GNFC, in the presence of RK Singhal, Director (BD), GAIL. Speaking on the occasion,

RK Singhal, Director (BD), stated that "This MoU marks an important step in strengthening India's petrochemical value chain.

GAIL is committed to leveraging its infrastructure to explore setting up downstream petrochemical projects." DV Parikh stated that: "GNFC is pleased to partner with GAIL through this MoU to explore opportunities in the downstream petrochemicals sector and this collaboration has the potential to open new avenues."

3.9 crore borrowers never took business loan: CIBIL

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi



About 3.9 crore individual business borrowers in India have never borrowed in an enterprise capacity, despite many having established credit histories and repayment records, a study said on Friday.

As of March 2026, 63 per cent of these borrowers had a CIBIL Score of 730 or above, while 54 per cent had more than two years of business-credit experience, highlighting a substantial opportunity to expand enterprise-level lending among entrepreneurs already participating in the formal credit ecosystem, it said. "Approximately 3.9 crore individual business borrowers in India have never borrowed in an enterprise capacity, despite many having established credit histories and repayment records," said a joint study by TransUnion CIBIL and the National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC).

Credit to India's micro business entrepreneurs touched ₹29.6 lakh crore as of June 2026, accounting for nearly half of the country's commercial credit portfolio.

Of the ₹29.6 lakh crore in outstanding credit, ₹19.1 lakh crore was held by individuals borrowing for business purposes through business loans, commercial vehicle and commercial equipment loans and loan against personal property; while ₹10.5 lakh crore was held by micro businesses, i.e. entities with credit exposure up to Rs two crore. Overall delinquency levels declined from 3 per cent to 1.9 per cent over three years, reflecting improving portfolio performance amid credit expansion. "This faster expansion in individual business borrowing reflects the growing role of entrepreneurs accessing finance in their personal capacity to support business operations, asset creation and growth, while also highlighting the opportunity to deepen participation in enterprise-level credit," the study said.

TransUnion CIBIL, MD &CEO, Bhavesh Jain said India's micro business credit landscape is evolving as more entrepreneurs access formal finance to meet their business needs.

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Ex-CJI Gavai writes to President on low representation of SC/ST/OBC in judiciary

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Expressing strong dissent and disappointment over recent appointments and transfers in the higher judiciary, former Chief Justice of India (CJI) BR Gavai on Friday urged President Droupadi Murmu to intervene to address low OBC, SC, ST, and minority representation in the high courts and the Supreme Court.

Justice Gavai, the first Buddhist and the second Dalit after KG Balakrishnan to head the Indian judiciary, who has been strongly defending the collegium system of judges appointing judges, expressed serious concern over what he termed a growing trend of caste-based preferences, lack of inclusivity and disregard for merit in appointments and transfers in the higher judiciary. Present CJI Surya Kant succeeded Justice Gavai after his retirement on November 23, 2025.

"When I was a part of the Collegium and was Chief Justice of India, I always followed the principles of diversity and inclusion. Adequate representation was ensured to different sections of the society, including those belonging to the forward section of the society and also to the marginalised section of the society including scheduled castes, tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women...," he said.

Without naming his successor, the former CJI said, "However, in the recent past disturbing events have unfolded, showing complete



disregard for principles of merit and inclusivity."

"I am constrained to voice my dissent and disappointment as evidently appointments and transfers are being done in complete disregard of the ethos of diversity, inclusion and merit, taking into consideration other irrelevant factors," he said. Justice Gavai, in a three-page letter to the President, who hails from a Scheduled Tribe, alleged that candidates from "one particular section of the society" are being favoured.

"Candidates belonging to one particular section of the society are being favoured for recommendation/elevation to the exclusion of everyone else, including marginalised communities including scheduled castes, tribes, other backward classes, minorities, women and even persons from forward sections of the society who are not from a particular community," he said without naming that section. After the retirement of Justice Gavai, seven new judges - Sheel Nagu, Shree Chandrashekhar, Sanjeev Sachdeva, Arun Palli, V Mohana, Sunita Agarwal, DK Upadhyay and Apresh Kumar Singh - have been appointed as SC judges by the collegium headed by present CJI Surya Kant.

EC raises honorarium of Bengal SIR tribunal judges to ₹2.5 lakh per month

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Election Commission of India(ECI) on Friday raised the monthly honorarium of former high court judges hearing appeals against voter-roll decisions under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in West Bengal to ₹2.5 lakh, while former chief justices will receive ₹2.6 lakh.

The revised rates, effective retrospectively from November 20, replace the earlier payment structure of ₹1.5 lakh to ₹1.6 lakh for an initial two-week period, with ₹25,000 for every additional week. The revision follows a recommendation by the Calcutta High Court's SIR Internal Committee.

The move comes months after tribunal judges flagged inadequate administrative and technical support, including portal glitches, lack of facilities for virtual hearings, delays in digitising offline appeals, cramped workspace and the non-payment of staff remuneration.

Order Order

Haryana State Vigilance, ACB files 239 corruption cases this year



The Haryana State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has registered 239 corruption cases till November 23 this year, according to an official statement.

During this period, 212 main charge-sheets and 163 supplementary charge-sheets have been filed in courts, it said.

According to State Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (SVACB) head AS Chawla, the bureau registered 200 trap cases after catching employees red-handed while accepting bribes. This comprised 171 in-trap and 29 out-trap cases.

At the district level, Gurugram recorded the highest number of 41 trap cases, followed by Hisar at 39, Rohtak 37, Karnal 30, Faridabad 28, Ambala 18 and Panchkula 7.

Chawla said the bureau has sent a clear message that corruption will not be tolerated at any level and strict action will be taken against officials and employees found involved in it. (*PTI*)

Court issues non-bailable warrant against minister Dayashankar Singh


UP Transport Minister (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh

A Ballia court here has issued a non-bailable warrant against Uttar Pradesh Transport Minister (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Singh in a nearly 23-year-old case involving charges of obstructing Government work and threatening a police officer, an official said on Friday.

The court of Chief Judicial Magistrate Shailesh Kumar Pandey issued the warrant on Thursday, prosecution department official PN Swami said.

The next hearing in the case has been scheduled for December 10, he said.

According to the prosecution, the case dates back to December 4, 2003, when an FIR was registered against Dayashankar Singh and BJP MLC Ravi Shankar Singh alias Pappu on the complaint of the then Ballia Kotwali police station in-charge Sarvjeet Shahi.

The complainant alleged that the two leaders misbehaved with the then station in-charge inside the police station premises, abused him and threatened to kill him.

They were also accused of obstructing Government work.

The police subsequently filed a charge sheet against both accused after completing the investigation, the prosecution official said. (*PTI*)

INVESTOR FRAUD

ED raids multiple locations in, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Jammu

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab as part of a money laundering investigation against a former SSB official who allegedly duped many investors, including jawans of the paramilitary force, officials said.

The searches were conducted at eight locations in Jammu, Kathua, Udhampur and Pathankot by the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) Jammu office under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the officials said.

The probe relates to a fraudulent money multiplier/investment scheme operated by the former Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) personnel Gurmeet Singh and his associates, they said.

The ED case stems from multiple FIRs registered by various police authorities in Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Bihar for "cheating" the public at large, including serving and retired SSB personnel who were persuaded to invest after being falsely promised high and assured monthly returns.

The officials said substantial amounts, running into crores of rupees, were collected from the investors through various entities and companies, including Style O Industry, Kathua, and Style O Comfort Creations Pvt. Ltd.

Contamination in river ecosystem: SC pulls up Rajasthan Govt, warns of drastic action

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi



The Supreme Court on Friday took a strong stance against the Rajasthan Government for its "lethargy" in a matter concerning contamination in the Jojari-Bandi-Luni river ecosystem. It warned of drastic action to wake up the authorities from "slumber".

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta observed that if the state authorities did not act in the matter, then the apex court could initiate suo motu contempt action against them.

"You better advise the Government and let them come out at the ground level and work rather than facing the wrath of this court," the bench told Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, who was appearing for the Rajasthan Government.

"They (authorities) don't want to do anything at all. We will surely have to take some drastic action to wake them up from slumber. We will not let this thing slide due to redtapism or bureaucratic hurdles. We will take them to task if they do not wake up and act," the bench observed.

The top court was hearing a suo motu case concerning contamination in the Jojari river. The bench also flagged pollution in the Bandi and Luni rivers.

The Jojari River passes through Jodhpur, the Bandi River flows through Pali, and the Luni River runs through Balotra. The Bandi and Jojari rivers merge with the Luni river near Balotra city.

During the hearing on Friday, senior advocate Balbir Singh, who is assisting the bench as an amicus curiae in the matter, referred to the October 26 order passed by the top court in the case.

He referred to the apex court's direction restraining the state from granting any further permission for the establishment of new industrial units along or in the vicinity of the riverine ecosystem until the high flood line and buffer zones were scientifically determined.

When he referred to the state's response, the bench observed, "It's absolutely lethargic."

Madras HC dismisses CM Vijay's plea seeking rejection of election petition challenging his win

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Chennai



The Madras High Court on Friday dismissed Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay's plea seeking rejection of an election petition challenging his victory from the Perambur Assembly constituency here. Justice V Lakshminarayanan dismissed the petition filed by Vijay, which sought to reject the election petition filed by S Dinesh, a voter from the constituency.

In his election petition, Dinesh alleged that the CM had deliberately and wilfully suppressed material information, misrepresented facts and made false declarations regarding his immovable properties.

He contended that the Returning Officer ought to have rejected Vijay's nomination during scrutiny, as it contained several defects that were "substantial in character". Therefore, he argued, accepting the nomination was improper.

Citing a Supreme Court judgment in Kimneo Haokip Hangshing vs Kenn Raikhan and others, the judge said it was a direct authority for the proposition that voters have a fundamental right to know about a candidate's assets.

The judge observed that the allegations of suppression of wealth required investigation during the trial and could not be a ground for rejecting the election petition at the threshold.

He said whether the alleged suppression of the Panruti property, the sale and generation of `35 crore in Padi and the part-sale of property in Korattur, the land area and construction extent in T Nagar, and the construction agreement in Mylapore were substantial issues could be determined only after a trial.

"As these averments have been clearly stated in the election petition, I am not in a position to hold that there is no cause of action. I conclude that this application for rejection of the election petition should be dismissed," the judge added.

SC ends mediation in Sunjay Kapur inheritance row after 15 rounds of talks fail

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi



The Supreme Court has closed a mediation process in an inheritance dispute within the family of late industrialist Sunjay Kapur, saying efforts at a settlement had reached an impasse and that the parties must now prepare for a legal "battle".

A bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and K Vinod Chandran on Thursday took note of a report submitted by former Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, whom the court appointed as mediator in May. The report indicated that efforts to resolve the claims of Sunjay Kapur's mother, Rani Kapur, had reached an impasse despite 15 rounds of sittings.

"One can never force a settlement," the bench said while formally closing the mediation proceedings. Justice Pardiwala said the court will soon pass an order urging the Delhi High Court to expeditiously consider an interim application seeking protection and preservation of the family trust's assets. The outcome is a setback to the top court's attempt to keep the feud over the vast assets linked to the Sona Group from turning into protracted litigation.

On Thursday, it emerged that the talks had failed to bridge two major differences- Rani Kapur's claims and the modalities for the exit of Kapur's two children from his earlier marriage to actor Karisma Kapoor from the trust structure. Justice Chandrachud, the court was told, remained hopeful of resolving the latter issue, but discussions on Rani Kapur's claims had reached a dead end.

Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, appearing for Rani Kapur, said his client had put forward a settlement proposal but received no counter-proposal from the other side for six months. Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Kapur's widow Priya Sachdev Kapur, disputed this. He alleged that Rani Kapur was unwilling to join a session with her daughter-in-law. "She walked out after one meeting, and now, she is blaming the daughter-in-law. Is this fair?" he asked.

Dave said the 81-year-old had lost both her husband and her son, and that meeting her daughter-in-law caused her considerable anxiety, though she was willing to engage with the mediator separately. The bench, which had repeatedly urged the family to approach mediation with an open mind, said the parties needed to show greater flexibility and take a practical view. The scale of the dispute came into focus when the bench asked about the competing claims.

Dave put Rani Kapur's demand at ₹6,000 crore, while the opposing counsel pegged the trust's assets at around ₹30,000 crore. Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, appearing in the court for Karisma Kapoor's children, said they were entitled to a 24 per cent to 26 per cent share.

Allahabad HC quashes UPPCS-2025 Preliminary Examination results

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Prayagraj



In a major setback to the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC), the Allahabad High Court on Friday quashed the PCS-2025 Preliminary Examination results declared on December 1, 2025. The court also directed the commission to prepare a revised merit list and conduct the Main examination afresh.

Disposing of a writ petition filed by Sanjay Kumar and three other OBC (Other Backwards Classes) and EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) candidates from Prayagraj, Justice Manish Kumar Nigam held that the commission had failed to follow the established reservation norms during the preparation of the category-wise results.

The petitioners' counsel had argued that while preparing the Preliminary results, the UPPSC had restricted 4,533 meritorious reserved category candidates — comprising 2,993 OBC, 464 SC (Scheduled Caste), 155 ST (Scheduled Tribe) and 921 EWS candidates — to their respective reserved categories, despite them scoring higher than the Unreserved (General) cut-off.

The petitioners contended that failing to migrate these high-scoring candidates to the Open or Unreserved category violated Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution, as well as section 3(6) of the Uttar Pradesh Public Services (Reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backwards Classes) Act, 1994. Consequently, several deserving reserved-category candidates were unfairly excluded from qualifying for the Main examination.

The petition had also challenged the UPPSC's office memorandum dated January 9, 2020. However, the court noted that the memorandum had already been quashed in a separate matter concerning the APO examination.

After hearing both sides, the court directed the UPPSC to prepare the PCS-2025 Preliminary merit list afresh by adjusting all reserved-category candidates who scored above the general cut-off into the Unreserved (Open) category and declare the revised results. The court further directed the commission to conduct the PCS-2025 Main examination afresh based on the newly revised preliminary merit list and complete the subsequent selection process accordingly.

HC refuses urgent relief to Tata Trusts, says Tata Sons board meet can go on

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Mumbai


Noel Tata
N Chandrasekaran

The Bombay High Court on Friday refused to grant any urgent relief to the two Tata Trusts challenging the reappointment of N Chandrasekaran as executive chairman for a third five-year term and said that the November 30 board meeting of Tata Sons can be held.

A bench of Justice Abhay Ahuja said any outcome of the board meeting would be subject to the court's final orders. The Tata Trusts had sought to defer or stay the meeting, or an order that Chandrasekaran would not be allowed to exercise his vote as executive chairman. The court, however, refused to grant any relief on Friday.

"We are not granting any relief today. Let the meeting (on November 30) proceed as scheduled. Any outcome of the meeting would be subject to our final orders," the court observed.

The bench ordered Tata Sons and the other respondents in the case, which include the board members, to submit their reply affidavits to two suits filed on Thursday and posted the matter for further hearing on January 18, 2027.

The Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT) and the RD Tata Trust (RDTT) had filed the suits in the High Court against Tata Sons and six of its directors, challenging the reappointment of Chandrasekaran as executive chairman for a third five-year term.

The SDTT has sought ₹50 crore, while the RDTT has sought ₹15 crore in damages, with 18 per cent annual interest.

As per the suits, the September 17 Tata Sons board resolution reappointing Chandrasekaran was invalid because it did not receive the affirmative vote required under Article 121 of the company's Articles of Association (AoA).

The immediate relief sought was to prevent the chairman of Tata Sons from exercising his casting vote during the November 30 board meeting if nominee directors were split. On Friday, the trusts' counsel also sought to defer the meeting, which Tata Sons opposed.

The Pioneer
BHOPAL | SATURDAY | NOVEMBER 28, 2026

Akash Deep shines for India; New Zealand end Day 1 at 246/5

KUSHAN SARKAR
Christchurch

Akash Deep was easily the most impressive Indian bowler on view, overshadowing the peerless Jasprit Bumrah with two beautiful deliveries in the post-lunch session, as New Zealand ended the opening day of the second Test at a middling 246 for 5 here on Friday.

New Zealand dominated sessions one and three while the middle session belonged to India during the 85 overs that were bowled on the day. After an opening stand of 77 between skipper Tom Latham (59) and Devon Conway (31), it seemed like a good toss to lose for the hosts but debutant Gurnoor Brar (1/52 in 19 overs) got his first Test scalp off the last delivery before lunch to set the ball rolling for the visitors.

Bengal speedster Akash (2/52 in 21 overs), who is returning to international cricket after a lengthy rehabilitation following a lower back stress injury, was the difference between the two sides. With semi-new Kookaburra, Akash produced two moments of magic to remove the already set-Latham and the jittery Rachin Ravindra (0) both caught by Rishabh Pant behind the stumps.

In between, the much talked about Anshul Kamboj (1/56 in 17 overs), whose selection is being hotly debated, got rid of Henry Nicholls (16) as New Zealand collapsed to 110/4 from 77 for no loss.



However, Tom Blundell (53 batting off 117 balls) and local lad Daryl Mitchell (31) added 74 before Washington Sundar (1/36 in 9 overs) had the latter caught by Dhruv Jurel at leg-slip. Blundell showed a lot of patience and at stumps, he had New Zealand's most improved Test batter of recent times — Glenn Phillips (36 batting, 64 balls) — for company. The two added another 62 runs for the unbroken sixth wicket stand to ensure that honours were shared on the opening day. If Akash was the most impressive bowler by generating appreciable off-the-surface movement, Brar's addition was a welcome change in the line-up as he looked way more incisive compared to Prasidh Krishna.

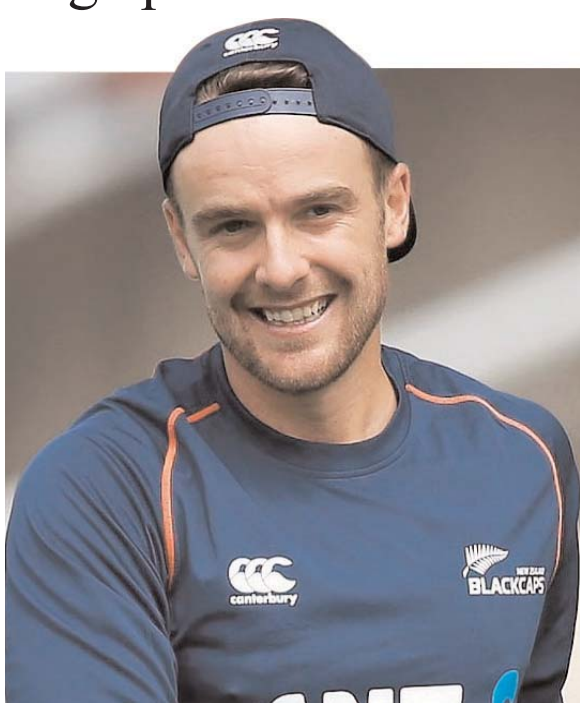
The pitch at Hagley Oval had a bit of everything. It had bounce, carry and seam movement for the bowlers. The batters could drive on the up and get value for their shots. In the second session, India skipper Shubman Gill's decision to change Akash's end from Port Hill to Botanical Garden also worked well.

The delivery to get Latham was a work of art. He pitched it on length and got it to straighten enough, leaving the Black Caps skipper with no option but to play it. The healthy nick went straight into Pant's gloves.

Kamboj, who had wasted the new ball, tried the short ball tactic for a few overs in the post lunch session. Most were ill-directed bouncers that Nicholls would duck before he managed one that was around waist high. It prompted Nicholls to go for the pull shot and Akash was in position to grab it. Rachin scratched around for around eight deliveries before Akash once again pitched a delivery on good length but this moved a shade more compared to the one he bowled to Latham.

The southpaw jabbed at it and once again Pant was in business. Earlier, in the first over of the day, Latham averted the ignominy of a hat-trick of ducks after successfully taking a DRS on being adjudged leg before off Bumrah, who went wicket-less on the day but kept it tight by conceding only 37 runs in his 19 overs. (*PTI*)

Happy with how we came back, big job now to go past 300: Blundell



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Christchurch

New Zealand batter Tom Blundell said he is happy with the 246/5 that his team managed on the opening day of the second Test against India here and the "big job" now is to take it past 300 on the challenging track that's "nipping quite a lot".

"It was a little bit slow from all counts initially but yeah throughout the whole day, it was nipping quite a lot... (we will) take it 100 per cent. I'm pretty happy."

India's most impressive bowler on the day was pacer Akash Deep with two scalps, while the redoubtable Jasprit Bumrah kept it tight in his 19 overs despite not being among the wickets.

Blundell said he and Phillips are up for a major challenge on Saturday to take New Zealand past the relatively secure 300-run mark. "If you look at it tomorrow me and Glenn have got a big job if we can carry on that partnership and get us above 300 and 300-plus would be ideal.

"But the Indian bowlers, they bowled pretty well all day. It's pretty tough out there facing all of them with that nipping ball but I thought you know all of them bowled really well," he said.

Reflecting on his own career, Blundell said it is a bit difficult being a one-format player. The late bloomer played his last T20I in 2024 and hasn't appeared in an ODI since 2023.

"I look back to last season and domestic cricket. I had probably one of my best seasons throughout the formats in domestic cricket.

"At times I do find it hard just being a one format cricketer. You go through periods where you might not play Test cricket for three or four months and then all of a sudden you're playing Test cricket in India," he explained. "So it can be quite challenging at times but I feel my game's in a really good spot. It just needs a bit of game time and that was nice today to be able to spend you know time out there and get a bit of the rhythm back I guess," he said.

Asked if he ever thought that he would appear in 50 Tests for New Zealand, Blundell said he is not much of a milestone man but the stat is special. "I always believed I would play for New Zealand. You know maybe a game but to be able to play 50 was something that I'm very proud of. Like I'm not a numbers guy whatsoever.

CHANGE OF NAME

I AMREEN OWAIS ALI W/O SYED OWAIS ALI R/O Flat no.02, Luv kush Apartment, Idgah Hills Bhopal (M.P.) 462001 I declare that My old name was AMREEN SIDDIQUI. Written in My 10th class Marksheet, now has to be changed AMREEN OWAIS ALI W/O SYED OWAIS ALI (new name) after Marriage. Hence forth I shall be known as AMREEN OWAIS ALI W/O SYED OWAIS ALI in future for all purpose including all the official documentations.

Rohit returns to captain Mumbai Indians after three seasons

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians on Friday reinstated talismanic Rohit Sharma as captain ahead of the 2027 Indian Premier League, hoping to snap their modest run in recent years.

Rohit, who led Mumbai to five IPL titles, will succeed Hardik Pandya after the all-rounder joined Punjab Kings in a trade involving pacer Arshdeep Singh. "I am ready for the 20th season (of the IPL), for the challenges ahead and for giving our Paltan plenty of moments to celebrate. The focus will be on playing our brand of cricket, competing together and enjoying the game," Rohit said in a release issued by Mumbai Indians.

"Mumbai Indians has been a huge part of my life, and leading this team has always been something I have taken great pride in.

"The conversations with Nita (Ambani) Bhabhi and Akash (Ambani) about the season ahead have been exciting, and I have a lot of belief in what we can achieve," he added. Rohit, who became MI captain in 2013, was removed from the franchise's leadership role after IPL 2023, and Pandya was named his replacement. Under the 39-year-old, Mumbai won IPL titles in 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020, besides the now-defunct Champions League T20 (CLT20) in 2013. After winning the trophy in 2020, the Mumbai outfit largely experienced poor outings in the league. They finished fifth in 2021, 10th in 2022 and were ousted in Qualifier 2 in 2023, prompting the MI management to change the skipper.



However, Mumbai did not fare any better under Pandya either, ending up 10th in 2024 and ninth in 2026.

In 2025, they managed to enter Qualifier 2 before being eliminated. After third straight title-less season under Pandya, it was clear that MI would let go of the star cricketer.

They initiated talks with multiple franchises, including Gujarat Titans, Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings, for a trade arrangement before eventually arriving at a mutual transfer agreement with Punjab Kings.

कार्यालय नगर परिषद ईसागढ़, जिला अशोकनगर (म.प्र.)
Email id: cmoesagarh@mpurban.gov.in

क्र. / न.प. / 2026 / 1494 — ईसागढ, दिनांक – 23 / 11 / 2026

// ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना //

निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु केंन्द्रीय कृता पंजीयन प्रणाली में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों व आंनलाइन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण वेबसाइट http://www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है ।

कार्य का नाम	टेंडर नं.	अनुमानित लागत	आमान राशि	निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य	कार्य की अवधि	निविदा की अंतिम तिथि
नागावादी पर खेल मैदान निर्माण कार्य	2026_UAD_551614_1	211.80 लाख	106000 /-	15000/-	12 माह	09.12.2026

शर्तें–
निविदा में किया गया कोई भी संशोधन वेबसाइट पर किया जायेगा । पृथक से कोई भी प्रकाशन नहीं किया जायेगा । अतः सम्बंधित जानकारी उक्त वेबसाइट पर देखी जाये, निविदा से सम्बंधित अन्य जानकारी कार्याललीन समय में सम्बंधित जानकारी शाखा में देखी जा सकती है उपरोक्त निविदा सुचना विभाग की वेबसाइट www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है ।

मुख्य नगरपालिका अधिकारी
नगर परिषद ईसागढ़

Online Tender Document for M.P. Police
POLICE HEADQUARTER, M.P., BHOPAL

No. PHQ / 15 / GPC / 6019 - 1 / 2026 Bhopal, Dated 25 / 11 / 2026

" ONLINE TENDER NOTICE "

Online tender are invited by Assistant Inspector General of Police (Provisioning) Police Head Quarter, Bhopal on behalf of DGP MP Bhopal for PRRI Branch on website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app

SPEED MEASUREMENT DEVICE (RADAR / LIDAR) WITH INBUILT CAMERA AND GPS FOR INTERCEPTOR VEHICLE

S. No.	Name Of Item	Qty.	EMD Paid Online Through mptenders.gov.in	Tender Fees (Rs.)
1	SPEED MEASUREMENT DEVICE (RADAR / LIDAR) WITH INBUILT CAMERA AND GPS FOR INTERCEPTOR VEHICLE	8 Nos	2,64,000/-	5000/-
	Total Rs.		2,64,000/-	5000/-

1. Cost of tender document (Tender Fee) is non refundable and cannot be exempted in any condition &must submit online through website https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app.
2. Tender document can be download from the website of MP Police (www.mppolice.gov.in)
3. Bids shall be submitted online only at MP Tender's website: https://mptenders.gov.in/nicgep/app
4. Critical Date Sheet:

Published Date	25 / 11 / 2026 Time 18:00 PM
Bid Document Download Start Date	26 / 11 / 2026 Time 12:00 PM
Pre Bid Meeting Date	01 / 12 / 2026 Time 16:00 PM
Bid Submission Start Date	08 / 12 / 2026 Time 12:00 PM
Bid Submission End Date	15 / 12 / 2026 Time 14:00 PM
Bid Opening Date	16 / 12 / 2026 Time 16:00 PM

5. Intending Bidders are advised to visit this website regularly till closing date of submission to keep themselves updated as any change/ modification in the tender will be intimated through this website only by corrigendum / addendum/ amendment.
6. Bids will be opened as per date/time as mentioned in the Tender Critical Date Sheet. After online opening of Technical-Bid the results of their qualification as well Price-Bid opening will be intimated later.

(Sandeep Dixit)
Assistant Inspector General of Police (Provisioning)
For- Director General of Police
Madhya Pradesh

G-22158/26 Green India Clean India

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd.
Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd

Corporate office: office Nos. 501 & 503,5th Floor, Lightbridge, Saki Vihar Road, Andheri East, Mumbai Suburban (District) Maharashtra - 400072

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

Shujalpur Branch: House No.17, Ward No.15, Panjabi Mohalla, Digambar Jain Mandir Road, Shujalpur, Shujalpur Mandi, Shujalpur Dist. Madhyapradesh-465333

POSSESSION NOTICE Appendix IV (for immovable property)

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

S. N.	Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) (Name of the Branch)	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date & Amount	Date of Possession
1	(Loan Code No. 05600000504 / Narmadapuram Branch) Neelesh Vishwakarma (Borrower) Madho Singh Vishwakarma (Co-Borrower)	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing, Ward No 14, Nagar Panchayat Bareli, Dist Raisen, M.P. **Boundaries** : East -Property Of Ashok Kumar And Shailendra Kumar, West - Rest Land Of Seller, North - Way, South - House Of Harkishan Badkur	11-08-2025 & ₹ 8,36,051/-	25-11-2026
2	(Loan Code No. 09110000382 / Shujalpur Branch) Yogesh Sen (Borrower) Kosalyah Bai (Co-Borrower)	All that piece and parcel of the property bearing, Ph. 10 Survay No 260/2/1/1/1 Shitla Mata Colony Pachore Ward No.3, Pachore Rajgarh Madhya Pradesh 465683. **Boundaries** : East -Public Way, West - School Boundray, North - Land Of Seller, South - Plot Of Other	10-11-2025 & ₹ 5,56,120/-	26-11-2026

Place : Madhya Pradesh
Date : 28.11.2026

Authorised officer
Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Engineering Department, Open tender (E-Tender)

E-Tender on behalf of the President of India acting through Sr. Divisional Engineer (Co-Ordination), Divisional Railway Manager (Works), West Central Railway, Jabalpur for the following works :-

S.No. : 1 **NIT No. :** DRMW-JBP-233-2026 Dated: 20/11/2026, **Name of work with location :** CTR 2.0 Km and TSR 79.59 Km by contractor's PQRS Machine & manually at obligatory points and TRR 18.75Km on Itarsi-Jabalpur and Jabalpur-Katni under Senior Divisional Engineer (South) Jurisdiction and Divisional Engineer (Central) Jurisdiction., **Approx. Cost of the work** : 18,75,90,388/-, **Earnest Money** : 37,51,800/-, **Completion period** :18 Months, **Last date & time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs on)** : 15/12/2026, **Tender to be opened at 15.15 hrs :** 15/12/2026

S.No. : 2 **NIT No. :** DRMW-JBP-234-2026 Dated: 20/11/2026, **Name of work with location :** Replacement of channel sleepers with H-Beam sleepers 1577 Nos on Major/improtant bridges no. 768/1 DN, 801/3 UP, 913/2 UP on 3 bridges of Itarsi-Jabalpur section under Jurisdiction of Senior Divisional Engineer (South) Jabalpur division., **Approx. Cost of the work** : 5,74,70,816/-, **Earnest Money** : 11,49,400/-, **Completion period** : 12 Months, **Last date & time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs on)** : 15/12/2026, **Tender to be opened at 15.15 hrs :** 15/12/2026

The complete information of the above é-tender' is available on website https://ireps.gov.in" and also placed on notice board of the Divisional Railway Manager (Works) Office, West Central Railway, Jabalpur. Tenders other than in the form of e-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders.

(Sd.)
Divisional Railway Manager (Works), West Central Railway, Jabalpur

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

BANK OF INDIA

E-AUCTION (SALE NOTICE)
(Under Sarfaesi Act 2002)

Zonal Office : Bank of India Bhawan, Arera Hills, Jail Road, Bhopal-462004
Tel.: 0755-2556770 / 2555169 E-mail: bhopal.assetrecovery@bankofindia.bank.in

Appendix-IV-A [See provisio to rule 8(6)]

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrower(s) & guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged / charged to the secured creditor, the **Physical/Symbolic possession** of which has been taken by the authorised officer the **Bank of India (secured creditor)** will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS, AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" & WHAT EVER THERE IS BASIS " on **31.12.2026** for recovery of bank dues to the **Bank of India (secured creditor)** Bidding will be done online through e-auction plateform **http://BAANKNET.com**

Name of Borrower/Guarantor Demand Notice Date, Notice Amount & Possession Date	Description of Mortgaged Properties & Name of Property Owner	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amt.
Gwalior Main Branch : Sanjay Complex, Jayendraganj, Gwalior Tel.: 7355725919 E-mail : Gwalior.Bhopal@bankofindia.co.in IFSC Code : BKID0009450, A/c for Deposit EMD 945090200000033- Auction Sale Proceeds)		
Borrower: **Mr. Pradeep Kumar Batra S/o Mr. Rajendra Kumar Batra and Mrs. Tarna Batra W/o Mr. Pradeep Batra** **Demand Notice Amount:** ₹ 27,59,663.49 +interest w.e.f. 07.05.2026 & other charges **Demand notice Date : 07.05.2026** **Possession Date : 08.07.2026 (Symbolic)**	**Flat No. F-2 (F.F.) Pratima Villa on plot No.85, Saket Nagar Village Ghospura, Tansen Road, Lashkar Gwalior, M.P Area- 710 sq.ft. Property Owner- Mr. Pradeep Kumar Batra S/o Mr. Rajendra Kumar Batra and Mrs.Tarna Batra W/o Mr. Pradeep Batra Boundaries:** East- Others Property, West- Colony Road, Below, North- Others Property, South- Others Flat F-1	₹ 22,01,000/- ₹ 2,20,100/- ₹ 10,000/-

Date and Time of e-auction : 31.12.2026, 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.

Other terms and conditions:
1) Auction Sale/bidding would be only through "Online Electronic Bidding" on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and " AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS" through the website: **http://BAANKNET.com** Bidders are advised to go through the website for detailed terms and conditions before taking in the e-auction sale proceeding.
2) The property can be inspected on or before **28.12.2026** between 10 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. with prior permission from Bank Manager of Concern Branch.
3) The Successful tenderer shall deposit 25% of the sale price (inclusive of EMD already paid), immediately on the allotment of tender in his/her favour and balance within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale in above mentioned branch's account number. If the tenderer fails to pay the sale price as stated above, the deposit made by him/her shall be forfeited without any notice.
4) The bidding will start at a price higher than that of fixed reserve price.
5) For sale proceeds of Rs. 50 Lacs (Rupees Fifty lacs) and above, the successful bidder will have to deduct TDS at the rate 1% on the Sale proceeds and submit the original receipt of TDS certificate to the Bank.
6) All statutory dues/non-statutory dues/applicable stamp duty/additional stamp duty/transfer charges/all fees/assessment charges/other dues including registration charges, stamp duty, taxes, applicable TDS etc. shall have to be borne by the purchaser.
7) Authorised Officer reserve the right to postpone/cancel or vary the terms and condition of the e-auction without assigning any reason thereof.
8) For further details contact Concern branch Manager at above Phone No. or Zonal Office Bhopal, Bhopal Phone: 0755-2556770/2555169

Note : This publication is also 30 days notice to Borrower/Guarantors/Mortgagors as required under Proviso of rule 8(6) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Place : Bhopal, Date : 26.11.2026 — Authorised Office, Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
Union Bank of India
A Government of India Undertaking

Regional Office :
Bhopal Central First Floor, 1513/1/1,
Arera Hills, Bhopal (M.P.)
E-mail : rh.bhopal@unionbankofindia.com

Please scan QR Code for Property details

Appendix-IV-A
[See provisio to rule 8(6)]

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **29.12.2026** for recovery of below mentioned amount plus interest till the date of realization and costs, charges and expenses due to the Union Bank of India Secured Creditor from below mentioned borrowers & Guarantor deatils are hereunder :

Name of Borrower(s)/ Mortgagors(s)/ Guarantor(s)	Description of Property of Borrower	Reserve Price / EMD	Outstanding Amount as per Demand notice
UNION BANK OF INDIA, HOSANGABAD ROAD BRANCH, Bhopal (M.P),			
Borrower : **Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav S/o Mr. Rana Prasad Yadav** Co- Borrower : **Mrs. Ranu Yadav W/o Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav**	**One Residential Flat situated in plot no 78-80, Krishna Tower, Flat No T-3, 3rd floor, Amaltash Colony, Katara Hills, Bhopal under ward no 86, admeasuring 39.94 Sq. Mtrs. Tehsil Huzur, District-Bhopal. Owners:** Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav S/o Mr. Rana Prasad Yadav and Mrs. Ranu Yadav W/o Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav Boundaries: East- Road, West- Flat No T-01 North- Others plot, South- Flat No T-04 **Property ID-UBINBHOBHC0434**	₹ 13,27,700/- 10% of the Reserve Price **Symbolic Possession**	₹ 7,85,161.33 as per demand notice dated 20.07.2026 + Interest & Other charges
Borrower : **Mrs. Ranu Yadav W/o Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav** Guarantor: **Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav S/o Mr. Rana Prasad Yadav**	**One Residential Flat situated in plot no 78-80, Krishna Tower, Flat No T-2, 3rd floor, Amaltash Colony, Katara Hills, Bhopal under ward no 86, admeasuring 38.16 Sq. Mtrs. Tehsil Huzur, District-Bhopal.** Owners: Owners: Mrs. Ranu Yadav W/o Mr. Rajesh Kumar Yadav Boundaries: East: Flat No T-4, West: Plot No 81 others property, North: Flat No T-01, South: Road **Property ID-UBINBHOBHC0193**	₹ 14,45,000/- 10% of the Reserve Price **Symbolic Possession**	₹ 7,09,778.59 as per demand notice dated 20.07.2026 + Interest & Other charges
Bhagwan Ganj Branch, Sagar			
Borrower : **(1) Shri Harish Soni s/o Shri Ram Chandra Soni (2) Smt. Nidhi Soni w/o Shri Harish Soni** Guarantor: **(1) Shri Ram Chandra soni (2) Shri Anil Soni S/o Shri Ratan Lal Soni**	**All the piece and parcel of Property Residential House no. 111, ward No. 31, Gandhi Chowk having ground floor (Shop) and first Floor (Residential) having total area 122.60 Sq. ft. and built up area 245.20 Sq.ft. at Sagar (M.P.) and bounded by Owners:** Shri Harish soni s/o Shri Ram Chandra Soni Boundaries: East: Property of Ram kishan soni, West: Property of Lachhu sahu, North: Property of Ramkisan, South: Road **Property ID-UBINBHOBHC9468**	₹ 14,30,550/- 10% of the Reserve Price **Symbolic Possession**	₹ 13,01,351.39 as per demand notice dated 20.12.2025 + Interest & Other charges

Date and Time of e-auction : 29.12.2026, 12:00 noon to 5:00 P.M.
(With 10 minutes unlimited auto extension)

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Union Bank of India Secured Creditor's website i.e. **https://www.unionbankofindia.bank.in/auction-property/viewauction-property.aspx & https://baanknet.com**
For Registration and Login and bidding Rules visit **https://baanknet.com**

Date: 26.11.2026, Place: Bhopal — Authorised Officer, Union Bank of India