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Factory blast kills 12 in Telangana, 34 hurt

Emergency services personnel at the site after an explosion at a pharma plant, at Pashamylaram, in Sangareddy district, Telangana, Monday PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Sangareddy

Twelve people were killed and 34 others suffered injuries in a blast in a pharma plant in Telangana's Sangareddy district, about 50 km away from Hyderabad, on Monday.

About 90 people were working at around 9.30 am in the plant of Sigachi Industries at Pashamylaram when the tragedy occurred, state Health Minister C Damodar Rajanarasimha, who visited the accident site along with Labour Minister G Vivek Venkatswamy, said. The cause of the mishap would be known after examination by the technical experts, he added.

Venkatswamy said 12 of the 34 injured people were critical and put on ventilator support in the hospitals. Because of the burns, their respiratory system was under stress, he said.

In a post on X, the PM announced an ex-gratia compensation from the PMNRF for the next of kin of the deceased and injured

The Government is hopeful that the remaining 22 people who received burns recover soon, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the fire tragedy and conveyed condolences to those who lost their loved ones in the incident. He wished an early recovery to the injured.

In a post on X, he announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured.

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy expressed anguish over the incident and directed officials to take all steps to save the trapped workers and provide them advanced medical care, an official release said.

The company said it deeply mourns the loss of lives and extends heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased. The firm is extending all possible support to those affected, it added.Y Nagi Reddy, Director General of the Telangana State Disaster Response and Fire Services, said a blast was being suspected in the drying unit of a plant.

"Industrial experts are saying that during the drying process, or a handling process the pressure could have built up followed by the blasting of the material which led to the blasting of the entire handling unit as well as the industrial building," Reddy told reporters.

Continued on >> P8

China plots SAARC alternative with Pakistan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Pakistan, China, and Bangladesh are developing a proposal for a new regional organisation, which seems to be planning to replace the now-defunct South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Quoting diplomatic sources familiar with the development, talks between Islamabad and Beijing are now at an advanced stage as both sides are convinced that a new organisation is essential for regional integration and connectivity.

This new organisation could potentially replace the regional bloc SAARC, which comprises India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong, Bangladeshi Acting Foreign Secretary Ruhul Alam Siddique and Additional Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Imran Ahmed Siddiqui at their first trilateral meeting at the official level in China's Kunming last week. FILE PHOTO

A recent trilateral meeting between Pakistan, China and Bangladesh in Kunming, China, was part of those diplomatic manoeuvres, they said, adding that its goal was to invite other South Asian countries, which were part of SAARC, to join the new grouping. However, Bangladesh's interim government had dismissed the idea of any emerging alliance between Dhaka, Beijing and Islamabad, saying the meeting was not "political".

"We are not forming any alliance," foreign affairs adviser M Touhid Hossain had said. According to sources, India would be invited to the new proposed forum, while countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Afghanistan are expected to be part of the grouping.

The main purpose of the new organisation is to seek greater regional engagement through enhanced trade and connectivity, the newspaper said.

It added that if the proposal is materialised, it would replace the SAARC, which has been suspended for a long time due to the India-Pakistan conflict. Its biennial summits have not taken place since the last one in Kathmandu in 2014.

ECI uploads Bihar poll data online

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Amid protests by Opposition parties, the Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday uploaded Bihar's 2003 electoral rolls to its official website. The EC clarified that those already enrolled in the 2003 electoral rolls or born to such electors - will not be required to submit any parental documents during the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The move is expected to significantly ease the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, as nearly 60 per cent of voters will no longer need to submit supporting documents.

The poll body clarified those individuals whose names appear in the 2003 rolls only need to verify their details and submit the completed Enumeration Form.

As per paragraph 5 of the ECI's instructions dated June 24 2025, Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), District Electoral Officers (DEOs), and Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) are to make the 2003 electoral rolls available to all Booth Level Officers (BLOs) in hard copy and online for easy access.

These can now be used as documentary proof during the submission of Enumeration Forms.

Continued on >> P8

New BJP party president soon

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Stage is set for selection of new national president of BJP, as on Monday the ruling party has announced two more State Presidents and is expected to announce in four more States. The BJP's constitution requires the election of its presidents in at least 19 out of its 37 organisational States before the process to elect its national president begins, and the ruling party is set to cross the threshold on Tuesday.

The BJP has now new state presidents, including some who were re-elected, in 16 States.

BJP president JP Nadda, who is also a Cabinet Minister, is continuing on several extensions. Many names are cropped up in the political circles for the new president. Names of Ministers Shivraj Chouhan, Nitin Gadkari, Manohal Lal Khattar, Bhupendra Yadav, Dharmendra Pradhan are doing the rounds as new BJP president.

VP Ramalingam and K Beichhua were elected BJP presidents of Puducherry and Mizoram respectively on Monday.

Continued on >> P8

The ByStander

PIONEER IN SHORT

Rail fares hiked after announcement

The railway ministry issued a circular on Monday, increasing the fares of the non-air-conditioned class in mail and express trains by one paisa and all air-conditioned classes by 2 paise per kilometre from July 1. Ministry officials had on June 24 hinted at the proposed fare revision. However, the official circular with the fare table according to trains and class categories was only released on Monday.

Delhi to deny fuel to overage vehicles

Petrol pumps across Delhi will no longer provide fuel to end-of-life vehicles starting July 1 under the directions of Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), with the Transport Department along with the Delhi Police and traffic personnel putting in place a detailed enforcement strategy to ensure strict compliance. In a major step to curb vehicular pollution, authorities are gearing up for strict enforcement from Tuesday.

THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF INDIA
(Set up by an Act of Parliament)

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July 1, 2025
3.30 PM onwards Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi

Chief Guest
Shri Hardeep Singh Puri
Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas

ICAI Torchbearers
CA. Charanjot Singh Nanda
President, ICAI
CA. Prasanna Kumar D
Vice-President, ICAI

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2 CPE Hrs.
Shri Anil Singhvi
Managing Editor, Zee Business
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Capital Market Expert

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The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | TUESDAY | JULY 1, 2025

Mishaps claim 2 lives

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

Two persons, including a four-year-old girl, died in road accidents in Madiaon and Rajajipuram areas of Lucknow.

In Madiaon, the victim identified as Isha Singh, along with her father Abhishek Singh, who is an e-rickshaw driver and resident of Keshavnagar, was returning home on Sunday evening. Abhishek is getting a house built near IIM Road and on Sunday evening he had gone to the plot in his e-rickshaw with his sister Khushi, aunt Rekha, aunt Anita, younger brother's wife Subhashini and daughter Isha. He was returning home from there at around 9 pm.

The e-rickshaw overturned due to the collision with a vehicle when they reached near Bhithauli crossing in Madiaon.

Everyone sitting in the e-rickshaw suffered minor injuries but Isha got a head injury. She was taken to a private hospital for treatment, where the doctor declared her dead. Isha was the only daughter in ther family and the police are investigating the matter.

In another incident an electronic shop owner Akhilesh Kumar (49), a resident of Badshah Kheda in Alamnagar, died after he came under the wheels of a tractor in Rajajipuram on Monday.

He used to run an electronic item shop near the tempo stand in Rajajipuram and had gone out to buy goods for the shop on Monday morning. A little distance away from the shop, a tractor hit him. In order to flee the scene, the driver ran the vehicle over his head and the victim died on the spot. The family consists of his wife and four daughters and a son.

THEFT CASE

Thieves cut down the sandalwood tree planted in the Vice Chancellor's residence of KGMU. Chief Proctor Kshitij Srivastava has lodged a complaint in Chowk Police Station. The police is looking into the CCTV cameras installed on the campus. Chief Proctor Kshitij Srivastava said he came to know about the theft on June 24 and he filed a complaint against unknown persons in this regard at the Chowk Kotwali on June 26.

Inspector Nagesh Upadhyay said that a case had been registered against the unknown persons and the CCTV cameras installed in the campus are being scanned.

There is a security arrangement at the Vice Chancellor's residence. This incident highlights serious concern about laxity in security in a very sensitive area of the campus.

Medical profession service to nation: Prez

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Gorakhpur

President Droupadi Murmu with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, MoS for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the first convocation of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Gorakhpur on Monday PTI

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said that the medical profession is not merely about treating illnesses but also a vital form of national service, contributing significantly to the development of society and the country.

Addressing the convocation ceremony of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Gorakhpur, she urged young doctors to extend their services to rural and remote areas, emphasising that a healthy population is essential for a progressive nation.

She said patients from abroad are also coming to India for treatment, not only because it is affordable, but also because it meets global standards.

She urged all stakeholders in medical education to ensure that doctors receive training not only in clinical skills but also in doctor-patient communication and the importance of the role of empathy in healing from the very beginning of their careers.

"Doctors face many challenges, but their patience and dedication set an example in society. Empathy must be deeply embedded in the system," she said.

"I want to tell all doctors that treatment is not just a means to serve people, but also a way to serve the country. Doctors do not merely cure diseases, they lay the foundation for a healthy society. When citizens are healthy, their productivity increases, and they actively contribute to national development," she said.

Highlighting the importance of accessible and quality healthcare, the President said that AIIMS institutions were established in various parts of the country to ensure that world-class medical education and services are available even in the most remote regions.

"Today, several AIIMS are functioning across India, providing high-quality healthcare to local populations. These institutions have also generated employment and educational opportunities in the health sector.

"Patients from abroad are also coming to India for treatment, not only because it is affordable, but because it is of global standard," she said.

President Murmu lauded the role of premier institutions like AIIMS in promoting medical tourism and making India a hub for healthcare excellence. "The cost of treatment in India is significantly lower than in many other countries. AIIMS, through its transparency, ethical practices and research-based treatment, has earned international recognition," she said.

She expressed confidence that AIIMS Gorakhpur, along with other AIIMS institutions, will play a pivotal role in establishing India as a global centre for medical care.

Addressing the graduating doctors, the President said, "You could have chosen many other career paths for financial and social upliftment.

"But by choosing the medical profession, you've shown a commitment to service. I thank you and your families for this."

She underlined the importance of empathy in medical practice, noting that a doctor's behaviour can profoundly influence a patient's mental and physical recovery.

"A sensitive doctor not only heals with medicine but also with compassion. Studies show that empathetic care leads to faster patient recovery," she said. Calling the medical profession a 24x7 responsibility, the President remarked, "Doctors are still considered living gods in our country. You may be asleep, or about to eat, but a call from a patient can change everything. That one decision - whether to respond immediately'— can determine a life."

President Murmu awarded medals to meritorious students from the institute's first graduating batch.

Earlier in the day, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath welcomed her on arrival in Gorakhpur. Governor Anandiben Patel was also among those present.

In an official statement issued on Sunday, the state government had said AIIMS-Gorakhpur has fast emerged as the dream destination for medical services across eastern Uttar Pradesh, neighbouring Bihar and even the bordering regions of Nepal.

On July 22, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for AIIMS, Gorakhpur, under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, it said.

It was inaugurated by Modi on December 7, 2021, and in the last four years it has emerged as lifeline for nearly five crore people, the statement added.

Troubled by debt, garment trader ends life with family

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

Neck-deep in debt, a garment trader alongwith his wife and their 16-year old daughter committed suicide at their flat in Asarfabad locality in Chowk, on Monday.

The deceased were identified as Shobhit Rastogi (48), his wife Suchita (45) and their daughter Khyati. They lived in a flat in Asarfabad locality. All three were found unconscious in the flat on Monday morning.

The police have found a suicide note and fragments of bangles from the flat. The forensic team also found a bottle of cold drink in the room. The suicide note read: "We are troubled by debt. We had taken a loan from the bank, which we are unable to repay. The loan is increasing each passing day. We have no other option left except taking our lives." Preliminary investigation revealed that Shobhit Rastogi ran a readymade clothes shop in Rajajipuram. His daughter Khyati was studying in 11th class in Lucknow Public School, Rajajipuram.

DCP Lucknow West Vishwajeet Srivastava said that deceased Shobhit's elder brother Shekhar called the police at 5 am and told police that his younger brother's daughter, Khyati, had called his wife Tripti to inform that she and her parents were unwell. "Khyati further asked Shekhar and Tripti to reach her home quickly."

The DCP said on information a police team reached the spot. "All three were lying unconscious. They were immediately taken to the hospital, where the doctors declared them dead," he said

Police suspect that the couple planned and committed suicide while taking consent of their daughter who probably was equally perturbed as her parents were, due their financial crisis. It further surfaced that when Shobhit's elder brother reached his home, the door was found locked from inside. Shobhit's sister-in-law Tripti called her niece Khyati on phone but she said she would not be able to come out. She told Tripti to open the door with the key she had. After saying this, the phone call got disconnected.

Shobhit's elder brother said Shobhit had asked him to water the plants at his home from Monday as he had to go to his in-laws' house. The deceased Shobhit Rastogi's sister-in-law Tripti said that neither Suchita nor Shobhit ever discussed any financial crisis with them.

"I had a talk with Suchita only on Wednesday. She was asking me to go for a darshan of Bhim Shah. But due to my daughter's exams from July 7, I could not spare time and so I told her that I will not be able to go this time. Yesterday, we also went to our brother-in-law's shop. If there was any kind of problem, he would have told us. He only gave us the keys of his flat," she said. The workers of Shobhit's shop also reached the house on hearing the news. They also told newsmen that both Shobhit and Suchita were all well and did not show any sign of depression.

Similar was the reaction of Shobhit's neighbours who said they were never seen under stress. "Whenever we met, we would greet him or he greeted us. He always took part in social works," the neighbours said. They said they could not believe such a jolly man could end his life along with his entire family. Some of the neighbours said people from bank used to visit his house probably due to some bank loan issue. They added that they did not know how much loan Shobhit had taken.

Two held for firing at rival

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

The Chinhat police, on Monday, arrested two miscreants accused of opening fire on their rival with an intent to kill him.

The incident took place in the area on Sunday night.

A live cartridge and one empty cartridge were recovered from the crime scene and the vehicles (a scooty and a SUV) used in the incident were impounded.

As per reports, on Sunday night one Vikas Kumar Tiwari lodged a complaint against Manas Mishra, Anurag, Yuvraj Singh, Shekhar Kaushal and Amitesh Yadav accusing them of the attack with an intention to kill him.

He alleged that the group also opened fire.

On information, an investigation was initiated in the case. The investigators recovered a live cartridge and an empty cartridge and the vehicles used in the incident.

The officials formed two teams for successfully working out the case.

On June 30, the investigators arrested accused Shekhar Kaushal of Balrampur and Amitesh Yadav of Deoria.

A police spokesman said efforts were being made to arrest the remaining accused. He said the arrested accused confessed to their crime and disclosed the location of their cohorts.

"Police are raiding these locations," he said.

The police spokesman said the accused worked as part-time contractors.

Youth attacked

Lucknow: A youth was attacked after he asked the wellbeing of a girl who had suffered a snake bite in Bijnor police station area on Sunday.

The victim, Ravi Prakash Jaiswal, of the area asked about the condition of a girl in the neighbourhood who had been bitten by a snake. This irked a male member in the family and in a fit of rage he hit Ravi Prakash on his head.

The incident took place on June 29 at a hospital located near Sheetla Mata Mandir in the area. Ravi Prakash told the police in his complaint that he was asking about the health of the girl who was bitten by a snake and he only wanted to know if she was having any trouble. "During this, the accused attacked and hit me on my head. Not only this, the accused also threatened to kill me," the victim alleged.

The victim further said he had no previous dispute with the accused. The police registered an FIR in the case and are investigating the matter. *PNS*

Two brothers attacked over land dispute

Lucknow: Two brothers were attacked over a land dispute in the Bijnor police station area on June 28 night. The incident came to light on Monday.

According to the police, Abhay Singh, a resident of Noornagar Bhadarsa, in Bijnor and his brother Sunny Yadav were assaulted. The accused Himanshu Singh called Sunny Yadav to meet him near the Hanuman temple in the area. When Sunny along with his brother reached there in their car, 6-7 unknown people including Himanshu Singh, Sudhanshu Singh, Gyan Singh Yadav, Sachin and Sandeep attacked them.

The accused had come in two different luxury cars. The attackers first pelted stones on the victims' car, due to which the front glass of the car broke. Then, both the brothers were pulled out of the car and beaten with sticks. During this, Sunny suffered a head injury. When both the brothers cried for help, the accused threatened to kill them and attempted to gag them. People in the area heard their distress calls and reached the scene causing the attackers to flee from the spot.

Police registered a case on the complaint of the victim. Police said the root cause of dispute was land-related money transaction. A case has been registered against 5 named and 6-7 unknown people. *PNS*

RPF inspector booked for seeking bribe

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

A Railway Protection Force (RPF) inspector was booked by the CBI for demanding a bribe of Rs 60,000 from a farmer who was involved in a freak accident in which a railway crossing's barrier collapsed on his tractor trolley, an official said on Monday. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) booked Inspector GS Gautam on the complaint of Dhanraj Verma, a resident of Maharajgang in Ayodhya district. The probe agency booked Gautam and unknown others under charges of criminal conspiracy and corruption involving a public servant accepting or obtaining any gratification.

The FIR said, "It has been alleged in the complaint that Gautam had threatened to register a case against him and slap false charges. Gautam demanded a bribe of Rs 60,000 from the complainant in lieu of settling the matter and for non-forfeiture of the tractor-trolley of the complainant." The bribe was demanded in the backdrop of the incident on June 23, around 11.30 a.m. at railway crossing number 96 in Akbarpur.

The complainant said that on the day of the incident, he was crossing the barrier when its bar fell on his tractor. "I drove back home after the situation normalised after the incident," said Verma. The tractor owner said, in his complaint to CBI, that after some time, Inspector Gautam and some of his colleagues came to his home and threatened to file a case against him. "The inspector offered to reduce the gravity of my offence if I gave him a bribe of Rs 60,000," he said, adding that the RPF Inspector gave him two days to arrange the bribe money. The complainant alleged that on June 25, the inspector again came to his home and threatened to slap serious charges and seize his tractor trolley if the bribe was not paid. Verma was not keen on paying the bribe, so he approached the CBI and complained against Gautam. On receiving Verma's complaint, CBI, ACB, Lucknow, verified it and prepared a report which said, "The above mentioned facts and discreet verification prima facie disclose commission of offence punishable under section 61(2) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (as amended in 2018) on the part of GS Gautam, Inspector, RPF, Akbarpur, UP, and unknown others."

ONE HELD

The Hazratganj police, on Monday, arrested an accused who had duped a transgender of Rs 3 lakh and had sexually exploited her besides threatening her with her life. The accused was carrying a bounty of ₹25,000 in his name. He was identified as Abhishek Singh Chauhan of Hardoi. Giving details to mediapersons, a police spokesman said on March 17, a complaint was given by transgender Priyanka Singh Raghuvanshi at the local police station against the accused Abhishek Singh Chauhan and three persons.

It was alleged that Abhishek trapped the victim in love and borrowed Rs 3 lakh from the victim to compensate for the losses he had incurred in business. However, on demanding return of the money, the accused and his aides abused her and threatened to kill her while holding her at gunpoint. Subsequently a case under sections 308(2)/ 316(2)/352/251 IPC was registered at the local police station on the complaint of the victim. On the other hand, the main accused named in the case, Abhishek Singh Chauhan, went underground soon after he got a whiff that his name was in the FIR. When efforts to bring him to the books failed, an NBW was issued by the court for his arrest. While conducting a search operation by a joint police team of Hazratganj Police Station and Cyber Crime Cell, accused Abhishek Singh Chauhan, was arrested from near Bada Imambara.

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Near Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow- 226007
(Area of Jurisdiction-
Partt of Uttar Pradesh)
Summons For Filing & Appearance By Publication
O.A. No. 135/2025
Dated- 16.05.2025
[Summons to defendants under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.]
Original Application No. 135 of 2025
ICICI Bank Ltd. ...Applicant
Versus
Reshav Mishra & Others
...Defendants
To.
1. Rishav Mishra S/o Pradeep Kumar Mishra R/o Opp Swasti Hospital Badaun Road 9154, Ganga Nagar Colony, Near Ganga Nagar, Bareily- 243001, U.P.
2. Pradeep Kumar Misra S/o R.B. Misra (Adult), R/o 9/54, Ganga Nagar Colony, Opp. Swasti Hospital Badaun Road, Bareily- 243001, U.P.
3. Sunita Misra W/o Pradeep Kumar Mishra (Adult), R/o 9/54 Ganga Nagar Colony, Opp. Swasti Hospital Badaun Road, Bareily- 243001, U.P.
In the above noted application you are required to file reply in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any) personally or through your duly authorised agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorised agent after publication of the summons and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 12.08.2025 at 10:30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

FORM NO. 5
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Near Hanuman Setu Mandir,
Lucknow- 226007
(Area of Jurisdiction- Part of Uttar Pradesh)
Summons for Filing & Appearance by Publication
O.A. No. 134/2025
Dated- 16.05.2025
[Summons to defendant under Section 19(3) of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institution Act, 1993 read with Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993]
Original Application No. 134 of 2025
ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant
V/s
HASEEB AHMAD & OTHERS
...Defendants
To,
1. HASEEB AHMAD
Through its Proprietor Haseeb Ahmad
Having its Address At: House No. 15 Chaudhari, Purva Madiyaon, Lucknow- 226021, U.P.
2. HASEEB AHMAD
S/o ABDUL JAUEEL(ADULT)
R/o House No. 15 Chaudhari, Purva Madiyaon, Lucknow-226021, U.P.
3. MAHVISH AKEEL
S/o AKEEL (ADULT)
R/o House No. 15 Chaudhari, Purva Madiyaon, Lucknow- 226021, U.P.
In the above noted application, you are required to file in Paper Book form in two sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving copy of the same on the applicant or his counsel/duly authorized agent after publication of the summons, and thereafter to appear before the Tribunal on 12/08/2025 at 10.30 A.M. failing which the application shall be heard and decide in your absence.
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Lucknow

CHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
Email:- swm@aurangabadmahapalika.org Helpline Number.155304 / 8055128080 / 8055505002
NIT NO: OW/CSMC/SWM/422/2025 Date: 30/06/2025
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SELECTION OF OPERATORS FOR DOOR TO DOOR COLLECTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE UPTO TRANSFER STATIONS / PROCESSING SITES AT CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION." invites online bids through https://mahatenders.gov.in for following works from the bidders fulfilling eligibility criteria's

S. N.	Name of Work	Cost of Tender	Earnest Money Deposit in Rs.
1.	REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR SELECTION OF OPERATORS FOR DOOR TO DOOR COLLECTION AND TRANSPORTATION OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE UPTO TRANSFER STATIONS / PROCESSING SITES AT CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION	11800/-	30,00,000/-

EMD shall be payable online on the portal https://mahatenders.gov.in.

Online Tender Purchase start	date: 30/06/2025	
Online Tender Purchase end date	: 28/07/2025	till 17:00 Hrs.
Online Bid Submission end date	: 28/07/2025	at 17:00 Hrs.
Pre-bid Meeting	: 10/07/2025	at 15:00 Hrs.
Technical Bid Opening date	: 30/07/2025	at 11:30 Hrs
PLACE OF OPENING BIDS	: OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, E-TENDER CELL PHASE - 3BUILDING, Chhatrapti Sambhajinagar - 431001	
OFFICER INVITING BIDS	: MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR MUNCIPAL CORPORATION 431001.	

Amendment to NIT, if any would be published on website https://mahatenders.gov.in
Sd/-
Deputy Commissioner-5
Solid Waste Management Department
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Municipal Corporation

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
The Aadhaar number 8322 3432 1011 is currently registered under the name Diya Singh which is completely incorrect.From today onwards in all official records, this will be recognized and read as Anveshika D/o Mahendra Singh instead of Diya Singh.Add: Anveshika D/o Mahendra SinghHouse No.71 Purana Shivli Road, Kalyanpur, Kanpur Nagar 208017

NOTICE
I have changed the name of my son Khush Mishra to Pranav Mishra, for all future references. Both the names are of one and same person.
Dr. Puneet Kumar Misra S/o Brij Mohan Lal Mishra, R/o 11, Swaraj Nagar, Panki, Kanpur Nagar - 208020

NOTICE
M/s. MEGHMANI CROP NUTRITION LIMITED
The company is going to import and sell the following (100% Water soluble Mixture of Fertilizers) in the state of UTTAR PRADESH (1) N-P-K 19-19-19, the quality of all the products is as per the Fertilizer Control Order, 1985 Notification No. S.O 4120 (E) Dt.30-12-2017 MEGHMANI CROP NUTRITION LIMITED S.No 403/P, 404/P& 452, Village: Chharodi, Ta: Sanand, Dist: Ahmedabad-382170. Gujarat, INDIA, Customer Care No: 9909030545

OBITUARY
OBITUARY
SEP DEEPAK KUMAR YADAV
25 JAN 1994-02 APR 2025
ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR. THE GREAT LOSS OF SEP DEEPAK KUMAR YADAV WHILE SERVING WITH 2006 FD HOSP. **FROM: LT GEN SHIVINDER SINGH AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**

आवश्यकता है
आवश्यकता है।
इरम कालेज
शेखपुर हबीबपुर राजाजीपुरम, लखनऊ (सम्बद्ध–लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय) में बी0एड0 पाठ्यक्रम हेतु योग्य अभ्यर्थियों की आवश्यकता है। मानदेय एवं योग्यता एन0सी0टी0ई0/राज्य सरकार/यू0जी0सी0/लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय, लखनऊ के मानकानुसार। इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी विज्ञापन के प्रथम प्रकाशन के 21 दिवस के अन्दर दो रंगीन पासपोर्ट साइज फोटो एवं समस्त शैक्षिक अभिलेखों की प्रमाणित छायाप्रति सहित प्रबन्धक, इरम एजूकेशनल सोसाइटी, सी–ब्लाक, इन्दिरा नगर, लखनऊ–226016 के पते पर प्रेषित करें।
0522–2310712
Email: info@eramedu.org
+eramedu@gmail.com
प्रबन्धक

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE
I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM ABDULLA KHAN TO ABDULLAH KHAN S/O ABDUL HAFIZ KHAN FOR FUTURE PURPOSE. ADDRESS- B-1/77 BABA NAGAR MACHHARIYA KANPUR NAGAR.

NOTICE
I have changed my name from Niharika Besain to Niharika Besain Singh for all future purposes. Niharika Besain Singh, W/o Ayushman Singh, R/o 4/278-B, 4-A, Vishnupuri, Kanpur.

NOTICE
Unaiza Khanam (ICSE 2021 UID : 7460654) declares that my mother's name is Nikhat Parveen but in ICSE marksheet it is indicated as Nikhat khanam which is incorrect.

NOTICE
I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM VIKAS KUMAR MADAN TO VIKAS KUMAR S/O KRISHNA CHANDRA FOR FUTURE PURPOSE. ADDRESS- 587 A.B. NAGAR UTTARI UNNAO.

NOTICE
Notice- My name is BRAJESH KUMAR in Bank A/c and in Aadhar Card it is BRAJESH KUMAR GUPTA. Infuture, I may be known & identified as BRAJESH KUMAR GUPTA Vill, Behta, P.O. Devarakala, Distt, Unnao.

NOTICE
I HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM ASALAM TO ASLAM S/O SUBARATI FOR FUTURE PURPOSE. ADDRESS- INDRA NAGAR KARARI KAUSHAMBI.

NOTICE
I, Ishwar Lal Dhirwani S/o Arjan Das Residing at Sixth House after Gurudwara,559 KA/264, Bahadur Kheda, Alambagh, Lucknow-226001,do hereby declares that my Previous name was recorded as Ishwar Lal, henceforth I shall be known and recognised as Ishwar Lal Dhirwani infuture.

NOTICE
Informed all, My name is Chandradeep Singh in all my documents. My name is Chandradeep in my educational certificate. Both Chandradeep and Chandradeep Singh are my names. Chandradeep Singh S/o Shiv bahadur singh R/o village Aliabad, post-Rari bujurg Tehsil and Police Station Bindki, District Fatehpur (U.P.). for all Future Purpose.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | TUESDAY | JULY 1, 2025

Prez highlights women's growing role in vet science

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bareilly

11TH CONVOCATION OF INDIAN VETERINARY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday congratulated the medal and degree recipients and expressed delight at the strong presence of female awardees, calling it an encouraging sign of women's growing role in veterinary science, as in other fields.

She recalled how women have traditionally cared for cows and other animals within households, noting that this deep-rooted connection makes their participation in the veterinary field especially meaningful.

Addressing the 11th Convocation of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) on Monday, President Droupadi Murmu said that by choosing a career dedicated to the treatment and welfare of innocent and voiceless animals, they have embraced a path deeply rooted in compassion. She remarked that the Indian ethos of *'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah'* — may all be happy — reflects the very spirit of their chosen field.

Referring to IVRI's motto, she underlined its essence: "Truth and virtue lead to knowledge." She said she believed students had imbibed this spirit during their education and should carry it forward in their careers. "Whenever you face a moment of doubt, think about those voiceless creatures you have pledged to serve. You will find your path," she advised.

The President highlighted the role of the Animal Science Incubator operating at IVRI in promoting entrepreneurship and start-ups in veterinary science. She encouraged students to establish ventures that could not only generate employment, but also contribute to the national economy. She said alumni from prestigious global institutions and industries could also guide such initiatives. She stressed the growing importance of the 'One Health' concept, which views human, animal, plant, and environmental health as interconnected. She urged everyone to uphold this principle, rooted in India's own traditions, and to actively work towards animal welfare. As a premier veterinary institute, IVRI can play a significant role in the control and prevention of genetic diseases. She urged that the intellectual capacity granted to humans by the divine be used for the welfare of all living beings.

The President noted that technology has the potential to revolutionise veterinary medicine and care, just as it has transformed other sectors. She said veterinary healthcare across the country can be strengthened through technologies like genome editing, embryo transfer, artificial intelligence, and big data analytics. Institutions like IVRI should use cutting-edge technologies to develop affordable and indigenous solutions for diagnosing animal diseases and improving nutrition. She also urged the exploration of alternatives to harmful drugs that have adverse effects not only on animals but also on humans and the environment. Droupadi Murmu further said the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed the harmful impact of a consumption-driven culture on humans, animals, and the environment. She emphasized the need to organise animal health melas to promote grassroots-level animal care and suggested that veterinary camps in villages could play a vital role in strengthening public health.

Expressing concern over the decreasing visibility of domestic animals in rural areas, she said, "These animals have historically supported agriculture. While we have embraced technology, essential soil partners like earthworms are vanishing, leading to barren land. Restoring soil fertility requires collective efforts from farmers, scientists, veterinarians, and citizens." She emphasised the need to protect and promote livestock wealth as a national responsibility.

The President shared that she hails from an environment deeply connected to nature. Addressing the graduating students, she urged them to let compassion and empathy guide their work as doctors and researchers, especially in their service to voiceless animals.

During the ceremony, the President conferred degrees and medals upon the meritorious students. Reflecting on the deep bond between humans and animals, she remarked, "This relationship is much like that of a family. While we now live in a modern, tech-driven world, in earlier times animals were our tools and companions. Farmers could not progress without them. Animals were once considered our wealth — life without them was unimaginable," she said, adding that the Indian culture perceives the presence of the divine in all living beings.

She remarked that the institute, established in 1889, has achieved numerous milestones in its 135-year journey. She spoke about the research contributions of scientists and the patents, designs, and copyrights held by the institute. She emphasized that the adage "Prevention is better than cure" is just as applicable to animal health. Vaccination plays a vital role in disease prevention, and it is a matter of pride that IVRI has developed several vaccines under the National Animal Disease Control Programme. The President noted that the decline in vulture populations is partly due to chemical drugs used in veterinary treatments. Banning such drugs is a commendable step toward vulture conservation, and she praised the scientific community for this effort. She highlighted that many species are either extinct or on the verge of extinction and stressed the importance of biodiversity conservation for ecological balance. Institutions like IVRI should lead by example in enhancing biodiversity.

The event was also attended by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Jharkhand Governor Santosh Gangwar, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Minister of State Bhagirath Choudhary, and other dignitaries.

Research must move from labs to fields: Chouhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Bareilly

Union Agriculture, Farmers Welfare, and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that 2,000 teams of scientists will soon be deployed across all districts of the country. These teams will work directly with local farmers, sharing knowledge on modern agriculture practices, advanced livestock breeds, technical farming methods, and horticulture.

Emphasising the need to bridge the gap between research and real-world application, he said, "Scientists should not remain confined to laboratories. They must engage with farmers in fields and barns." He further added that research papers must lead to transformation in the lives of farmers and livestock breeders, not just serve academic publications.

The Minister made these remarks while addressing the convocation ceremony of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) on Monday.

Calling IVRI the foundation of India's rural life, livestock heritage, and scientific progress, Chauhan praised its landmark contributions in vaccine development, breed improvement, dairy production, and animal husbandry—achievements that have impacted not just India but the global community.

He reiterated that although India is an agricultural nation, its agricultural identity is incomplete without animal husbandry. "Today's research must travel from labs to the lives of farmers and livestock breeders," he asserted. He also noted that over 300 innovative agricultural experiments by farmers themselves have been documented, which now need scientific refinement and support.

At the convocation, 576 students received degrees and 24 were awarded medals by President Droupadi Murmu. Addressing the graduating students, Chauhan said, "This is not just a degree, it is a responsibility — towards the nation, society, farmers, and animal welfare." Quoting Swami Vivekananda, he encouraged them by saying, "You are not alone — you are the future of the nation. You become what you think. The country needs scientists who transform knowledge into service."

CM Yogi lauds researchers at IVRI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow/Bareilly

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing the 11th convocation ceremony of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) in Bareilly on Sunday, praised the researchers, stating that the institution's 136-year journey is a source of inspiration for the entire nation.

"Scientists like you become the voice of the voiceless beings who cannot speak for themselves. Your research and service give new direction to society," he said.

President Droupadi Murmu and Governor Anandiben Patel attended the event as chief guests. At the convocation, the President conferred 24 medals and awarded degrees to 576 graduates.

The Chief Minister referred to Bareilly as a city rich in mythological and spiritual heritage, noting that the region was known in ancient times as *'Panchal desh'* and is home to seven ancient temples of Lord Shiva, which are now being developed into the 'Nath Corridor'. Temples like Baba Alakhnath, Vankhandi Nath, Trivati Nath, Tapeshwar Nath, Madhi Nath, Dhopeshwar Nath, and Shri Pashupatinath are key identities of Bareilly. While these temples give the city spiritual identity, IVRI has provided it a modern scientific stature, he said.

Praising the institution, CM Yogi said IVRI has become a life-saving centre not only for livestock, but for all living beings. He highlighted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, when RT-PCR testing was a major challenge, IVRI conducted over two lakh tests in partnership with the UP government. "IVRI's dedication shows that its role is not limited to veterinary science; it has been a front-runner in saving human lives too," he said.

CM Yogi elaborated on the role of IVRI during the second wave of the lumpy skin disease that severely affected cattle. He said the vaccine developed by IVRI was instrumental in eradicating the infection from Uttar Pradesh. "Even our gaushala in Gorakhpur was affected. When scientists proposed testing the vaccine, I immediately contacted then Union Minister Parshottam Rupala to obtain approval, and the vaccine developed by IVRI successfully eliminated lumpy disease from the state," he said.

The chief minister thanked the scientists for their selfless service to voiceless animals and said their innovations had transformed the lives of farmers. "By providing improved livestock breeds, you have empowered the annadata," he said. He added that IVRI's 136 years of dedication is a true inspiration for the nation.

Addressing the graduating students, CM Yogi said, "Today marks a new chapter in your lives. This degree is not just an academic milestone but a pledge to serve society." Urging them to rise above challenges, he said, "One's true identity is revealed in moments of adversity." Quoting former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he recited, *"Aadmi ko chahiye ki wo joojhe paristhitiyon se... ek swapn toote to doosra gadhe* (A man must battle the odds; if one dream ends, he must craft a new one)."

He encouraged students to take a leading role in realising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a *"Viksit Bharat"* (Developed India). He congratulated all degree holders, their families, teachers and scientists, saying, "Today, this sacred land is giving new energy to the nation, and through you, this energy will reach society."

Union Agriculture and Rural Development Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Jharkhand Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, and Union Minister of State for Agriculture Bhagirath Choudhary were among the dignitaries present, along with several officials, public representatives, university administrators, and students.

Agricultural education must be linked to rural needs: Guv

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Lucknow/Bareilly

Addressing students, scientists, and faculty at IVRI's 11th convocation, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel praised students for their commendable work across departments and said those excelling were rightly being honoured. She urged students not to be disheartened if they hadn't received awards. Stressing the importance of aligning agricultural education with rural realities, she emphasised that quality education and active rural engagement must go hand in hand in universities.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for "quality education," Governor Anandiben Patel said that universities must strive to meet global standards. "Uttar Pradesh has five agricultural universities. To deliver meaningful education, we must understand our needs, problems, and priorities," she emphasized. She encouraged greater engagement between universities and nearby villages, stating that such outreach reflects the true purpose of education.

Expressing pride, she noted that the Agricultural University in Ayodhya has earned an A+ grade from NAAC, placing it among the top institutions nationally, while Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Agricultural University in Meerut has secured an A grade. The Governor added that agriculture and animal husbandry are employment-generating sectors. Full utilisation of schemes and budgets related to these areas can help fulfil the needs of farmers, women, and livestock owners. Citing Gujarat's 2003 Krishi Rath Yatra, she said that direct engagement with farmers forms the basis of transformation.

During that journey, scientists, professors, and researchers personally interacted with farmers, understood their challenges, and brought revolutionary reforms in the state's agricultural system.

Security at Agra airport beefed up after threat mail

Agra: Security at Agra airport has been beefed up after it received a threat mail, police said on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (City) Sonam Kumar said the airport security filed a complaint regarding the threatening email on Sunday, following which a case was registered at Shahganj police station.

The complaint did not specify the details about the threat, police said.

"Similar emails have been received at other locations as well, and we are in contact with officials there. A thorough investigation is underway. The airport premises has been checked, and nothing suspicious found," the DCP said.

The FIR has been registered under BNS Section 351(4) (criminal intimidation by an anonymous communication) and Section 66F of the IT Act.

Police are working to trace the source of the email and assess its credibility, officials said. *PTI*

UP's first AYUSH University set to become a significant hub for education, treatment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Gorakhpur

Uttar Pradesh's first AYUSH University, named after Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath and established in Pipri, Bhathat (Gorakhpur), is poised to become a significant hub for both education and treatment in traditional medical systems, including Ayurveda, Unani, and Homoeopathy.

More than just an academic institution, the university is poised to unlock new avenues of employment and promote commercial cultivation of medicinal plants in the region.

The university will be formally inaugurated on Tuesday, July 1, by President Droupadi Murmu, in the esteemed presence of the Governor and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. The initiative reflects the Chief Minister's vision of advancing traditional medicine and establishing Uttar Pradesh as a destination for AYUSH-based health tourism.

A dream project of CM Yogi Adityanath, the foundation of this university was laid by then-President Ram Nath Kovind on August 28, 2021. Now, it will be inaugurated by the current President, marking the second time Yogi Adityanath has hosted the nation's first citizen in Gorakhpur for this landmark initiative. Spread across 52 acres, the university has been developed with an approved budget of Rs 267.50 crore.

Although the formal inauguration is scheduled for July 1, the AYUSH OPD began operations earlier, on February 15, 2023, and was inaugurated by CM himself. Evening OPD services have been introduced, with approximately 300 patients availing themselves of consultations in Ayurveda, Unani, and Homoeopathy daily. So far, more than 1.25 lakh people have benefited from these services. Once the full-fledged hospital with IPD and operation theatres becomes functional, AYUSH-based treatments will expand significantly. A state-of-the-art Panchakarma center with 28 cottages is also ready and will soon be operational for treatments. The Yogi government's emphasis on promoting AYUSH will not only strengthen traditional medicine, but is also poised to create significant employment opportunities. With Gorakhpur as its focal point, AYUSH University is expected to catalyze health tourism and herb-based income generation in the entire eastern Uttar Pradesh region. As envisioned by CM, local villagers can be directly linked with new employment opportunities—from medicinal plant cultivation to herbal collection and support services in the health tourism sector. The university is thus a significant step toward prosperity for both farmers and young people. Previously, various regulatory bodies governed AYUSH disciplines, including Ayurveda, Unani, Homoeopathy, Yoga, Naturopathy, and Siddha, in Uttar Pradesh. With the establishment of this university, all 98 government and private AYUSH colleges in the state now come under a unified regulatory framework, ensuring better coordination and academic excellence.

Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University is not only the first of its kind in the state but also marks Gorakhpur's rise as an educational powerhouse. It is now the city's fourth operational university, joining the ranks of Deendayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University, Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology, and Mahayogi Gorakhnath University. Furthermore, plans are underway for the establishment of a fifth university — a dedicated Forestry University — on land already earmarked for the project.

MGUG rapidly emerging as a model institution by setting new standards

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Gorakhpur

Mahayogi Gorakhnath University Gorakhpur (MGUG) is rapidly emerging as a model institution by setting new standards in various spheres — be it alignment with the National Education Policy, offering globally relevant and employment-oriented courses, delivering quality Ayurveda and modern medical treatment at affordable rates, fostering innovation, maintaining a disciplined and vibrant campus culture, or promoting environmental sustainability.

MGUG holds the distinction of being the first university in the country to conduct student parliament elections online using its own indigenously developed software. Continuing its commitment to innovation and green practices, the university is now working towards operating its entire campus on solar energy.

On Tuesday, July 1, a significant milestone will be added to MGUG's illustrious journey as President Droupadi Murmu visits the university — marking the second presidential visit in just four years. The university was inaugurated on August 28, 2021, by then-President Ram Nath Kovind. The upcoming visit by the current President underscores the growing stature of MGUG in the higher education landscape.

During her visit, President Murmu will inaugurate several key infrastructure projects, including a newly constructed academic block, a world-class Panchkarma Medical Centre with 11 state-of-the-art cottages, and a modern auditorium with a seating capacity of around 1,500. She will also lay the foundation stone for a girls' hostel designed to accommodate 1,000 students and equipped with ultra-modern amenities.

A flagship initiative of Maharana Pratap Shiksha Parishad, MGUG prioritises medical education and its allied fields alongside offering a diverse range of future-focused, skill-based academic programs. The university is currently offering more than two dozen advanced courses in MBBS, BAMS, Nursing, Pharmacy, Paramedical and Allied Health Sciences, Agriculture, and Business Administration.

The vision to make Gorakhpur a 'Knowledge City' by the centenary year of Maharana Pratap Shiksha Parishad in 2032, as envisioned by former President Ram Nath Kovind in 2018, is being actively realized by MGUG. Vice Chancellor Dr. Surinder Singh Kak affirms that the university is playing a pivotal role in this transformation through its forward-looking academic ecosystem.

Registrar Dr. Pradeep Kumar credits MGUG's progress to the visionary leadership of its Founder and Chancellor, Gorakshapeethadhishwar and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, whose guiding mantra — "Be two steps ahead of time" — has become a driving force for the institution. This philosophy reflects in MGUG's efforts to go beyond conventional education systems by nurturing a holistic and progressive learning environment.

In its pursuit of academic excellence and industry relevance, MGUG has signed MoUs with a range of reputed national and international institutions, including the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Lumbini Buddhist University (Nepal), South Bihar Central University, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, AIIMS Gorakhpur, KGMU Lucknow, RMRC Gorakhpur, Deendayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University, National Botanical Research Institute, Indian Institute of Seed Science, and several others. These partnerships aim to enhance research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and capacity-building in both education and medicine.

As MGUG accelerates its development, a robust infrastructure is being built to support its ambitions. The university is on track to establish a cutting-edge medical college hospital with 1,800 beds, with construction progressing swiftly. With its blend of academic rigour, state-of-the-art infrastructure, sustainable practices, and visionary leadership, Mahayogi Gorakhnath University is well on its way to becoming a national exemplar in higher education.

The Pioneer
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Newborns to get 'Green Gold Certificate', plant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

The state government is going to give special gifts to newborns born between from July 1 to 7. This gift will keep their life connected to nature. The child born during this period will be given a 'Green Gold Certificate' and a plant as a gift by the government. This programme will be done in coordination with the Forest and Health Departments. The Health Department will give information about children born in district hospitals, Community Health Centres (CHCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and other government hospitals to the forest department.

On the auspicious occasion of the birth of a child, the government will gift a plant symbolising life, prosperity and development to the family along with a 'Green Gold Certificate' so that this plant planted on the occasion of the arrival of the newborn will take the form of a tree in the future.

Forest Conservator of Varanasi Dr Ravi Kumar Singh said that children born between July 1 to 7 would be given a plant by the Forest Department. Along with this, the family will also get a 'Green Gold Certificate'.

The Forest Conservator informed that in coordination with the Health Department, information would be taken about children born in institutional delivery in District Hospitals, CHCs, PHCs and other government hospitals.

This campaign of plantation will give a strong message in both environmental protection and social awareness.

When a plant is also born along with a child, it will not only be a gift dedicated to nature, but will also lay the foundation of a green future for generations. The forest conservator said that priority would be given to gifting timber trees to the family, which will include teak, rosewood etc. The Forest Department will give information about the planting technique to the family and also encourage to take care of the planted trees.

AYUSHMAN BENEFICIARIES

Regarding the complaints of Ayushman beneficiaries in the hospitals listed under Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal directed that all beneficiaries should be provided free treatment facilities as per rules.

During a meeting organised at the Rifle Club recently he said that the expenses incurred by the beneficiaries during treatment should be refunded immediately, otherwise action would be taken against the hospital concerned. Along with this, action can also be taken to cancel the district level local registration by informing the higher officials of the State Agency for Comprehensive Health and Integrated Services (SACHIS) to cancel the affiliation of the hospital in the scheme.

He informed that 26 beneficiaries had complained about money being taken from the hospitals despite having Ayushman cards, out of which the money of 20 beneficiaries has been refunded while the process of three cases was going on and three cases have been sent to SACHIS.

Chief Medical Officer (CDO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary also spoke on the occasion. Additional Chief Medical Officer SS Kannaujiya, Dr Piyush Rai, DGM Sagar Kumar, Navendra Singh and representative managers of hospitals were present in this meeting.

Sharp rise in water levels of twin rivers in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Prayagraj

The holy city of Prayagraj is witnessing a sharp rise in the water levels of the twin rivers — Ganga and Yamuna following heavy rainfall in the past 24 hours and the release of water from several upstream dams. As a result, many of the ghats in the Sangam area are now submerged and floodwaters have reached the platforms of Teerth Purohits. According to the water level report recorded at 8 am on Monday, the Ganga river is flowing at 76.78 metres in Phaphamau and 74.78 metres in Chhatnag, marking a rise of 14 centimeters and 228 centimeters respectively in the past 24 hours. Meanwhile, the Yamuna river at Naini has reached a level of 75.61 metres, recording a 175 centimetre rise during the same period. Although the water levels are surging rapidly, they still remain approximately 10 metres below the official danger mark at the Sangam, which stands at 84.734 metres.

The sudden rise in river levels has triggered increased activity in the flood-prone Sangam zone. Local shopkeepers and residents along the riverbanks have started relocating their goods and temporary shelters to safer ground. Many can be seen using boats, carts etc to shift their belongings. Pilgrim priests have also begun dismantling their makeshift tents and wooden platforms installed near the ghats.

On the administrative front, vigilance has been stepped up. The Irrigation Department's control room is monitoring the situation round the clock. Water Police and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) teams have been deployed in the Sangam region and flood outposts across the district have been placed on high alert. The administration has issued a public advisory urging people to stay away from the riverbanks, remain cautious and cooperate with officials to prevent any untoward incident.

ARRESTED

The Special Task Force (STF) of Prayagraj in collaboration with local police on Monday arrested a wanted criminal, Gufran alias Chhangu, who carried a cash reward of Rs 50,000 on his head. According to officials, the STF had received intelligence inputs that Gufran, despite being on the run, was actively involved in criminal activities. Several cases have been registered against him under multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Law Amendment Act at Patti police station.

Acting on the inputs, the STF launched an operation under the supervision of Deputy Superintendent of Police Shailesh Pratap Singh. A team led by Inspector Jaiprakash Rai began tracking the accused. Information was received that Gufran was spotted near the Kalyana Canal Bridge in Patti area. Following this lead, inspector Patti area Anil Kumar Singh and his team conducted a cordon-and-search operation and successfully apprehended the accused.

Tree plantation necessary to protect environment: Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal at CRPF camp premises in Varanasi

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp and Court Registration Fees Ravindra Jaiswal planted saplings in the 95 Battalion campus of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at Pahadia Mandi on Sunday under the tree plantation campaign. On the occasion, the minister said that tree plantation was necessary to protect the environment. Later, a meeting was organised which was chaired by Commandant Rajeshwar Balapurkar.

In his address, the minister announced construction of the necessary boundary wall and an open gym besides road repair at the CRPF headquarters in Pahadia Mandi to maintain the safety and health of the CRPF personnel.

Addressing the personnel, the minister said that CRPF has always played a very important role in the country's defence and he would cooperate as much as possible for the convenience of the personnel.

Rajeshwar Balapurkar thanked the minister wholeheartedly for this announcement.

On the occasion, Alok Kumar, Pradeep Singh Shekhawat, Abhishek Kumar Singh, Shivmohan Dixit, Ranjan Kumar Singh, Prince Singh, Kamlesh Yadav, Dinesh Yadav, Anil Yadav of CRPF, along with Vipul Kumar (Mandi secretary), Atul Singh (BJP mandal president), local corporators and other people were prominently present.

Preparations for communicable disease control drive reviewed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Kanpur

A district-level interdepartmental coordination meeting was held at the new auditorium near Sarsaiya Ghat under the chairmanship of District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh to review preparations for the upcoming Special Communicable Disease Control Campaign. Senior officials from the Health Department, various other departments, and representatives from UNICEF and WHO were present.

The DM firmly informed that no department would be excused for any negligence during the campaign month. All departments should perform their duties responsibly and ensure 100 per cent execution of the micro plan. Special focus should be given to data feeding and continuous monitoring. The DM also instructed that a show-cause notice be issued to the nodal officer of the Medical Education Department for not attending the meeting.

The district malaria officer reviewed the micro plans received from 10 blocks, including urban areas, and was asked to submit a report on deficiencies found on the same day. Based on last year's vector-borne disease data, 36 hotspots have been identified in the district. Anti-larval spraying will be carried out in these sensitive areas. The additional chief medical officers, MOICs, and municipal health officers concerned will visit these places and interact with the public and submit a report within a couple of days.

The district magistrate announced that the campaign would run from July 1 to 31 and the 'Dastak' (Door-to-Door Knock) campaign would be conducted from July 11 to 31. ASHA and Anganwadi workers will go door to door, providing awareness on protection against mosquito-borne diseases and encouraging behavioural changes. Additionally, the 'STOP Diarrhoea campaign' will run for two months during this period.

He directed that gram pradhans (village heads) be informed about ongoing activities in their areas to ensure participation and cooperation. Health teams will check mosquito breeding sources such as coolers, tyres, plant pots, and refrigerator trays. Since January, breeding has been found in 195 houses, of which 73 were fined and others warned. The campaign will begin on July 1 from Maksudabad. During the first week, all departmental officers must conduct field visits and review the activities, taking strict action against negligent staff. The animal husbandry officer was directed to spread awareness among livestock owners regarding mosquito-borne diseases.

ASHA and ANM workers are to be mobilised and their daily activities should be reviewed. The basic education officer and DPRO have been instructed to ensure trimming of bushes, monitoring of water stagnation and cleanliness in schools and to submit reports.

The Municipal Corporation, Rural Development, and Panchayati Raj departments should take immediate action against waterlogging, blocked drains and sanitation issues. In hotspot zones, densely populated areas, and slums, fogging, anti-larval spraying and public awareness drives will be prioritised. Under the 'Dastak' campaign, front-line workers from all departments will inform households about preventive measures against infectious diseases. The Education Department will carry out awareness activities in schools. The Food Department has been instructed to routinely inspect restaurants, sweet shops and street food vendors to prevent food poisoning. All block-level meetings and training sessions must be attended by all officers and staff.

ASHA and Anganwadi workers are to conduct effective counseling. CHC and PHC level facilities must ensure immediate treatment of patients with diseases like dengue. Citizens can call the toll-free number 18001805145 to get information related to communicable diseases.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Udaybhan said that raising public awareness was the most effective way to prevent Aedes and Anopheles mosquito breeding. Preparations for the prevention of vector-borne diseases have been completed. All departmental staff have been instructed, and data will be fed into the e-Kavach portal. ABHA IDs for all family members will also be generated. The meeting was attended by Chief Development Officer Diksha Jain, CMO Dr Udaybhan, all Additional and Deputy CMOs, Medical Superintendents, block level officers, CDPOs, biologists and representatives from various departments and partner organisations.

Many hurt as bus collides with truck

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA/
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Prayagraj

Around 12 people were injured after a roadways bus en route from Chitrakoot to Prayagraj collided with a truck here on Monday morning, police said.

Four of the injured are in a critical state, they said.

Police said the driver and conductor of the bus were injured in the accident, which took place near Sehuda Nagar in Bara police station area.

Bara Station House Officer Rajesh Kumar Maurya said that a scooty rider was also injured. All the injured have been taken to a primary health centre for first aid, he said.

Maurya said that according to eyewitnesses, the roadways bus collided with a dumper truck while trying to save a scooty rider coming from the front.

34 STUDENTS SELECTED

A total of 34 students from Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS), have been selected through a series of campus placement drives organised by reputed companies.

Director of Career Planning and Placement, Prof Ashok Tripathi, emphasised the significance of such placement drives in enhancing career opportunities for students enrolled in professional programmes.

The selected students credited their success to the university's enriching academic environment and the dedicated mentorship of faculty members.

Vice Chancellor Prof Rajendra B. Lal, extended his heartfelt congratulations to the selected students and wished them success in their future endeavours.

Meditation a profound tool to attain true peace: Prof

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Kanpur

The 'Samay Saathi Counselling and Happiness Centre' was inaugurated at Hari Girls Hostel, Geetangar, by National Co-Convenor of Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas Sanjay Swami The event was themed 'Togetherness and Heartfelt Conversations', aimed at promoting mental wellness and emotional support within the community.

In his keynote address, Sanjay Swami said the centre would undoubtedly prove beneficial to youth, women, children, and the elderly, providing them with much-needed emotional and mental support.

Dr. Sushil Mishra hosted the event and introduced and honoured all distinguished guests. In her address, State Convenor of the Nyas Dr Bindu Singh highlighted the objective of Samay Saathi, stating that the initiative was about spending meaningful time with loved ones. The goal was to reach out to those deprived of time and conversation with their families and friends, and to support individuals struggling with loneliness, stress and depression. Professor DP Singh from IIT Kanpur emphasised that meditation was a profound tool to attain true peace, and Samay Saathi was a commendable step in that direction. Poet and Physics lecturer Om Tiwari Gopal captivated the audience with a self-composed poem dedicated to Samay Saathi. Alok Solanki, head of the Gau Raksha Helpline, described cow service as a true spiritual act, adding that Samay Saathi reflects similar values of service and compassion.

A meditation session was also conducted by Yoga Guru Rahul Yadav, providing attendees with a sense of inner calm and clarity.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Anokhe Lal Pathak, Subject Coordinator (Vedic Mathematics) of Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas.

Prominent attendees included Anokhe Lal Pathak, Dharmendra Awasthi, Prabal Pratap Singh, Srigopal Tulsiyan, Ashutosh Dwivedi, Dharmendra Shukla, Ashish Shukla, Kavita Tiwari, Amit Gupta, Rishabh Gupta, Sadhana Tiwari, Manisha Singh, Poonam Mishra, Deepti Dubey, Anuj Nigam and many other distinguished guests.

APPRECIATED

The representatives from various communities of Kanpur Nagar paid a courtesy visit on Monday to District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh to appreciate his ongoing public welfare efforts. As a token of respect, they presented him with a bouquet and a ceremonial shawl, honouring him for his commendable service.

The representatives praised the district magistrate's dedication, impartiality and commitment to public service, lauding his sincere approach.

21 employees of BLW retire

PCPO Janardan Singh greeting a retiring employee at BLW in Varanasi on Monday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

A total of 21 employees retired from Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) in June. In the farewell ceremony organised in the Hall of Fame of Administration Building here on Monday, Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) Janardan Singh gave a farewell to all the retiring personnel by presenting folders and medals to them.

Senior Personnel Officer Rajkumar Gupta informed about the facilities available to the retired employees and emphasised on making financial plans. Divisional Medical Officer of BLW Central Hospital, Dr Saurabh Sharma, advised everyone to adopt regular yoga, exercise and a balanced lifestyle. Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar, along with wishing everyone, suggested that they should spend most of their time with family. In the programme, members of the Employees' Council Naveen Sinha and Amit Kumar also wished the retiring employees and advised them to take special care of their health.

On this occasion, representatives of State Bank of India and Bank of Baroda located in the BLW campus told all the retiring employees to invest their accumulated money in safe government schemes as well as safe investment options and honoured them by giving gifts. With the cooperation of the Accounts and Personnel Departments, lump sum payment was also ensured to everyone.

Felicitation ceremony organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

The Faculty of Arts at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Monday organised a felicitation ceremony for 14 faculty members who superannuated on their last working day in the university. Faculty Dean Prof Sushma Ghildiyal felicitated the teachers by presenting them mementoes.

Ghildiyal appreciated the contribution of these teachers during their service to the university and said that due to it the faculty and the university touched new heights of progress.

The teachers who superannuated include Prof ON Singh, Dr Ranjit Singh and Dr Ashok Kumar Singh of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Prof Maya Shankar Pandey and Prof Prakash Chandra Pradhan of the Department of English, Prof DK Singh of the Department of French, Prof MK Natarajan of the Department of German, Prof Gopabandhu Mishra and Prof Shri Kishore Mishra of the Department of Sanskrit, Prof Usha Rani Tripathi of the Department of Museum Science, Prof Mukul Raj Mehta of the Department of Philosophy and Prof Bimalendra Kumar and Prof Lalji of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies.

GM commends performance of railway personnel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Prayagraj

An informal meeting of the All India Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Railway Employees' Association was held on Monday at the North Central Railway Headquarters, Prayagraj, under the chairmanship of General Manager Upendra Chandra Joshi.

It was attended by Principal Chief Personnel Officer S Balachandra Ayyar, who warmly welcomed all the dignitaries and office-bearers of the SC/ST Railway Employees' Association of North Central Railway. On this occasion, several heads of departments and key office-bearers of the association were present, including zonal president Kishan Swaroop and zonal secretary Dinesh Kumar, alongside other senior association representatives. During the meeting, General Manager Joshi appreciated the valuable contributions made by all officers, employees and association members towards the efficient functioning of North Central Railway. He specifically acknowledged the active support provided by the association to the Railway Administration, highlighting the importance of such collaborative efforts. GM Joshi commended the performance of dedicated and responsible railway personnel in maintaining a safe and secure environment for passengers, calling it a matter of pride for the entire railway family. He also praised the Association's commitment to resolving employee grievances in coordination with the administration. Expressing optimism, Joshi said he hoped that all departments and employees would continue to work in unison to set new benchmarks of excellence.

CME SESSION HELD

A CME session was organised by the Allahabad Medical Association at the AMA Convention Centre under the presidentship of Dr JV Rai.

Govt issues action plan for PMFBY

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal informed that the government has issued an action plan for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme in Kharif and Rabi seasons of the year 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26. The SBI General Insurance Company Limited has been nominated to operate the scheme in the district.

Under the scheme, insurance cover/ compensation is provided to the insured farmers in case of damage to notified crops due to adverse weather conditions.

He informed that the last date for ensuring the crops notified for Kharif season in the district - paddy, maize, millet, sorghum, urad, tur and chilli crops is July 31.

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SC permits substitution of attached property under PMLA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

In a notable development with far-reaching implications under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), the Supreme Court on Monday permitted M3M Group to substitute a parcel of land attached under PMLA proceedings with an alternative property.

The order, passed by a bench comprising Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Justice R Mahadevan, comes as a critical and timely judicial intervention — one that strikes a much-needed balance between the State's interest in securing alleged proceeds of crime and the rights of commercial enterprises to carry on legitimate economic activity.

The concept of substitution of attached property is not alien to PMLA but has often been clouded by a rigid enforcement mindset. Section 8(4) of the Act empowers the authorities to take possession of confirmed attached property, while Section 8(8) provides for restoration to victims. However, nowhere does the law prohibit substitution per se. In practice, such flexibility has been exceedingly rare, with most enforcement actions resulting in indefinite stagnation of valuable commercial assets — thereby frustrating not just economic growth, but also investor confidence.

It is in this context that the Supreme Court's order in the M3M matter marks an evolution in the interpretation of PMLA's objectives. The substitution application filed by M3M was not a plea for immunity, but a pragmatic solution: replace the attached land with an alternate asset of equivalent or higher value, in order to allow development and public utility of the originally attached parcel. The Court's acceptance of this request implicitly affirms that preservation of alleged proceeds of crime need not come at the cost of economic paralysis — especially where the accused party is cooperating and offering adequate security.

What makes the order more remarkable is that it comes at a time when concerns have grown over excessive asset attachment by enforcement agencies — often in the early stages of investigation, and without confirmed findings of guilt. The current order introduces a practical middle path, one that allows the process of law to continue while safeguarding economic activity and contractual obligations, particularly in sectors like real estate that operate on long project timelines and high-value land banks.

It also potentially lays down a progressive precedent for other courts to consider substitution in suitable cases, provided the accused party demonstrates bona fides and offers assets that meet the twin tests of traceability and value sufficiency. Importantly, the substitution mechanism does not dilute the enforcement powers under PMLA — rather, it strengthens procedural fairness and reflects a maturing jurisprudence that acknowledges the complexities of large-scale commercial operations caught in the crosshairs of criminal law.

M3M's success in obtaining this relief could now open the door for constructive dialogue between businesses and regulatory authorities, encouraging compliance through cooperation rather than confrontation. The order not only restores the commercial usability of a major land parcel, paving the way for project launch and employment generation, but also signals to investors and institutions that the Indian legal system remains open to equitable solutions even within stringent regulatory regimes.

In sum, the SC has rightly recognised that law enforcement and economic continuity can — and must — co-exist. This landmark order offers hope that legal innovation, when anchored in statutory discipline and judicial pragmatism, can meaningfully restore the balance that the rule of law ultimately seeks to uphold.

India to receive above average rainfall in July, says IMD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Most parts of India are likely to receive above-normal rainfall in July, the weather department said on Monday, asking authorities and people in central India, Uttarakhand and Haryana to stay alert due to the risk of flooding. The IMD said rainfall is likely to be below normal in large parts of the northeast, many areas of eastern India and extreme southern peninsular India.

Average maximum temperatures are expected to remain normal to below normal in many regions. However, parts of the northeast, northwest, east and southern peninsula are likely to see above-normal temperatures, IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said during an online press briefing.

The country gauges 28 cm of rainfall on average in July.

Mohapatra said there is a high chance of heavy rainfall in central India and the adjoining southern peninsula. This includes east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, adjoining areas of Vidarbha and Telangana and parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

"We should monitor the catchment areas of rivers such as the Godavari, Mahanadi and Krishna. Our models show a high probability of above-normal rainfall in the upper Mahanadi catchment, which includes Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. There are several other rivers in the region. We must closely watch rainfall activity and the water levels in reservoirs," he said.

He added that good rainfall is also expected in Uttarakhand and Haryana.

"This region includes several cities and towns, including Delhi. Many south-flowing rivers originate in Uttarakhand. We must take precautions for all these river catchments, cities and towns," Mohapatra said.

He said this kind of rainfall pattern usually occurs when the monsoon trough shifts south of its normal position and when multiple low-pressure systems form.

CBI arrests 10th suspect in Mule accounts case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The CBI has arrested the 10th suspect from Patna, Bihar, in connection with its crackdown on mule accounts used by cyber criminals to launder illicit money, officials on Monday said.

The agency has found that the suspect had "links in foreign countries" which are being investigated thoroughly, they said. The CBI had launched a nationwide crackdown on 8.5 lakh mule accounts in over 700 bank branches which were being used by cyber criminals to launder proceeds from scams involving digital theft, impersonation, fraudulent investments and UPI-based frauds, the officials said.

The CBI had during the operation conducted coordinated raids at 42 locations in Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in which nine suspects were taken into custody. The materials found during searches took the agency to the 10th suspect in Patna who was arrested recently.

The CBI has not yet revealed the identity of either of the arrested suspect and is tight lipped about the case as the operations are still going on, they said. Those taken into custody include alleged middlemen, agents, aggregators, account holders and banking correspondents, all believed to be instrumental in orchestrating and facilitating the opening of these fictitious accounts, the officials said.

A mule account is opened in the name of an individual, who may or may not be aware that the account is used to launder illicit money.

BJP slams Tejashwi Yadav's stand on Waqf Act

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The BJP on Monday accused the opposition alliance of trying to turn the Constitution into a *sharia* script and using the garb of *samajwaad* (socialism) to hide its *namazwaad*, as it slammed RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav for asserting that his bloc, if elected to power in Bihar, will throw the amended Waqf Act in dustbin.

BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the INDIA bloc of the RJD-Congress-Left in Bihar has shown its absence of respect for the Constitution, as the Act was passed by Parliament and is being adjudicated in the Supreme Court. He told reporters that the opposition alliance is driven by vote bank politics, a euphemism for its outreach to Muslim voters over the opposition to the Act from a large number of them.

Trivedi alleged that the INDIA bloc wants to enforce Sharia provisions through the back door. States like Telangana and Karnataka are giving reservations to Muslims at the cost of quotas for Hindu OBCs, SCs and STs and West Bengal is also trying to do it, he said.

He underlined the BJP-led NDA's commitment to the values of the Constitution drafted by BR Ambedkar.

He said, *Samvidhan bachao* is merely a facade of these parties as their true face is *sharia lao*. If they are in power, they will add *namazwaad* to the Constitution's preamble. They want to turn the Constitution into a *sharia* script, but we will not allow it."

RJD's Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday claimed that the ruling NDA in Bihar was "on its way out" and the new Government in the state led by the opposition alliance will "consign to the dustbin" the Waqf Act brought by the Narendra Modi dispensation at the Centre.

The leader was addressing a 'Save Waqf, Save Constitution' rally at the historical Gandhi Maidan in Bihar's Capital, Patna. Elections in Bihar will be held later this year. The BJP spokesperson said the ruling National Democratic Alliance will not allow any provisions of Ambedkar's Constitution to be thrown into the dustbin.

Slamming opposition parties, he said the *sharia* provisions they are advocating are not in force in even Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkiye. These parties want to concentrate huge portions of Waqf land into the hands of some self-appointed Muslim religious leaders, he said, adding that these properties were never used for the welfare of the community.

Socialism believes in the distribution of wealth, but socialist parties like the RJD and the Samajwadi Party are doing the opposite and are, in fact, with a few self-appointed Muslim leaders, he said. This is not *samajwaad* but namazwaad, he alleged.

Army Chief begins four-day trip to Bhutan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Monday began a four-day trip to Bhutan to further enhance the already close bilateral military ties against the backdrop of China's relentless efforts to strengthen infrastructure around the strategically located Doklam plateau.

In Bhutanese capital Thimphu, Gen Dwivedi will call on King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and hold wide-ranging talks with Bhutan's military chief Lt General Batoo Tshering, officials said. The Army Chief's visit to Bhutan from June 30 to July 3 comes amid the evolving regional security scenario and over seven weeks after India's Operation Sindoor targeting terror bases in Pakistani territories.

"The visit aims to further bolster the enduring bilateral defence cooperation between the two nations," the Indian Army said, adding it reflects India's commitment to its neighbour. It is expected that the overall situation in the Doklam plateau as well as Chinese activities in the region are set to figure in Gen Dwivedi's talks with his Bhutanese interlocutors.

The strategic ties between India and Bhutan witnessed an upward trajectory in the last few years in the backdrop of a 73-day face-off between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam tri-junction in 2017.

The Doklam plateau is considered an important area for India's strategic interest.

The standoff at the Doklam tri-junction in 2017 began after China tried to extend a road in an area that Bhutan claimed belonged to it. India had strongly opposed the construction as it would have impacted its overall security interests. The India-China stand-off in the Doklam plateau even triggered fears of larger conflict between the two neighbours. Bhutan had said the area belonged to it and India supported the Bhutanese claim. The face-off was resolved following several rounds of talks.

Bhutan shares an over 400-km-long border with China and the two countries have held a series of boundary talks in a bid to resolve the dispute.

China and Bhutan are looking at an expeditious resolution of their festering boundary row that could have implications for India's security interests.

In late 2023, Bhutan's then Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji held talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing. A Chinese readout on the talks said Bhutan firmly abides by the one-China principle and stands ready to work with China for an early settlement of the boundary issue.

New Delhi has been keeping a close eye on the negotiations between Bhutan and China on their boundary row as it could have implications for New Delhi's security interests, especially in the Doklam tri-junction.

In October 2021, Bhutan and China signed an agreement on the "three-step roadmap" to expedite negotiations to resolve their boundary dispute. Chief Operations Officer of the Royal Bhutan Army Lt General visited India in February. During the trip, he held talks with Gen Dwivedi, NSA Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh.

Jal Shakti Ministry issues guidelines for scientist recruitment

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has proposed a comprehensive overhaul of rules for recruitment and promotion of Group A scientists in the Central Ground Water Board, introducing a structured promotion path, mandatory field experience, tiered performance assessments and new training requirements.

The draft rules covering posts from Scientist B to G have been published for public consultation, and stakeholders are to submit their feedback by July 13.

The draft notification aligns the rules with the Revised Flexible Complementing Scheme introduced by the Department of Personnel and Training in 2024.

Promotions will be granted only after scientists complete minimum residency periods -- three years at Scientist C level and up to five years at senior grades like Scientist F and G. Additionally, field experience of two years is required for promotion to Scientist F and five years for Scientist G.

A key feature of the revised framework is the two-tier assessment system. Scientists will undergo Level-1 screening by an Internal Screening Committee, followed by Level-2 assessment by either an Assessment Board or a Department Peer Review Committee.

These evaluations will be held twice a year, in January and July. Scientists who do not qualify can be reassessed only after one year and must submit an additional Annual Performance Appraisal Report.

Training is also a significant component of the new rules.

Direct recruits must undergo a mandatory one-year Induction Level Training Course, while officers promoted internally are required to complete two weeks of training in management and leadership at recognised government institutions such as the Rajiv Gandhi National Ground Water Training and Research Institute or Institute of Secretariat Training and Management. The draft specifies that promotions under the Revised Flexible Complementing Scheme will be allowed only three times. If a candidate does not qualify within those attempts, they will be moved to the Modified Assured Career Progression scheme applicable to other Central Government employees.

Moreover, no retrospective promotions will be allowed. Officers on deputation or leave will receive promotions only upon their return.

SC junks Lalit's plea seeking BCCI to pay ED penalty

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Monday junked a plea filed by former cricket administrator Lalit Modi seeking an order to the BCCI to pay a penalty of ₹10.65 crore imposed on him by the ED for violating the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). A bench of Justices PS Narasimha and R Mahadevan, however, said Modi will be entitled to avail civil remedies as available according to law.

The Bombay High Court on December 19 last year had imposed a cost of ₹1 lakh on Modi while dismissing his petition seeking an order to the BCCI to pay a penalty of ₹10.65 crore imposed on him by the Enforcement Directorate for violating FEMA.

The high court had said the petition was "frivolous and wholly misconceived" as the adjudication authority under FEMA has imposed the penalty on Modi.

Modi, in his plea, said he was appointed as vice president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, during which period he was also the chairman of the Indian Premier League governing body, a subcommittee of the BCCI. The plea claimed that the BCCI is supposed to indemnify him as per the bylaws.

The HC bench, however, referred to a Supreme Court judgment of 2005, which said the BCCI does not fall under the definition of a 'state' as defined under Article 12 of the Constitution.

Despite clear orders from the apex court, Modi filed this petition in 2018, the HC bench noted.

"In matters of alleged indemnification of the petitioner (Modi) in the context of penalties imposed upon the petitioner by the ED, there is no question of discharge of any public function, and therefore, for this purpose, no writ could be issued to the BCCI," the HC had said.

"In any event, the reliefs are wholly misconceived. This petition is frivolous, and accordingly, we dismiss this petition," the court had said and directed Modi to pay a sum of ₹1 lakh to the Tata Memorial Hospital within four weeks.

QUAD nations launch sea observer mission to boost maritime cooperation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The coast guards of India, Japan, the US and Australia have launched the first-ever "Quad-at-sea" mission to boost operational coordination and interoperability in the Indo-Pacific.

The decision to launch the mission was taken at the four-nation's grouping annual summit in Wilmington in September last year that was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Quad leaders. "In a significant stride toward strengthening maritime security and interoperability in the Indo-Pacific, the coast guards of India, Japan, the United States, and Australia have launched the first-ever 'Quad at sea ship observer mission' under the Wilmington declaration," the defence ministry said.

"Two officers, including women officers, from each country have embarked on board US Coast Guard Cutter Stratton, which is currently sailing to Guam," it said.

The ministry said the "cross-embarkation mission" marks an unprecedented step to enhance joint readiness, operational coordination, and domain awareness in support of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

"The mission reflects the vision laid out at the Quad leaders's summit in September 2024 and signifies a deepening of operational ties between the Indian Coast Guard, Japan Coast Guard, US Coast Guard and Australian Border Force," the ministry said in a statement.

In a joint statement, the Quad leaders on September 22 rolled out a number of new and ambitious initiatives in areas ranging from maritime security, infrastructure to critical and emerging technologies and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

A key outcome of the summit was a decision on having joint Coast Guard operations under a first-ever "Quad-at-Sea" ship observer mission to advance maritime safety and to continue with further missions in future across the Indo-Pacific. The defence ministry said India's participation reinforces its strategic maritime vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and complements national efforts under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

The Quad-at-sea initiative thus sets the foundation for fostering stronger trust, coordination, and collective resilience amid evolving maritime challenges in the region, the ministry added.

The IPOI is an open, inclusive, non-treaty based, global initiative that was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 14th East Asia Summit in November 2019 to promote collaborative efforts among like-minded nations to better manage, conserve and secure the Indo-Pacific maritime domain.

BRICS to denounce Pahalgam attack

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The BRICS leaders' declaration to be unveiled at the grouping's annual summit in Rio de Janeiro is set to forcefully denounce the Pahalgam terror attack and call for a firm approach to unitedly confront terrorism in line with India's expectation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the summit in the Brazilian city on July 6 and 7. India will be the grouping's chair for the next year. The prime minister is travelling to Brazil as part of his five-nation tour from July 2 to 9. The other countries that the prime minister is visiting are Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina and Namibia.

Dammu Ravi, secretary (economic relations) in the external affairs ministry, told a media briefing that Modi's participation in the summit will be an expression of India's solidarity with the bloc and it will be a great opportunity for him to connect with the leaders of the Global South.

Ravi suggested that the BRICS leaders' declaration will have reference to the challenge of terrorism that will be much to the satisfaction of India. "There is no contradiction in the way the members have come out with their understanding, sympathy and solidarity with India on Pahalgam I think this has been very well captured in the (leaders) declaration and all the members are very sensitive to this matter," he said. "There is also a broader understanding on how to deal with this menace of terrorism and no one should be spared in dealing with it. I think that is very well captured."

"When you get the declaration, you will see the language is much to our satisfaction," Ravi added. BRICS brings together 11 major emerging economies of the world, representing around 49.5 per cent of the global population, around 40 per cent of the global GDP and around 26 per cent of the global trade.

The BRICS declaration is also expected to feature a reference to the Iran-Israel conflict. The senior diplomat said four concrete "deliverables" are expected from the BRICS summit that include global governance and artificial intelligence, a framework declaration on climate finance and a partnership for the elimination of socially determined diseases. Asked about Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin deciding to skip the summit, Ravi only said it will be a key forum for India to continue to push for the interests of the Global South.

Ravi indicated that the BRICS summit could also deliberate on the issue of carrying out trade settlements in national currencies. Ravi said BRICS is bringing some understanding of how important it is to have alternative mechanisms to do trade and projects in national currencies.

"It is a process and we are confident that it will get traction in days to come," he said.

BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, with Indonesia joining in 2025.

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Editor's TAKE

Language imposition row

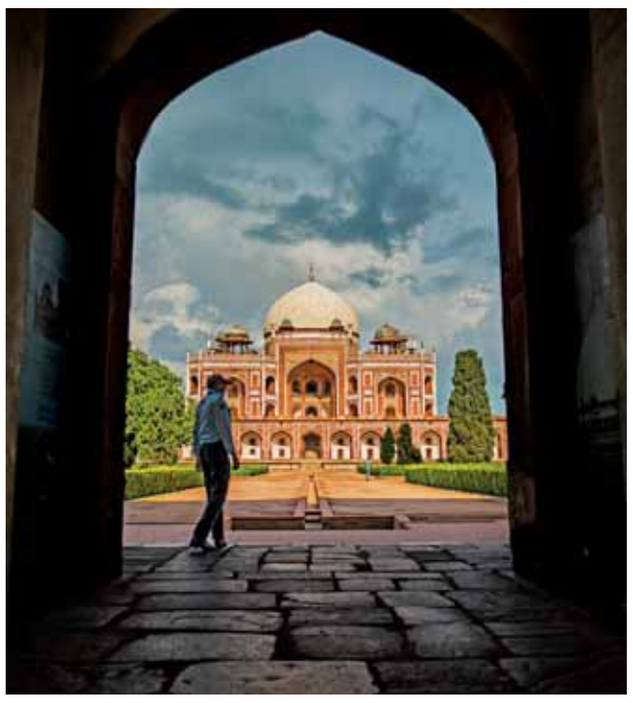
Maharashtra withdraws its resolution to implement 3-language policy after huge backlash in the state

The Maharashtra Government has withdrawn two Government resolutions (GRs) related to the implementation of the three-language policy in schools, following a fierce backlash from opposition parties and civil society over what was perceived as the imposition of Hindi. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that a new committee headed by noted educationist Dr Narendra Jadhav would re-examine the language policy in detail and submit a report within three months. Until then, both resolutions issued on April 16 and June 17 have been scrapped.

The controversy first erupted when the Government issued a GR in April making Hindi a compulsory third language for students in Classes 1 to 5 in English and Marathi medium schools. Opposition parties, including the Shiv Sena (UBT), Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad Pawar faction), and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, termed the policy an attempt to erode regional identity and promote a cultural homogenisation under the guise of national integration. The resistance to Hindi is not unique to Maharashtra; southern states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh have historically pushed back against any perceived attempt to promote Hindi at the expense of their native languages. This opposition is rooted in a mix of cultural pride, historical memory, and concerns about linguistic equity. In states like Tamil Nadu, anti-Hindi agitations of the 1960s left a deep imprint, shaping the political and cultural outlook for generations. In Maharashtra, the assertion of Marathi identity has always played a central role in political discourse. Any attempt to dilute this through what is seen as a "national" agenda often provokes strong emotional and political responses. The core concern in these regions is that Hindi, already dominant in the central Government and national media, is being imposed through educational policies that ignore local linguistic contexts. Critics argue that while students in non-Hindi-speaking states are expected to learn Hindi, there is no reciprocal encouragement for Hindi-speaking students to learn regional languages like Marathi, Tamil, or Kannada. This one-sided policy direction fosters a sense of marginalisation and cultural erosion. At its heart, this controversy is a reflection of India's enduring challenge: how to balance national integration with linguistic diversity.

Language in India is more than a means of communication; it is an emblem of identity, history, and emotional belonging. The issue is not with learning Hindi per se, but with the manner in which it is introduced and the lack of choice it implies. Voluntary, interest-driven language learning is welcome. Coercive mandates, however, tend to backfire. Going forward, Maharashtra's decision to put the policy on hold and form an expert panel is a step in the right direction. It acknowledges the need for dialogue, consultation, and a broader consensus on something as sensitive as language education. India's strength lies in its linguistic diversity. Efforts to unify the country through language should celebrate that plurality rather than suppress it. As the panel led by Dr Jadhav begins its work, the hope is that it will recommend a policy that upholds the rights of every child to learn the language he wants.

PIC TALK

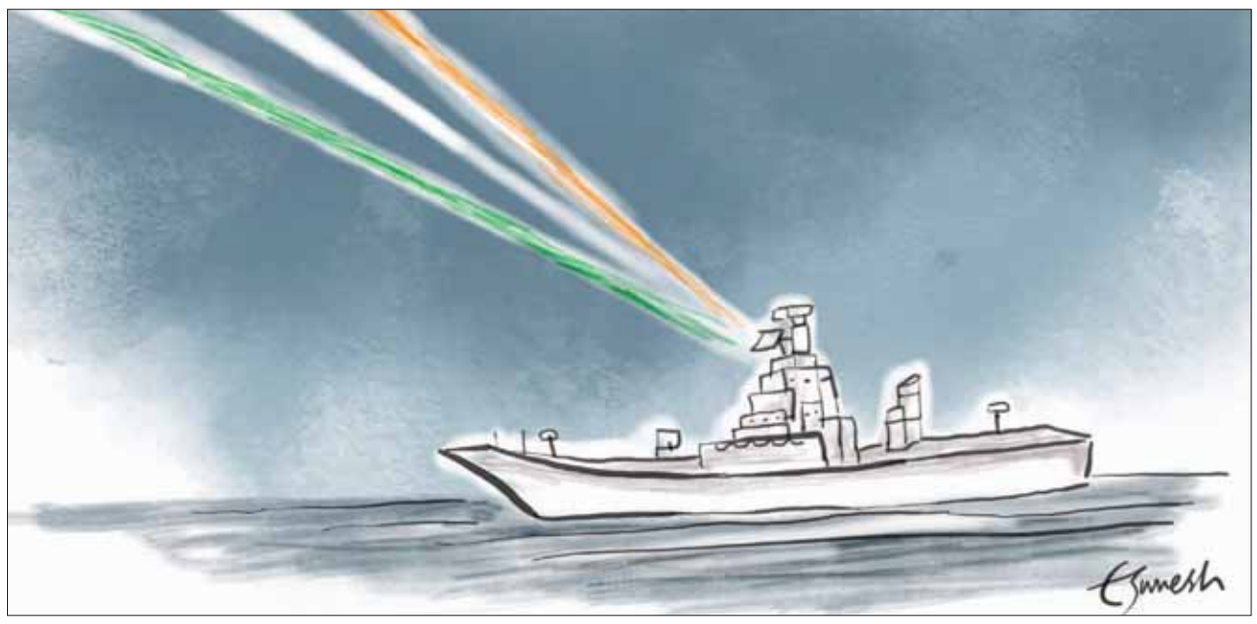


Humayun's Tomb rises majestically above the moody monsoon clouds, a familiar silhouette against the stormy sky.

PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

Strategic realignment in a shifting world order

Against the backdrop of global instability, India is recalibrating its strategic posture. Anchored in a blend of realism, regional engagement, and democratic values, India's maritime vision is emerging as the mainstay of its foreign policy



In recent years, international politics has seen the rise of several popular yet complex terminologies — bandwagoning, strategic autonomy, plurilateralism, and epistemic communities. These concepts have grown in prominence alongside earlier ideological debates such as the "End of History" and the "Clash of Civilisations" that dominated post-Cold War discourse.

As the global order continues to undergo sweeping changes, many once-stable doctrines now stand challenged, highlighting an enduring truth of international relations: change remains the only constant. Amid this flux, a notable evolution has emerged — the strengthening of strategic and democratic bonds between the United States and India, the world's oldest and largest democracies. While several global regions continue to simmer under conflict — West Asia and the Ukraine-Russia war being prime examples — India and the US have taken steps towards enhancing mutual cooperation in defence, trade, and global governance.

In this environment, nations are urgently seeking robust strategic mechanisms to preserve sovereignty and national interest. The resurgence of offensive realism as a philosophical framework underscores this strategic recalibration. As great powers jostle for influence, the 19th-century maritime doctrine of Alfred Thayer Mahan — that control of the seas equates to global dominance — has resurfaced with striking relevance. Maritime security, therefore, has become the linchpin of modern geopolitics. Oceans are no longer viewed simply as trade routes but as strategic zones essential to regional stability, economic resilience, and defence readiness. Recognising this, India has been working to secure its maritime frontiers, particularly within the framework of its Neighbourhood First Policy and its vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

These principles aim not only to foster regional collaboration but also to establish India as a stabilising maritime power in the Indian Ocean. One of the strongest manifestations of India's maritime strategy has been its deepening cooperation with countries like Mauritius. Recent Indo-Mauritius coordination exemplifies India's intent to build an integrated network of partnerships, especially in response to assertive moves by other regional powers. This includes countering China's growing influence through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), military bases such as the one in Djibouti, and the strategic encirclement of India via the "String of Pearls" doctrine. In response, India has forged closer security partnerships with countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles, Bangladesh, and Mauritius. A coastal radar surveillance network has been established, alongside the Indian Ocean Region Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR), which shares real-time intelligence to enhance situational awareness. These steps ensure that India remains agile in detecting and responding to maritime threats. India's defence preparedness has also been fortified with procurements like the Indo-Russian BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and advanced components for its Air Force's MIG-29 jets. Parallelly, the Necklace of Diamonds strategy — India's response to China's "String of Pearls" — is bearing fruit through naval partnerships and infrastructural projects in Oman, Myanmar, Chabahar Port in Iran, and the Changi Naval Base in Singapore.

SUDHIR HINDWAN

Underpinning these efforts is India's Act East Policy, which seeks to reinforce economic, cultural, and strategic ties with East and Southeast Asian nations. Through an expanded network of ports, high-quality medical assistance, humanitarian relief, and joint patrolling initiatives, India is also working to build a resilient and secure Indo-Pacific architecture. Crucially, this strategic reorientation demands not just naval might but also consensus and diplomatic cohesion. India has led calls for a unified maritime policy across the IOR. The emphasis now lies in gathering all regional actors at a common table to forge cooperative responses to transnational challenges — ranging from piracy and drug trafficking to terrorism, cybercrime, and climate-induced threats. India's leadership in climate action and sustainable development has further bolstered its diplomatic credentials. The country has advocated for renewable energy cooperation and equitable access to technological resources among developing nations. These initiatives not only support the environmental resilience of small island nations but also reinforce India's role as a responsible global actor.

India's trade volumes with its neighbouring nations have surged significantly in the last half-decade, reflecting the success of its regional engagement strategy. The bolstered economic ties are increasingly complemented by military-to-military cooperation and strategic dialogues, ensuring a multi-layered relationship that transcends transactional interests. In 2023, the Quad (comprising India, the US, Japan, and Australia) took a decisive step forward through the panel titled "The Quad Squad: Power and Purpose of the Polygon." Member nations reiterated their commitment to safeguarding the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. The Quad's focus on maritime security, resilient infrastructure, and capacity-building for smaller nations aligns perfectly with India's SAGAR doctrine.

This initiative also strengthens the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), where India's growing leadership continues to receive global acknowledgement. Looking ahead, there's a growing consensus on the need for a multi-tiered strategic mechanism to safeguard maritime trade routes, tackle piracy, and counter emerging threats such as smuggling, cyber-attacks, and transnational terrorism. Creating resilient alliances that can jointly withstand the impact of such challenges will remain central to India's foreign policy calculus. This collaborative spirit is not merely a reflection of geopolitical necessity — it is also rooted in India's cultural philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the world as one family. The idea is not just to defend borders but to co-develop strategies that promote shared prosperity, regional equity, and timely support during crises. In conclusion, India's maritime and strategic vision is undergoing a significant transformation — blending realism with regional empathy and diplomatic foresight. From countering China's BRI to building strategic depth through its Necklace of Diamonds, India is carving out a stable and inclusive maritime architecture.

By integrating security, economic, and environmental priorities, India offers a roadmap that blends traditional wisdom with modern statecraft.The coming years will be crucial. The success of India's strategy lies in its ability to ensure that new geopolitical frameworks are inclusive, robust, and adaptable to the fast-evolving international order. This approach will not only preserve regional peace and prosperity but will also project India as a pivotal force in shaping the contours of 21st-century global diplomacy.

(The author, a recipient of the Bharat Gaurav Award, is a Professor and expert in Strategic Affairs. Views are personal)

The emotional toll of vitiligo in India

SECOND Opinion

India has the dubious distinction of having the highest prevalence of vitiligo in the world, estimated at 8.8 per cent (as against the global prevalence of 1 per cent-2 per cent). Every year, over 1 lakh cases of vitiligo are reported in India, and though the condition can occur at any age, it is more common before the age of 30.

In a world filled with beauty standards set by societal norms, one condition often becomes the subject of whispered conversations and hidden insecurities — Vitiligo. This chronic autoimmune condition, characterised by depigmented patches that appear when melanin-producing cells are destroyed, affects millions worldwide.

Beyond its Physical symptoms, Vitiligo patients face significant social stigma, impacting their mental health and relationships.

Meet Satya, a 28-year-old artist from the vibrant city of Jaipur who has been living with vitiligo since she was 12. "At first, I was a shy girl who tried to hide my skin," she recalls. "I wore long sleeves, avoided swimming, or anything to cover up the patches." The stigma associated with her condition was palpable, often leaving her feeling isolated and exposed to unwanted stares and comments, People often think it's contagious or associate it with a lack of health, but they don't understand the emotional toll it takes.

SATISH BHATIA

Farah's story is not unique. Many with vitiligo experience harsh judgments and discomfort in their daily lives. Marriage prospects are affected especially in tier 2 cities and villages. Mental health issues such as anxiety and low self-esteem are common in Vitiligo patients.

The Dermatologist's Perspective:

Vitiligo can significantly impact an individual's self-esteem and mental well-being. While doctors focus on medical treatment. it's essential to consider a holistic approach that includes emotional support. Treatment options: Several treatment options each tailored to fit the unique needs of the patient. These may include:

1. Topical Corticosteroids and Immunosuppressants like Pimecrolimus and Tacrolimus: These are commonly prescribed to reduce inflammation and encourage repigmentation in the affected area.
2. Phototherapy: Controlled exposure to ultraviolet B light can stimulate skin repigmentation In some patients.
3. Skin Grafts: In more severe cases, dermatologists may recommend surgical options such as skin grafting.
4. PRP therapy: Stimulates Pigment cells with new vessel formation at Vitiligo areas causing repigmentation.
5. Depigmentation Therapy: For those with widespread vitiligo, this involves lightening the unaffected skin to create an even tone.

However, Vitiligo treatment goes beyond just the skin. "We encourage patients to engage in counseling or support groups. The emotional experience of living with vitiligo is just as important as managing the physical symptoms."

The Importance of Counseling

Counselling plays a critical role in coping with the psychological impact of vitiligo. Mental health professionals can help individuals develop coping strategies, improve self-acceptance, and reduce feelings of anxiety or depression associated with appearance.

Vitiligo is more than just a skin condition — it's a deeply personal battle against stigma, isolation, and societal pressure. In India, where beauty standards remain rigid, those with vitiligo often face emotional trauma alongside physical symptoms.

While medical treatments offer hope, healing must include mental health support and social awareness.
It's time we move beyond appearances and embrace inclusivity, ensuring that people like Satya and millions more — are seen, supported, and empowered to live without shame.

(The writer is a Board Certified Dermatologist MD, IFAAD, Indian Cancer Society, Mumbai. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Trump's rhetoric and the cost of chaos

US President Donald Trump's recent outburst calling Iran's Supreme Leader "public enemy number one" is not only diplomatically reckless but emblematic of the impulsive, performative politics that defined his presidency. Iran's condemnation of the remark as "disrespectful and condemnable" reflects a broader concern: Trump's approach to foreign policy often privileged provocation over prudence.

From abandoning the Iran nuclear deal and walking away from climate commitments to cosying up with autocrats and sparking trade wars, his tenure was marked by erratic swings between isolationism and interventionism. The result — strained alliances, emboldened adversaries, and a world less stable. Now, as he angles for a return to power, Trump's inflammatory rhetoric seems more like campaign theatre than credible policy.

His comments risk inflaming already tense Middle East dynamics, particularly in the wake of the Israel-Iran flare-up. Meanwhile, his contradictory talk of a "very big" trade deal with India, despite calling barrier removal "unimaginable," mirrors the familiar pattern — grandstanding with little substance.

The tragedy isn't just the poor choices — it's how predictably they repeat. In seeking strength, he sowed division; in chasing deals, he eroded trust. The world has grown weary of the chaos he once called strategy.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

India's second man in space

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla has made all Indians proud by being only the second Indian Astronaut to be launched into Space and the first Indian to enter the International Space Station (ISS) (634th person to be aboard that ISS)!

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 18-minute conversation with Indian astronaut Shukla, who not only emphasised Earth's unity from space and its alignment with India's values, but also said, "We see sunrise and sunset 16 times a day from orbit… Our nation is moving forward at a very great pace…"

And added, "India looks grand and bigger from space than it does on the map." Shubhanshu-Modi talk is reminiscent of PM Indira Gandhi's talk with Squadron Leader Rakesh Sharma in 1984 when PM Indira Gandhi talked LIVE with Rakesh Sharma. She asked what the Earth looked like from above. Rakesh told Ms Gandhi that India looks like 'Sare Jahan se Achha' from space. What a thoughtful reply! I still remember that. And that is precisely what Subhanshu expressed, but using different words (But from space, India appears truly grand — majestic in scale and spirit). Interestingly, Rakesh Sharma was sent to space with no charges, but the Modi Government bought a seat in Axiom-4 for ₹548 Cr, or $64 million for a 24-day stay.

BIDYUT KUMAR CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

Debate over 'socialist' and 'secular'

Recently, some RSS members have started a debate in the country that the words "Socialist" and "Secular" were originally not a part of the Constitution, but were added by The Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976, during the Emergency imposed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The insertion of "socialist" aimed to emphasise socialism as a goal and philosophy of the Indian state, with a focus on eradicating poverty. The NDA Government is already working to remove poverty in the country. The inclusion of "secular" reinforced the idea of a secular state, treating all religions equally, maintaining neutrality, and not endorsing any particular religion as a state religion.

What is the objection to inserting these two words in the Constitution? Rather, the Government should emphasise implementing these words in letter and spirit instead of indulging in unnecessary debate. The current debate over the insertion of "Socialist" and "Secular" in the Constitution distracts from their intended spirit.

While it's true these words were added during the 42nd Amendment, their core values have always underpinned India's democratic ethos. Rather than questioning their legitimacy, the focus should be on realising these ideals in practice — by upholding religious neutrality and working sincerely to eradicate poverty. Implementation, not revisionism, is the need of the hour.

SK KHOSLA | CHANDIGARH

SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES – A BOON OR A BAND-AID?

The Prime Minister's recent statement (30.6.2025) that 95 crore Indians are beneficiaries of social security schemes raises a pertinent question – should this be a matter of pride or concern?

Out of 150 crore citizens, if 95 crore rely on Government aid, it reflects the deep economic distress faced by the majority. For instance, 81 crore depend on free ration, while in several states, women and the elderly receive monthly stipends of ₹1,500. Though these appear generous, they are often politically driven gestures, announced during elections without long-term economic planning.

The real issue is that these schemes offer short-term relief, not long-term solutions. Five kilos of rice or a ₹1,500 handout cannot lift families out of poverty. Meanwhile, Governments – both state and central – grapple with mounting debts, and such expansive welfare is funded by borrowing or increased taxes and fees. In Andhra Pradesh, the much-hyped 'Navaratnalu' schemes were offset by steep hikes in electricity tariffs, bus fares, and house taxes, while essential goods became increasingly unaffordable. Healthcare schemes often end up enriching private insurance firms and hospitals, not safeguarding the poor. Meanwhile, educated youth wait for jobs, only to be offered unemployment allowances instead of employment.What's more troubling is the parallel reality where the rich are pampered – corporate tax cuts, exemptions, waived loans – enabling billionaires to thrive amidst growing inequality. Despite rising GDP and India's rank as the fourth-largest economy, its growth remains elite-centric.

That's perhaps why we are still only invitees, not members – at G7 summits. True welfare lies in empowerment, not dependency. The need of the hour is to create opportunities for self-reliance, not perpetuate helplessness through doles.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR

Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words. We appreciate your feedback.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | TUESDAY | JULY 1, 2025

How extreme weather is undermining India's infrastructure and economy

From roads that melt in summer heat to power plants shutting down for lack of water, and telecom networks buckling under extreme weather stress, India's highways, railways, energy grids, ports, and defence posts are increasingly vulnerable to climate shocks

FIRST Column

BKP SINHA

ARVIND KUMAR JHA

Climate change isn't just about erratic rains, heatwaves, and extreme weather events leading to natural disasters; it's silently and actively wearing down the very backbone of our nation, impacting its infrastructure and consequently its economy in a very subtle manner. India's essential infrastructures — from the highways and railways to power grids, ports, airports, water systems, and telecom networks — are facing a growing crisis.

As if in science fiction, railway tracks, originally designed to operate within a limited temperature range, are reported to be twisting like snakes in the extreme summer heat, and newly paved roads melt under one's feet. In 2023, extreme heatwaves saw railway tracks buckle and twist in places like Jharkhand's Dilwa station. Similar incidents were reported across several states, leading to the deployment of special monitoring teams, strict summer safety protocols, and even speed restrictions on vulnerable sections to prevent accidents. Our roads are suffering too. In April 2023, a brand-new 200-metre stretch of road in Surat, connecting the Chandra Shekhar Azad Bridge to Adajan Patiya, literally began to melt under scorching heat. This incident starkly highlighted how fragile Indian roads become if they are not made from climate-resilient materials and consider outdated temperature thresholds.

Excessive rains bring a different set of problems. Rainwater seeps into tiny cracks developed due to extreme weather conditions creating potholes and, in severe cases, causing large road sections to collapse. Considering that over 60 per cent of goods and 85 per cent of people in India depend on road transport, such climate-induced damage is a huge threat. It impacts our safety, access to healthcare systems, the efficiency of supply chains for essential goods, and ultimately, the country's economic development. The power supply also feels the heat, quite literally. Hydropower, which makes up about 13 per cent of the country's energy, is at risk. Its reliance on steady river flows makes it vulnerable to erratic monsoons, landslides, and melting glaciers, all of which can disrupt power generation. Similarly, thermal power plants, which provide about 83 per cent of India's electricity, need massive amounts of water for cooling. This makes them incredibly vulnerable, impacts generation capacity and may trigger electricity shortfalls across critical regions. The Parli thermal power station in Maharashtra, crucial for its Marathwada region, has faced repeated shutdowns due to dangerously low reservoir levels. In March 2016, the 1,720 MW Raichur Thermal Power Station in Karnataka was also forced to shut several units amid severe water shortages. Between 2013 and 2016, 14 of India's 20 largest thermal utility firms had to suspend operations at various points due to insufficient water, causing an estimated loss of ₹9,100 crore. With soaring heatwaves, demand for electricity goes up pushing the power grids to their limits. Delhi's power demand in the summer of 2024 breached 8,300 megawatts — the highest ever recorded in the National Capital Territory — placing immense stress on the city's electrical infrastructure. The hot climate and stressed electrical infrastructure contribute to a sharp rise in electrical fires. The telecommunication systems are under pressure since the mobile towers, data centres, and internet cables are also at risk from floods, strong winds, and extreme heat. Data centres, needing cool environments, are at constant risk of overheating during heat waves, threatening service continuity. In addition to the civilian set-up, the defence infrastructures are also increasingly exposed to extreme weather conditions.

On the coasts, cyclonic storms and coastal flooding impact the naval facilities. The Hudhud in 2014, for example, caused extensive damage to facilities on the eastern coast. In the Himalayas, Indian Army posts in high-altitude regions like Siachen and parts of Ladakh do face the impact of glacial retreat and unpredictable weather. Melting permafrost weakens foundations, while sudden avalanches and flash floods pose increasing risks to soldiers and supplies. In 2021, a glacier burst in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district destroyed bridges and roads critical to the region.The vulnerability of urban infrastructure to climate-change-related vagaries gets further increased due to unplanned constructions on wetlands, blocking of drains, paving of areas, and lack of infrastructure upgradation. In Bengaluru, for example, rainfall in September 2022 inundated major tech parks and upscale housing complexes, causing the requirement of an estimated ₹225 crore for repair to roads and buildings, and restoration of businesses. Bengaluru's IT sector suffered major disruptions, with productivity losses running into millions.

> THE TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ARE UNDER PRESSURE SINCE THE MOBILE TOWERS, DATA CENTRES, AND INTERNET CABLES ARE ALSO AT RISK FROM FLOODS, STRONG WINDS, AND EXTREME HEAT. DATA CENTRES, NEEDING COOL ENVIRONMENTS, ARE AT CONSTANT RISK OF OVERHEATING DURING HEAT WAVES, THREATENING SERVICE CONTINUITY

Chennai's catastrophic floods in December 2015, which killed over 400 people and caused thousands of crores in property damage highlight the dangers of ignoring urban hydrology and the impact of climate change. Mumbai's vulnerability to flooding has been on public display almost every monsoon season with the July 2005 deluge etched in memory: 944 mm of rainfall in a single day, claiming over 1,000 lives. In 2023, parts of central and east Delhi went underwater, revealing that the capital's aged and often clogged drainage systems are easily overwhelmed by erratic rainfall. The Hyderabad flash floods of October 2020 were contributed by cloudbursts, delivering over 190 mm of rainfall in 24 hours.

Over 70 people lost their lives, thousands were displaced, and property damage was estimated at over ₹8,000 crore. Again, the devastating impacts of Cyclone Amphan in 2020 and Cyclone Yaas in 2021 laid bare the fragility of its urban systems in the wake of extreme weather activities. While urban centres like Guwahati are witnessing repeated waterlogging and landslides; the 2013 Kedarnath disaster, floods in Srinagar in 2014, and the unusually heavy rains in 2019 in Patna with immense damages therefrom are a stark reminder of the urgent need to prioritise climate change preparedness.

Insecurity over land and water is contributing to rising conflicts between communities, especially in regions where traditional resource-sharing systems are breaking down under environmental stress. The "climate-displaced" populations that comprise mostly poor people often lack legal protection and access to adequate compensation, exacerbating existing inequalities. Simultaneously, the burden on public institutions — healthcare, forestry, sanitation, disaster response, and policing — continues to grow, making it harder for the state to deliver services equitably. The conceptualisation of forests as a form of natural infrastructure is gaining increasing traction, emphasising their critical role in providing essential ecosystem services that directly parallel those traditionally associated with human-built systems.

Much like engineered infrastructures, forests regulate hydrological cycles, contributing significantly to flood control through water retention and gradual release; and perform large-scale carbon sequestration, acting as vital sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide. This perspective can facilitate a shift towards more sustainable planning and development practices that integrate natural capital alongside conventional infrastructure investments. Climate-proofing India's future has no alternative.

The recurring incidences of damage to infrastructure relatable to climate change expose dangerous flaws in our infrastructure, much of which, built decades ago, simply wasn't designed for today's climate extremes. India needs a major shift in how it plans and develops. It must design for the future (i.e., build infrastructure that can withstand higher temperatures, heavier rains, and stronger storms); protect natural defences by restoring forests, lakes, wetlands, and green spaces; implement land-use regulations that consider climate risks; and prioritise funds for climate-resilient upgrades and advanced early warning systems.

Simultaneously it must involve local communities in planning and disaster preparedness and empower them duly recognising their unique knowledge. Addressing the emergent challenges requires not just environmental action, but coordinated policy efforts across urban development, environment, forestry, health, and disaster management to ensure that climate resilience goes hand in hand with social justice and national cohesion. Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it's here, impacting every aspect of our lives. Addressing it isn't just an environmental issue; it's crucial for India's economic stability, social well-being, and national security. The time to act is now.

(The writers are Former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra. Views expressed are personal)

From ancient kilns to smart city: The metamorphosis of Moradabad

Moradabad, formerly known as Chaupala and also called Rustam Nagar, is one of the largest industrial cities in western Uttar Pradesh. Nestled on the gentle banks of the Ramganga River, it has long drawn water for its kilns and workshops — its artisans skillfully transforming molten brass into heirloom pieces. Today, Moradabad's handicraft industry and artistic brassware jewelry are celebrated across continents, earning it the affectionate nickname "Pital Nagri," or Brass City.

Moradabad sits 165 km east of New Delhi on NH 24 (now NH 9), a crucial highway bustling with trucks, buses, and aspirations heading towards Lucknow and beyond. For local entrepreneurs, NH 24 is more than just pavement; it represents a promise of timely deliveries and access to new market frontiers. Thanks to the Hapur–Moradabad six-laning project, which opened in March 2022, the travel time to the capital has already been reduced by almost 30 per cent. Proposed upgrades — a regional airport, a 60 m-wide ring road, and a 36 m industrial corridor — are poised to further weave Moradabad into India's economic tapestry.Under the Moradabad Master Plan 2031, city planners plot an ambitious trajectory for growth and inclusion. A mega-MSME park and handicraft village will unite designers, producers, and exporters beneath one roof — transforming scattered workshops into a cohesive campus. The brass industry powerhouse already hosts 30,000–40,000 units, and recent diversification into steel, aluminium, and iron goods has bolstered resilience when global demand fluctuates. Complementing this is an Industrial Logistics Park and Knowledge City — spaces where young engineers prototype new tools and entrepreneurs pitch digital solutions. The transport infrastructure projects will link the SEZ's 58 operational units directly to the city's industrial zone, leveraging NH-24's logistic advantages.

Moradabad's civic landscape is undergoing a quiet renaissance under the Smart City initiative. High-definition CCTV cameras now pepper major junctions. Digital traffic signals adjust in real time to ease morning jams, and a user-friendly online grievance portal ensures that if a streetlight fails or a pothole appears, a single click sets local teams in motion. At the heart of it all, NH 24 serves as both backbone and barometer — its steady flow mirroring the city's rhythm.

Riding this growth wave, enhanced accessibility and industrial spill have ignited a real-estate boom along the NH 24 corridor. In New Moradabad, young families now settle into gleaming apartment towers. Property values have surged by 15–20 per cent in recent years, driven as much by repeat homebuyers seeking community as by corporate leases for warehouses and office parks. Master-planned townships boast verdant green belts and clubhouses, while smaller enclaves celebrate Moradabad's heritage through brass-themed public art and bustling weekend bazaars. As infrastructure steadily reshapes the urban fabric of Moradabad, a quiet transformation is taking place, people are aligning their lifestyle choices with better-planned spaces and emerging corridors of opportunity. New Moradabad is becoming the city's most promising zone for both living and investment.

PYUSH LOHIA

Led by the Moradabad Development Authority (MDA) and prominent private developers, over 1,000 acres have been earmarked for integrated development, featuring residential complexes, commercial hubs, educational zones, and abundant green spaces.

The appeal is affordable, yet backed by state-planned infrastructure and rising end-user demand, without the crowding of metros. Whether you're looking to build, invest, or settle, New Moradabad offers a rare combination: the calm of a growing city and the confidence of planned progress. It's not just a place on the map, it's a destination taking shape with purpose. Healthcare, too, is emerging from its traditional cocoon. By July 2025, Moradabad will host one of Uttar Pradesh's twelve advanced food and drug testing laboratories — an institution as vital to farmers and pharmacists as the kilns are to artisans.

Here, grain samples and medicine vials undergo rigorous quality checks. The forthcoming Medicity promises tertiary-care specialties from cardiology suites to maternity wings for helping families once forced to travel hours for treatment. Many health care precincts, combining modern hospitals, specialty clinics (cardiology, oncology, orthopedics), including traditional wellness centers (Ayurveda, Yoga), are being established on the same campus. While diagnostic hubs and proposed medical colleges boost research. To meet the demands, there's a hospital boom — leading specialty chains and upgrades to the District Census Hospital along NH 24 reduce patient travel times, offering lower costs, private-room comforts, and green corridor transfers. Moradabad is steadily establishing itself as an educational, medical, and financial hub even for the smaller towns and rural belts that surround it. Financially, Moradabad's growing network of banks, fintech services, and MSME-friendly institutions support not just the city but all nearby regions without the need to travel to metro cities.

Education and services form Moradabad's rising undercurrent. Technical institutes offer courses in metallurgy and design, with students learning both CAD software and traditional repoussé techniques. Concurrently, the services sector — IT support for export documentation, logistics consultancies, hospitality ventures — now employs a growing cohort of graduates. Afternoon *chai* discussions in college canteens often pivot from exam stress to startup dreams, reflecting a city where heritage and innovation converse at every corner.Moradabad's story is one of dynamic equilibrium: honoring ancestral skill even as highways widen, nurturing small-scale artisans even as mega-parks rise. Its strategic perch on NH 24 has unlocked opportunities across industrial, residential, healthcare, and educational sectors, while a clear Master Plan lays out milestones for the coming decades. In every clink of brass, every new road sign, and every skyline silhouette, you sense a city writing its next chapter — one that marries the warmth of handmade crafts with the pulse of modern ambition. Crafted in the spirit of Moradabad's artisans and the promise of NH 24, where every mile tells a story of heritage reborn and horizons expanded.

(The author is the Director of Lohia Worldspace. Views are personal)

Beyond bat and ball: Decoding the tactics of modern T20 cricket

T20 cricket is often seen as a batsman's game: short boundaries, flat wickets, and powerplays that favour hitting. But the approach to building an innings has evolved enormously. Is it fair to view T20 through the same lens as we do cricket? The simple answer would be, yes, as the bat, the ball and 11 players on each side are present in T20, but the fact that ten wickets are available to be spent in 120 balls fundamentally alters the risk and reward, arguably making it an entirely different game. T20 cricket is considered the most volatile form of cricket.

In test and even ODI cricket, 90-95 per cent of the time the best sides generally go on to win the game. However, in T20 cricket, it's fairly random. In T20 cricket, even the best teams will have a win percentage of 70 or 75 and the worst will have a percentage of 40-45, so, the gulf in quality is not massive, and it's very random and on top of that you have a short season.

So judging teams on their tactics and intent is a much better metric than results because results in T20 cricket can be very random.

FARMAN SIDDIQUI

Because time is limited, each ball in T20 is a high-leverage event. Teams try to optimise every delivery, making the format heavily managed. Historically, multiple players would adopt the role of an anchor — someone who batted conservatively to stabilise the innings. But modern T20 tends to limit this role to one or two players. "It all comes down to knowing your game and the opposition's," says ILT20 analyst Kieran Parmley. "There's almost no batter who can't score at a strike rate of over 160 in the last four overs once set. But if you take 45 balls to get there, what use is that?"

He cites Chris Gayle, who may take time early but knows exactly which bowlers to target later, as an example of effective pacing. Maximising 120 balls and 10 wickets is the key. The worst T20 innings? Scoring 160/2 — because preserving wickets is pointless if you don't maximise your total. A famous example is Ajinkya Rahane's knock in the 2016 T20 World Cup semi-final.

His 40 off 35 balls looked steady on paper, but it took up nearly a third of the innings for just 20 per cent of the runs, slowing the scoring rate and preventing more explosive batsmen from getting a chance. India posted 192/2 but still lost comfortably.

Despite the drawbacks, many teams still use anchors. Freddie Wilde, an analyst for Royal Challengers Bangalore, argues that selecting an anchor is a defensive tactic — like Jose Mourinho's football approach. "It lowers a batting side's ceiling but also reduces the chance of collapse." He believes anchors become more valuable as the standard of cricket improves. Players like Virat Kohli and Kane Williamson are better suited to top-tier leagues like the IPL than second-tier competitions like England's T20 Blast, where raw power is often enough.

A team's choice to include or omit an anchor reflects its philosophy. England, for instance, left out technically solid Joe Root in favour of power hitters like Jos Buttler and Jonny Bairstow, aiming to out-hit opponents. Australia, with a stronger bowling attack, often used Steve Smith as an anchor, comfortable defending slightly lower totals. The strategy paid off with their first T20 World Cup title in 2021.

Another key debate in T20 strategy is when to deploy your best batsmen. Some argue they should be open to exploit field restrictions, but others like analyst Alagappan Vijaykumar believe the best should bat in the middle overs.

"A number four batter needs to be versatile: if they come in at 10/2, they must rebuild cautiously; at 100/2, they must attack immediately. They face the dual pressure of maintaining momentum while protecting wickets."

Fluid batting orders have become common since the mid-2000s when Rahul Dravid and Greg Chappell experimented with adjusting the lineup based on the game context. Now, with data-driven match-ups, teams often hold bowlers back for specific batsmen, complicating the job of middle-order players even more.

A number six batter's role is also particularly tough. Unlike a number four, they rarely get time to settle. "You used to need just range as a finisher," says Vijaykumar. "Now you need brute power to counter high-speed, hard-length deliveries, or you need to pair different skill-sets — like Dinesh Karthik's range with Andre Russell's power at KKR." T20 is often portrayed as a bowler's nightmare, but the reality is more nuanced. While batting techniques have improved, bowling has also advanced through analytics, smarter variations like the wobble seam, and faster pitches. "If you watch dismissals from the '50s and '60s, you'd be shocked at how poor some shots were. Today's bowlers are as sharp as the batters," says Vijaykumar. Ultimately, T20 is a distinct format requiring distinct tactics. Each delivery carries weight.

Picking when, and how to deploy your best players — anchors, power hitters, or middle-order maestros — determines success more than sheer batting or bowling quality. In a game defined by volatility and thin margins, understanding the interplay of roles and risk is what separates the merely good from the truly great sides.

(The writer is a sports journalist. Views are personal)

The Pioneer
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Uddhav, Raj Thackeray to hold victory rally on July 5 in Mumbai

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ Mumbai

A day after Maharashtra Government revoked its two resolutions declaring Hindi as a "third language" for the first to fifth standard students in Marathi and English medium schools in the state, Thackeray cousins — Uddhav and Raj — on Monday announced that the Shiv Sena (UBT) and MNS would hold a joint victory rally on July 5, instead of the protest planned by them earlier at the Azad Maidan in south Mumbai.

Interacting with media persons separately, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and MNS chief Raj Thackeray said that they would convert their proposed joint protest into a victory rally at the Azad rally on Saturday (July 5).

The announcement by the Thackeray cousins followed a decision taken by the BJP-led MahaYuti Government to cancel the Government Resolutions (GRs) issued on April 16 and June 17, 2025 about the introduction of Hindi as "Hindi" language as "third language" and appoint a committee headed by economist, writer and educationalist Dr Narendra Jadhav, to re-look into the three-language policy – under which Hindi was made the third language.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis made had come after the protesting Shiv Sena (UBT) workers burnt the copies of the two GRs making Hindi as the third language for the first to fifth standard students in Marathi and English medium schools in the state "We have appointed Dr Narendra Jadhav to determine from which standard the three-language policy should be implemented, how the implementation should take place and what choices should be given to students.

Shiv Sena (UBT) Chief Uddhav Thackeray being garlanded as he arrives at Vidhan Bhavan to attend the first day of the monsoon session of Assembly, in Mumba

Based on the report to be submitted by the Narendra Jadhav committee, we will take a final decision," Fadnavis said.

Reacting to the state Government's decision to withdraw two GRs introducing Hindi as the "third language, Uddhav said: "We have smashed the heads of those who hate Marathi. Before they raise their heads again and the next crisis hits us, we should maintain this unity. We are talking to everyone. We need to show the same unity in the victory celebration," Uddhav said.

"The issue of making Hindi compulsory is over and the Marathi unity will be on display on July 5," he added.

Alluding to the state Government's decision to appoint a committee headed by Dr Narendra Jadhav to look into the third language policy and its earlier decision to make Hindi as the "third language" in primary schools, Uddhav said: "I am warning the Government not to take the matter lightly. This pertains to education, and you have appointed an economist," he said.

"I don't understand why the state Government was insisting on bringing in Hindi as the third language in primary schools. Earlier, Hindi was taught from around Class 5 or 6, and that was acceptable. But why did the state Government want to push it from Class 1 now? Hindi is not the rashtra bhasha (national language) to be imposed on other states," Raj said.

"People are trying to make the 150 to 200-year-old Hindi language appear superior to Marathi, which has a history of over 3,000 years. This is unacceptable, and I will not allow it," t4he MNS chief said.

On the appointment of the Narendra Jadhav-led committee to look into the three-language policy, Raj said: "Whatever may be the recommendations of the Government appointed committee, we will not allow Hindi to be taught in schools from the first standard in the state".

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray accused the ruling BJP of trying to divide Marathi people and said: "They (BJP) are making all efforts to divide Marathi people, they are making all efforts to ensure that the two brothers (Uddhav and Raj) don't come together".

Interestingly enough, as monsoon session of the Maharashtra legislature began on Monday morning, the legislators the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi comprising Congress, Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) were in a celebratory mood for having forced the Maha Yuti Government to withdraw the two GRs regarding the "imposition" of Hindi as the third language.

CM Rekha requests renaming of Old Delhi Railway station

VAISHNAVI MISHRA
■ New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has written a formal letter to Union Railway Minister Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw, requesting the renaming of the historic Old Delhi Railway Station. In the letter dated June 19, the Chief Minister has proposed that the station be renamed as "Maharaja Agrasen Railway Station" in honour of the legendary king and social reformer, Maharaja Agrasen.

In her letter, CM Gupta highlighted the immense contributions of Maharaja Agrasen to India's socio-economic development, particularly in Delhi. She described him as a revered historical figure who symbolised social justice, economic foresight, and community welfare. She mentioned that Maharaja Agrasen's legacy continues to inspire countless followers and descendants who play a key role in shaping Delhi's cultural and economic identity.

The Chief Minister noted that renaming the station would serve as a meaningful tribute to Maharaja Agrasen's enduring legacy. "It would deeply resonate with the sentiments of millions of Delhi residents who hold him in the highest esteem," she wrote.

Emphasizing the historical and emotional value of the proposal, CM Gupta appealed for the Railway Minister's kind consideration and personal intervention to facilitate a favourable and speedy decision on the matter. She concluded the letter by expressing her gratitude for the Ministry's attention to the request.

The Old Delhi Railway Station, originally known as Delhi Junction, is one of the oldest and busiest railway hubs in the country.

Delhi announces sops for Kanwar Yatra

Pioneer News Service n New Delhi

With the annual Kanwar Yatra set to begin from July 11, Delhi Education, Home, and Power Minister, Ashish Sood, announced several key measures , including up to 1,200 units of free electricity for each camp and financial aid through Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) to registered Kanwar committees.

To further ease the process, the government has also slashed the required security deposit for temporary electricity connections — Kanwar organisers will now need to pay just 25% of the usual amount. Sood said these measures are aimed at reducing the financial burden on organisers and ensuring that all camps operate safely and efficiently.

The meeting, chaired by Sood, was attended by Minister-in-Charge for Kanwar Yatra Kapil Mishra, MLAs Anil Sharma, Sanjay Goyal, and Pradhuman Rajput, along with senior officials from departments including Delhi Police, MCD, DJB, Health, Power, and Fire Services. Sood directed all departments to begin preparations without delay, stating that all arrangements must be completed "on a war footing" to ensure a safe and organised Yatra.

Beginning July 1, Kanwar committee registrations will open at all District Magistrate (DM) offices across Delhi. The registration counters will operate from 9 AM onwards. To streamline the process, Additional District Magistrates (ADMs) in each of Delhi's 11 districts have been appointed as nodal officers responsible for assisting the committees in obtaining necessary permissions and No Objection Certificates (NOCs). A complete list of these officers will be made public to ensure transparency and smooth communication.

The Minister instructed all departments to work in close coordination with these nodal officers to avoid bureaucratic delays.

Parents meet Delhi CM over fee hike issue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A group of parents met Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Monday to raise concerns about the fee hike in private schools and requested the government to intervene.

The group, representing the Delhi Parents' Association, reached the Delhi Secretariat to discuss the matter, an official statement said.

According to the statement, the chief minister assured them that the issue would be looked into and a meeting would be held soon with parents from different schools.

The discussion is expected to include the chief minister, education minister and officials from the education department, it said.

Earlier in the day, the parents had tried to meet the chief minister at her residence in Shalimar Bagh but were stopped due to security reasons. They were later called to the Secretariat, where the meeting took place, a parent said.

During the meeting, the parents said that some private schools were not following the Directorate of Education's guidelines and were issuing notices to students over non-payment of increased fees.

They also expressed concern about what they described as unfair treatment of students in such cases.

The parents, under the banner of the United Parents' Voice (UPV), urged the government to pause any proposed ordinance related to school fees until proper consultation is held.

They said that parents and citizens should be involved in decisions that affect school education.

They also raised concerns about the way fee-related issues are being handled by some school authorities and requested the government to ensure that rules are implemented fairly.

Tigers death: Deputy Conservator of Forests, two others sent on leave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Bengaluru

The Forest department on Monday sent the Deputy Conservator of Forests and two other officials on compulsory leave with immediate effect pending an inquiry into the case of 'unnatural death' of five tigers in the Male Mahadeshwara Hills, officials said.

A female tigress and her four cubs were found dead in the Hugyam range of the MM Hills on June 26.

Following the incident, three people, including the owner of the dead cow sprayed upon with poison and consumed by the wild cats, were arrested.

Odisha evacuates low-lying areas as flood water enter villages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Bhubaneswar/Balasore/Baripada

The Odisha government on Monday evacuated people from low-lying areas in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts as waters of river Subarnarekha and Budhabalang started entering villages, officials said.

The state government had earlier sounded a red alert for both districts as water levels in rivers like Subarnarekha, Budhabalang, Jalaka, and Sono continue to rise.

Odisha Revenue and Disaster Manager minister Suresh Pujari said people in both districts have been evacuated and housed in shelters where they are being provided with cooked and dry food. Personnel of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) and Fire Service are engaged in rescue and relief operations, the minister said.

Keeping in view the flood situation, all schools and Anganwadi centres in Mayurbhanj district remained closed on Monday.

According to official sources, the Subarnarekha river reached a water level of 11.28 metre at Rajghat at 9 PM on Monday — well above the danger mark of 10.36 metre.

A total of seven blocks of Balasore and 17 blocks of Mayurbhanj have been affected by the recent floods due to heavy rains in the region and discharge of water from Chandil Dam and Galudihi Barrage in neighbouring Jharkhand.

"North Odisha often gets flooded due to discharge of water by Jharkhand. The neighbouring state does such because of the non-completion of the Chandil dam. We are discussing with them what could be done and how to complete the Chandil dam so that the water could be regulated," the Revenue and Disaster Management minister said.

"Floodwaters have inundated parts of Balasore and Mayurbhanj. District administrations have started evacuating people from low-lying and flood-prone areas. Rescue and relief operations are underway. The situation is under control," Pujari said after reviewing the flood situation.

The minister said field staff are monitoring vulnerable points of river embankments and have been equipped with flood-fighting materials in both Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts. The chief engineer of the Water Resources department is in constant touch with the district collectors of Balasore and Mayurbhanj, he said, adding that some breaches in riverbanks have been identified and are being repaired using sandbags and other materials.

Meanwhile, the IMD has forecast more rain across the state till July 5. "Heavy rains are likely in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts in north Odisha and Sundergarh and Jharsuguda in the southern region of the state," the weather office said.

Balasore: Swollen Subarnarekha river after the release of water from Chandil Dam following heavy rainfall, in Balasore district, Odisha PTI

Factory blast kills 12 in Telangana...

Continued from >> P1

He said the removal of debris was still ongoing at the blast site and that search was on for any people trapped in the collapsed three-storeyed building.

Inspector General of Police (Multizone) V Satyanarayana said the impact of the blast was felt for about five kms in the Pashamylaram area.

Labour Minister Venkatswamy said the incharge of the factory also lost his life in the accident and "there is nobody from the factory side to give us really what happened," he said.

After the incident, the district Collector and Superintendent of Police reached the spot within 30 minutes, he said.

A good ex-gratia amount would be ensured to the kin of the deceased and the government would also consider interim help to the affected families, the minister said.

He also said DNA tests were being conducted in hospitals to identify some of the deceased.

At least half a dozen bodies should undergo DNA profiling to establish the identity as they were charred beyond recognition, a Revenue Department official. Sigachi Industries Limited is a pharmaceutical company dedicated to pioneering advancements in Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), Intermediates, Excipients, vitamin-mineral blends, and Operations and Management (O&M) services, according to the company's website.

ECI uploads Bihar poll data

Continued from >> P1

"The ease of availability of 2003 electoral rolls of Bihar would hugely facilitate the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar as now nearly 60 per cent of the total electorate, would not have to submit any documents.

They have to just verify their details from the 2003 electoral rolls in the ER and submit the filled-up Enumeration Form. Both, the electors as well the BLOs, would be able to readily access these details," the poll body said in a statement.

It further stated that as per instructions, anyone whose name is not in the 2003 Bihar electoral roll can still use the extract of 2003 electoral roll rather than providing any other documents for his or her mother or father. In such cases, no other document would be required for his or her mother or father. Only the relevant extract or details of the2003 ER would be sufficient. Such electors would have to submit the documents, only for themselves, along with the filled-up Enumeration Form.

The commission reiterated that revision of electoral rolls before every election is a legal requirement under Section 21(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and Rule 25 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 a process the ECI has conducted consistently for 75 years.

Additionally, it emphasised that as per Article 326 of the Constitution, only Indian citizens aged 18 or above and ordinarily residing in a constituency are eligible to be registered as voters.

New BJP party president soon

Continued from >> P1

Meanwhile, single nomination for the post was filed in states like Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, making their election a mere formality on Tuesday.

The BJP has now new state presidents, including some who were reelected, in 16 states, a figure that will rise on Tuesday. Some big states like Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh may also follow suit in the next few days.

The BJP has picked seasoned organisational men but with low public profile in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in Ramchander Rao and P V N Madhav respectively. Upset over the possible appointment of Ramchander Rao as BJP's Telangana President, the party's firebrand MLA Raja Singh on Monday wrote to Union Minister G Kishan Reddy saying that he is resigning from the primary membership of the saffron party. Reddy is presently the state chief and the party high command is likely to announce new successor on Tuesday.

Raja Singh said the decision to appoint the new head of the party in the state has come as a shock and disappointment, not just to him, but to lakhs of Karyakartas, leaders, and voters who have stood by the party through every high and low. "With great sadness, I have decided to resign from the primary membership of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

I request you, Shri Kishan Reddy ji, to kindly inform the Hon'ble Speaker of the Telangana Legislative Assembly that T Raja Singh is no longer a member of the BJP," he said in the letter.

Maharashtra BJP working president and four-term MLA Ravindra Chavan is set to be elected president in place of Chandrashekhar Bawankule, a Cabinet minister in the BJP-led government in the state, while incumbent Uttarakhand president and Rajya Sabha MP Mahendra Bhatt is set to begin a new term. The development has brightened the prospect for the BJP to elect its new national president to replace Nadda, a Cabinet Minister in the Modi government, in July.

The BJP's decision to replace its Lok Sabha MP Daggubati Purandeswari as its Andhra president with a seasoned organisation man is driven by its leadership's wish to build the party in a state where it is an ally of the ruling TDP but remains a minor electoral player. Purandeswari, the daughter of towering Andhra leader N T Rama Rao and sister-in-law of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, enjoys a certain stature due to her family background and long stint in politics during which she served as a Union minister in the UPA government when she was in the Congress. In Uttarakhand, the party, having made a Thakur leader in Pushkar Singh Dhami as the Chief Minister, has opted for a Brahmin face in Bhatt as its president. Chavan is a Maratha, a powerful community in Maharashtra.

Global summit seeks trillions to fight poverty – US absent

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Barcelona (Spain)

Many of the world's nations are gathering starting Monday in Spain for a high-level conference to tackle the growing gap between rich and poor nations and try to drum up trillions of dollars needed to close it.

The United States, previously a major contributor, pulled its participation, so finding funding will be tough.

The four-day Financing for Development meeting in the southern city of Seville is taking place as many countries face escalating debt burdens, declining investments, decreasing international aid and increasing trade barriers. "Financing is the engine of development. And right now, this engine is sputtering," United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his opening comments at the conference. "We are here in Sevilla to change course, to repair and rev up the engine of development to accelerate investment at the scale and speed required."

The UN and Spain, the conference co-hosts, believe the meeting is an opportunity to reverse the downward spiral, close the staggering USD 4 trillion annual financing gap to promote development, bring millions of people out of poverty and help achieve the UN's wide-ranging and badly lagging Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

Even though the gathering comes amid global economic uncertainty and high geopolitical tensions, there is hope among the hosts that the world can address one of the most important global challenges — ensuring all people have access to food, health care, education and water.

"The government of Spain believes that this summit is an opportunity for us to change course, for us to raise our voice in the face of those who seek to convince us that rivalry and competition will set the tone for humanity and for its future," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez told the delegates as he inaugurated the conference.

Spain's PM Pedro Sanchez (left) speaks with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, as they pose for a photo with nation leaders and representatives, at the start of the four-day Financing for Development meeting in Seville on Monday PTI

The ambitious package seeks to reverse decline in development High-level delegations, including more than 70 world leaders, are attending in Seville, the UN said, along with several thousand others from international financial institutions, development banks, philanthropic organisations, the private sector and civil society.

At its last preparatory meeting on June 17, the United States rejected the 38-page outcome document that had been negotiated for months by the UN's 193 member nations and announced its withdrawal from the process and from the Seville conference.

The rest of the countries then approved the document by consensus and sent it to Seville, where it is expected to be adopted by conference participants without changes. It will be known as the Seville Commitment — or Compromiso de Sevilla in Spanish. The document says the leaders and high-level representatives have decided to launch "an ambitious package of reforms and actions to close the financing gap with urgency," saying it is now estimated at USD 4 trillion a year.

Among the proposals and actions, it calls for minimum tax revenue of 15 per cent of a country's gross domestic product to increase government resources, a tripling of lending by multilateral development banks, and scaling up private financing by providing incentives for investing in critical areas like infrastructure. It also calls for a number of reforms to help countries deal with rising debt.

UN trade chief Rebeca Grynspan said recently that "development is going backward" and the global debt crisis has worsened.

Last year, 3.3 billion people were living in countries that pay more interest on their debts than they spend on health or education - and the number will increase to 3.4 billion people this year, according to Grynspan.

And developing countries will pay USD 947 billion to service debts this year, up from USD 847 billion last year.

She spoke at a press conference where an expert group on debt appointed by Guterres presented 11 recommendations that they say can resolve the debt crisis, empower borrowing countries and create a fairer system. US objections to the document

While the US objected to many actions in the outcome document, American diplomat Jonathan Shrier told the June 17 meeting: "Our commitment to international cooperation and long-term economic development remains steadfast."

He said, however, that the text "crosses many of our red lines," including interfering with the governance of international financial institutions, tripling the annual lending capacity of multilateral development banks and proposals envisioning a role for the UN in the global debt architecture.

Shrier also objected to proposals on trade, tax and innovation that are not in line with US policy, as well as language on a UN framework convention on international tax cooperation.

The United States was the world's largest single founder of foreign aid. The Trump administration has dismantled its main aid agency, the US Agency for International Development, while drastically slashing foreign assistance funding, calling it wasteful and contrary to the Republican president's agenda. Other Western donors also have cut back international aid.

Chinese Communist Party membership crosses 100 m

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Beijing

China's ruling Communist Party's membership has crossed the 100 million mark, a report said on Monday. The CPC, founded in 1921, had more than 100.27 million members at the end of 2024, up by nearly 1.09 million from 2023, the report released by the Central Organisation Department (COD) of the CPC said.

The CPC had 5.25 million primary-level organisations at the end of 2024, an increase of 74,000 compared with the previous year.Headed by Chinese President Xi Jinping, the CPC is one of the few Communist parties in power.

Vietnam, Laos, Cuba and North Korea are governed by the parties claiming ideological affiliation to Marxism and Socialism.

Analysts say the growth of the CPC membership was slow due to stricter screening by the COD, the party's top personnel office, the Hong Kong based South China Post reported.

The membership data for the previous year was released a day ahead of the July 1 celebrations marking the party's founding.

While CPC membership is sought after for its political influence, the members are subjected to much tighter regulations, including membership fees of up to two per cent of their monthly pay, which goes into the party funds, and regular attendance at party meetings and basic organisational "cell" activities, the Post said.

By the end of 2024, there were 21.42 million applicants waiting in line, an increase of 440,000 applicants over 2023, according to the COD data.

The CPC had nearly 31 million female members, accounting for 30.9 per cent of its total membership, up 0.5 percentage points from the previous year, Xinhua reported.

Pak toll in rain related incidents rises to 45

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Islamabad

Another seven people were killed in the past 24 hours in rain related incidents in Pakistan, bringing the death toll to 45, according to official data released on Monday.The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in its latest update said seven more people died, including four in Balochistan, two in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, and one in Punjab. It said 68 people have been injured since the pre-monsoon spell of rains began on June 26. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwest Pakistan was the worst hit with 21 casualties, according to the NDMA website. It said another 13 people were killed in Punjab, seven in Sindh, and four died in Balochistan province. At least 39 people have been injured in Punjab, 16 in Sindh, 11 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and two in Balochistan, it said.

As many as 50 houses have been fully damaged and 39 partially damaged while 55 animals killed as rains wreak havoc in different parts of the country. The NDMA said roads and bridges were also damaged due to rains. The monsoon weather system annually brings rains in the vast Indian subcontinent region, including Pakistan. Rain triggered floods in 2022 inundated a third of Pakistan, leaving 1,737 people dead and causing widespread destruction across the country.

Women to be drafted into Danish military

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Hovelte (Denmark)

Peering across a dense stretch of woodland outside of Denmark's capital with camouflage paint smeared across her face, 20-year-old Katrine scans the horizon for approaching threats.

After nearly four months of military training, the young soldier and the rest of her unit spent early June completing their final exercises near the Danish army's barracks in Hovelte, 25 kilometres north of Copenhagen.

Katrine and other female soldiers, all of whom spoke to The Associated Press on June 11 on the condition that only their first names be used because of operational security, volunteered for military service earlier this year. Until now, that was the only way for women to be part of the armed forces.

The Scandinavian country is seeking to increase the number of young people in the military by extending compulsory enlistment to women for the first time. Men and women can both still volunteer, and the remaining places will be filled by a gender-neutral draft lottery.

"In the situation the world is in now, it's needed," Katrine said. "I think it's only fair and right that women participate equally with men." Under new rules passed by Denmark's parliament earlier in June, Danish women who turn 18 after Tuesday will be entered into the lottery system, on equal footing with their male compatriots. The change comes against a backdrop of Russian aggression and growing military investment across NATO countries.

Russia's looming threat

Even from the relative safety of Denmark, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine casts its shadow. Lessons from the Ukrainian battlefields have even filtered down into their training."That makes it very real," Katrine said.

Denmark's gender-parity reforms were originally outlined in 2024 as part of a major defense agreement. The program was originally expected to be implemented by early 2027, but has been brought forward to summer 2025. Col. Kenneth Strom, head of the conscription program, told AP the move is based on "the current security situation". "They could take part in NATO collective deterrence," Strom added. "Raising the number of conscripts, that would simply lead to more combat power."

Denmark, a nation of 6 million people, has about 9,000 professional troops. The new arrangement is expected to bring up to 6,500 annual conscripts by 2033, up from 4,700 last year.

Under Danish law, all physically fit men over age 18 are called up for military service. But because there are usually enough volunteers, there's a lottery system so not all young men serve. Women, by contrast, could only volunteer previously, making up roughly a quarter of 2024's cohort.

"Some will probably be very disappointed being chosen to go into the military," Anne Sofie, part of Katrine's cohort of volunteers, said of the new female conscripts. "Some will probably be surprised and like it a lot more than they think they would."

The duration of service is also being extended from four to 11 months. Conscripts will first spend five months in basic training, followed by six months of operational service, plus additional lessons.

Lithuania, Philippines sign pact to build alliance against aggression

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Manila

The Philippines and Lithuania signed an agreement to build a security alliance resulting from their mutual alarm over what they perceive as growing aggression threatening their regions by countries such as China.

The memorandum of understanding signed Monday in Manila by Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. And his Lithuanian counterpart, Dovile Sakaliene, would foster defence cooperation particularly in cyber security, defence industries, munitions production, addressing threats and maritime security, the Department of National Defence in Manila said.

Sakaliene described Lithuania's alarm over an emerging "authoritarian axis" of Russia, China, North Korea and Iran, which she raised in an international defence forum in Singapore last month.

The emerging alliance needed to be confronted by a unified response from pro-democracy countries, she said.

"What we see now is that authoritarian states are really cooperating very efficiently," Sakaliene said at a news conference with Teodoro. "One of the worst results is the cooperation on Ukraine." "Their joint actions are threatening the free world, are threatening the democracy in this world … and we do not have a luxury to allow this to be annihilated," she added.

Chinese officials did not immediately comment on the remarks. Sakaliene cited China's actions toward Taiwan and Filipino fishermen in the disputed South China Sea, which Beijing has claimed virtually in its entirety. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have been involved in prolonged territorial standoffs but confrontations between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces have particularly spiked in recent years.

Scorching temperatures grip Europe

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Ankara (Turkiye)

Forest fires fanned by high winds and hot, dry weather damaged some holiday homes in Turkiye as a lingering heat wave that has cooked much of Europe led authorities to raise warnings and tourists to find ways to beat the heat on Monday.

A heat dome hovered over an arc from France, Portugal and Spain to Turkiye, while data from European forecasters suggested other countries were set to broil further in coming days. New highs are expected on Wednesday before rain is forecast to bring respite to some areas later this week.

"Extreme heat is no longer a rare event - it has become the new normal," tweeted UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres from Seville, Spain, where temperatures were expected to hit 42 Celsius (nearly 108 Fahrenheit) on Monday afternoon.

Reiterating his frequent calls for action to fight climate change, Guterres added: "The planet is getting hotter and more dangerous - no country is immune." In France, which was almost entirely sweltering in the heatwave on Monday and where air conditioning remains relatively rare, local and national authorities were taking extra effort to care for homeless and elderly people and people working outside.

Some tourists were putting off plans for some rigorous outdoor activities.

"We were going to do a bike tour today actually, but we decided because it was gonna be so warm not to do the bike tour," said Andrea Tyson, 46, who was visiting Paris from New Philadelphia, Ohio.

Authorities in Portugal issued a red heat warning for seven of 18 districts as temperatures were forecast to hit 43 degrees Celsius, a day after logging a record June temperature of 46.6 degrees C. Almost all inland areas were at high risk of wildfires.

In Turkiye, forest fires fanned by strong winds damaged some holiday homes in Izmir's Doganbey region and forced the temporary closure of the airport in Izmir, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Authorities evacuated four villages as a precaution, the Forestry Ministry said.

In Italy, the Health Ministry put 21 cities under its level three "red" alert, which indicates "emergency conditions with possible negative effects" on healthy, active people as well as at-risk old people, children and chronically ill people.

Regional governments in northwestern Liguria and southern Sicily in Italy put restrictions on outdoor work, such as construction and agricultural labour, during the peak heat hours.

Team England makes clean sweep at World Cryptic Crossword Contest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ London/New Delhi

In a thrilling culmination of linguistic wit and mental agility, Team England made a clean sweep at the first-ever World Cryptic Crossword Championship — Team Championship, held at The Nehru Centre, London. The prestigious event saw Mark Goodliffe, the 13 times winner of the Times Crossword Championship, clinching the WCCC 2025- World Cup champion's title, followed by Colin Thomas as the first runner-up, and John Henderson securing the third spot, firmly establishing England's dominance in the global cryptic crossword arena.

Rounding off the top six were Philip Coote from Australia, Matthew Marcus from the USA, and Shashwat Salgaonkar from India, who showcased formidable skill and earned international acclaim in a contest that brought together elite crossword solvers and setters from across continents.

The first ranker amongst the Winners of WCCC 2025 World Cup is Mark Goodliffe (England) followed by Colin Thomas (England) as first runner-up and John Henderson (England) as the second runner-up. Philip Coote (Australia) stood at 4th, Matthew Marcus (USA) at 5th and Shashwat Salgaonkar from India at 6th. The contest was conceptualized and organised by Extra-C, under the leadership of Vivek Singh, President of the World Crossword Federation (WCWF), with the goal of establishing a global stage for crossword excellence. "Crossword puzzles have endured for over 111 years-older than many celebrated sports," said Singh during the inaugural address.

World Cup winner Mark Goodlife on the right and runner-up Colin Thomas on the left with President of World Crossword Federation Vivek Singh
PIONEER PHOTO

"Despite their rich heritage and global following, crossword setters and solvers have rarely enjoyed the international spotlight they deserve. The WCCC was born out of that desire to create a world platform-one that would honour, celebrate, and inspire the cruciverbalist community. London, being the spiritual birthplace of the crossword, was the natural choice for this momentous beginning," said Singh.

The event was inaugurated by Naorem J Singh (IFS), Director of The Nehru Centre, London, who served as the Chief Guest and applauded the championship for bridging cultural and intellectual borders through a shared love of language, according to a Press release by the organiser.

The competition unfolded in two high-stakes rounds: In the Preliminary Round (Off-Stage), all participants were challenged to solve two demanding cryptic crossword puzzles in just 60 minutes. Performance was judged on accuracy and time. The Final Round (On-Stage) brought the six top scorers into the spotlight for a dramatic cold-solve of two cryptic grids-no letters revealed-in a quiz-style face-off.

Veteran crossword expert Ochintya Sharma masterfully conducted the high-stakes on-stage round, captivating both participants and the audience with his trademark charm, intellectual agility, and crisp delivery. With years of experience in the world of cryptic clues, he effortlessly balanced intensity with humor, offering insightful commentary and maintaining an engaging tempo throughout the contest.

"The difficulty level and quality of the puzzles were exceptional. It's wonderful to see an event that unites the global crossword community in such a meaningful way," said Mick Hodgkin, Puzzle Editor at The Times. Suzie Mesure, a prominent crossword columnist, spotlighted a powerful shift in the puzzle community. "English cryptic crosswords have long been male-dominated. It was encouraging to see women like Jeane Willson (UK), Anicha Rebuam (Germany), and Sowmya Ramkumar (Bahrain) actively competing and excelling. This contest is helping challenge the norms and open doors for new voices-especially young female setters," Mesure added.

Vinayak Ekbote, Vice President of the Crossword Association of Delhi, brought a perfect blend of poise, wit, and command to the stage as he expertly moderated the entire event. His articulate commentary, seamless transitions, and deep understanding of crossword culture added depth and dynamism to the proceedings, ensuring the championship unfolded with energy, clarity, and finesse.

The World Cryptic Crossword Contest — Team Championship is the first global initiative dedicated to celebrating cryptic crossword excellence. Founded by Extra-C and endorsed by the World Crossword Federation, the WCCC seeks to elevate crosswords to a competitive and cultural phenomenon on par with international mind sports.

F1 delivers Apple biggest big-screen hit

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ New York

Apple has its first box-office hit. "F1 The Movie" debuted with USD 55.6 million in North American theatres and USD 144 million globally over the weekend, according to studio estimates Sunday, handing the tech company easily its biggest opening yet.

Though Apple Original Films has had some notable successes in its six years in Hollywood — including the 2021 Oscar-winner "CODA" — its theatrical results have been decidedly mixed. Misfires like "Argylle" and "Fly Me to the Moon" and big-budget awards plays like Ridley Scott's "Napoleon" and Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" have been better at driving viewers to Apple TV+ than movie theatres.

But "F1" was Apple's first foray into summer blockbuster territory. It won a bidding war for the project from much of the production team behind the 2022 box-office smash "Top Gun: Maverick". Apple then partnered with Warner Bros to distributed the film starring Brad Pitt, Damson Idris and Kerry Condon. With a production budget over USD 200 million, "F1" still has several laps to go to turn a profit. But for now, "F1" is full speed ahead. "The film's outstanding debut reflects both the excitement of Formula 1 and the deeply emotional and entertaining story crafted by the entire cast and creative team," said Zack Van Amburg, who heads worldwide video for Apple with Jamie Erlicht. "Their dedication and innovation have fuelled an unforgettable cinematic experience."

Car racing movies have often struggled in theaters; crash-and-burn cases include Ron Howard's "Rush" (2013) and Michael Mann's "Ferrari" (2023). But "F1" built off the Formula 1 fandom stirred up by the popular series "Formula 1:

The Pioneer
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Growth needs stability: RBI Governor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Monday said financial stability, like price stability, is a necessary condition for boosting economic growth even as he flagged that structural shifts in the global economy are making policy interventions challenging.

"Financial sector regulators remain committed to protecting customers, promoting competition and fostering innovation as they strike the right balance between improving efficiency and growth, and safety and soundness," he said in the foreword to the Financial Stability Report (FSR) for June.

According to the governor, there are many structural shifts that are reshaping the global economy, including growing fragmentation in trade, rapid technological disruption, ongoing climate change and protracted geopolitical hostilities.

"They make economic forecasts difficult and policy interventions challenging. Therefore, even as they navigate through the fog of uncertainty, it is imperative for central banks and financial sector regulators to remain vigilant, prudent and agile in safeguarding their economies and financial systems," he said.

Malhotra also highlighted that "financial stability, like price stability, is a necessary condition, and not a sufficient one to boost India's potential growth". As custodians of financial stability, he said, the efforts are to develop a well-functioning financial system that not only promotes macroeconomic stability but also provides financial services efficiently. Amid global uncertainties, he said, the Indian economy remains a key driver of global growth. "Growth momentum is buoyed by strong domestic growth drivers, sound macroeconomic fundamentals and prudent policies. Nonetheless, external spillovers and weather-related events could pose downside risks to growth," he said. The outlook for inflation, on the other hand, is benign and there is greater confidence in the durable alignment of inflation with the Reserve Bank's target, he said.

As this edition of the FSR highlights, the resilience of the domestic financial system is continuously improving, bolstered by strong capital buffers, low non-performing loans and robust profitability, he said.

Results of stress tests reaffirm the strength of the banking and non-banking sectors with capital levels projected to remain well above the regulatory minimum even under adverse shock scenarios, he said, adding that the healthy balance sheets of corporates, banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) augur well for the economy.

Observing that tariffs by the US administration in April has set in motion a new paradigm in trade and economic policy, he said geopolitical risks remain elevated.

The ensuing policy uncertainty and unpredictability will influence global growth, he said, adding, international agencies, including the IMF, the OECD and the World Bank, have revised growth downwards. Against this backdrop, near-term global financial stability risks have increased and the market turbulence in April was a stark reminder of how existing vulnerabilities in the global financial system are amplified by sudden shocks. Though financial markets have stabilised after this episode, he said they remain volatile and highly sensitive to economic and geopolitical developments.

Globally, he said, risks associated with elevated public debt and possibilities of further corrections in asset prices remain high.

Industrial output growth slows

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

India's industrial production growth slowed to a nine-month low of 1.2 per cent in May 2025 due to poor performance of manufacturing, mining and power sectors caused by the early onset of Monsoon, according to official data released on Monday.

The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), had expanded by 6.3 per cent in May 2024.

The National Statistics Office also revised downward the industrial production growth for April to 2.6 per cent from the earlier estimate of 2.7 per cent released last month. The previous low was observed in August 2024 when IIP remained unchanged.

The NSO data showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth decelerated to 2.6 per cent in May 2025 from 5.1 per cent in the year-ago month. Mining production contracted by 0.1 per cent against a growth of 6.6 per cent a year ago. Power production declined by 5.8 per cent in May 2025 against 13.7 per cent growth in the year-ago period. During April-May period of FY26, industrial production grew by 1.8 per cent compared to 5.7 per cent a year ago.

Aditi Nayar Chief Economist, Head - Research & Outreach, ICRA said, "The early onset of the monsoon doused activity in mining and the demand for electricity, with both these sub-sectors of the IIP reporting a contraction in May 2025, amidst an anaemic growth of manufacturing. Moreover, the underlying trends were uneven, with three of the use-based categories displaying a contraction, amidst a continued high 14.1 per cent expansion in capital goods, boosted by a low base, Nayar said.

Tepid industrial volume growth in the first two months of the quarter does not augur well for industrial GVA (gross value added) growth in Q1 FY2026, she added.

As per use-based classification, the capital goods segment growth accelerated to 14.1 per cent in May 2025 from 2.6 per cent in the year-ago period. Consumer durables (or white goods production) contracted by 0.7 per cent during the reporting month against a growth of 12.6 per cent in May 2024.

Prosperous farmers essential for goal of developed India: Shivraj Chouhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Bareilly

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday stressed that a developed agricultural sector and prosperous farmers are essential to achieving the goal of 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India).

Speaking at the 11th convocation ceremony of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) here, the minister emphasised the importance of taking up integrated farming, which combines crop cultivation, animal husbandry and related agri activities, to make agriculture profitable.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to build a developed India and under his leadership, a massive campaign is underway to build a grand, glorious, prosperous and developed India.

"But to achieve 'Viksit Bharat', a developed agriculture sector and prosperous farmers are essential in which animal husbandry has a very big contribution," the minister said.

Chouhan, who is popularly known as *mama* (maternal uncle), addressed the passing out students as *priye vidyarthee bhaanje aur bhaanjiyo* (dear nephews and nieces).

"IVRI is not just an institute, but (it is) the base of India's rural lifestyle, animal husbandry culture and scientific advancement... "Scientists who passed out from here have given direction not only to the country but also to the world in the field of veterinary science, rural development, livelihood, milk production, vaccine research, disease diagnosis and biosecurity," Chouhan said. He called upon the students to use their education for the country's growth and development.

"Agriculture cannot become a profitable business without animal husbandry. Only crops will not suffice. A new concept of integrated farming in which animal husbandry is done along with farming. There are other dimensions to it too.

"Therefore, animal husbandry is very important even today and therefore there is no doubt that we have done amazing work in this field, but there is a need to keep working continuously in the future," the Union minister asserted.

Later, in a post on X in Hindi, Chouhan said, "Today, I had the privilege of participating in the convocation ceremony organised at ICAR - Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) located in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, in the dignified presence of the Honourable President Droupadi Murmu Ji... "I extend my heartiest congratulations and best wishes to all the newly initiated students for a bright future. The nation will surely benefit from your knowledge, your spirit of service and your energy," Chouhan said on X.

He added that animal husbandry is extremely important for the rural economy.

"Even today, a large part of livelihood in villages depends on animal husbandry and related activities. Without this, farming cannot become a profitable business.

"I am confident that all of you will play an active role in the resolution of 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) and 'Viksit Krishi' (Developed Agriculture) and will make the vision of respected Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji a reality," Chouhan said on X.

India Inc must work towards inclusive, green growth, says HUL chairman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

India Inc must play a responsible role for "inclusive and environmentally responsible" growth of the country, even as the government is taking steps for that, said HUL Chairman Nitin Paranjpe has said.To become a developed nation, India should chart a path that prioritises economic growth alongside environmental sustainability and social progress, he said while addressing the shareholders in the 92nd AGM of the leading FMCG maker.

"While the government is taking significant steps, 'India Inc.' must play a crucial role in ensuring this growth is inclusive and environmentally responsible," he said.

In his speech titled 'Building a Winning Business in an Aspiring India', Paranjpe reflected on the evolving business landscape, noting that while India offers immense opportunities, it is equally important to address the challenges that accompany this growth. The world today is characterised by "uncertainty and chaos," however Indian economy is continuing its growth journey. "However, amidst this incomprehensibility, the Indian economy appears poised to continue its path to sustainable and inclusive growth," he said.

Paranjpe called period from 2014 to 2024 as the "decade of India's economic resurgence" which aligns with the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' (Develope India) by 2047.

"Achieving zero poverty, quality education for all, affordable healthcare, meaningful skilled employment, and becoming the world's food basket are ambitious yet achievable milestones in India's journey to becoming an advanced economy," he said.

Elaborating India growth journey Paranjpe said "several tailwinds will help achieve this, including a strong digital infrastructure, a conducive policy environment, and a burgeoning young population." He called out India's Digital Public Infrastructure as one of its greatest future advantages, and hailed the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for levelling the playing field for kirana walas and retailers across the nation. At the same time, he mentioned that getting sellers and resellers to leverage e-commerce and improve India's e-retail penetration is a tall order. Hinting towards growing premiuimisation, Paranjpe said the Indian consumer is evolving, seeking newer products, better experiences, and aspiring for more.

"As a business serving the needs of an ever-aspiring consumer and partner to a nation focused on its growth, we bear significant responsibility. The new India presents several opportunities that we can leverage to leapfrog into the future," he said.

Pranjape also added, HUL like other makers is witnessing 'unprecedented' technological advancements, where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is taking over everything from searches to product design to farming, bio-mimetic inspired design, driverless vehicles and Mars missions to science utilising bugs for cleaning homes.

Commercial vehicles likely to see 3-5 per cent growth this fiscal: Icra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Domestic commercial vehicle (CV) industry is likely to see a 3-5 per cent year-on-year growth in wholesale volumes this fiscal, after logging a slight dip of 1.2 per cent in FY25, Icra said in a report on Monday.

This growth is expected to be driven by resumption of construction and infrastructure activities and a steady economic environment, the ratings agency said in its latest report. Domestic CV wholesale volumes saw a miniscule 0.1 per cent increase in the previous month on a year-on-year basis, while sequentially it grew by around 1.6 per cent. However, in the first two months (April-May) of the current financial year, the CV wholesale volumes declined by 0.7 per cent year-on-year, it said. CV retail volumes, according to Icra, declined by 3.7 per cent year-on-year in May 2025, while sequential decline was at 11.3 per cent, it said, adding such trends reflect elevated inventory at dealerships' end. In the medium and heavy commercial vehicle (M and HCV) segment, retail sales volumes in May witnessed a moderate decline of 4.4 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis, while reporting a sizeable decline of 18.9 per cent sequentially. The M and HCV (trucks) wholesale volumes are expected to register a 0-3 per cent Y-o-Y growth in FY26, after a 4 per cent decline in FY25, as per the report. Retail volumes in the light commercial vehicle (LCV) segment in the previous month declined by 3.2 per cent on a Y-o-Y basis, and by 4.9 per cent on a sequential basis, reflecting muted demand.

The LCV (trucks) wholesale volumes are likely to register a limited growth in FY26. Increasing preference for pre-owned vehicles over new vehicles in this segment has also impacted the demand in the recent past, it stated.

While M and HCV (trucks) and LCV (trucks) segments are expected to witness modest Y-o-Y volume growth of 0-3 per cent and 3-5 per cent, respectively, the buses segment is likely to see a relatively higher growth of 8-10 per cent Y-o-Y for this fiscal, Icra said.

At the same time, pick up in construction and mining activities, coupled with a steady economic environment, will support the demand prospects for the LCV (trucks) and M&HCV (trucks) segments, while replacement demand is likely to support volume growth for the buses segment, the report said.

US-India trade talks extended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

The Indian team, headed by special secretary in the department of commerce Rajesh Agrawal, will remain in Washington till Monday for negotiations on an interim trade agreement with the US, an official said.

The stay of the Indian officials has been extended for three days until June 30. Initially, the delegation was scheduled to stay for two days with the talks having commenced on June 26.

These negotiations are significant as both countries are engaged in negotiations for an interim trade deal and are trying to finalise the pact before July 9, the deadline for the expiry of the suspensions of reciprocal tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration on April 2.

On April 2, the US imposed an additional 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place. India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 per cent tariff.

Agriculture and dairy sectors are difficult and challenging areas for India to give duty concessions to the US. India has not opened up dairy in any of its free trade pacts signed so far.

The US wants duty concessions on certain industrial goods, automobiles - especially electric vehicles, wines, petrochemical products, dairy, and agricultural items like apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops.

India is seeking duty concessions for labour-intensive sectors like textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, grapes, and bananas in the proposed trade pact. The two countries are also looking to conclude talks for the first tranche of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by fall (September-October) this year. The pact is aimed at more than doubling bilateral trade to $ 500 billion by 2030 from the current $ 191 billion.

Before the first tranche, they are trying for an interim trade pact. The US team was here from June 5 to June 11 for the talks. The negotiations will continue both virtually and physically in the days to come.

India's merchandise exports to the US rose by 21.78 per cent to $17.25 billion in April-May this fiscal, while imports rose by 25.8 per cent to $8.87 billion.

Hindustan Zinc pays back to India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
Udaipur

The contribution-56 per cent of Hindustan Zinc's revenue-underscores its role in nation building

Hindustan Zinc Limited, the country's only and the world's largest integrated zinc producer, has contributed ₹18,963 crore to the national exchequer in FY25, according to its 8th Annual Tax Transparency Report released today. This marks a 44 per cent year-on-year increase and brings the company's five-year total contribution to ₹87,616 crore.

The contribution-56 per cent of Hindustan Zinc's operational revenue-underscores its role in nation building and commitment to fiscal transparency. The report provides a detailed breakdown of payments including ₹18,191 crore in government royalties and levies, ₹12,393 crore in corporate income taxes, ₹21,627 crore in dividends to the Government of India, and ₹27,500 crore in indirect taxes.

Hindustan Zinc achieved several operational milestones in FY25, including record mined and refined metal production of 1,095 KT and 1,052 KT, respectively. It also recorded a four-year low zinc production cost of $1,052/MT and grew total metal reserves to 13.1 Mt, extending mine life beyond 25 years.

The company, which contributes an average of ₹3,600 crore annually to Rajasthan's economy, engaged a Big 4 audit firm to provide independent assurance on the report. The initiative aligns with its strong Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) agenda. Hindustan Zinc has been ranked the world's most sustainable metals and mining company by S and P Global's Corporate Sustainability Assessment.

World shares mixed, US stocks hit high

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Bangkok

World shares started the week mixed, with European markets opening lower, after US stocks closed at an all-time high following their recovery from the shocks of the Trump administration's trade policies. Canada's decision to cancel a plan to tax US technology firms that had led President Donald Trump to halt trade talks helped to steady the markets.

US stock futures advanced after Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said the talks had resumed. The future for the S and P 500 was up 0.4 per cent while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.5 per cent.

Germany's DAX edged 0.2 per cent lower to 23,979.42, while the CAC 40 in Paris also gave up 0.2 per cent, to 7,676.98. Britain's FTSE 100 lost 0.3 per cent to 8,773.30.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 0.8 per cent to 40,487.39. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.9 per cent to 24,072.28, while the Shanghai Composite index advanced 0.6 per cent to 3,444.43.

China reported that its factory activity improved slightly in June after Beijing and Washington agreed in May to postpone imposing higher tariffs on each others' exports, though manufacturing remained in contraction.

In South Korea, the Kospi gained 0.5 per cent to 3,071.70. Australia's S and P/ASX 200 rose 0.3 per cent to 8,542.30.

Taiwan's Taiex lost 1.4 per cent and the Sensex in India was down 0.6 per cent. In Bangkok, the SET gained 0.7 per cent. On Friday, the S and P 500 rose 0.5 per cent to 6,173.07, above its previous record set in February. The key measure of Wall Street's health fell nearly 20 per cent from February 19 through April 8.

The Nasdaq composite gained 0.5 per cent to 20,273.46, its own all-time high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 1 per cent to 43,819.27.

The gains on Friday were broad, with nearly every sector within the S and P 500 rising. Nike soared 15.2 per cent for the biggest gain in the market, despite warning of a steep hit from tariffs. An update on inflation Friday showed prices ticked higher in May, though the rate mostly matched economists' projections.

Inflation remains a big concern. Trump's on-again-off-again tariff policy has made it difficult for companies to make financial forecasts and strained household budgets. A long list of businesses from carmakers to retailers have warned that higher import taxes will likely hurt their revenues and profits.

The US has 10 per cent baseline tariffs on all imported goods, along with higher rates for Chinese goods and other import taxes on steel and autos and the threat of more severe tariffs continues to hang over the economy. The current pause on a round of retaliatory tariffs against a long list of nations is set to expire on July 9. Failure to negotiate deals or further postpone the tariffs could once again rattle investors and consumers. In an interview with Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures," Trump said his administration will notify countries that the trade penalties will take effect unless there are deals with the United States. Letters will start going out "pretty soon" before the approaching deadline, he said.

The Pioneer
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Lack of variety in India's bowling attack concerning, says Chappell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
London

Australia batting legend Greg Chappell believes India paid the price for a lack of variety in their bowling attack during the first Test against England and has called for the inclusion of Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav, whom he hails as the "best wrist-spinner since Shane Warne", in the playing XI.

India lost the opening Test of the five-match series by five wickets at Headingley, where they were also guilty of dropping as many as eight catches.

"As disappointing as the fielding in Headingley was, it was not the main reason India lost the Test. Most of India's problems were self-inflicted. Perhaps the most expensive error was the no-ball that gave Harry Brook an early life in the second innings," Chappell wrote in his column for 'ESPNCricinfo'.

However, the former Australian skipper felt that the sameness of India's right-arm seamers — Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, and Shardul Thakur — posed a bigger tactical problem that the fielding issue."More concerning to me, though, is the lack of variety in the bowling attack. Apart from Jasprit Bumrah, India's seamers are too similar - all right-arm, medium-fast, operating at comparable angles.

"There is a reason why wickets often fall after a change of bowling. It forces the batter to recalibrate. That variability isn't available to Shubman Gill with his current crop."

The 76-year-old former India coach called for the inclusion of left-arm seamer Arshdeep and wrist-spinner Kuldeep to add much-needed contrast to the attack.

"Without Bumrah, I'd like to see left-armer Arshdeep Singh added to the mix and Kuldeep Yadav, possibly the best wrist spinner since Shane Warne, included in the attack."

At Headingley, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah returned match figures of 5/140 from 43.4 overs. In contrast, Thakur and Krishna ended with 2/89 from 16 overs and 5/220 from 35 overs respectively.

"Even with Bumrah in the mix, the rest of the attack has to be more disciplined. I didn't see two consecutive balls land in a dangerous place. They were either too full, too short or too wide. Bowlers have to work in partnerships as much as batters.

"All England have to do at present is to see off Bumrah and they know the pressure will go with him," Chappell wrote.

Chappell also criticised the Indian team management's preference for batting depth over a balanced bowling attack.

"I don't agree that an extra batter who bowls should be selected as insurance against top-order collapses. The top six must be trusted to deliver the runs and that the best combination to secure the requisite 20 wickets is available to the captain," he said.

India opted to go with all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja as the lone spinner at Leeds.

"Jadeja is not a front-line spinner in English conditions. If his batting is considered good enough, he can be a support spinner; otherwise a rethink is necessary. If India are to reverse their fortunes in this series then a better balanced team is required.

"The selectors are the ones under pressure now. If batters and bowlers have to be prepared to take risks to score runs and take wickets, they too have to have the courage to take bold decisions."

Dhoni seeks trademark for sobriquet 'Captain Cool'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has filed a trademark application for the phrase 'CAPTAIN COOL', a sobriquet widely associated with his calm on-field demeanour.

According to the Trade Marks Registry portal, the application's status is 'accepted and advertised'. It was published in the official trademark journal on June 16. The application was filed on June 5.

The proposed trademark is registered under the category for sports training, providing sports training facilities, sports coaching and services.

No comments could immediately be obtained from Dhoni.

Interestingly, another company, Prabha Skill Sports (OPC) Pvt Ltd, had earlier filed a similar application for the phrase. However, that application's status is showing as 'rectification filed'.

Earlier this month, Dhoni was inducted into the ICC's Hall of Fame for the year 2025 along with seven cricketers, including Australian great Matthew Hayden and South Africa's Hashim Amla.

The ICC hailed Dhoni as a player who excelled not just in numbers but also in "extraordinary consistency, fitness and longevity".

"Celebrated for his calm under pressure and unmatched tactical nous, but also a trailblazer in the shorter formats, MS Dhoni's legacy as one of the game's greatest finishers, leaders and wicketkeepers has been honoured with his induction into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame," the ICC statement had said.

Confident India hope for Mandhana encore in 2nd T20I against England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Bristol

A confident India will aim to capitalise on opener Smriti Mandhana's sublime form and hope for skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's availability to achieve another big win when the second Women's T20I against England is played here on Tuesday.

Mandhana's maiden T20I century in the opening game at Nottingham guided India to a massive 97-run win, and the likely presence of skipper Harmanpreet — who was rested for the first game as a precautionary measure following a head injury sustained during a warm-up match — for the second game would only add to the hosts' worries.

Mandhana's stroke-filled century would have rung alarm bells in the English camp as it tries to find answers to the dramatic batting collapse it suffered while chasing a steep 210-run total.

It was a day when Mandhana's entertaining innings brought the hosts under tremendous pressure, which was later exploited by the Indian bowlers.

India struck twice early and the slow bowler, especially left-arm spinner Shree Charani who grabbed four wickets in her maiden T20I, complete the demolition job.

Mandhana, who led the T20I run-scoring charts last year, seemed to have picked up from where she had left off, smashing all the English bowlers with impunity. Though the left-handed batter said after the match that the T20I format wasn't her forte, it was a statement the cricket experts would take with a pinch of salt.

The India vice-captain's power-hitting was on full display as she collected most of her boundaries on the off-side, while her three maximums came on the on-side.

The long camp in Bengaluru followed by their early arrival in England and a couple of tour matches seem to have helped the Indian players get into the rhythm of the shortest format as they showed no signs of rustiness in Nottingham.

India looked like a well-knit unit despite missing their premier seamers, Renuka Singh Thakur and Pooja Vastrakar, who are injured.

Harleen Deol at Number 3 looked the right call as she forged a 94-run stand for the second wicket with Mandhana to set up the platform for a big total.

While the bilateral white-ball series may not have immediate implications, it will certainly give the young Indian players the look and feel of the things to come when the T20 World Cup is held next year in England.

And, the 20-year-old debutant Shree Charani did really well in her maiden outing, delivering a dream spell of 3.5-0-12-4 to set up India's win by displaying a lot of discipline and focus to strangle the England batters.

Azhar appointed Pakistan's acting red-ball head coach

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Lahore

Former all-rounder Azhar Mahmood was on Monday elevated to the post of Pakistan's acting red-ball head coach until the conclusion of his current contract, which runs until April next year.

Mahmood had signed a two-year contract with the Pakistan Cricket Board in April last year as assistant coach across formats along with Australia's Jason Gillespie (Tests) and South Africa's Gary Kirsten (limited overs), who have both moved on.

"The Pakistan Cricket Board today announces Azhar Mahmood as the acting red-ball head coach of the Pakistan men's team. Azhar will serve in this role until the conclusion of his current contract," the PCB said in a statement. "A seasoned cricketing mind, Azhar Mahmood steps into the role with an impressive portfolio of experience. Having served as the assistant head coach of the national side, Azhar has long been a pivotal part of the team's strategic core.

"His deep knowledge of the game, combined with hands-on international exposure and proven success in the English county circuit, make him exceptionally well-suited for this position," the PCB added. PCB highlighted Mahmood's achievements in winning County Championship titles for Surrey as their assistant coach.

"His red-ball pedigree is underscored by two County Championship titles — an achievement that speaks volumes about his leadership, tactical acumen and unwavering commitment to excellence," it said.

French soccer union blasts Club World Cup over player welfare

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Paris

France's union of professional soccer players launched a scathing attack on the Club World Cup on Sunday, saying it is "urgent to stop this massacre" amid ongoing concerns about extreme player workloads.

The UNFP also accused FIFA president Gianni Infantino of living "in an ivory tower" by ignoring the impact congested calendars have on players worldwide.

"The incongruity of the situation is not lost on anyone, except, of course, Gianni Infantino and his flatterers. From the height of his ivory tower, which he parades around the world, the FIFA president is not bothered by the fate that the international calendar reserves for the game's leading players," the UNFP said in a statement early Sunday morning. "His (Infantino's) Club World Cup proves, to the point of absurdity, that it is urgent to stop this massacre game. He flouts the physical and mental health of players for a few more dollars."

The UNFP statement said the Club World Cup comes at the end of an already exhausting season, and thereby ignores "collective bargaining agreements (which) almost everywhere, provide for an incompressible period of three weeks of rest for footballers between two seasons."

FIFA was approached for comment by The Associated Press.

Days before the start of the month-long Club World Cup, which ends on July 13, soccer chiefs faced renewed calls to safeguard players over growing fears of injuries and burnout.

The newly expanded tournament involving 32 of the world's best teams has faced pushback since FIFA announced it would be added to an already saturated calendar. The tournament will be played every four years, sandwiched in between the men's World Cup, European Championship and Copa America.

It went ahead against the backdrop of legal challenges in Europe, strike threats and repeated concerns over players' mental and physical welfare due to too many games.

"The UNFP, like FIFPRO and FIFPRO Europe, has been protesting for years against the drastic increase in workloads," The UNFP added. "But also against the harmful repercussions for domestic football of a calendar that FIFA is still alone in building today."

Last September, Manchester City midfielder Rodri suffered a severe knee injury soon after saying players were close to going on strike over excessive workloads.

MIGHTY PSG SETS SIGHTS ON ANOTHER TROPHY

Atlanta (USA): Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) left no doubt it was Europe's top club with a historic victory in the Champions League. Now, PSG is intent on conquering the world. Les Rouge-et-Bleu turned in a dominating performance at the Club World Cup on Sunday, brushing aside Lionel Messi and Inter Miami with a first-half blitz that resulted in a 4-0 victory.

While the European powerhouses complained mightily about having to play in the newly expanded tournament at the end of a grueling season, PSG is taking the 32-team competition seriously.

Outside of a 1-0 loss to Brazilian club Botafogo in group play, PSG has won three games by a cumulative 10-0 since arriving in the United States.

"It's clear that this is a historic season for us. We intend to continue making history with this competition," PSG coach Luis Enrique said through an interpreter. "We're fighting to claim silverware. This season is very long for all the teams. But we're excited to be here."

PSG advanced to the quarterfinals, where it will face Bayern Munich next Saturday in Atlanta. The German club defeated Flamengo of Brazil 4-2.

There was a huge buildup to the game against Messi, who played two seasons at PSG before making the move to South Florida in the twilight of his brilliant career and was facing his former coach at Barcelona. But even with an eight-time Ballon d'Or winner leading the way, the club from Major League Soccer was simply no match for a deep, talented squad that routed Inter Milan 5-0 in the Champions League final a month ago.

João Neves scored a pair of goals for PSG, setting the tone with a header off a free kick just six minutes into the match.

He scored again in the 39th, and Inter Miami totally fell apart in the closing minutes of the opening half. Tomás Avilés gave up an own-goal on a cross in front of the net, and Achraf Hakimi added to his brilliant campaign with another tally in stoppage time.

No rest for PSG

Champions League winner Paris Saint-Germain is one of the biggest sides involved in the Club World Cup.

After winning the Champions League on May 31, key PSG players like Ousmane Dembélé and Désiré Doué played for France and then went to the United States soon after for the Club World Cup. Some French clubs have already resumed training for the upcoming Ligue 1 season, which begins mid-August, while others start next week. PSG was not able to push back its start to the Ligue 1 season.

"We don't see how or why the Parisians should not benefit from the three weeks of complete rest they are entitled to," the UNFP said, adding that the toll of extra games for PSG's players could impact the national team in early September.

"A delay in preparation that must also worry (France coach) Didier Deschamps ahead of two qualifying matches for the 2026 World Cup," the UNFP said, before concluding. "What do you say, Mr. Infantino?"

FIFA hopes the event will be to club soccer what the World Cup is to international soccer and establish itself as one of the biggest and wealthiest tournaments in sport.

The old version of the Club World Cup, which was played yearly, was dominated by European teams in recent times.

Guatemala enters CONCACAF Gold Cup semifinals

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■
Minneapolis (USA)

José Morales sent Guatemala to the semifinals of the CONCACAF Gold Cup with the clincher over Canada in a 6-5 penalty-kick decision after a 1-1 draw on Sunday.

Rubio Rubín scored the tying goal with a header in the 69th minute for Guatemala, which is 106th in the FIFA rankings and reached the semifinals for the first time since 1996. Guatemala will meet the United States in St. Louis on Wednesday, while Mexico plays Honduras in the other semifinal in Santa Clara, California. The championship is in Houston on July 6.

The seven-round shootout was a fitting end to a fast-paced and feisty contest that went down as one of the best of this biennial tournament for North America, Central America and the Caribbean. The blue-and-white-clad fans of Guatemala flocked to US Bank Stadium and made the announced crowd of 32,289 sound almost like a sold-out NFL game inside the home of the Minnesota Vikings with the translucent roof.

Jonathan David scored on a penalty kick in the 30th minute for 30th-ranked Canada, which won its group with two wins and one draw but had to play the second half with 10 men. Canada has been bounced from the quarterfinals in four of the last five Gold Cup tournaments.

Canada forward Jacob Sheffelburg was ejected in first-half stoppage time for a second yellow card, after lowering his elbow during a mid-air collision for the ball that knocked Guatemala defender Stheven Robles to the ground.

Dayne St. Clair, an MLS All-Star who plays just a few miles away for Minnesota United, made two saves for the Reds in regulation against a consistent if erratic attack as Guatemala had an 11-5 edge in shot attempts and a 58 per cent possession rate.

Aldrich Potgieter wins Rocket Classic on 5th playoff hole

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Detroit (USA)

Aldrich Potgieter ended the protracted Rocket Classic, making an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth playoff hole to outlast Max Greyserman for his first PGA Tour title on Sunday.

"I finally got one to the hole," Potgieter said after missed opportunities on the green by three players led to the longest playoff of the season on the tour.

He celebrated by embracing his caddie and shaking hands with Greyserman and his caddie before giving his father, Heinrich, a hug.

The 20-year-old Potgieter is the youngest player on the tour and its biggest hitter, averaging 326-plus yards off the tee. He became the ninth player to win for the first time this season.

Potgieter was born in South Africa, moved to Australia when he was 8 and returned to South Africa at age 17 because the COVID-19 pandemic limited his opportunities to compete.

"We had to give up a lot, moving to Australia, moving back," he said. "Emigrating is definitely not the easiest thing. Coming alone at the start of my career to the States and giving it a grind, and having my dad here has helped so much."

Potgieter won the British Amateur at the age of 17 and became the youngest Korn Ferry Tour winner last year, paving the way for him to become the second-youngest player to earn a PGA Tour card through the minor league just after his 20th birthday. The youngest was Jason Day, who was 19 in 2007.

Chris Kirk was eliminated after missing a 4-foot putt on the second playoff hole - that after pushing a 9-foot putt past the cup on the first extra hole with a chance to win.

Greyserman and Potgieter each had opportunities to win end it on the 72nd hole at Detroit Golf Club, but couldn't convert on birdie opportunities to break a tie at 22 under with Kirk.

"This one's going to sting for a little bit," Greyserman said.

Potgieter, two strokes ahead entering the round, closed with a 3-under 69, and Greyserman and Kirk each shot 67.

Greyserman missed a 12-foot putt and Potgieter came up short on an uphill, 42-foot putt. That set up Kirk with an opportunity to win it, but he couldn't take advantage. After Greyserman two-putted from 39 feet for par and Potgieter did the same from 20 feet, Kirk had a chance to win it with a 9-foot putt only to push it to the right of the cup to extend the playoff.

The trio then went to the par-3, 158-yard 15th and Greyserman was the only one who was accurate off the tee and didn't take advantage.

The trend continued on the par-4 16th, where both Greyserman and Potgieter missed 16-foot putts with a chance to win.

At the par-5 14th, Greyserman hit is drive 361 yards - his longest of the week - and was just 2 yards behind Potgieter's blast. Potgieter hit his approach from 195 yards to 19 feet and he pulled his putt. Greyserman two-putted from from 29 feet for birdie.

Back at No. 15 for a second time in the playoff, Greyserman two-putted from 34 feet and then Potgieter finally ended it.

"Just wasn't my time," said Greyserman, who finished second for the fourth time after coming up short for his first PGA Tour victory.

Michael Thorbjornsen (67) and Jake Knapp (68) finished a stroke out of the playoff.

Collin Morikawa, meanwhile, is still waiting to end his drought.

He shot a 68 to finish 19 under and in an eighth-place tie. The two-time major winner, who was the highest-ranked player in the field at No. 5 in the world, has not won the PGA Tour since October 2023 at the Zozo Championship in Japan.

Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley, who rose to No. 7 in the world after winning the Travelers Championship last week, closed with 67 to tie for 41st at 12 under.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | TUESDAY | JULY 1, 2025

Ayush clinches maiden BWF World Tour title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
United States

Rising shuttler Ayush Shetty notched up his first BWF World Tour title with a commanding straight-games victory over Canada's Brian Yang in the men's singles final of the US Open Super 300, ending India's title drought this season.

The 20-year-old, a 2023 junior world championships bronze winner, defeated the third seeded Yang 21-18, 21-13 in 47 minutes on Sunday to cap off an impressive week, which included a come-from-behind win against top seed Chou Tien Chen in the semifinals. It was Shetty's third victory over Yang, having defeated him twice earlier this year at Malaysia and Taipei Open.

In the women's singles final, 16-year-old Tanvi Sharma finished runner-up after a fighting three-game loss to top seed Beiwen Zhang of the United States. Playing her first World Tour final, the unseeded teenager went down 11-21, 21-16, 10-21 in 46 minutes.

The men's singles final began evenly with scores tied at 6-6, but Shetty, seeded fourth, surged ahead with a string of winners to lead 11-6 at the interval.

Yang narrowed the gap to 13-11 and drew level at 16-16, but Shetty regained control with well-placed shots to secure the opening game with a decisive jump smash. The second game saw the Mangalore shuttler race to a 7-2 lead before Yang briefly caught up, but the Indian maintained composure, mixing variations and sharp defence to keep his opponent at bay.

Leading 17-12, Shetty closed out the match with a cross-court punch followed by a powerful smash to seal his maiden World Tour title.

Shetty had reached the finals of 2023 Odisha Masters Super 100 tournament, besides making the summit clash at the 2023 Bahrain International and 2024 Dutch Open.

Sharma vs Zhang

In the women's singles final, Sharma struggled to settle early as Zhang built an 11-5 lead in the opening game, which the Indian couldn't breach.

In the second game, Sharma came out attacking, taking a 4-0 lead and maintaining her advantage despite Zhang pushing her with long rallies.

From 11-9 at the interval, Sharma continued her aggressive approach, forcing errors from Zhang and taking the game to force a decider.

Nikhat, Lovlina enter Women's Boxing Tournament finals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Hyderabad

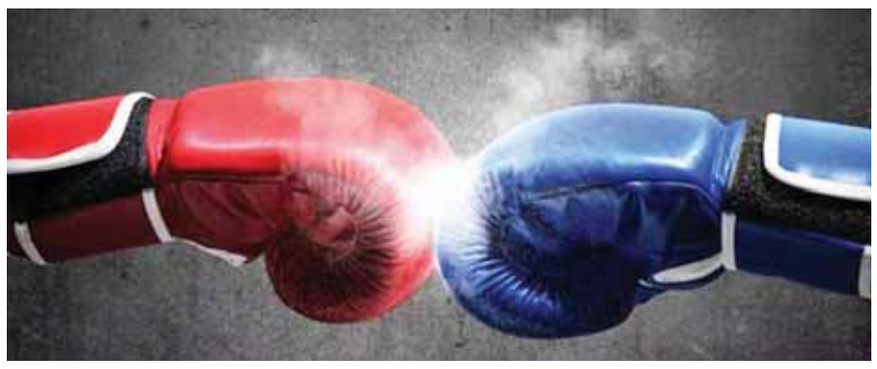
World champions Nikhat Zareen, Lovlina Borgohain, Nitu Ghanghas and Saweety Boora notched contrasting wins to move to the finals of their respective weight categories in the Elite Women's Boxing Tournament here on Monday.

Two-time world champion Zareen impressed once again on home turf, defeating V Lakshaya with a clean 5-0 decision and setting up a 51kg final clash against Jyoti (RSPB).

Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Borgohain cruised into the 75kg final after overpowering Sneha (Uttar Pradesh) via first-round stoppage (RSC). Nitu, the 2022 Commonwealth Games gold medallist, out-punched Railways' Manju Rani to enter the 48kg final, setting up a title bout against Chanchal (SAI N).

Saweety too delivered a commanding performance in the 80kg semifinal, outclassing Babita Bisht of All India Police 5-0. In the 65kg division, former youth world champion Ankushita Boro (TOPS) out-boxed Amita Kundu (AIP) to win 5-0 and will take on Shashi (RSPB), who beat Telangana's Yashi Sharma by the same margin, in the final.

Boxer alleges sexual harassment by woman coach; parents lodge FIR



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

A woman coach with the Sports Authority of India's National Boxing Academy in Rohtak has been accused of sexual harassment by a minor pugilist, who according to the FIR filed by her parents, has slipped into depression because of repeated "mental and physical abuse".

Despite having a copy of the FIR, PTI is withholding the name of the accused as the matter is under investigation.

When reached for a comment, the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) acknowledged receiving a complaint from the 17-year-old victim about intimidation and incidents of slapping but denied being told about sexual harassment as alleged in the FIR. Both the bodies said that their internal investigations did not find any evidence against the coach, who is continuing to play a leading role in conducting the national camp for junior and youth boxers at this point.

In her FIR lodged at a Rohtak police station, the victim has stated that the coach tried to forcibly remove her clothes once, slapped her on multiple occasions, threatened to ruin her career and called her a "person of bad character" in front of other boxers leading to her isolation.

The complaint against the coach has been registered under Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita's section 115 (voluntarily causing hurt) and 351 (3) (criminal intimidation) along with Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse act's section 10 (aggravated sexual assault).

SAI said it would assist in the investigations as and when required.

"...We have not received copy of any such FIR as of now. A complaint was however lodged by a female Boxer of NBA Rohtak through email, on 24/4/25 in which she alleged Mental and Physical harassment by a female coach during an invitational boxing tournament held in Ireland from 25th March 2025 to 3rd April 2025. No allegation of sexual harassment was levelled in that complaint," SAI Regional Centre (Sonepat) stated in response query. "A detailed inquiry was conducted in which statements of the complainant, the coach concerned, the fellow coaches and staff members and fellow athletes were taken and the allegations made could not be established.

"SAI is committed to ensuring clean sports and will extend any cooperation required during investigation based on the FIR, at any point of time," it added. The girl's parents have stated that they are not satisfied with the BFI's handling of the matter.

Describing in detail the abuse she was allegedly subjected to, the victim's parents said that during the tour of Ireland, the coach humiliated the boxer and went on to molest her as well. "This coach had tried to touch her inappropriately in the past too but my child could not understand her actions at that time," the FIR alleged. The parents said that the victim was also punished with strenuous physical exercise after failing to record a (training) video as demanded by the coach.

"She apologised to the coach for not recording the video as well as the coach desired and requested her to do the seconding (coaching assistance during bouts) for her in the fight.

"But the coach did not go with her for the fight and did not allow any other coach to accompany her either. She even stopped my daughter's fellow boxers from helping or supporting her during the bout. We have CCTV footage to prove that my daughter was alone in the ring." The parents alleged that the boxer, who won two national-level gold medals despite her difficult circumstances, was also molested by the coach.

The parents said they came to know of their child's plight from one of her camp mates and rushed to Rohtak, where she finally broke down and narrated her ordeal.

Akshay Bhatia finishes T-26 in Rocket Classic golf

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Detroit (US)

Akshay Bhatia shot nine birdies in the last 12 holes to score a respectable 7-under 65 on the final day to finish tied-26th in the Rocket Classic golf tournament here.

The Indian-American golfer finished with a total of 15-under over four rounds to finish T-26 with five others.

Bhatia, who had modest rounds of 68-70-70 on the first three days, had nine birdies in the last 12 holes after two bogeys in the first six holes.

Bhatia opened the final round with bogeys on the third and the fifth and then had four birdies in a row from seventh to the 10th.

He had another four-in-a-row from 12th to the 15th and one more final birdie on the 18th.

South African youngster Aldrich Potgieter made an 18-foot birdie putt on the fifth playoff hole to outlast Max Greyserman for his first PGA TOUR title on Sunday.

The 20-year-old from South Africa is the youngest player on the TOUR and became the ninth player to win for the first time this season.

Chris Kirk was eliminated after missing a 4-foot putt on the second playoff hole. That was after pushing a 9-foot putt past the cup on the first extra hole with a chance to win.

Potgieter, two strokes ahead entering the round, closed with a 3-under 69, and Greyserman and Kirk each shot 67.

Michael Thorbjornsen (67) and Jake Knapp (68) finished a stroke out of the playoff.

Collin Morikawa shot a 68 to finish 19 under and in an eighth-place tie.

Ryder Cup captain Keegan Bradley, who rose to No. 7 in the world after winning the Travelers Championship last week, closed with 67 to tie for the 41st place at 12 under.

SAPTAK TALWAR FINISHES IN T31 IN FRANCE

Le Vaudreuil (France): India's Saptak Talwar carded a 2-under 70 in the final round to finish Tied-31st at the Le Vaudreuil Golf Challenge. Talwar had four birdies, including on fifth, eighth, 15th and 16th holes, and a couple of bogeys on the first and ninth holes. David Horsey (69) secured the title after being forced to enter a four way playoff against Daniel Young (67), James Allan (65) and Joseba Torres (66). They were all tied at 16-under. Horsey ended the playoff on the first hole with a birdie. The hole selected for the playoff was the 10th hole. Horsey carded 3-under 69 on the final day having played rounds of 72, 66, 65 and 69 and a combined score of 16 under par. Albin Bergstrom who went into the final round tied with Horsey for the lead finished in fifth place one stroke behind the lead group that went into the playoff. His combined score for the week was 15 under par after a final round 70.

VANI FINISHES 6TH, DIKSHA GETS 8TH SPOT IN GERMAN MASTERS GOLF

Hamburg (Germany): India's Vani Kapoor fought back from a disappointing third to register 2-under 71 in the final round and finish a creditable tied sixth at the Amundi German Masters golf tournament here. Vani, thus, logged her first top-10 finish since October 2022, when she ended T-8 at her home event, the Hero Women's Indian Open.
Playing only her third event of the 2025 season, Vani, who has won four times in her home Tour Hero WPGT this year, shot rounds of 72-70-76-71 to total 3-under for the week. It was a windy fourth round on the North Course at Green Eagle Golf Courses with players battling the conditions. Singapore's Shannon Tan sank a par putt on the last to secure a one-shot victory and her second Ladies European Tour (LET) title after a tense final day. Vani was the best Indian this week as Diksha Dagar, who was in contention over the first two days with 69-73, shot 74-74 over the final two rounds and ended tied-eighth.

Wimbledon preparing for record-breaking Day

ASSOCIATED PRESS
London

Wimbledon was preparing for the possibility of record-breaking Day 1 heat as the oldest Grand Slam tournament got started on Monday.

The temperature shortly before play was scheduled to begin in the first matches at 11 am local time was 82 degrees Fahrenheit (28 Celsius) — not yet quite reaching the 85 F (29.3 C) measured during the first day of the 2001 fortnight.

"I'll spend the whole day going from one shady spot to another," said Sally Bolton, the chief executive officer of the All England Club.

"Obviously, it's a very warm day. The first obvious point to make is that the athletes compete in temperatures like this all year on the tour," Bolton said. "For us Brits here at The Championships, it feels very hot." The average daytime temperature in London in June is 71 F (21.5 C), although the Government's official weather office said this spring was "the UK's warmest and sunniest" since that's been tracked.

The temperature at the first match will be around 82 degrees Fahrenheit (28 Celsius)

Wimbledon, like other tennis tournaments, monitors air temperature, surface temperature and humidity for a heat-stress reading that, if it exceeds 30.1 C (about 86 F), allows for 10-minute breaks between the second and third sets of women's matches or between the third and fourth sets of men's matches.

Among other precautions being taken Monday, Bolton said, were having more ice on court available for players to use to cool off, rotating ball girls and boys more frequently "if we feel we need to," and giving regular breaks to workers around the grounds.

As for fans, Bolton said, "we're offering the same advice as lots of the medical professionals: Come prepared. Bring a hat. Wear sunscreen. Wear light clothing if you can. Take breaks out of the sun. We've got over 100 water points around the grounds, so definitely stay hydrated. And keep an eye on your friends and others around you. If people look like they're suffering a little bit from heat stress, we've got a really significantly sized medical team here."

This is nothing compared to what athletes and spectators experience during the local summers when the Australian Open is held in Melbourne in January or the US Open is held in New York in August and September, when temperatures regularly get to 90 F (32 C) and can top 100 F (38 C).

A 2023 Associated Press analysis showed the average high temperatures felt during the U.S. Open and the three other major tennis tournaments steadily have gotten higher and more dangerous in recent decades, reflecting the climate change that has created record heat waves. For the players, it can inhibit them from playing their best and, worse, increase the likelihood of heat-related illness.

Michelle Kang takes over as president of Lyon

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Paris

American businesswoman Michele Kang has taken over as president of seven-time French champion Lyon after John Textor resigned following the club's relegation over financial irregularities.

The South Korea-born Kang is also majority owner of the Lyon's women's team — OL Lyonnes — and has been on Lyon's board of directors since 2023. Lyon said in a statement that Kang will play an "active role" in leading the club's appeal against the relegation handed down last Tuesday by the French league's soccer watchdog, known as DNCG. The case is expected to be heard within the next week.

That ruling could also decide whether Crystal Palace will be allowed to play in next season's Europa League, which Lyon also qualified for. Textor also held a 43 per cent stake in Palace — which he has agreed to sell to New York Jets owner Woody Johnson — and UEFA has rules against clubs with the same owner playing the same competition. Lyon added that Textor has also resigned from the board of directors. He became Lyon president three years ago, taking over from longstanding incumbent Jean-Michel Aulas, who sold to Textor's Eagle Football Holdings.

American businesswoman Michele Kang

The 66-year-old Kang will be supported in her role by Michael Gerlinger, the general manager of Eagle Football Holdings. "A highly respected figure in European football administration, Michael brings over two decades of experience in governance, regulatory affairs and sports operations," Lyon said in its statement.

Why did Lyon get relegated?

Lyon's run of Ligue 1 titles from 2001-08 made it the powerhouse of French soccer. Since Paris Saint-Germain took over at the top, fortunes have steadily dipped for Lyon.

The decision to relegate the club followed an audit of its finances by the DNCG, with Lyon's current debt estimated at 175 million euros ($203 million). The DNCG had already provisionally relegated Lyon to Ligue 2 in November, with the club reporting at the time that it had more than 500 million euros ($581 million) of debt. A transfer ban was also imposed in the January transfer window.

News of Lyon's relegations was met by dismay from Lyon fans, with one historic supporters group — The Bad Gones — leading calls for Textor's immediate resignation. The club shop was tagged with a blunt message urging him to go.

A Champions League finalist five years ago, Lyon narrowly lost to Manchester United in the Europa League quarterfinals this season and missed out on a cash windfall when it failed to qualify for next season's Champions League after finishing sixth in Ligue 1.

Three weeks ago, Lyon received a much-needed cash injection by selling coveted playmaker Rayan Cherki to Manchester City for 36 million euros, while high earners like forward Alexandre Lacazette left the club.

But it wasn't enough to convince the DNCG that Lyon's books were in order, a task which now falls to Kang.

Ligue 1 resumes in mid-August with Lyon scheduled to play at Lens if it wins the appeal. More about Michelle Kang. Forbes estimates Kang's worth at $1.2 billion.

Kang assumed majority ownership of Lyon one year after taking over the Washington Spirit women's team in 2022 when average gates were around 3,000. They are now around 15,000.

Real tournament will start from quarterfinals: Sreejesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Bengaluru

India coach PR Sreejesh says competing in the FIH Junior World Cup in a new format will be exciting and reckons that the real tournament will

Begin from the quarterfinals. India will host the quadrennial event in the cities of Chennai and Madurai from November 28 till December 10, this year.

For the first time, 24 teams will compete in the World Cup which was initially a 12-team tournament. From the 2001 edition onwards it became a 16-team tournament.

Under the new format, teams will be divided into six pools (A-F) with four teams in each pool. The six group winners and two best-placed second place teams will qualify for the quarterfinals.

India are placed in Pool B alongside arch-rivals Pakistan, Chile and Switzerland.

"We will take each game as it comes, one step at a time and grab as many points as we can to secure the best spot in the quarterfinals," Sreejesh said in a Hockey India release.

India's Mohammed Siraj taking part in a nets session at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England on Monday PTI

"This is the first time the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup, 2025 has been expanded to 24 teams, and we're planning our preparations accordingly. Playing in this new format will be very exciting," the former India goalkeeper said.

"Our Pool B presents a good challenge, with Pakistan, Chile, and Switzerland. While I expect the match against Pakistan will be interesting, the tournament will really start from the quarterfinals."

In the last edition of the men's Junior Hockey World Cup in 2023, India had missed the podium and finished fourth. India's best result came in 2001 and 2016 when they emerged champions.

Germany has been the most successful team in the tournament having won the title seven times. They are also currently the defending champion.

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