

Delhi cop suspended for kidnapping minors, extortion

VAISHNAVI MISHRA
■ New Delhi

Delhi police Sub-Inspector (SI) posted at the Sarai Rohilla Police Station has been suspended after serious allegations emerged against him for illegally detaining six minor boys and demanding money from their parents in exchange for their release.

"The Sub-Inspector has been suspended. A departmental inquiry is underway to investigate his conduct. A vigilance probe has also been ordered," said Raja Banthia, District Commissioner of Police (DCP) North. The incident took place on Wednesday night when SI Balbir Chand received a PCR call at about 11 pm regarding a scuffle involving minors near the Sarai Rohilla area. According to the call, two juveniles had been beaten up by six other boys while returning from a coaching centre. All of them reportedly belonged to Bhopura, a locality in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

Following the call, SI Balbir reached the spot and took all eight minors — two victims and six accused — to the police station for inquiry. It was later revealed that the six accused boys were on their way to the Sarai Rohilla Railway Station to catch a train to the Khatu Shyam Temple in Rajasthan. All the boys were between 15 and 17 years of age.

At the police station, the two injured boys were sent for medical examination and their parents were also contacted. The parents of the six accused were also informed about their presence at the station. As the accused were minors, and as per rules no formal action was taken against them and they had to be released.

It is reliably learnt that the victims eventually left the police station after medical check-ups, but instead of releasing the six accused as well, SI Balbir allegedly detained them. He allegedly forced the six boys into his personal vehicle and drove them along with another person. The officer then took the children to the parking lot of a society in Ghaziabad, where he resided.

It is alleged that while some of the parents went and collected their kids, the children of others who did not pay the amount were released only late at night. When the parents refused to give in to his demands, SI Balbir reportedly abandoned the boys on the roadside the next morning and returned.

Later in the day, a formal complaint was lodged with the DCP, North Raja Banthia against SI Balbir. Taking swift action on the complaint, DCP Banthia ordered the immediate suspension of SI Balbir and initiated a departmental enquiry into the matter.

While the departmental proceedings have begun, no First Information Report (FIR) has been registered against the officer as of now. Facts pertaining to the incident are being verified, senior officers said, adding that they are probing the matter.

Sources in the department revealed that SI Balbir Chand has faced multiple inquiries in the past. Earlier in his career, he was posted at the North-East DCP Office where he was allegedly involved in misconduct. He was then transferred to the Cyber Police Station, where he again faced internal scrutiny. Following that, he was taken to the Sarai Rohilla Police Station, where this latest incident occurred.

The Delhi Police officials have assured that appropriate action will be taken based on the outcome of the enquiries. The families of the six minors are also in the process of seeking legal action against the suspended officer.

Court reinstates cop suspended for Bengaluru stampede

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Holding the Indian Premier League (IPL) team Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) prima facie responsible for the gathering of three to five lakh people in Bengaluru that led to the death of 11 people on June 4, the Bengaluru Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) set aside the Karnataka Government's order suspending Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) Vikash Kumar Vikash due to stampede.

The tribunal noted that police personnel are also human beings. "They are neither God nor Magician and also not having the magic powers like *Aladdin ka chiraq* which was able to fulfill any wish only by rubbing a finger," Tribunal said in its while defending the police.

A quorum of members BK Shrivastava and Santosh Mehra also observed that the suspension order was passed mechanically without sufficient grounds and the order is not based upon the convincing materials.

The tribunal noted, "Therefore, prima facie it appears that the RCB is responsible for the gathering of about three to five lakh people. The RCB did not take the appropriate permission or consent from the police. Suddenly, they posted on social media platforms and as a result of aforesaid information the public were gathered." The tribunal was critical of the RCB's last-minute announcement of the celebration, calling it a "nuisance."

Setting aside the State Government's order suspending the ACP, it said, "The police officers have been suspended without any sufficient material or grounds. Hence, the aforesaid order is liable to be quashed." It thus directed the State to reinstate Vikash immediately.

Holding RCB responsible for gathering of about three lakh to five lakh people at a stadium, which had a capacity of 35,000, the tribunal said, "Suddenly, they posted on social media platforms and as a result of aforesaid information the public were gathered. Because of shortage of time on 04.06.2026, the police was unable to do the appropriate arrangements. Sufficient time was not given to the police."

It further noted, "The public was available the whole night intervening 3rd to 4th June, 2025 on the streets of Bengaluru and police was doing the management of aforesaid public. Another function was also organised by the State Government in the campus of the "Vidhana Soudha. Police was also deputed at that place. Suddenly, the RCB created the aforesaid type of nuisance without any prior permission. It cannot be expected from the Police that within a short time of about 12 hours the Police will make all arrangements required in the Police Act or in the other rules, etc".

It also noted that the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) had only intimidated the Inspector of Police, Cubbon Park of the RCB victory parade, and not Vikash.

After the stampede, the Karnataka Government suspended Vikash, B Dayananda, Shekar H Tekkannavar, C Balakrishna (Assistant Commissioner of Police, Cubbon Park) and AK Girish (Police Inspector, Cubbon Park) in connection with the tragedy for dereliction of duty. Vikash then moved CAT challenging the suspension order.



File Photo

Trade, ceasefire separate: EAM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES
■ New Delhi/New York

Denying US President Donald Trump's claims that India agreed to a ceasefire with Pakistan under US trade pressure, foreign minister S Jaishankar said, "I can tell you that I was in the room when Vice President (JD) Vance spoke to Prime Minister Modi on the night of May 9. There was no linking of trade and ceasefire," he added.

In a conversation with Newsweek magazine in New York, Jaishankar gave a detailed account of the tense negotiations leading up to the ceasefire after India launched Operation Sindoor in retaliation for the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir. Calling the attack an "act of economic warfare," he said it was designed to destroy Kashmir's tourism industry and provoke communal tensions.

The foreign minister asserted that despite warnings from Washington about a "massive assault" by Pakistan, India stood firm and responded militarily, refusing to be swayed by nuclear threats or diplomatic pressure. "We did not accept certain things, and the Prime Minister was impervious to what the Pakistanis were threatening to do," he said, adding, "On the contrary, he indicated that there would be a response from us."

Trump, on various occasions, claimed that he persuaded both sides to end the hostilities that erupted after India launched Operation Sindoor to destroy terror bases in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir following the deadly terror attack in Pahalgam.

While speaking to reporters in The Hague last week, Trump reiterated his version despite India's denials, saying, "I ended that with a series of phone calls on trade. I said, look, if you going to fight each other, we are not doing any trade deal."

Jaishankar is on an official visit to the US and will travel to Washington DC to participate in the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Tuesday.

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External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar addressing the media before Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting in Washington DC

PTI

The ByStander



SC brings reservation for staff

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

In a first, the Supreme Court has introduced a formal reservation policy for the direct appointment and promotion of its staffers belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The decision was communicated in a circular issued on June 24 to all Supreme Court employees.

"As per the directions of the Competent Authority, it is to notify for the information of all concerned that the Model Reservation Roster and Register has been uploaded on the Supnet (internal email network) and it is made effective from June 23, 2025.

"It is to inform further that in case of objections/representations raised by any staff member about mistakes or inaccuracies in the roster or register, they may inform about the same to the Registrar (Recruitment)," the circular said.

As per the circular and the model roster now in effect, top court employees will receive a 15 per cent quota and ST employees a 7.5 per cent quota in promotions. According to the policy, the quota benefits will be available to registrars, senior personal assistants, assistant librarians, junior court assistants and chamber attendants.

BNS biggest reform in independent India: Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressing a gathering to mark one year of the implementation of three new criminal laws across the country in New Delhi on Tuesday

PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Terming the enactment of three new criminal laws as the biggest reform in independent India, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that the Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi framed them such that rights of citizens are protected while no criminal goes unpunished.

Addressing an event marking a year of the rolling out of the three criminal laws, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik

Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), Shah said these laws are going to transform the criminal justice system in the country significantly.

"I assure all the citizens of India that it will take a maximum of three years for the full implementation of the new laws. I can also confidently say that anyone can get justice up to the Supreme Court within three years of filing an FIR," he said. The BNS replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code.

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FIR filed in Telangana blast



Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy with others during an inspection at the site of an explosion at the Sigachi Industries' pharma plant in Sangareddy district, Telangana on Tuesday

PTI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Hyderabad

The Sangareddy district police registered an FIR in connection with the explosion in a pharmaceutical manufacturing plant that claimed 36 lives and left an almost equal number injured, Superintendent of Police Paritosh Pankaj said on Tuesday. The fatal accident that occurred on June 30 is suspected to have been caused by a chemical reaction. "We have registered an FIR in this case under Sections 105, 110 and 117 of BNS. The investi-

gation is on," said SP.

Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) deals with punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, Section 110 deals with the attempt to commit culpable homicide while Section 117 deals with the offense of "Voluntarily causing grievous hurt". Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who visited the blast site, said that those responsible for the deadly incident will be booked.

A senior official of the Department of Factories, Telangana, said they will be

booking a case against the management of the plant with regard to the incident.

"We are inquiring. We will book a case. First we will issue a notice under the Factories Act 1948 against the license holder and manager of the unit seeking their explanation on the lapses," the official said. The notice is likely to be issued in a couple of days, the official added.

The Telangana Government gave a dressing down to the management of Sigachi for its absence following the blast in the factory that claimed precious lives.

Delhi tweaks labour laws for women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Women can work in night shifts in the national Capital after their consent is taken as part of the State Government's efforts to ensure "Ease of doing business" and "Maximum governance-minimum government."

This order, issued after reviewing the status and progress of various aspects related to flagship schemes, also directed the labour department to ensure all safeguards by amending the Delhi Shops and Establishment Act and by issuing suitable notifications under Factories Act.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Vinai Kumar Saxena along with Chief Minister Rekha Gupta chaired a high-level meeting which among others was also attended by City Home Minister Ashish Sood, Industries Minister, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Chief Secretary, Police Commissioner, MCD Commissioner, VC (DDA) and Heads of all related Departments, including Urban Development, Information

Technology, Transport, Home, Environment, Revenue and Labour.

Other key decisions included amendment of Delhi Shops and Establishment Act to increase the threshold of minimum number of employees from one to 10 for applicability of the Act and to allow shops/ establishments to work 24X7. Nod was also given to increase the threshold of workers from 100 to 200, in Industrial Dispute Act, for seeking permission for closure.

The Fire Department was asked to empanel agencies for Third Party Audit. A senior officer said that large commercial establishments and industrial establishments will be allowed to get NOC on audit certificate of empaneled agencies and small establishments may be given an option for the Third Party Audit.

An expression of interest can also be floated immediately.

The Fire Department has been asked to revisit its regulation in view of technological advancements and availability of small, drone-based and robotic firefighting equipment.

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War of words intensifies between Musk, Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Washington

The war of words between billionaire Elon Musk and President Donald Trump over the big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts is heating up again, with Musk claiming he may form a new political party and Trump blasting the Tesla CEO over electric vehicle subsidies.

The most prominent divide in the relationship between Musk and Trump is the president's big bill. Musk ramped up his criticism of the bill just three days ago, arguing the legislation that Republican senators are scrambling to pass would kill jobs and bog down burgeoning industries.

Musk, who is also CEO of SpaceX, posted on X on Saturday that the bill would be "political suicide for the Republican Party".



President Donald Trump speaking to the media before walking across the South Lawn of the White House to board Marine One en route to Joint Base Andrews, Md., and on to Florida,

PTI

With the Senate working its way through a tense overnight session that dragged into Tuesday, Musk suggested he will work to get members of Congress who vote for the bill out of their seats next year.

"Every member of Congress who campaigned on reducing Government spending and then immediately voted for the

biggest debt increase in history should hang their head in shame," he wrote on X. "And they will lose their primary next year if it is the last thing I do on this Earth."

The post was viewed 26 million times on the social media platform. A few hours later, Musk followed up with a post claiming he will create a new

political party if the bill passes. "If this insane spending bill passes, the America Party will be formed the next day," he wrote. "Our country needs an alternative to the Democrat-Republican uniparty so that the people actually have a VOICE." Musk's post about the America Party was viewed 32 million times on X.

For his part, Trump focused some of his criticisms of Musk on EV mandates and subsidies. In a post on Truth Social early Tuesday morning, Trump said Musk has known that he's against an EV mandate and that people should not be forced to own electric vehicles.

"Elon may get more subsidy than any human being in history, by far, and without subsidies, Elon would probably have to close up shop and head back home to South Africa," Trump wrote.

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Report on AI crash soon

RAJESH KUMAR
■ New Delhi

Nearly 20 days after the Air India crash in Ahmedabad killed 270 people including 241 on board, Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is likely to release a preliminary probe report by next week.

The document, which is likely to be four to five pages long, will be crucial because it will provide initial insights into the crash on June 12, including the possible causes, sources said here on Tuesday.

As per International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) guidelines, India is required to file a preliminary report within 30 days of the crash. The complete probe report is expected in roughly two months from now, which would be three months from



File Photo

the day of the crash. Sources said the preliminary report will include details about the aircraft, which was a Boeing Dreamliner 787-8, the crew, conditions at the Ahmedabad airport, and the weather on June 12, when Air India flight 171 crashed, roughly 30 seconds after taking off.

Details about the wreckage will also be part of the report, as will the name of the inves-

tigator in charge. The document will chart the progress of the probe, outline the next steps that need to be taken and highlight areas that need further investigation.

Just days ago, the junior minister for civil aviation, Murlidhar Mohol had said all angles are being investigated in the crash, including sabotage.

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3.	<u>For Verka Gurdaspur Dairy</u> a) Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 500 gm, 1 kg, 5kg and 15 kg dahi Matka filling and sealing machine. b) Hiring of insulated Road Milk Tankers for transportation of Milk from Verka Gurdaspur Dairy to other milk unions (vice-versa) within and outside state. Capacity 10MT-01, 15MT-01, 20MT-02.	01 No. 04 No's
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5.	<u>For Verka Ludhiana Dairy</u> Job Contract for :- i. Filling, packing and shifting of powder into 25 kg bags, ½ kg and 1 kg SMP and WMP packets, packing of Ghee (All variants), packing and shifting of white butter box, packing of Dahi (All variants) and shifting to incubation room/cold store. ii. Packing of Liquid Milk, Dahi and Lassi in pouches and cleaning of Milk plastic trays.	Annual Annual
6.	<u>For Verka Jalandhar Dairy</u> Hiring of :- i. Deep freezer (cold store) for storage and transportation of white butter from Verka Jalandhar dairy to hired cold store & Vice-versa. ii. Refrigerated vehicles for supply of packed milk and fresh milk products for Verka Jalandhar Milkshed Area.	Annual
7.	<u>For Verka Hoshiarpur Dairy</u> e-Tender for engaging for labour contractor for outsourcing production job works.	-
8.	<u>For Verka CFP, Bhattian Khanna</u> Hiring of Seven Seater AC car (Innova crystal), Model less than 7 years old.	01 No.
9.	<u>For Cattle Feed Plant, Ghanaia Kd Banger</u> a) Labour job contract for shifting, dumping of raw material & stacking of finished products; dumping of trace elements, filling, packing, shifting of mineral feed supplement; cleaning and bundling of empty bags; cleaning of plinths and godowns etc. b) Hiring of one five seater AC passenger car for all india Area for one year.	Annual 01 No.

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Prez Murmu gifts UP its first AYUSH University

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow/Gorakhpur

President Droupadi Murmu, on Tuesday, inaugurated Uttar Pradesh's first AYUSH University, named Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University, in Gorakhpur. Spread across 52 acres and built at a cost of Rs 268 crore, the university marks a significant step forward in promotion of traditional systems of medicine and holistic health in the state.

Commencing her address by paying tributes to the sacred land of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath, the President said, "It is said that after Adi Guru Shankaracharya, there has been no other spiritual figure as influential in India as Guru Gorakhnath." She referred to Gorakhpur as a land of yoga, enriched by the spiritual energy and teachings of the Nath tradition.

The President highlighted the spiritual and historical legacy of the region, stating that it is also the birthplace of Paramhansa Yogananda. She added that the people here are part of a great local tradition that holds national importance and has influenced humanity. The Nath tradition, which follows the teachings of Shri Adinath, Matsyendranath, and Guru Gorakhnath, began from Gorakhpur and has spread across India and even to other countries, working for the welfare of humanity.

"This land of penance, meditation, and spirituality is also the foundation of self-respect and national pride. From the 18th-century monk-led revolts to the 1857 freedom struggle, the yogis of the Nath sect from

Gorakhpur have played a key role in public welfare and India's fight for independence. The sacrifices of great freedom fighters like Babu Bandhu Singh and Ram Prasad Bismil are also linked to this sacred land," she added.

Speaking at the inauguration of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University, the President said she felt a deep sense of reverence visiting an institution named after such a legendary spiritual figure. She called the university a modern, dynamic center built upon rich ancient traditions, and expressed confidence that it would become a milestone in the development of medical education and healthcare not only in Uttar Pradesh, but across the country.

She pointed out that the university is equipped with high-end facilities that will benefit the general public. Nearly 100 AYUSH colleges affiliated with it are already gaining from its excellence. The university will offer education and research from undergraduate to advanced levels in AYUSH systems and run job-oriented courses in traditional medicine. Special emphasis will also be placed on international-level research to make traditional Indian healthcare systems globally recognized and accepted.

The President expressed her gratitude to CM Yogi Adityanath for his visionary leadership and tireless efforts in conceptualizing and establishing UP's first AYUSH University. She praised the excellence of the university and acknowledged CM's role in turning this dream into reality.

Highlighting the value of



President Droupadi Murmu with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the inauguration of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University in Gorakhpur on Tuesday

dedication, the President reflected on the word "*Athak*", meaning "tireless," and emphasised that true public service demands unwavering effort, day and night. She remarked, "While doctors recommend 6-8 hours of sleep, a yogi like Chief Minister Adityanath proves that through yoga, even three hours of rest can be as rejuvenating as eight." Praising his relentless commitment, she called him a symbol of tireless service, noting how his leadership has brought significant progress in infrastructure, agriculture, education, and healthcare across the region.

The President reminded the audience of the debt we owe to our ancestors and sages, emphasizing the responsibility

to uphold their legacy. She proudly noted that India's voice is now being heard across the globe and that good health is regarded as true wealth by the people of the nation. Stressing the need for timely action, she said, "If we envision a developed India by 2047, the groundwork must begin today." Institutions like AYUSH University, she added, will play a pivotal role in this journey by advancing education, healthcare, and traditional knowledge systems.

Calling India a land of sages and yogis, President Droupadi Murmu said that ancient yogis were known to live for 200 to 400 years, underscoring the belief that the human body—composed of the five ele-

ments—can remain healthy through balance and discipline. She highlighted the importance of mindful eating, urging people to eat in moderation, follow seasonal diets, and pay attention to what they consume. While manual labor and farming naturally promote good health, she emphasized that those with sedentary lifestyles or office jobs must incorporate yoga into their daily routines to stay fit.

The President stressed that we must be grateful to our ancestors and sages, and it is our duty to honour their legacy. "Today, the world is recognizing India's wisdom. If we want India to become a developed nation by 2047, we must begin working toward it today,"

she said, adding that institutions like this AYUSH university will play a crucial role in that journey by advancing education and healthcare.

The President emphasised the value of India's traditional healing systems like Ayurveda, Yoga, and Naturopathy, calling them time-tested scientific methods for maintaining health and longevity. She praised the vision behind creating such an institution and underlined its potential to globally promote India's ancient knowledge.

The President said that ancient Indian practices offered ways to keep the body and senses healthy even beyond 100 years, and modern India must return to those practices. She

urged people to follow the Ayurvedic lifestyle, which focuses on daily routine (din-charya), seasonal habits (ritucharya), and balanced food, behavior, and thoughts. "Ayurveda is deeply connected with nature," she said, noting that India's forests and fields are still rich with medicinal herbs and plants. She also mentioned that many Ayurvedic medicines, such as arishta and asava, do not even have expiry dates.

She added that in keeping with the inclusive Indian philosophy of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*", India has embraced several global traditional systems into the AYUSH framework. "Unani medicine, originally from the Middle East, is more widely used in India than in its countries of origin. Similarly, homeopathy, developed in Germany, has been fully accepted in India," she said.

"Since 2014, the Central Government and, from 2017, the Uttar Pradesh Government have established dedicated AYUSH departments to actively promote these beneficial traditional systems both in India and abroad with renewed energy," she added.

The President further mentioned that the inauguration of this university is a significant celebration of the revival of India's AYUSH systems. She called Ayurveda, Yoga, and Siddha — which are key parts of AYUSH — India's priceless gift to the world.

The President also acknowledged the contributions of Lord Dhanvantari, Charaka, and Sushruta, the ancient pioneers of Indian medicine. She referred to scholarly beliefs that yogis from the Nath tradition successfully used bhasma

in safe and effective healing practices.

She praised Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath for establishing the discipline of Hatha Yoga, saying he played a vital role in India's spiritual and cultural revival. Highlighting his unique influence, she recalled the words of Goswami Tulsidas, who wrote "*Gorakh Jagayo Jog*", meaning Guru Gorakhnath reawakened the tradition of yoga. The President noted that Gorakhnath not only preserved yoga but also made it accessible to the common people.

Thanking Prime Minister Modi, the President highlighted how International Yoga Day, celebrated on June 21, is now observed in many countries. She said that even foreign nationals promoting yoga in their countries have been honored with Padma Shri awards, showing the global respect for India's wellness traditions.

President Murmu concluded by expressing confidence that Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University will play a pivotal role in expanding the popularity, research, and global scientific acceptance of AYUSH systems. She said the university will stand as a symbol of tradition meeting modernity and earn recognition as a world-class institution in the years to come.

The event was also attended by Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Cabinet Ministers Surya Pratap Shahi, Swatantra Dev Singh, Dr. Sanjay Nishad, AYUSH Minister Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu', MP Ravi Kishan, Vice Chancellor K. Ramachandra Reddy, and other dignitaries.

President launches Van Mahotsava

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow/Gorakhpur

President Droupadi Murmu inaugurated the week-long Van Mahotsava 2025 celebrations on Monday in Gorakhpur, marking a significant push towards environmental awareness and plantation. The event, running from July 1 to 7, began with the President planting a rudraksha sapling under the '*Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam*' campaign during the inauguration of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University.

The President also emphasised the importance of conserving plants, highlighting that plantation efforts must be matched with long-term care and protection.

Following the inauguration, President Murmu met with elected representatives and toured an exhibition at the venue. Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were also present at the ceremony.

As part of the Van Mahotsav, Minister of State



President Droupadi Murmu with Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the inauguration of Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University in Gorakhpur on Tuesday

(Independent Charge) for Forest and Environment, Dr Arun Kumar Saxena, inaugurated Triveni Van — a sacred plantation of banyan, neem, and peepal trees — in Kukrail.

The minister also launched an open gym, inaugurated a yoga meditation centre, and unveiled a statue of Buddha

at the site. In another green initiative, Dr Saxena visited the Veerangana Avanti Bai Women's Hospital, where he presented 'Green Gold Certificates' to the families of eight newborns and gifted them moringa (*sahjan*) saplings, encouraging environmental responsibility from birth.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Gorakhpur

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that following the establishment of Uttar Pradesh's first AYUSH University, the government will now set up at least one 100-bed AYUSH Health and Wellness Centre in every district.

These centres will offer key treatments such as Panchakarma and Ksharasutra. In addition, the state government has decided to open one AYUSH college at each of the six divisional headquarters that are currently without such facilities.

The chief minister was addressing the inauguration ceremony of Uttar Pradesh's first AYUSH University—Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University — on Tuesday. Welcoming President Droupadi Murmu, the chief guest, and Governor Anandiben Patel, the special guest of honour, the chief minister stated that both the central and state governments are continuously working to ensure

CM assures help to girl

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Gorakhpur

When a class 7 student told Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath that her education could be disrupted as her parents were unable to pay the school fees, he told the girl that the government would ensure that she did not have to drop out. The girl, Pankhuri Tripathi, a resident of Purdilpur in the Kotwali area here, put forth her appeal for help at a 'Janta Darshan' held at the Gorakhnath temple.

"I want to study, but my family is unable to pay the school fees," Tripathi told the CM.

Tripathi, who studies in an English-medium school, shared that her father is differently-abled, her mother works

holistic health for all.

Prior to 2014, India's traditional systems of medicine had not gained global recognition. After taking office in 2014,

in a shop to support the family and her elder brother is a class 12 student. Amid the family's financial difficulties, her schooling had almost ended, she said.

Moved by her sincerity, Adityanath assured the girl that her education would not be disrupted. "Either your fees will be waived, or we will arrange the amount," he promised. The CM also fulfilled Tripathi's wish to click a picture with him.

During the 'Janta Darshan', Adityanath met over 100 people, listening to their grievances and issuing on-the-spot directives to officials to resolve the issues. He reiterated that resolving public issues, especially those related to education, healthcare and welfare schemes, remains a top priority for his government.

gave traditional medicine a national platform. The chief minister noted that the Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University is a result of PM Modi's vision for comprehensive wellness. With the inauguration complete, the university will now move forward with its admission process. It will offer medical services across various traditional systems including Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy and Siddha.

The university will also emerge as a major centre for research and development in the AYUSH sector. The chief minister highlighted that the university will play a significant role in providing employment opportunities to both farmers and youth. Through this institu-

tion, cultivation of medicinal plants will become a viable source of income. He added that the university will also be instrumental in promoting traditional medicine as a new form of health tourism. He expressed confidence that the university will emerge as a premier destination for health tourism in the future. During his address at the inauguration ceremony, the chief minister also spoke about the connection between Ayurveda and the Nath tradition.

He explained that Rasashastra and metallurgical sciences in Ayurveda are linked to the legacy of the Navnath and 84 Siddhas. The credit for systematically organising these disciplines, he said, goes to Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath.

Guv calls for boost to farming of medicinal plants

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Gorakhpur

At the inauguration of Uttar Pradesh's first Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University, Governor Anandiben Patel urged farmers to launch a 'One Village, One Medicinal Plant' campaign. She emphasised that with the establishment of this major Ayurveda hub in Purvanchal, the region is set to witness a significant boost in medicinal farming.

Welcoming the chief guest, President Droupadi Murmu, the Governor highlighted the economic potential for farmers in the surrounding villages. She said cultivating medicinal plants could enhance farmers' incomes while promoting the production of safe, natural medicines and earning public goodwill. She proposed that each village specialise in cultivating a specific medicinal plant to maximise benefits.

Addressing the broader healthcare landscape, the Governor emphasised the need

to ensure access to treatment for every corner of society. She advocated for the distribution of safe and effective Ayurvedic and homeopathic medicines through Anganwadi centres, and called on doctors, social workers, and public representatives to support this effort. She also noted that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath remain deeply committed to public health.

Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu also addressed the inauguration ceremony of AYUSH University. The welcome address was given by the Vice Chancellor of AYUSH University, Prof. K. Ramachandra Reddy. On this occasion, Agriculture Minister of the State Government Surya Pratap Shahi, Jal Shakti Minister Swatantrdev Singh, Fisheries Department Minister Sanjay Nishad, MP Ravi Kishan Shukla, local MLA Mahendrapal Singh, many public representatives, dignitaries and a large number of people were present.

Geeta Press delegation meets Prez

Gorakhpur: A seven-member delegation from the iconic Gita Press met President Droupadi Murmu at the Circuit House here on Tuesday morning.

The delegation presented her three books in Odia language and a special edition of 'Kalyani', a Hindi publication focused on environmental issues, Geeta Press manager Lalmani Tripathi said.

During the 10-11 minutes meeting, President Murmu enquired them about the details of the books and appreciated the efforts of Gita Press in promoting Odia language. The books presented to the President included '*Geeta Sadhak Sanjeevani*', '*Bhakta Charitamrita*' and a matchbox-sized edition of the '*Bhagavad Gita*'.

The delegation comprised Geeta Press trustees Devi Dayal Agrawal and Ishwar Prasad Patwari, members Ajay Prakash Agrawal and Madhav Prasad Jalan, manager Lalmani Tripathi, and members Arvika Garg and Radheshyam Agrawal. On Monday night, during a ceremonial dinner at the Gorakhnath Temple, Geeta Press trustees Devi Dayal Agrawal and manager Dr Lalmani Tripathi had also presented the President with Odia translations of '*Bhagavad*' by Jagannath Das and a condensed version of the '*Shiva Purana*'. *PNS*

'Rly ministry's decision to hike fares against public interest'

Lucknow: Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Tuesday termed the decision of the Railway Ministry to increase the fares as one "against the general public interest and more of a business-minded decision rather than the welfare objective of the Constitution". The Railway Ministry issued an official circular on Monday, increasing the fares of the non-air-conditioned class in mail and express trains by 1 paise and all air-conditioned classes by 2 paise per kilometre from July 1.

Speaking to reporters in Lucknow, Mayawati said, "As it is known that when most of the people of the country are suffering and unhappy due to the daily hunger and thirst of extreme inflation, poverty, unemployment and decrease in income, then in such a situation, the increase in the train fare in the country by the Centre seems to be a decision taken against the general public interest."

She said it was more of a business-minded decision rather than fulfilling any welfare objective of the Constitution. The fares of suburban trains and monthly season tickets have been left unchanged in the interest of daily commuters. The ordinary second-class fare has not been increased

for up to 500 km and for distances beyond that, there is an increase in the ticket prices by half a paise per km.

Mayawati alleged that the practice of increasing the exploitation of the common man by increasing the burden on their daily life through railways just like GST in the name of 'Nation First is extremely unfair.

It would be better if the government reconsiders it immediately, she added. "For crores of people here, the train journey is not a fashion, pleasure or tourism, rather it is a very painful journey and compulsion due to the increasing poverty, inflation, acute shortage of respectable permanent employment in the country, compulsion to leave their homes and migrate to feed the family," Mayawati said.

The government should not adopt a commercial approach towards them but and treat them with sympathy and welfare, she said, adding that this has been everyone's expectation. "Therefore, instead of worrying only for its own benefit and for a handful of rich and prosperous people, the government should take proper care of the crores of people of the country who are yearning to live a life of self-respect..." she said.

The former chief minister said about 95 crore people of the country's population have been forced to become beneficiaries of at least one social welfare scheme of the government. Due to this, the number of such helpless people has increased to about 64.3 per cent in the current year 2025, whereas in the year 2016 this number was only about 22 per cent. Hitting out at the BJP government in Delhi, the BSP chief alleged that it is adopting an anti-people attitude of ruthlessly displacing the poor and those who migrate from other states, especially from UP, Bihar and Bengal for livelihood, without making any other arrangements. "Their slums are being demolished so ruthlessly that it is very sad and shameful," she said stressing that the Delhi government says it is following the court's order. "But, the honourable court did not say that you should displace them without making any other arrangements... The court has definitely said you should remove them but the court did not say that you should not make any other arrangements for them. "It is the responsibility of the government to make alternate arrangements to settle them before removing their slums," she said. *PNS*

PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT

UTTARAKHAND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE PROJECT (UP-PPARE)

5th Floor, USDMA Building, 36 IT Park, Sahasradhara Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Pin: 248001

Email : uppreparemu@gmail.com & procurement.upprepare@gmail.com

Reference No. 165/PIU-FOR-EST/SP/PMU/2025

DATE: 01.07.2025

Invitation for Demonstration of Communication Equipment

The World Bank — funded Uttarakhand Disaster Preparedness & Resilience Project (U-PPARE) invites interested OEMs and potential bidders to physically demonstrate the Communication Equipment intended for the Forest Department, Uttarakhand.

Further details may be obtained from the website: www.u-prepare.com / www.usdma.uk.gov.in

Date: 05-07-2025 | Time: 12:00 P.M. onwards | Venue: 5th Floor, 36, USDMA Building, IT Park, Dehradun.

Addl. PROGRAM DIRECTOR U-PPARE

IN THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, ALLAHABAD

(9/2A, PANNA LAL ROAD), ALLAHABAD

SUMMONS FOR FILING REPLY & APPEARANCE BY PUBLICATION

DATE : 28-04-2025

(Summons to defendants under section19 (3), of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act,1993 Read with rules 12 and 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules, 1993)

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 1658 OF 2024

BANK OF BARODA.....APPLICANT

VERSUS

SHRI DARSHAN SINGH SIDHU.....DEFENDANT

To,

1. SHRI DARSHAN SINGH SIDHU, adult, S/o Shri Jaswant Singh, R/o 331/2, Civil Line, Jhokan Bag, Jhansi, U.P. 284001.

2. MRS. SANYA AGARWAL, D/o Mr. Dilip Agarwal, R/O 376/16, Chandra Vihar Colony, Behind BKD Hostel, Civil Line Jhansi, U.P. 284001.

In the above noted application, you are required to file reply in paper book form in four sets along with documents and affidavits (if any), personally or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner in this Tribunal, after serving a 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 18.07.2025 at 10:30 A.M. before the undersigned, failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. REGISTRAR DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, ALLAHABAD

Rain in Kashi disrupts life for 3rd consecutive day

BRINGS HAPPINESS ON FACES OF PADDY GROWERS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

Monsoon rain disrupted life in the city for the third consecutive day on Tuesday afternoon. The rain which lashed the city left several localities waterlogged. The city has been receiving good rain for the last three days which has brought happiness on the faces of paddy growers in this belt, known as 'Rice Bowl' for its high and rich paddy production.

The city had received 4.6 and 50 mm rain respectively in the last two days. Though the duration of rain was short a day ago its intensity was high in the city leaving several markets and localities waterlogged for hours.

Even the premises of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Dham were heavily waterlogged, causing huge inconvenience to the devotees present there.

Rain also disrupted life at the internationally famous 85-odd Ganga ghats as the water level of Ganga river has been rising continuously for the last two days. According to the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), during the last two



Waterlogging near Girjaghara crossing in Varanasi

days, the water level of Ganga has increased by 2.67 metres, from 58.96 metres to 61.63 metres as recorded at 8 am on Tuesday. The river was rising

with a speed of 50 mm per hour in the city and its level was on the rise right from upstream Mirzapur to downstream Ballia, including Varanasi and

Ghazipur, in this belt of Purvanchal (eastern Uttar Pradesh).

Rains left several localities including Andhrapul, Teliabagh, Nagwa, Samnaghat, Dashashwamedh, Godowlia, Luxa, Nai Sarak and the roads of many other markets and colonies waterlogged. Power supply in the city was disrupted the flight services were also affected, especially during the afternoon hours.

RESEARCH

Dr Abhishek Singhal under the mentorship of Prof SS Chakrabarti became the first junior resident doctor from the Department of Geriatric Medicine, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) to present his work on an international forum. He presented his research on chorea in elderly at 11th annual conference of Sri Lankan Association of Geriatric Medicine at Colombo. Dr Abhishek's research on cancer in elderly has also been accepted for the International Society of Geriatric Oncology Conference to be held in Belgium later this year in November.

Special communicable disease control campaign launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

Special communicable disease control campaign was launched in the district on Tuesday from the office of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) located at Durgakund. Chief Medical Officer Dr Sandeep Chaudhary flagged off the rally. Public awareness rallies were taken out by health workers and sanitation workers under the leadership of Nagar Swasthya Adhikari (city health officer) Dr SK Chaudhary.

The CMO said that awareness was the best way to prevent the danger of communicable diseases. "Special communicable disease control campaign is not just a campaign but a ritual which is being done by the state government to protect people from infectious diseases", he said, adding that therefore, public participation in the campaign was very important.

He further said, "Our little awareness towards cleanliness can save not only us but also the family and society from serious diseases. We should maintain cleanliness around us and make others aware of it. Cleanliness has a direct impact on infectious diseases. To eliminate communicable diseases, it is necessary for everyone to be aware and vigilant."



CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary flagging off Special Communicable Disease Control Campaign in Varanasi on Tuesday.

Nagar swasthya adhikari said that the coming together of many departments in the campaign against communicable diseases was important in itself. "People from the departments concerned will go door to door. Along with making people aware of its danger, they will also be made aware of prevention. This will definitely bring success", he said, adding that communicable diseases occur only due to negligence. "If we become aware of small things like consumption of dirty water, waterlogging around the house, then we can avoid big dangers", he said, adding that we should all be alert and not let dirty water accumulate

around the house and make people aware of it. "If someone falls ill with a communicable disease, then get him treated immediately at the nearest health centre", he said.

ACMO (Vector Borne) Dr Amit Singh said that the special communicable disease control campaign would run till July 31. During this period, many programmes will be organised for the prevention of vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue and chikungunya. During the campaign, door-to-door enquiries will be made about persons with symptoms of fever, TB, filariasis etc. Persons with symptoms will be identified and treated.

Government ambulance service will also be available if required. Complete details, including full name, address and mobile number of the person with symptoms will be sent to the block headquarters through ANMs so that the disease can be assessed, he said.

He said that under the campaign, Dastak Abhiyan would also run in the district from July 11 to 3. He said that in this the Health Department team would go door-to-door and collect information about sick people. District Malaria Officer Sharad Chandra Pandey said that the campaign would have the participation of Medical Health Department, Nagar Panchayat Development, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development Department, Child Development and Nutrition Department, Education Department, Department for Persons with Disabilities, Agriculture and Irrigation Department, Information and Horticulture Department. He said that responsibilities have been assigned to all the departments and preventive action would be taken wherever there was a possibility of mosquito breeding.

Senior malaria inspector Ajay Kumar Mishra and others participated in the rally.

‘School Chalo Abhiyan’ inaugurated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Kanpur

The new academic session has formally begun on Tuesday in all primary and junior schools of Kanpur Nagar district. Approximately 1.25 lakh enrolled students enthusiastically headed towards their schools.

District Magistrate Jitendra Pratap Singh inaugurated the 'School Chalo Abhiyan' at primary school Bhainsiya Hata in Colonelganj by ceremonially welcoming young students with a traditional *tilak*. He distributed books, pens and chocolates to children from classes I to V. On the occasion, while interacting with the students, the district magistrate said, "Children, study with dedication. This is the time when you can lay a strong foundation for your future. The country needs bright young minds like you."

He informed that currently 54 students were enrolled in the



DM Jitendra Pratap Singh distributing books to students in a primary school

school. He instructed the principal to take steps to increase student enrollment. He stated that facilities such as a disabled-friendly toilet and clean drinking water have been provided under the Kayakalp Scheme with the support of the Municipal Corporation. He appealed to all teachers, whom he referred to as true representatives of Goddess Saraswati, to fulfil their responsibilities with utmost

sincerity and punctuality. He also urged parents to send their children to school regularly. "I extend my heartfelt wishes to all officials, teachers, parents, and students for the new academic session. I am confident that the Education Department and its partner institutions will work together to further enhance the quality of education and school infrastructure." *PNS*

Mock drill conducted

Prayagraj: The IFFCO Phulpur unit on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive mock drill to rehearse its onsite emergency response plan, aiming to assess preparedness for chemical leak scenarios. The simulated emergency involved a high-pressure ammonia leak originating from Valve 31 HV 180 on the common discharge line of Pump 31 P-5A/B in the Urea-II plant.

During the drill, the leak of ammonia gas was reported as a result of a sudden high-pressure release. Upon detection of the leak, the Fire and Safety Department of IFFCO immediately initiated emergency response protocols. The fire brigade teams, equipped with protective gear and breathing apparatus, worked swiftly to control the release. *PNS*

IIVR director calls upon farmers to adopt scientific approach

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

Under the 'Farmers First' project run by ICAR-Indian Institute of Vegetable Research (IIVR), a one-day training, awareness-cum-vegetable seed distribution programme was organised at Ramna village on Tuesday. The chief guest of this programme was IIVR Director Dr Rajesh Kumar, who addressed the farmers and informed them about the latest vegetable technologies, improved varieties and organic and natural farming methods of the Institute.

He called upon the farmers to adopt a scientific approach for sustainable agriculture. During the programme, the institute's Principal Scientist and Project



Investigator Dr Neeraj Singh threw light on the objectives and achievements of the 'Farmers First' project so far. He informed that this project was being run to increase the income of farmers by making them technically strong. On the subject of crop protection, Principal Scientist Dr KK Pandey gave detailed information to the farmers about the

management of major diseases like root rot and seed rot in beans, cowpea and pumpkin, phytoplasma in brinjal, gummy stem blight in cucurbitaceous vegetables. Dr Pandey recommended the farmers to spray Trichoderma and neem-based medicine for seed purification and pest-disease management so that the crop product was of

good quality. The institute has promoted these vegetables along with certified seeds and Trichoderma powder of improved varieties of vegetables like 'Kashi Haritima', 'Kashi Khushal' (beans), 'Kashi Nidhi' (Boda) and 'Kashi Harit' (kumrah) developed by the institute. The booklets were distributed free of cost by Director Dr Rajesh Kumar.

Dr Rameshwar Singh gave practical information on advanced methods of vegetable production. The farmers showed keen interest in the training and expressed their desire to maintain continuous contact with the institute in future. Principal scientist Dr Rakesh Kumar Dubey, Ajay Yadav and Pramod were present in the programme.

Dr Pandey appointed new principal of MLNMC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Prayagraj

Dr VK Pandey has been appointed as the new Principal of Motilal Nehru Medical College (MLNMC), Prayagraj. He is a s s u m e d charge on Tuesday, succeeding Dr V a t s a l a Mishra, who retired on Monday after serving as the acting principal.

Prior to this appointment, Dr Pandey was serving as the principal of the Government Medical College in Pratapgarh. Notably, he had served as vice-principal at MLN Medical College just five months ago.

As the principal of MLN Medical College, Dr Pandey have been entrusted with the

overall supervision of three major associated hospitals: Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital, Sarojini Naidu Children's Hospital and Manohar Das Eye Hospital.

Talking to mediapersons here on Tuesday, Dr. Pandey emphasised his commitment to both academic excellence and patient care. "My focus will be on ensuring that medical students receive high-quality education and training, while also guaranteeing that patients who come to our hospitals receive all necessary facilities and compassionate care," he stated.

INAUGURATED

In the last decade, Artificial Intelligence has revolutionised the way we live, work and think. From predictive analytics and intelligent automation to self-driving vehicles and healthcare innovations, AI has

already transformed several sectors. Today, we stand at a crucial juncture — moving beyond traditional AI to the fascinating world of Generative AI. These views were expressed by Prof Mukul Sharad Sutaone, Director, IIIT-A while inaugurating the six-month AICTE-QIP-P-G-Certificate Programme 2025 on 'From AI to Generative AI: Unlocking the Power of Smart Technologies' and 'From Semiconductors to Chips: IC Design and Fundamentals (SemChips)' at Jhalwa campus here on Tuesday.

Prof Sutaone said that the Generative AI, as we all know, was not just about analysing data but about creating new content — whether it be text, images, music or even scientific solutions. It represents the next big leap towards making machines not only intelligent but also creative collaborators.

The theme of this programme — "From AI to Generative AI: Unlocking the Power of Smart Technologies" — reflects our collective ambition to equip professionals and educators with cutting-edge knowledge and practical skills that align with global technological advancements, he said.

Dr Satish Kumar Singh, QIP coordinator said that at IIIT Allahabad, we have always emphasised the importance of interdisciplinary research, innovation-driven learning and industry-academia collaborations. This programme, supported by AICTE under the Quality Improvement Programme, is another step in that direction. He was confident that this initiative will serve as a catalyst for faculty members and participants to integrate these modern AI techniques into their teaching, research, and professional practices.

Prof Manish Goswami, Dean Academics encouraged all participants to make the most of this opportunity — to engage deeply with experts, to collaborate with fellow learners and to explore the transformative potential of Generative AI. Dr KP Singh, Head IT extended his gratitude to AICTE for their continued support, to organising faculty members and staff for their tireless efforts and to all resource persons who will be sharing their expertise during this six-month journey. Dr Sanjay Singh, Head, Electronic Communication Department, wished the programme great success. Coordinator Dr Naveen Saini said 100 faculty members across the country were taking part in the programme. Dr Prasanna Mishra and Dr Kavindra Kandpal were also present at the inaugural session.

Nearly 8 lakh travel in first month of Knp Metro extension

Kanpur: Exactly one month ago, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the extension of Kanpur Metro's passenger services from Moti Jheel to Kanpur Central Station. The very next day, residents of Kanpur began arriving in large numbers at metro stations to experience underground metro travel for the first time. Their trust in the service grew rapidly over the following days.

In the first month since the extension, nearly eight lakh people have travelled via Kanpur Metro. To mark this milestone and enrich the commuter experience, a series of engaging events—band performances, book fairs, yoga session and drawing competition—were organised. *PNS*

Doctors' Day celebrated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Kanpur

The members of Inner Wheel Club of New Kanpur celebrated Doctors' Day at Suraj Nursing Home, Kakadeo, on Tuesday. In recognition of their service to humanity and society, Dr Savita Luthra, Dr Satish Luthra, Dr Richa, Dr Saurabh Luthra, Dr Subhash Gandhi, Dr Nupur Kapoor, Dr Rahul Yadav and Dr Uma Agrawal were felicitated.

On the same day, Annapurna Day was also observed by the club members, during which 51 lunch packets were distributed to the needy. Additionally, on the occasion of CA Day, Atul Agrawal, Rajesh Thakur, Prashant Pandey and



Kamlesh Bajaj were honoured for their contribution to society.

Charter President Renu Gupta, President Prof Mridula Shukla, Secretary Vinay Gupta, Sangeeta Jhavar, Ruchi Agrawal, Meenakshi Anurag and others were present.

Cochlear implant surgery performed successfully

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

On Doctor's Day, a new achievement was registered by the ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat) department of Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) which has been consistently providing quality services to patients coming from various regions of Purvanchal (eastern UP). On Tuesday, senior ENT specialist Prof Rajesh Kumar and his team comprising Prof Vishwambhar Singh, Dr Siva S. Dr Ramraj, Dr Rahul, Dr Chandrashekhar, Dr Akanksha, Dr Pamei, Dr Mayur, and from

the anesthesia team Dr Shashi Prakash and his team, as well as audiologist Sunil Kumar successfully performed a cochlear implant surgery on a two-year-old child suffering from CHARGE syndrome.

Prof Rajesh Kumar informed that in this disease, the child is born without the ability to hear or speak because the inner ear responsible for hearing is not developed at all.

CHARGE syndrome includes Coloboma (a congenital defect or hole in the eye), heart defects (such as congenital heart diseases), choanal atresia (blockage of the nasal passage from behind), retardation of growth and intellectu-

al development, genital abnormalities, and ear deformities and/or hearing loss.

Many of these conditions can be treated through surgery. In this case, a cochlear implant has been placed by performing surgery on the child's ear. With the help of an external hearing device, the child will now be able to hear within 24 hours and, with aural habilitation, will gradually learn to speak. The remaining conditions will be treated in the future. Prof Rajesh Kumar stated that cochlear implant was a promising option for children who are born deaf and mute or those who lose hearing ability at any point in life due to any reason.

Need to focus on ethics, moral values underlined

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Kanpur

The BNSD Alumni Council organised a seminar on the topic 'The Role of Alumni in the Current Education System' at its Kakadeo-based office.

Council President Dr Shivakant Mishra said that alumni could provide invaluable guidance to current students through their experiences. He emphasised that one of the council's key objectives was to reconnect successful alumni, who are now in high positions in India and abroad, with their alma mater. Paediatrician Dr RN Chaurasia stressed the importance of identifying students' interests and encouraging them

to pursue careers accordingly.

Council Secretary Gurcharan Singh highlighted that former President of India Ram Nath Kovind was an alumnus of the institution and it was upon his suggestion that the BNSD Alumni Council was established. Chief Advisor Dr Sidhanshu Rai and Principal Amar Singh Chauhan also spoke on the occasion. Former Principal of GSVM Medical College, Dr SK Katiyar, acknowledged the crucial role alumni play in enhancing the reputation of their school. Architect Vimal Jhaharia underlined the need to focus on ethics and moral values. Dr Shivakant Mishra, Dr Sidhanshu Rai, and Gurcharan Singh entertained the audience by singing nostalgic songs.

29 rly personnel retire

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Varanasi

A total of 29 employees from various departments who were retiring on June 30 were paid the final amount in a simple ceremony organised in the Premchand Auditorium Room of DRM Office here on Monday under the chairmanship of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER), Vineet Kumar Srivastava.

On the occasion, Divisional Personnel Officer (Incharge) Abhinav Kumar Singh, Assistant Divisional Personnel Officer Virendra Yadav and Assistant Divisional Finance Manager Arvind Pandey along with inspectors and employees



of Accounts and Personnel departments were present.

The divisional railway manager gave service medals to all the retiring employees and wished them a good life ahead

and expressed gratitude for their long and remarkable services. Before this, DPO (in charge) Abhinav Kumar Singh honoured all the retiring employees by garlanded them.

Digital India bridges divide, becomes people’s movement: PM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted on Tuesday that the Digital India initiative launched a decade ago bridged the digital divide between haves and have-nots and democratised opportunity, stressing that it has become a people’s movement.

In a social media post, he said while decades were spent doubting the ability of Indians to use technology, his Government changed this approach and trusted the ability of citizens to use technology.

Modi asserted that his Government used technology to eliminate the gap between the haves and the have-nots, he added. “When the intent is right, innovation empowers the less empowered. When the approach is inclusive, technology brings change in the lives of those on the margins. This belief laid the foundation for Digital India: a mission to democratise access, build inclusive digital infrastructure, and opportunities for all,” he said. In 2014, Modi said, India

had around 25 crore internet connections. Today, that number has grown to over 97 crore, with over 42 lakh km of optical fibre cable equivalent to 11 times the distance between the earth and the moon now connecting even the most remote villages, he added.

He said India’s 5G rollout is among the fastest in the world, with 4.81 lakh base stations installed in just two years.

High-speed internet now reaches urban hubs and forward military posts alike, including Galwan, Siachen and Ladakh, he noted.

He recalled that internet penetration was limited, digital literacy was low, and online access to Government services was scarce in 2014, the year his Government came to power.

He said many doubted whether a country as vast and diverse as India could truly go digital.

“Today, that question has been answered not just in data and dashboards, but in the lives of 140 crore Indians. From how we govern, to how we learn, transact and build, Digital India is everywhere,” he said.

Ten years ago, India embarked on a bold journey



into uncharted territory with great conviction, he said.

A decade later, the journey has touched countless lives and ushered in a new era of empowerment, he said, adding India has made many strides in digital payments, powered by the collective resolve of 140 crore Indians.

India Stack, which is the digital backbone, has enabled platforms like UPI, which now handles 100 plus billion transactions a year, he said, adding that around half of all real time digital transactions happen in India.

Through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), over ₹44 lakh crore has been transferred directly to citizens, cutting out

middlemen and saving ₹3.48 lakh crore in leakages, he said, adding that schemes like SVAMITVA have issued over 2.4 crore property cards and mapped 6.47 lakh villages, ending years of uncertainty.

The prime minister said India’s digital economy is empowering MSMEs and small entrepreneurs like never before.

He asserted that ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) is a revolutionary platform which opens a new window of opportunities by providing a seamless connection with huge market of buyers and sellers.

He added that the GeM (Government E-Marketplace) enables the common man to sell goods and services to all arms of the Government. This not only empowers the common man with a huge market but also saves money for the Government.

“Imagine this: You apply for a Mudra loan online. Your creditworthiness is assessed through an account aggregator framework. You get your loan and start your venture. You register on GeM, supply to schools and hospitals, and then scale up via ONDC,” he said.

ONDC recently crossed 200 million transactions, with the last 100 million in just six months, he noted.

He said from Banarasi weavers to bamboo artisans in Nagaland, sellers are now reaching customers nationwide without middlemen or digital monopolies. The GeM has also crossed ₹1 lakh crore

Gross Merchandise Value GMV in 50 days, with 22 lakh sellers, including over 1.8 lakh women-led MSMEs, who have fulfilled orders worth ₹46,000 crore, he said.

Modi said India’s digital public infrastructure is its global offering. From Aadhaar, CoWIN, DigiLocker and FASTag to PM-WANI and One Nation One Subscription is now studied and adopted globally, he said.

Through its G20 Presidency, India launched the Global DPI Repository and a USD 25 million social impact fund, helping nations across Africa and South Asia adopt inclusive digital ecosystems, he said.

Modi said India now ranks among the top three start up ecosystems in the world, with over 1.8 lakh start ups. But this is more than a start up movement, it is a tech renaissance, he added.

India is doing extremely well when it comes to AI skill penetration and AI talent concentration among our youth, he said in the post. Through the \$1.2 billion India AI Mission, India has enabled access to 34,000 Graphics Processing Units at globally unmatched

prices at less than ₹1 per GPU hour, making India not just the most affordable internet economy, but also the most affordable compute destination, he said.

Modi said, “India has championed humanity-first AI. The New Delhi Declaration on AI promotes innovation with responsibility. We are establishing AI Centres of Excellence across the country.”

The prime minister said the next decade will be even more transformative, as India is moving from digital governance to global digital leadership, from India-first to India-for-the-world.

He said digital India has not remained a mere Government programme but has become a people’s movement. It is central to building an Aatmanirbhar Bharat, and to making India a trusted innovation partner to the world, he said. Modi said, “To all innovators, entrepreneurs, and dreamers: the world is looking at India for the next digital breakthrough.” “Let us build what empowers. Let us solve what truly matters. Let us lead with technology that unites, includes and uplifts.”

BJP finishes organisational polls in 22 states, eyes on national president election

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday elected its presidents in six more states, taking to 22 the number of states where it has picked its organisational heads since the start of the party’s internal polls last year and fulfilling an essential formality to begin the election of its national president.

BJP presidents in Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand were elected unopposed, with the party showing a preference for those with a long stint in the organisation and ticking right social boxes, while having a low profile in public.

Ravindra Chavan, N Ramchander Rao, PVN Madhav, Rajeev Bindal and Mahendra Bhatt were formally announced as party presidents in these states respectively, a day after they were the only leaders to file nomination papers in line with the central leadership’s emphasis on fostering consensus around its choice.

Anil Tiwari was elected party president in Andaman and Nicobar in a similar manner.

A few more state presidents, including in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, will be elect-



ed in the coming days.

Seasoned lawmaker Hemant Khandelwal, currently an MLA, was the only one to file his nomination in Madhya Pradesh, making his election a mere formality.

A BJP leader noted that the central leadership has gone for candidates who are not seen as leading any faction and enjoy

wider acceptability.

The election of several state chiefs in the last couple of days has fulfilled a key BJP’s constitutional directive for starting the nomination process for picking its national president who will replace the incumbent JP Nadda.

Its 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.

Nadda, who was elected in January 2020, has been on an extension since his three-year term ended — first due to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and then because of the ongoing organisational exercise.

NCB busts darknet-hosted drug trafficking syndicate, arrests two

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Tuesday claimed to have busted a darknet-based pan-India LSD (a type of drug) trafficking syndicate with the arrest of two persons and seizure of drugs and cryptocurrency worth about ₹1 crore.

The syndicate was operating under the name ‘Ketamelon’ and a probe was initiated by the federal anti-narcotics agency after its Cochin zonal unit first intercepted three postal parcels containing 280 LSD blots on June 28 and the home of a suspect was raided the next day.

“This was (Ketamelon) one of India’s most prolific darknet drugs syndicates. The agency launched an operation codenamed ‘Melon’ to investigate it after getting primary inputs from the Cochin seizure,” the NCB said in a statement.

The darknet-enabled drugs supply platform had “established” a “widespread” network shipping LSD to cities like Bengaluru, Chennai, Bhopal, Patna and Delhi apart from some cities in Himachal

Pradesh and Uttarakhand, it said. The NCB suspects that over the last 14 months, it delivered 600 shipments. Two persons linked to the syndicate have been arrested till now, the agency said.

A total of 1,127 LSD blots, 131.66 grams of Ketamine, a hardware wallet holding about ₹70 lakh worth of USDT (cryptocurrency) was also seized as part of the operation. Some custodial wallets on crypto platforms like Binance have been identified for further investigation, it said.

NCB officials said ‘Ketamelon’ was India’s only Level 4 darknet vendor — kind of a top-tier status — operating “actively” over the past two years. The cartels on darknet, as per the investigators, are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 star based on their potency of drugs sold and their customer service.

Darknet refers to the deep hidden internet platform that is used for narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities by using the clandestine alleys of the onion router (ToR) to stay away from the surveillance of law enforcement agencies.

The name of this particu-

lar syndicate is derived from the vendor’s early involvement in Ketamine smuggling, as per the agency.

Drugs were primarily sourced from UK-based vendor Gunga Din, a known reshipper of the globally infamous Dr Seuss (also known as DS or Tribe Seuss) which is believed to be the largest LSD source in the world, the NCB said.

The estimated street value of the seized drugs is about ₹35.12 lakh with LSD blots being priced in a range of ₹2,500 - ₹4,000 each, as per the statement. LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) is a hallucinogenic drug which chemically acts to change the way people sense the world around them.

It is also known as acid, blots, stamps etc. LSD is odourless, colourless and tasteless and can be painted onto small squares of paper that people lick or swallow and it alters the sense of space, distance and time.

The NCB had busted a similar darknet-based LSD cartel named Zambada in 2023 and it had arrested 14 persons in the case apart from seizing 29,013 LSD blots, 472 grams of MDMA and ₹51.38 lakh in cash.

Rajnath, US Defence Secretary discuss ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday spoke to US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth and appreciated the “unwavering support” the US extended to India in its fight against terrorism.

In a phone conversation, Singh and Hegseth also took stock of India-US defence collaboration.

“Excellent discussion to review the ongoing and new initiatives to further deepen India-US defence partnership and strengthen cooperation in capacity building,” Singh said in a social media post.

“Conveyed my deep appreciation for the unwavering support extended by the US to India in its fight against terrorism.

“Looking forward to meeting him at an early date,” he said.

It was the first phone conversation between Singh and Hegseth following the May 7-10 military conflict between India and Pakistan.

BJP slams Tejashwi Yadav over Waqf act remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The BJP on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav over his remarks on the Waqf Act, calling him a “Maulana” and accusing him of polarising the society in Bihar on communal lines sensing opposition Mahagathbandhan’s “imminent” defeat in the assembly polls due later this year.

Doubling down on Yadav’s assertion that the opposition grand alliance in Bihar will consign the Waqf Act to the dustbin if voted to power, BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia alleged that they want to gain the power to bring Sharia law for the empowerment of one particular community only, unlike the NDA which works for the progress of all sections of society.

“These namazwadi do not want Babasaheb Ambedkar’s Constitution. They do not respect the Constitution. They only want Sharia law, they want only one particular religion’s empowerment,” he told a press conference at the BJP headquarters here. Accusing Yadav of indulging in “communal politics” with an eye on Muslim votes, Bhatia said, “Those talking about consigning Babasaheb’s Constitution and law passed by Parliament to the dustbin, people of Bihar

will ensure that their communal politics is consigned into the dustbin.”

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 Government at the Centre.

The RJD leader was addressing a ‘Save Waqf, Save Constitution’ rally at Gandhi Maidan in Patna. While lambasting Yadav for his comments, Bhatia also questioned the RJD leader’s understanding of the Constitution and the judicial process.

“Tejashwi Yadav, the opposition leader and former Bihar deputy chief minister who failed in class ninth, was saying yesterday that he will throw the Waqf (Amendment) Act to the dustbin. “I ask Tejaswi Yadav, a ‘namazwadi’, Maluna and messiah of those who do appeasement, have you ever read the Constitution? Have you ever fulfilled the basic spirit of the Constitution?” he said, asking, can any state Government trash a law passed by Parliament.

Bhatia said the law passed by the Parliament is subjudice in the Supreme Court and accused Yadav of disrespecting the apex court by making such remarks about the law.

ELI Scheme deceptive method to transfer public funds to employers : CITU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Major Left trade union CITU on Monday flayed new Employment linked Incentive Scheme (ELI) and accused the scheme as Government’s deceptive methods to transfer public funds to the employers’ class.

“It is in line with the earlier

₹1.97 lakh crores Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) and Rs.76000 crores Capital Expenditure Incentive Scheme (Capex Incentive) rolled out by the Union Govt in the name of generating employment,” said CITU general secretary Tapan Sen in a statement.

The PLI scheme was launched in 2020 for 14 industries in the manufacturing sector and then expanded to total

The PLI scheme was launched in 2020 for 14 industries in the manufacturing sector and then expanded to total 17 industries to create six million jobs

17 industries with a claim to create 6 million jobs and to increase the contribution of

manufacturing sector share to the GDP to 25 per cent from the then existing share of 15.4 per cent.

Contrary to the claimed target even seven lakhs jobs are not created.

Similarly Capex Incentive provided around ₹3.25 crores subsidy per job created at Sanand location in Gujarat to the four companies — American Micron, Tatas,

Murgeppa group, Japanese and Taiwanese companies for setting up semiconductor plants there, said CITU.

“These Incentive schemes have turned out to be the schemes subsidising investment cost, production costs of the corporates both domestic and foreign, through the public funds collected through GST imposed on the common masses of people. Now the lat-

est ELI scheme approved in the name of creating employment, further subsidises labour cost and the statutory liabilities of the employers under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Act from the Public Fund. While the budgetary allocation for MNREGA and other schemes are drastically cut year on year such subsidies are rolled out to the employers’ class,” said CITU.

Congress slams 10 years of Digital India as lofty claims

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

With the Modi Government hailing Digital India as a people’s movement that democratised technology in 10 years, the Congress on Tuesday claimed the fine print of its “lofty claims” is marred by unfulfilled promises, digital exclusion of the marginalised, hurting privacy and weakening transparency.

Digital India is a flagship programme of the Government launched on July 1, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the vision to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Questioning the Government’s claims of the success of the initiative that completed 10 years, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge cited data like villages and schools that are yet to get broadband connectivity, the

rising debt of state-owned telecom companies MTNL and BSNL and a surge in cyber crimes.

At the same time, the opposition party sought to take credit for laying the foundation of several pathbreaking initiatives like Aadhaar and UPI during its rule.

“The fine print of Modi Govt’s lofty claims of ‘Digital India’ is marred by unfulfilled promises and false claims,” Kharge said in a social media post...as of 26th June 2025, under the BharatNet project, a total of 6.55 lakh villages were supposed to be targeted for broadband connectivity, but out of these, 4.53 lakh villages, ie 65 per cent of them are yet to be covered, he claimed.

“The project’s deadline has been revised at least 8 times in 11 years. A meagre 0.73 per cent (766) Gram Panchayats currently have active Wi-Fi services. When the private players are opting for 5G, BSNL has not yet completed its tar-



get of deploying 1 lakh 4G towers. One-third towers left to be installed,” the Congress chief said.

Even after receiving three revival packages worth over ₹3 lakh crore — ₹69,000 crore in 2019, ₹1.64 lakh crore in 2022, and ₹89,047 crore in 2023 — it still lags behind private players, Kharge said.

He pointed out that BSNL’s debt rose by 291.7 per cent, from ₹5,948 crore in March 2014 to ₹23,297 crore in March 2024.

“MTNL’s debt increased by 136.2 per cent, from ₹14,210 crore to ₹33,568 crore over the same period,” he said.

Kharge also flagged the issue of “digital exclusion of the marginalised”.

He said 75.3 per cent of people aged 15 and above in the country do not know how to use a computer.

“This includes 81.9 per cent in rural areas and 60.4 per cent in urban areas, highlighting a significant digital skills gap. (NSS survey, 2020-21),” he

said. Nearly 7 crore registered workers were excluded from MNREGA by imposing the condition of AADHAAR-based payment, he said.

Kharge further claimed that 54 per cent of Government schools do not have an internet connection, 79 per cent have no desktop computer, 85 per cent lack a projector and 79 per cent do not have a smart classroom.

He also alleged that it has hurt privacy and weakened transparency.

“None less than PM Modi himself, reportedly told Ministers and Secretaries that India saw over 10 crore cyberattacks since the Pahalgam terror attack. Cybersecurity incidents rose by about 76.25 per cent from 2020 to 2024. These cases increased from 11.58 lakh in 2020 to over 20.41 lakh in 2024,” Kharge claimed, citing CERT-In data.

Between 2022 and 2024, digital arrest scams and related cybercrimes in India nearly tripled, and the money lost rose

21 times, he said, citing replies to questions in the Rajya Sabha.

The Act brought by the Congress party is being weakened by bringing a flawed Data Protection Law, he alleged.

“We were told that demonetisation will reduce cash transactions, but cash in circulation has risen, even in the last year,” Kharge said.

“Narendra Modi ji, we need to place on record that it was under the then PM Dr Manmohan Singh, that we created the Direct Benefits through AADHAAR and UPI architecture, which has made India a leader in Digital transactions.

“National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) which runs UPI transactions, was established by the UPA Government in 2009 itself,” he said. First Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme — PaHaL for LPG subsidy to 9.55 crore beneficiaries was launched by Congress-UPA in June 2013, Kharge pointed out.

Editor's TAKE

Is a new alternative to SAARC in the making?

As the idea of an alternative to SAARC gains momentum, India must act now to safeguard its regional power status

China has long desired to have a foothold in South Asia, the region which is strategically and economically conducive for its aspirations. Now it has got an opportunity to make an entry by forming a group of South Asian countries on the lines of SAARC. A recent trilateral meeting between China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in Kunming has reignited discussions about the future of regional cooperation in South Asia.

Reportedly these three countries are exploring the formation of a new regional organisation, potentially positioning it as an alternative to the long-stalled South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

While Bangladesh has officially downplayed the political implications of the Kunming meeting, the timing and context suggest a more ambitious agenda. Formed in 1985, SAARC includes eight South Asian nations: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. However, the organisation has been largely dysfunctional for the past decade.

The last SAARC Summit was held in Kathmandu in 2014. Since then, India-Pakistan tensions and broader geopolitical realignments have kept SAARC in cold storage, leaving a vacuum in regional diplomacy. China has steadily increased its footprint in South Asia through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), infrastructure investments, and strategic partnerships.

Its closer alignment with Pakistan, formalised through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), offers both countries an incentive to shape a new multilateral platform that bypasses India's dominance. For Pakistan, a new grouping-especially one that includes China-could allow Islamabad to regain some diplomatic leverage in the region.

However, the formation would not be a cakewalk. Bangladesh's official dismissal of alliance-building reflects its delicate balancing act. While Dhaka has strong economic ties with China and shares historical ties with Pakistan, its political, cultural, and economic proximity to India cannot be ignored.

Moreover, Bangladesh's reluctance to appear part of any China-Pakistan axis suggests that it values its autonomy and strategic balance. For India, the proposed bloc can a direct challenge to its regional dominant power. The creation of a parallel regional order where China, an external power, sets the agenda in South Asia could erode India's dominance.

If countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives sign on — drawn by investment promises — India may find itself increasingly isolated in its immediate neighbourhood. However, India also has considerable soft power, historical linkages, and economic influence in the region. The backlash against China's debt-trap diplomacy and increasing concerns over sovereignty could deter many nations .

The need of the hour is that India must take proactive steps to revive SAARC by engaging bilaterally with member states. India must intensify economic and infrastructure partnerships with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives. India is better suited to lead South Asia than China because of its historical and geographic advantages which are deeply rooted in its South Asian identity, While SAARC may be comatose, the need for regional cooperation is more urgent than ever. India must seize the moment to reassert its role as a natural leader in South Asia-not through coercion.

THE NEED OF THE HOUR IS THAT INDIA MUST TAKE PROACTIVE STEPS TO REVIVE SAARC BY ENGAGING BILATERALLY WITH MEMBER STATES

AAP's byelection wins spark political revival

Once seen as a Delhi-centric outfit, AAP's latest wins in BJP strongholds Ludhiana West and Visavadar signal not only a shift in public sentiment but also the party's growing national stature

The Aam Aadmi Party is delighted after its recent win in the Gujarat and Punjab by-elections. These victories in states dominated by the BJP indicate a shift in the Party's fortunes.

The AAP, once viewed as a Delhi-centric party ruling only in Delhi, has expanded over the years, gaining a national character. It now governs Punjab and is beginning to make inroads in states like Gujarat, which has long been considered a stronghold of the BJP.

The AAP was founded by Arvind Kejriwal in 2012, following his departure from Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement, which claimed to transform Indian politics. Leading a successful movement, Kejriwal first became the Chief Minister of Delhi in 2013.

He was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Delhi for the second time on February 14, 2015. He first assumed office on December 28, 2013, becoming the youngest Chief Minister of Delhi. The AAP ruled Delhi from 2015 until 2025.

The by-election victory is vital for Kejriwal after his Party's loss in February's Delhi Assembly poll. Atishi, the former chief minister, stated, "The victories in Ludhiana West and Visavadar show that people want effective governance. Underestimating Arvind Kejriwal's approach is a mistake — he plans to implement his model nationwide. Congratulations to the people of Ludhiana and Visavadar, and best wishes to AAP workers in Punjab and Gujarat."

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) retained the Ludhiana West assembly seat in Punjab, with Sanjeev Arora defeating Congress's Bharat Bhushan Ashu by 10,637 votes.

In Gujarat's Junagadh district, Gopal Italia won against BJP's Kirit Patel in Visavadar by 17,554 votes. AAP has now achieved victories in both seats with double the margins compared to the 2022 elections. These victories have provided hope for the Party's leaders, workers, and supporters. Although winning or losing is part of electoral politics, what truly matters is a party's ability to recover and thrive.

With the approaching Assembly polls scheduled for 2027, AAP's double victory indicates a clear indication that AAP is not out. Only in February did the AAP face a setback in the Delhi Assembly polls, resulting in the end of its ten-year rule, with the BJP winning 48 out of 70 seats.

Political fortunes can shift quickly, and this time, they have favoured Kejriwal and his Party. The defeat of both the Congress



and BJP was a significant setback for them, the AAP chief noted.



KALYANI SHANKAR

The success in by-elections demonstrates the Party's ability to sustain itself and recover from setbacks. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is expected to secure one seat in the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections. Many believe that Kejriwal will enter the Rajya Sabha despite his stated intention not to do so. However, his unpredictability is evident, as he has often said one thing and done another.

What would be the impact of AAP's victory in the by-polls on national politics? The Party has a fascinating history, facing both successes and setbacks. In the past 12 years, it has emerged as a national party and a political force.

It ruled Punjab and Delhi (until February). The Party's growth has been

fueled by its adoption of welfare policies and the offering of free benefits.

The AAP's approach, centred on efficient public service delivery and direct engagement with citizens, prioritises immediate improvements in the quality of life. This fresh approach has given the Party a unique standing in Indian politics. The AAP suffered a considerable setback when it lost the Delhi Government in the 2025 Assembly polls to the BJP.

To its utter shock, its convenor Kejriwal, along with some of his senior colleagues, also lost their seats. Meanwhile, the Party's image plummeted drastically when Kejriwal and some of his ministers were jailed for alleged corruption. He handed over power to his colleague, Atishi, until the elections.

It was a bitter loss for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), as it not only failed to return to power in Delhi but also saw many of its top leaders, including Kejriwal, defeated by the BJP. There were other reasons for the loss. It includes the disenchantment of the middle classes over the AAP and its leaders. AAP's welfare schemes mainly

benefit lower-income groups while neglecting the salaried middle class. Slum dwellers, migrant workers, and daily-wage labourers — AAP's loyal voter base — receive subsidies and cash transfers, leaving those in the middle-income group feeling overlooked.

Once a hero to the middle class and marginalised, Kejriwal's aura has faded. Yet, the uncanny politician cannot be written off after the by-election win.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is part of the Opposition coalition INDIA and worked with Congress in the 2024 elections. However, both parties have realised that this partnership has not helped either.

After the by-election win, Kejriwal has declared that now the AAP is considering running independently in the upcoming elections. This decision, along with the AAP's stronger presence in the opposition following its recent by-election wins, makes the Party's future in Indian politics quite interesting.

(The author is a popular columnist. Views are personal)

The new paradigm of holistic education

SECOND Opinion

Indian students were known for their rote learning prowess and their genius capabilities to manoeuvre through theory lessons. The education system pushed such students by awarding them with good marks.

However, with changing times, it dawned upon educators the fact that just theoretical education will not be enough for the students who are stepping into the 21st century, which is more advanced than at any time ever.

The next generation needs to be empowered by holistic education where they not only learn about core subjects but also learn soft skills and empathy, and develop a skillset that will be required in the future. Thus, multiple courses were introduced by schools to prepare the students for a future that will be considerably different when they step into the professional world. Interestingly, International Baccalaureate or IB programmes offer a curriculum that is rooted in curiosity.

It is a course designed for the future and does not even require any specific programmes to cater to futuristic needs. Here, teachers don't just share theoretical information but share knowledge; students too do their research for better clarity of the topic. It leads to a meaningful connection where both draw from real-world contexts to learn and teach complex topics. This deep



SANAMDEEP CHADHA

involvement is only possible through experiential learning, where students learn through hands-on activities, field visits, and role plays and thus understand the concepts in such a manner that they create lasting memories. It is difficult to create a rigid curriculum for such classes since the teacher will have to create a flow in tandem with the knowledge the students possess.

While the students' age, developmental level, exposure, IQ, and EQ will play a crucial role here, with every class they skillfully navigate the curriculum and apply the knowledge in ways that have never been thought of before. The inquiry-based learning pedagogy of the IB empowers the learners to evolve in the right direction in a world that is dynamic and changing every day.

Teachers can become their anchor and help the students to think in smart ways. This can be done by challenging the students with problems and helping them in analysing and solving the problems. Instead of showing the students how to solve a problem, the focus here is on the students themselves working towards finding the solution to this problem.

Real-world scenarios can be the best examples to understand many concepts. Teachers are the right people to build a mindset that is more entrepreneurial. These creative students, who have been regularly solving problems since their school days, will think like entrepreneurs and create more employment rather than looking for one. As the students learn skills that

will help them in the real world, they will be able to compete with the best. This is the right way to prepare students to succeed in the global workforce. Introducing advanced technology at an early age will make the students comfortable with it and also sow the seeds for innovation early on.

A focus on science and technology will build a strong foundation for engineering and maths, apart from creating a scientific approach to technology. Paralleled with a conducive learning environment where students share their ideas, this will not just boost their creativity but also their confidence and make them self-assured individuals. The culture of innovation will motivate all students and the values of inclusivity will create a learning environment that is accessible to everyone.

Ultimately, creating such an ecosystem is only possible when all stakeholders work together. As teachers inculcate teamwork and communication skills, parents too will need to step up and support their child's education. The parents must change their viewpoint and understand the benefits of this futuristic style of education.

To take innovation-based learning to the next level, Government support too is necessary. They must create policies that promote invention and creativity. Such an approach will help us prepare the students for careers in modern industries and prepare them for any surprises that the future may hold.

(The writer is an educator and education reformist. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Yet another stampede

Apocryphal news item, "Stampede mars Lord Jagannath's yatra", published on June 30, this is my response. Even as the scars of the Bengaluru stampede remain at large, the country has witnessed yet another such incident with three devotees being killed and over 50 injured during the Rath Yatra in Puri, Odisha last Sunday.

Deadly crowd surges have become a common sight in India, especially during religious events which are often held in cramped areas with shoddy infrastructure and few safety measures. There have been a number of stampedes in India over the last some decades, as many religious events are organised without adequate preparations, and proper safety measures in place. The role of authorities and their utter failure and negligence to manage huge crowds primarily cause such stampedes. While the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) had released guidelines in 2014 for crowd management, these directions are flouted with impunity.

By ensuring separate entry and exit points at a location, deploying adequate police and security personnel and using a public address system for proper communication, stampedes can be prevented, saving precious human lives. This tragic recurrence underscores the urgent need for stricter enforcement of existing guidelines and proactive planning from organisers.

RANGANATHAN SIVAKUMAR | CHENNAI

Rising menace of diabetes

The cases of diabetes in India are increasing in a leap and bound manner. Despite being a chronic disease, approximately 101 million Indians are having diabetic issues. India is the second largest country in the world with the highest diabetic prevalence after China. Ultra processed and processed foods, which are part and parcel of our daily diet, are the main source of inviting this disease into our body at an early age.

Processed food item brands often play with the customers in the name of so-called 'Natural', 'Sugar-free' or 'No added sugar' labelling. Even sugar-free food items are not actually free from sugar. We all need to be alert from the health disaster slowly coming to our body. We must make ourselves label-literate. We need to track the total sugar quantity of the packed food items, we are consuming. Also, becoming ingredient-literate is necessary, so that we can make smart health choices every time we pick any processed food item. Becoming label-literate is the need of the hour to avoid diabetic health disaster. This surge necessitates immediate and widespread public health campaigns. Educating consumers about hidden sugars and encouraging fresh, whole foods are crucial steps. Ultimately, a societal shift towards healthier eating habits, supported by clear labelling regulations, is essential to combat this growing epidemic.

KIRTI WADHAWAN | KANPUR

World UFO Day

Since its inception, World UFO Day has grown into an international event, with celebrations ranging from sky-watching sessions to educational programmes, all aimed at inspiring curiosity and critical thinking.

The UFOs are a constant subject of conspiracy theories around the world. This day is celebrated in various ways such as hosting a sky-watching session, appropriate documentary screening by ufologists and curious people, setting up creative activities, organising debates, and relevant science sessions can be organised.

The UFO and aliens-related films like ET, The Extra-Terrestrial, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Independence Day, The Day the Earth Stood Still and Men in Black can be specially screened to suitable public on this day. All around the globe, unusual lights in the sky or strange occurrences keep humans always curious about otherworldly beings. Movies and television series keep our imaginations alive. It's no surprise conspiracy theories are also prominent when it comes to UFOs. World UFO Day recognises our curiosity about life from another dimension. World UFO Day serves as a fascinating reminder of humanity's enduring quest to understand the unknown. It encourages both scientific inquiry and imaginative exploration of what lies beyond our terrestrial confines.

BURRA MADHUSUDHAN | REDDY

VICE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS RAISE DEMOCRATIC CONCERNS

Of late, the Vice President is seen actively amplifying the voice of the functionaries of the ruling party. He has been raising his loud voice against the judiciary after the Supreme Court verdict that went in favour of the Government of Tamil Nadu and gave clarity on the functioning of the Governors of States and the President of the country, reasserting their role to act as per the advice of the law-making bodies elected by the people.

His open support to the unconstitutional acts of the Governors of the opposition-ruled states was not expected of a person holding such a constitutional post. He knows how some Governors were trying to rule the states, keeping aside the ministries and the law-making bodies elected directly by the people. Again, he has amplified the statement of the Union Home Minister on the language policy. Now he has spoken against those who criticise the Government. Criticising the Government's

incongruous policies and programmes, mistakes and misdeeds are the essence of democracy. To quote an example, exposing the role of Electoral Bonds and the way they were used to promote quid pro quo means to influence the ruling party for desired favours was an important act of the political and non-political critics. It is known to all that the opposition parties and the people braved even the worst forms of repression and opposed the emergency to restore democracy.

Can they be called enemies within the country? Calling critics as enemies within the country displays a poor understanding of the principles and practising of democracy. It is said dictatorship begins with control over media to suppress dissent and critics. Let the constitutional heads remember their official position before they make any instinctive reactions, as they concern the image of the nation also.

AG RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR

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

India's rising score but falling rank in gender equality

Is India truly progressing towards gender equality, or are its gains being undermined by persistent gaps in key areas, especially political representation? As metrics in education, health, and economic participation show incremental advances, a sharp decline in political empowerment casts a shadow over development

FIRST Column

According to the World Economic Forum's 2025 Global Gender Gap Report, India poses a conundrum. The global rating of India has fallen from 129 to 131 out of 148 international locations, no matter its gain in its overall gender parity rating, which went from 64.1 per cent to 64.4 per cent.

The quantity and sustainability of the improvements made are known as a query by means of this improvement. Is India making progress toward gender equality, or is this improvement being overshadowed by other areas in which development has been relatively gradual?

The Metrics Behind the Movement

The Global Gender Gap Index evaluates gender parity in four different areas: political empowerment, health and survival, educational attainment, and economic involvement and opportunities. India's score in three of these categories has remained stable or improved. However, the total performance has been significantly impacted by the loss of political empowerment.

India's score in 3 of these categories has remained solid or progressed. However, the entire overall performance has been appreciably impacted by the loss of political empowerment.

India has made quantifiable strides in a number of regions, along with monetary participation and possibility. One of the number one factors of the 0.9 per cent factor increase on this subindex's rating is the development in parity in predicted earned income, which accelerated from 28.6 per cent to 29.9 per cent.

This minor upward thrust is massive given the ancient gender-based economic disparity in India. Women endured to take part in the labour pressure on the best price in India's history, at 45.9 per cent. Regardless of this stability, the commercial enterprise keeps facing problems which include informality, wage inequality, and a lack of social guarantees.

Some other regions of development indicated instructional attainment. India's rating extended to 97.1 per cent, reflecting nearly frequent literacy parity and better female tertiary schooling attendance. Secondary-level enrolment figures have come to be further encouraging, and ladies' gross enrolment now marginally surpasses boys'. Even though there's nevertheless a giant gap between educational attainment and professional potentialities.

India's parity score in Health and Survival has improved as a result of longer healthy life expectancy and a better birth — sex ratio. Maternal health initiatives and increased access to healthcare programs like Ayushman Bharat have contributed to a more than 50 per cent decrease in maternal mortality over the past ten years. The overall ranking has dropped due to a sharp reduction in the Political



HEMANGI SINHA

Empowerment dimension, despite improvements in economic, health, and education metrics. The proportion of women in cabinet positions fell from 6.5 per cent to 5.6 per cent, while their representation in Parliament fell from 14.7 per cent to 13.8 per cent. These decreases are part of a longer-term downward trend that began in 2023. Given that the Women's Reservation Act of 2023 calls for a one-third reservation for women in state assemblies and parliament, this is especially

disheartening.

However, this law won't take effect until after the general elections in 2029 due to continuing procedures like the national census and delimitation. In the meanwhile, few political parties have taken explicit steps to increase female representation, and they are not constitutionally compelled to do so. In India, women have long fought for political representation.

The Women's Reservation Bill was passed after various parliamentary hurdles and more than thirty years. This delay further solidifies the long-standing opposition to female leadership in Indian Governmental institutions and demonstrates a lack of political will.

South Asia and Beyond

When compared to its South Asian neighbours and the BRICS countries, India's relative decline becomes even more apparent. Stronger political representation and more successful grassroots empowerment initiatives are the main reasons why nations like Bangladesh and Nepal have outperformed India in gender parity rankings. India's performance appears particularly low when viewed from this regional perspective, underscoring the urgent need for policy reform.

Furthermore, India still does poorly on measures like the employment — education divide, which should ideally demonstrate greater synergy.

Women make up less than 20 per cent of the workforce and contribute a small portion of the GDP, despite high rates of reading and graduation. Oxfam India 2020 research found that women's unpaid labour contributes around ₹19 lakh crore to the economy annually, which traditional economic measurements do not account for.

Bridging the Gap

Even while India has made significant progress towards achieving gender parity in economic inclu-



SAKSHI CHAUDHARY

sion, health, and education, the systemic obstacles that prevent women from fully participating in society still exist. India must implement comprehensive, inclusive, and long-term policy reforms to address important structural concerns if it hopes to go beyond small achievements to revolutionary effects.

Policy Gaps

The delayed implementation of the Women's Reservation Act, which was passed in 2023, is one of the most obvious gaps. It appears unlikely that the plan to reserve a third of seats in State Assemblies and Parliament would be carried out before 2029. In addition to representation, this delay affects the wider ramifications of having women in leadership roles, including the allocation of resources and the formulation of policies.

Furthermore, even if women's labour market participation is at its highest point ever — 45.9 per cent — this number conceals a number of issues, including salary inequities, the quality of jobs, their prominence in the unorganised sector, and the absence of social protections. The majority of working women still have low-wage, precarious occupations with few

opportunities for growth.

Similar to this, even if initiatives like Jan Dhan Yojana and MUDRA loans have improved financial inclusion, it is still surface. According to the World Bank's Findex Survey, one-third of all women's accounts remain dormant. Despite having bank accounts, women continue to struggle with financial independence and decision-making.

Social and Cultural Norms

Patriarchal conventions still limit women's freedom, independence, and involvement. Gender roles are embedded from a young age and influence financial decisions, career choices, and leadership ambitions. Early marriage is still common and daughters are still viewed as liabilities in many rural areas of India, which hinders progress in school and the workplace.

Women still experience the glass ceiling and glass cliff in metropolitan environments, where they are either excluded from leadership positions or assigned to unstable ones. According to a McKinsey analysis, reducing the gender employment gap might boost India's GDP by \$770 billion by 2025. However, this promise is still mostly unrealised.

Policy for Accelerated Progress

India needs to take a comprehensive, whole-of-society strategy in order to attain true gender parity. Implementing employment and skill development initiatives that provide women with digital and vocational training is a top priority, especially in high-growth industries like technology, clean energy, and logistics.

Gender-sensitive labour regulations should include provisions for flexible work schedules, workplace safety, and equitable remuneration. Increased political representation and mentorship initiatives are necessary to support women's leadership. With ministries and state Governments allocating funding according to gendered demands and outcomes, gender-responsive budgeting is crucial. Additionally important are reasonably priced child care and assistance for self-help groups via digital literacy and business training. Education changes should encourage girls to pursue STEM fields and emphasise gender sensitisation from an early age. Progress will be monitored and accountability will be enhanced by routine data gathering via a national gender dashboard. Investing in women is not just about equality; it is also a significant driver of inclusive development and economic success in India. Gender parity is crucial if India is to grow into a \$5 trillion economy and a major world power. According to the facts, families succeed, communities flourish, and the national GDP increases when women are economically empowered, educated, and healthy. The best strategy to guarantee long-term socioeconomic resilience is to invest in women.

(Hemangi Sinha is Project Head at World Intellectual Foundation and Sakshi Chaudhary is a researcher. Views are personal)

How the Modi Government rewrote India's growth story after a lost decade

As the Modi Government marks 11 years in office and one year into its third term, India finds itself at a vastly different juncture than it did in 2014. After a decade of drift, indecision, and policy paralysis under the UPA regime, the BJP-led NDA, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has delivered a decisive shift in both vision and execution. The contrast between the two eras is not merely one of leadership style; it is a difference in outcomes, priorities, and national confidence. The UPA years, especially during its second term (2009–2014), were marred by scandals, economic slowdowns, and administrative inertia.

Despite India's potential, governance was often reduced to managing coalition compulsions and fire-fighting reputational damage. Flagship welfare programs lacked targeting, leakages were rampant, and large sections of the poor remained excluded. In stark contrast, the Modi Government embraced technology-backed delivery and scale.

Over 81 crore people today receive free food grains under the PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, while the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has led to the construction of over 12 crore toilets, transforming rural sanitation, an area long neglected during the UPA years. While the UPA Government often spoke extensively about inclusive growth, it failed to operationalise financial inclusion at the grassroots level.

The Modi Government made inclusion tangible through the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) trinity, revolutionising welfare delivery. Over 52 crore loans have been provided under the Mudra Yojana, with 68 lakh street vendors empowered through PM SVANidhi. Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) to 20 crore women during the pandemic stand as a testament to real-time governance, a concept alien to the UPA era, which was defined by middlemen and red tape. In a major achievement over the past eleven years, the Direct Benefit Transfer system under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government has revolutionised welfare delivery in India, resulting in cumulative savings of ₹3.48 lakh crore by curbing leakages and ensuring direct transfers to beneficiaries. Since its inception, ₹44 lakh crore worth of benefits have been transferred via DBT. To put this scale in perspective, counting ₹1 lakh every minute would take over 833 years to reach that total. The DBT model has significantly improved the efficiency and targeting of Government subsidies. India's farmers, too, were long used to hollow promises and minimal budgetary support. Under the UPA, minimum support prices stagnated, insurance schemes were either non-existent or ineffective, and rural distress remained unresolved.

In contrast, the Modi Government quintupled the agriculture budget, distributed nearly 25 crore soil health cards, and directly transferred ₹3.7 lakh crore through PM-Kisan. Over ₹1.75 lakh crore in crop insurance claims have been settled under the PM Fasal Bima Yojana. Women, often relegated to

symbolic representation during the UPA years, have emerged as a force in the Modi era.

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has enabled over 10 crore households to access clean cooking fuel, drastically improving women's health and dignity. Paid maternity leave was extended to 26 weeks, and women received over 35 crore Mudra loans comprising 68 per cent of total disbursements marking a major departure from the limited economic inclusion offered earlier. The vision of "Lakshpati Didi's" aims to turn 3 crore women into income earners, setting a clear goal for empowerment that goes beyond tokenism.

The UPA's approach to education reform and youth development was characterised by bureaucratic inertia and outdated frameworks. By contrast, the Modi Government introduced the National Education Policy (NEP) after 30 years, bringing in multidisciplinary flexibility and investing massively in skill development.

Over 1.6 crore individuals have been trained under the PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana, while more than 1.6 lakh startups many of them youth-led have emerged, creating over 17 lakh jobs. Infrastructure upgrades under the PM SHRI scheme, the establishment of 7 new IITs and 8 IIMs, and a tripling of AIIMS underline the Government's long-term commitment to building a knowledge economy.

In terms of physical infrastructure, the change is dramatic. Under the UPA, projects moved slowly, and red tape throttled investments. Today, highway construction proceeds at 34 km per day, metro rail networks have quadrupled, and 86 new airports have been operationalised. The rural road network now spans nearly 4 lakh km, with 99 per cent connectivity achieved. The railway budget has increased ninefold, facilitating the introduction of 400 Vande Bharat trains, transforming connectivity and travel comfort across the country.

More than 136 Vande Bharat trains are currently operational, connecting various cities. On national security and foreign policy, the UPA's tenure was marked by hesitation and passivity. Cross-border terror and infiltration met with little response beyond diplomatic protest.

In contrast, the Modi Government's handling of crises whether surgical strikes and air strikes like Operation Sindoor or rescue missions like Operation Kaveri reflects a clear doctrine of assertive, sovereign decision-making. Defence exports have increased 34 times since 2014. India's defence exports have surged to a record high of ₹23,622 crore in FY 2024–25. Strategic decisions such as the abrogation of Article 370 and the restructuring of the Ordnance



ASEERVATHAM ACHARY

Factory Board highlight a leadership unafraid to act. Economically, India was in a fragile state by 2014 burdened by rising NPAs, stalled investments, and falling investor confidence.

Today, India is the fastest-growing economy in the world. India is the fourth-largest economy in the world, and it leads in innovation and manufacturing. From mobiles to toys, products are now being made in India.

India leads the world in real-time digital transactions (49 per cent of the global total), has reduced NPAs to 2.6 per cent, and FDI inflows have seen a steady rise from USD 36.05 billion in FY 2013–14 to USD 81.04 billion (provisional) in FY 2024–25, marking a 14 per cent increase from USD 71.28 billion in FY 2023–24. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme alone has catalysed ₹14 lakh crore in manufacturing output and created 11.5 lakh new jobs. These are not just economic figures, they represent India's transition from fragility to resilience.

The Modi Government has also streamlined the business ecosystem with bold reforms. While the UPA era was defined by complex regulations and outdated laws, India has since climbed 79 ranks in the Ease of Doing Business index and seen a 17-fold increase in patent grants. Over 1.8 lakh companies were registered in 2023–24 alone, supported by simplified labour codes, reduced corporate taxes, and the removal of archaic colonial-era laws.

Culture and heritage, long overlooked, were rejuvenated. Projects like the redevelopment of Kedarnath, the reconstruction of the Ram Mandir, and the repatriation of over 640 stolen artefacts signal a cultural renaissance absent under previous regimes.

Initiatives like Swadesh Darshan and HRIDAY have placed India's civilisational legacy back at the heart of public consciousness. Finally, the digital revolution in India has gone from rhetoric to reality. Under the UPA, broadband connectivity was sluggish and internet costs were prohibitive.

Today, with 116 crore mobile subscribers, 6.93 lakh km of fibre optic cable laid, and UPI clocking ₹24 lakh crore in monthly transactions, India has become a global leader in digital infrastructure. Data costs have plummeted by 97 per cent, and 5G now reaches 99.6 per cent of districts, empowering even remote regions with next-generation technology.

In every sphere — governance, economy, security, infrastructure, and inclusion — the Modi Government has not only outperformed its predecessors but has also fundamentally altered the trajectory of India's development. From a nation weighed down by indecision and scandals to one that leads in innovation, delivery, and global confidence, India's transformation from the UPA years to the Modi era is nothing short of historic.

(The writer is National Coordinator of Digital Library, Library and Documentation, Bharatiya Janata Party. Views are personal)

Why Kuruba tribe deserves schedule tribe status

In a vibrant nation like India, with its rich tapestry of cultures and communities, the need to address the grievances of marginalised groups is paramount. As we strive toward social justice and equality, it is crucial to shine a light on the Kuruba tribe, whose persistent calls for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) list across Karnataka deserve urgent attention and action.

Currently, the Kuruba community, which numbers nearly 60 lakh, holds ST status solely in the Kodagu (Coorg) district. This limitation not only undermines the collective identity of the Kurubas but also perpetuates a legacy of historical injustice that has stymied our community's progress for generations. The removal of geographical restrictions is imperative for recognising our rightful place in the socio-cultural fabric of Karnataka.

Historical Context and Cultural Identity

Historically, the Kuruba community has been classified as "Forest and Hill Tribes" since the 1901 Census, indicative of our deep-rooted connection to the natural environment. Our customs, traditions, and livelihoods reflect a rich heritage that transcends mere administrative classifications. Across Karnataka, from the verdant hills of Kodagu to the plains of Mysuru and beyond, the Kurubas share identical cultural practices, language (Kannada), and social rituals that bind us together. Shared religious beliefs, including the worship of deities such as Beerappa and the observance of festivals like Makke Habbu, highlight our community's unity in diversity. We boast a unique caste structure and a system of totemic symbolism that further delineates our identity. The existence of community priests known as Tammadi or Gorava — whose practices differ significantly from those of traditional Brahmin priests — reinforces our distinct cultural lineage.

Socio-economic Challenges

Despite our cultural richness, the Kuruba community continues to face significant socio-economic challenges. Historically dependent on pastoralism, agriculture, and animal husbandry, many Kurubas have struggled due to displacement from their ancestral lands and adverse policies that have marginalised their livelihoods.

For instance, literacy rates among Kurubas have remained abysmally low, with only 1.09 per cent recorded in the 1901 census — a figure that saw only marginal improvement by 1931. Continued socio-economic marginalisation, exacerbated by living in forests and rural areas, hampers educational opportunities and economic stability for our community.

Recognising the Kuruba tribe as STs throughout Karnataka would open avenues for targeted welfare programs, educational initiatives, and infrastructure development aimed at empowering the community. It would enable us to harness Government support aimed at improving literacy, healthcare, and employment opportunities — essential components for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Legal Justifications for Inclusion

The case for our inclusion as Scheduled Tribes is bolstered by the legal framework surrounding tribal recognition in India. The Supreme Court's rulings have consistently supported the idea of unifying tribal synonyms under the ST list, arguing in favour of shared characteristics that define tribal identity. Moreover, the 1976 ST Amendment allows for proportional adjustments in the context of area expansions, supporting the stance that Kurubas meet the criteria established by the Lokur Committee regarding primitive traits, distinct culture, and geographical isolation. The imposition of area restrictions during the 1956 States Reorganisation has resulted in the unjust exclusion of Kurubas from the ST list in many regions of Karnataka. This has been a major oversight, given that other tribes such as Naikda, Lambani, and Soliga have been granted state-wide ST recognition without similar constraints. Parliamentary debates as far back as 1976 have underscored the need to eliminate such regional-based restrictions, highlighting a growing consensus on the need for equitable treatment of all tribal communities.

Conclusion: A Collective Path Forward

The plight of the Kuruba tribe is not merely an ethnic issue; it reflects a broader struggle for recognition, dignity, and empowerment in our society. By granting statewide Scheduled Tribe status to the Kuruba community, we will take a decisive step toward rectifying the historical injustices that have marginalised us for too long. This act will not only promote social justice but will also enrich Karnataka's diverse cultural heritage.

As we move forward, we must engage in meaningful dialogue, fostering collaboration between Government authorities and community leaders. Together, we can ensure that the voices of the Kuruba tribe, along with our shared values and aspirations for a brighter future, are heard and respected. It is time to embrace a future where every community, regardless of its history, is given the chance to thrive and contribute to the nation's progress.

(The writer is Member of Legislative Assembly, Karnataka. Views are personal)

Saraswat Bank set to acquire New India Co-op Bank

TN RAGHUNATHA
■ Mumbai

In a major relief to affected 1.35 lakh account holders and depositors, Saraswat Co-operative Bank Ltd — India's largest urban co-operative Bank — initiated the process of merger with New India Co-Op Bank Ltd (NICB) Limited, following an "in-principle" approval given by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Addressing a joint news conference with the Administrator of the RBI restrictions-imposed NICB Ltd, Chairman of Saraswat Bank Gautam E Thakur said that the merger formalities would be completed by August/ September 2025.

Thakur said that the Saraswat Bank which "has a long tradition of taking over financially weak co-operative banks, had so far acquired seven such banks, including Mandvi Cooperative bank and Nashik People's cooperative bank. "The NICB will be the eighth such bank that Saraswat Bank will take over," he said.

Thakur said that after completing the process of "due diligence" lasting for a fortnight, Saraswat Bank had vol-

untarily approached the RBI, showing readiness to take over NICB, following which the apex bank gave an "in principle" his bank's proposal.

"The merger process — involving the submission of a scheme of amalgamation with NICB to the RBI and subsequent formal approval by the apex bank — will be completed in 45 days to 60 days. During this period both NICB and Saraswat will seek formal sanction from their respective share-holders at general meetings," he said.

"After the RBI approves the scheme of amalgamation submitted by both Saraswat and NICB together, the normal operations of the merged bank will start immediately," Thakur said.

Expressing his happiness over Saraswat Bank's decision to take over the affected bank, RBI-appointed Administrator of the RBI Shreekanth said: "This is the quickest-ever resolution to a crisis facing a cooperative bank. Within four and a half months, a solution has been found to the NICB crisis under the guidance of the RBI". It is a win-win situation for the affected depositors of the New India Co-operative Bank. The Saraswat

will be protecting the interests of the NIC depositors".

It may be recalled that the RBI imposed restrictions for a period of six months on the NICB Ltd on February 13, after a fraud worth ₹122 crore came to light in the bank. RBI restrictions came into effect after the close of business on February 13, and will be valid for six months. Having superseded the bank's board of directors for 12 months, citing "poor governance standards", the RBI has appointed Shreekanth, a former chief general manager of the State Bank of India (SBI), as the administrator to manage the bank's affairs. Additionally, a committee of advisors has been formed to assist him. In all, NICB has 30 branches and a deposit base of ₹2,436 crore as of March 2024. The bank had posted losses of ₹30.74 crore in 2022-23 and ₹22.78 crore in 2023-24.

Announcing a big relief for the NICB depositors, the Saraswat Bank chief said in his interaction with the media that the depositors would get "full access" to their money lying in their saving bank/current bank accounts and also the Fixed Deposits immediately after the start of the normal operations post

the merger. "As per the value-based policy of our bank, we will protect the financial interests of all depositors.

"Based on our requirements, we will also try to absorb nearly 200 employees of the NIC after their taking interviews".

Replying to a question, Thakur expressed confidence that the Sarswat would bring about a turn-around of the NICB.

To another question, Thakur said: "As far as merging of branches are concerned, Saraswat will take a call based on the convenience of customers in specific localities and size of the branches of the banks". Currently, the Saraswat Bank has 312 branches and 303 ATMs in eight states, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Haryana, while NICB has 27 branches, including 17 in Mumbai and six in Thane. As on March 31, 2025, Saraswat has a total business of ₹91,814 crore (comprising ₹36,333 crore, while NICB has deposits worth ₹2,397 crore and advances worth ₹1,162 crore during the same period.

Two arrested in ₹10 crore online trading fraud

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi Police have busted a stock trading scam involving a nationwide fraud trail of over ₹10 crore, arresting two men from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Tuesday.

The investigation began after a Delhi resident, Sachin Kumar Tomar, was duped of ₹8.15 lakh through a fake online trading platform.

The case, registered on April 2, 2025, has exposed the elaborate workings of a cyber fraud network that used social media platforms like WhatsApp to lure unsuspecting victims with promises of high returns on stock market investments.

Tomar, a resident of Shivaji Park in Shahdara, came in contact with a woman named Sakshi Yadav on WhatsApp. Over time, she convinced him to invest in a trading platform and added him to a WhatsApp group named "eToro Analytical Team & Time is Money", claiming it was run by her uncle and another man named Rakesh. Trusting her, Tomar deposited ₹8.15 lakh into various bank accounts shared in the group. However, when he attempted to withdraw his supposed profits, the transactions failed and the group became unresponsive. Realizing he had been cheated,

he filed a complaint on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), following which an FIR was registered under cybercrime-related provisions.

A special team led by SHO Vijay Kumar and supervised by ACP Operations Gurdev Singh began tracing the financial trail. Investigators found that ₹5.75 lakh of the defrauded money had been transferred to a Canara Bank account in Andhra Pradesh, which was later redirected to an Axis Bank account operated by Shashi Pratap Singh and his father, Ramashankar Singh. After serving notice, Ramashankar disclosed that although he was a joint account holder, it was his son who controlled the transactions. Police arrested Shashi Pratap from Gorakhpur and recovered his mobile phone, SIM cards, company pamphlets, and official stamps related to the fraudulent firm SRG TREE Pvt. Ltd.

Upon interrogation, Shashi revealed that he had been taken to Nepal by an associate, Nihal Pandey, where they stayed in a hotel with three other men. There, Nihal collected SIM cards from Shashi and handed them over to another individual known only as "X."

Nihal was later arrested from Gorakhpur as well, and from his possession, police recovered

mobile phones, SIM cards, and the cheque book linked to the Axis Bank account that received the defrauded funds.

During questioning, Nihal confessed to being a part of a larger syndicate that sourced multiple bank accounts by luring people with promises of commissions.

He admitted that over a period of one month, the group conducted transactions worth over ₹10.4 crore. Shashi was allegedly promised 1.5 per cent commission per transaction, while Nihal also earned through referrals. One more individual, identified only as "Y," reportedly paid Shashi ₹8 to Rs. 10 lakh in cash.

The accused were produced before the court and remanded to one day of police custody. Police have recovered mobile phones, SIM cards, stamps, company pamphlets, and cheque books.

The investigation is ongoing, with officials working to identify other members of the syndicate and trace the full extent of the financial fraud. 94 killed in 78 terrorist attacks across Pakistan in June: Report Peshawar, Jul 1 (Press Trust of India) At least 94 people, including 53 security personnel, were killed in 78 terrorist attacks across Pakistan in June this year, according to a new report released on Tuesday.

Digital copies of adoption orders valid under new rules: CARA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has clarified that adoptive parents do not need hard copies of adoption orders as digitally certified versions sent via e-mail are legally valid and sufficient under the current rules.

In a letter issued to all states, Union Territories, Specialised Adoption Agencies (SAAs) and District Child Protection Units (DCPUs), CARA addressed the confusion surrounding Regulation 13(8) of the Adoption Regulations, 2022, which outlines the procedure for delivering adoption orders to adoptive families.

The clarification comes amid reports that some adoption agencies and protection units were uncertain about the validity of e-mailed orders, leading to delays and miscommunication in finalising adoption processes.

The regulation mandates that a certified copy of the adoption order — authenticated by the office of the District Magistrate — must be obtained by the SAA through the DCPU.

This copy must then be sent to the adoptive parents via e-mail within 10 days and uploaded on the designated portal for download.

Clarifying the term "certified copy," CARA said it refers to a digitally authenticated version bearing official attestation, and not a physical original or hard copy.

"Certified digital/e-mailed copies, as authenticated by the competent authority, shall be considered compliant with the Regulation," the letter said.

Central Adoption Resource Authority also urged all agencies to coordinate at the district level to resolve procedural hurdles if they arise while securing or forwarding certified copies.

The advisory aims to ensure uniform implementation of adoption procedures across the country and facilitate smoother transitions for adoption.

INS Tamal commissioned into Indian Navy in Russia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Indian Navy's Russian-manufactured guided missile frigate INS Tamal that features an array of guns, surveillance systems and BrahMos supersonic missile was commissioned into the force in Russia's coastal city of Kaliningrad.

The 125m long, 3900-tonne warship, packs a lethal punch as it features an impressive blend of Indian and Russian cutting-edge technologies and best practices in warship construction.

INS Tamal is the eighth Krivak class frigate to be inducted from Russia over the past two decades.

The warship has been built at Yantar shipyard in

Kaliningrad, and is the last such platform that has been inducted from a foreign source, officials said.

INS Tamal is the second ship of the Tushil Class, which are the upgraded versions of their predecessors, Talwar and Teg classes. The combat capability of the ship is augmented by a host of network centric warfare capabilities and advanced electronic warfare suite, the officials said.

India as part of the broader contract for Tushil class is also building two similar frigates called the INS Tripud class at Goa Shipyard Ltd with transfer of technology and design assistance from the Russian side.

Tamal's construction was closely overseen by an Indian team of specialists from the

Warship Overseeing Team stationed at Kaliningrad.

At the Naval headquarters, the project was steered by the Directorate of Ship Production under the Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition.

The ship has significant upgrades in its arsenal in comparison to its predecessors, such as vertical launched surface-to-air missiles, improved 100 MM gun, heavyweight torpedoes, urgent-attack anti-submarine rockets, and a host of surveillance and fire control radars and systems. The crew, comprising over 250 personnel have undergone rigorous ashore as well as afloat training in extremely challenging winter conditions of St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad.

MCD installs rainwater systems in 394 parks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has successfully completed the pre-monsoon cleaning of rainwater harvesting systems (RWHS) in approximately 394 parks across its 12 municipal zones, officials announced on Tuesday.

Encouraged by the success of the existing installations, MCD has planned to install 115 additional rainwater harvesting systems across various parks this year.

Developed by MCD's Horticulture Department, these RWHS units are based on a cost-effective and eco-friendly model that repurposes defunct borewells previously used for park irrigation. By turning these idle structures into functional groundwater recharge units, MCD has taken a significant step toward sustainable urban water management and climate resilience.

Each system consists of a 5ft x 5ft x 5ft pit constructed around a vertical, perforated pipe inserted into the defunct borewell.

The pipe is perforated to



allow the direct entry of rainwater. It is wrapped in permeable geotextile fabric to prevent clogging, and the pit is filled with layers of small and medium-sized pebble materials chosen for their excellent

filtration and percolation properties. The surrounding land is levelled to create a gentle slope towards the structure, ensuring that all surface runoff from the park naturally flows into the pit.

This promotes efficient rainwater infiltration, leading to effective groundwater recharge. This initiative not only prevents surface waterlogging but also helps replenish the local water table.

These systems have been developed at a modest cost ranging between ₹15,000 to ₹25,000 using locally available materials. The initiative not only addresses the challenges of water conservation but also helps mitigate urban flooding by reducing surface runoff.

The upcoming rainwater harvesting systems too will follow the same low-cost, sustainable design by utilizing unused borewells, further promoting environmentally

War of words intensifies between...

Continued from >> P1

The President went on to say that there could be some cost savings for the nation.

"No more Rocket launches, Satellites, or Electric Car Production, and our Country

would save a FORTUNE. Perhaps we should have DOGE take a good, hard, look at this? BIG MONEY! TO BE SAVED!!!" Trump posted.

Several hours later, while standing on the White House

lawn before heading to Florida, Trump continued to discuss what he believes is Musk's displeasure with potentially losing EV subsidies.

"He's very upset. You know, he can lose a lot more than that,

I'll tell you right now," Trump said. "Elon can lose a lot more than that." The President also cautioned Musk on the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, which the billionaire used to lead.

Delhi tweaks labour laws for women...

Continued from >> P1

Another officer said that the DPCC has been asked to reduce the time to give Consent to Operate to 20 days after which it should be a deemed approval. The DPCC will allow self-certification for MSME in both green and white industries and can also empanel third party agencies for certifications. As several sections and provisions of the DLR Act, including Section 81 and 33, being implemented by the Revenue Department, were proving to be detrimental to farmers in the city, by way of

making transfer / sale of land / mutation almost impossible, the concerned Department was asked to take a fresh look at the Act and specific provisions.

Similarly, with the recent notifications with regards to "Ease of Doing Business", the MCD was asked to take a fresh look at Section 475 of the DMC Act, which was yet proving to be a source of harassment for the people in the city. The IT Department was directed to make a single window portal for all kind of NOC.

The meeting was also of the

view that lease administration for the industrial areas, also requires a fresh look in terms of ensuring better civic infrastructure and services in them.

It was decided that the implementation of all the above will be reviewed on a regular basis by the LG and chief minister and the same should be completed within six months.

After reviewing presentations made by the departments / agencies concerned, it was underlined by the LG and the Chief Minister that the progress during the last 11 years was far

from satisfactory.

Delhi, which should have been an example for every other state, being the Capital of the country, had severely lagged behind other states. The LG observed that the restrictive and archaic laws, processes and regulatory regimes had hampered and discouraged businesses and economic activities. The CM

said that the difficulty in doing business had led to a situation wherein, industries and businesses had shifted to other states at the cost of Delhi.

HP Assembly speaker bats for strengthening anti-defection laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Dharamshala

Himachal Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania on Tuesday stressed on strengthening anti-defection laws so that public representatives do not betray people's mandate and to also

ensure stability and public confidence in governance.

At a two-day conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) Zone-II that concluded here, he cited a precedent where six MLAs lost their assembly seat following his decision on defection and the ruling was later upheld by the

High Court. Pathania was referring to the disqualification of six Congress MLAs after they cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha polls in 2024 and defied a party whip by abstaining from the House during discussions on cut motion and passing of the budget for 2024-25.

"These (anti-defection) laws must be made more stringent

to ensure public representatives do not betray the mandate of the people and to ensure stability and confidence in governance," the assembly speaker was quoted as saying in a statement. The conference deliberated on "Provision of Disqualification under 10th schedule of Constitution (anti-defection)".

BNS biggest reform in independent...

Continued from >> P1

Whereas the BNSS and the BSA replaced the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act of 1872, respectively. The new laws came into effect on July 1, 2024.

"The Narendra Modi Government, your chosen Government, has made the

laws for you and it will protect all your rights," he said. Since July 1, 2024, all fresh FIRs were registered under the BNS. The cases filed earlier, however, continued to be tried under the old laws till their final disposal. The new laws brought in a modern justice system, incorporating provisions such as

Zero FIR, online registration of police complaints, summonses through electronic modes such as SMS and mandatory videography of crime scenes for all heinous crimes.

These laws have taken into account the current social realities and modern-day crimes and are going to provide a

mechanism to effectively deal with these, keeping in view the ideals enshrined in the Constitution.

Shah, who piloted the laws, said the new laws would give priority to providing justice, unlike the colonial-era laws that gave primacy to penal action.

Trade, ceasefire separate: EAM

Continued from >> P1

He commenced his visit by inaugurating an exhibition in the UN Headquarters titled The Human Cost of Terrorism, organised by the Permanent Mission of India to the UN.

Jaishankar said: "Everybody knows what is the headquarters of organisation A and organisation B and those are the buildings, the headquarters that India destroyed" in Operation Sindoor.

He added that "we've also heard this for too long" that both India and Pakistan are nuclear countries and "therefore the other guy will come and do horrible things, but you must not do anything because it gets the world worried."

"Now we are not going to fall for that. If he is going to come

and do things, we are going to go there and also hit the people who did this. So no yielding to nuclear blackmail, no impunity to terrorists, no more free pass that they are proxies. And we will do what we have to do to defend our people," Jaishankar said amid applause from the audience.

Referring to the exhibition at the UN highlighting the devastating toll of terrorist attacks across the globe, including those perpetrated by Pakistan-based terror entities, Jaishankar said India believes that "terrorism is actually a threat to everyone, that no country should use it as an instrument to further its policies because, at the end of the day, it comes back to bite everyone."

The minister stressed that the message to the world has to

be that there should be zero tolerance for terrorism, that there should be no circumstances, no excuse, no justification under which a country would allow, support, finance or sponsor terrorist acts.

Jaishankar added that Pakistan did launch a significant attack that night, but India responded swiftly. The next morning, Jaishankar spoke with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who conveyed that Pakistan was open to talks. By that afternoon, Pakistan's DGMO, Major General Kashif Abdullah, called his Indian counterpart, Lt Gen Rajiv Ghai, requesting a ceasefire.

"So, I can only tell you from my personal experience what happened," Jaishankar said during a chat with Newsweek CEO

Dev Pragad.

"We are now moving to a policy of no impunity. We will not accept that the terrorists are proxies and somehow, therefore, the state is not culpable. I mean, we think it's very clear the Pakistani state is up to its eyeballs in this one," he said.

India responded by launching Operation Sindoor, targeting terrorist bases in Pakistan used by the Resistance Front, a group linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba. Jaishankar rejected this narrative.

"Diplomacy and trade are not interlinked," he said. "The trade people are doing what the trade people should be doing — negotiate with numbers and lines and products and do their trade-offs. They're very professional and very focused."

Report on AI crash soon

Continued from >> P1

"It (the plane crash) was an unfortunate incident. The AAIB has begun a full investigation into it. It is being probed from all angles, including any possible sabotage. The CCTV footage is being reviewed and all angles are being assessed. Several agencies are working on it," he had said.

"It has never happened that both engines have shut down together. Once the (full) probe report comes out, we will be able to ascertain if it was an engine problem or fuel supply issue or why both the engines had stopped functioning. There is a Cockpit Voice

Recorder in the black box, which has stored the conversation between the two pilots. It is too early to say anything but whatever it is, it will come out," the minister added.

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, which was operating as Air India flight AI-171 to London, had taken off from Ahmedabad and crashed into the complex of the BJ Medical College — an aerial distance of less than 2 km. The crash took place at 1.39 pm, just 32 seconds after the aircraft took off.

Of the 242 people, including 10 crew members and two pilots, on board the flight, only one — 40-year-old

Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, a British-Indian who was returning to the UK after a visit — survived. At least 30 people on the ground, including trainee doctors, were also killed. The document will focus on establishing a timeline of the crash. It will also detail critical information such as cockpit conversations, pilot actions, system performance, weather data and air traffic control communications, the report added.

While the report is not expected to assign definitive blame, it will mark the first time that investigators publicly share insight into what hap-

pened inside the cockpit and on the ground in the final minutes of the flight.

Meanwhile, legal teams from the US and UK are preparing to sue Air India and Boeing over the devastating Air India crash. The legal action is being considered to seek enhanced compensation for the loss of lives in the tragic incident.

According to sources, the litigation is being spearheaded by UK-based Keystone Law partners James Healy-Pratt and Owen Hanna, alongside aviation law specialists from the US-based Wisner Law Firm.

Trump to host Israeli PM Netanyahu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Washington

President Donald Trump will host Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for talks at the White House next Monday, according to a US administration official.

The visit comes as the US leader has begun stepping up his push on the Israeli government to broker a ceasefire and hostage agreement and bring about an end to the war in Gaza.

The official was not authorised to comment publicly on the visit that hasn't been formally announced and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Netanyahu's visit comes after Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer's visit to Washington this week for talks with senior administration



US President Donald Trump stands with Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the West Wing of the White House

PTI

officials on a Gaza ceasefire, has signalled he's turning his attention to bringing a close to the fighting between Israel and Hamas, since the ceasefire to end 12 days of fighting between Israel and Iran took hold a

week ago.

Trump on Friday told reporters, "We think within the next week we're going to get a ceasefire" in Gaza, but didn't offer any further explanation for his optimism.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt on Monday said Trump and administration officials were in constant communication with Israeli leadership and bringing about an end to the Gaza conflict is a priority for Trump.

"It's heartbreaking to see the images that have come out from both Israel and Gaza throughout this war, and the president wants to see it end. He wants to save lives," Leavitt said. She said White House officials continued to work on scheduling another Washington visit by Netanyahu to meet with Trump, but no date had been set.

Europe swelters under punishing heat wave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Paris

France and the rest of Europe were still in the grips of the first major heat wave this summer with health warnings in effect Tuesday, even as conditions began to improve in some parts of the region.

Punishing temperatures were forecast to reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) in Paris and to stay unusually high in Belgium and the Netherlands. In contrast, temperatures were falling in Portugal, where no red heat warnings were issued.

In France, the national weather agency Météo-France placed several departments under the highest red alert,

with the Paris region particularly hard hit. The heat wave - defined as consecutive days of very high temperature - is expected to intensify Tuesday and more than 1,300 schools were expected to be partially or fully closed, the Education Ministry said.

Visitors to the Eiffel Tower without tickets were told to postpone their visits, and the summit of the city's landmark was closed until Thursday.

Farther south, 17 of Italy's 27 major cities were experiencing a heat wave, according to the Health Ministry.

Météo-France also warned of the heightened risk of wildfires due to the drought-stricken soil, compounded by a lack of rain in June and the

recent surge in temperature.

Climate experts warn that future summers are likely to be hotter than any recorded to date. By 2100, France could be up to 4 C (39 F) warmer, with temperatures exceeding 40 C expected every year and extreme heat spikes potentially reaching 50 C (122 F). According to Météo-France, the country may face a tenfold increase in the number of heat wave days by 2100.

In Portugal, Lisbon was forecast to reach 33 C (91 F), typical for this time of the year, though some inland areas could still see peaks of 43 C (109 F), according to the national weather agency. June temperature records were broken in two locations in Portugal on June 29.

International Criminal Court hit with cyber security attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ The Hague

The International Criminal Court has been targeted by a "sophisticated" cyberattack and is taking measures to limit any damage, the global tribunal announced Monday.

The ICC, which also was hit by a cyberattack in 2023, said the latest incident had been contained but did not elaborate further on the impact or possible motive. "A court-wide impact analysis is being carried out, and steps are already being taken to mitigate any effects of the incident," the court said in a statement.

"All necessary measures have been taken to ensure the business continuity," court spokesman Fadi El Abdallah

told The Associated Press.

The incident happened in the same week that The Hague hosted a summit of 32 NATO leaders at a conference centre near the court amid tight security including measures to guard against cyberattacks.

The court declined to say whether any confidential information had been compromised.

The ICC has a number of high-profile investigations and preliminary inquiries underway in nations around the world and has in the past been the target of espionage.

In 2022, a Dutch intelligence agency said it had foiled a plot by a Russian spy using a false Brazilian identity to work as an intern at the court, which is investigating allegations of Russian war crimes in

Ukraine and has issued a war crimes arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former defence minister, Yoav Gallant, over Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza have also drawn ire.

US President Donald Trump slapped sanctions on its chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, in February and earlier this month also sanctioned four judges at the court.

The court is still feeling the effects of the last cyberattack, with wifi still not completely restored to its purpose-built headquarters.

Mamdani nears victory as NYC awaits vote tally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New York

The winner of New York City's Democratic mayoral primary, between progressive Zohran Mamdani of Indian American descent and former Gov Andrew Cuomo, is likely to be finalised Tuesday when the city's board of elections announces the next round of results.

Mamdani already declared victory on election night last week after gaining a commanding lead over Cuomo, who swiftly conceded. But more results are needed to establish the victor due to the city's ranked choice voting model, which allows voters' second, third, fourth and even fifth preferences to be counted if their top candidate falls out of the running.

The board is scheduled to run through its first tabulation at noon, which may be enough

for Mamdani to clear the 50 per cent threshold needed. If so, he would move on to the November election to face a field including incumbent Mayor Eric Adams and potentially Cuomo again, if the former governor decides to run on an independent ballot line.

Mamdani, a 33-year-old democratic socialist and member of the state Assembly, was virtually unknown when he launched his candidacy centred on a bold slate of populist ideas. But he built an energetic campaign that ran circles around Cuomo as the older, more moderate Democrat tried to come back from the sexual harassment scandal that led to his resignation four years ago.

The results, even before they were finalised, sent a shock-wave through the political world.

Mamdani's campaign, which was focused on lowering the cost of living, claims it has

found a new blueprint for Democrats who have at times appeared rudderless during President Donald Trump's climb back to power.

The Democratic establishment has approached Mamdani with caution. Many of its big players applauded his campaign but don't seem ready to throw their full support behind the young progressive, whose past criticisms of law enforcement, use of the word "genocide" to describe the Israeli government's actions in Gaza and "democratic socialist" label amount to landmines for some in the party.

If elected, Mamdani would be the city's first Muslim mayor and its first of Indian American descent. He would also be one of its youngest.

For Republicans, Mamdani has already provided a new angle for attack.

Trump and others in the GOP have begun to launch

Ukrainian drones strike Russian factory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Kyiv

A Ukrainian drone struck a Russian industrial plant some 1,300 kilometres from Ukraine, a local official said Tuesday, after Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy prioritised the weapon's development and Russia pounded Ukraine with a monthly record of drones in June.

Both sides in the more than three-year war following Russia's February 2022 invasion of its neighbour have raced to improve drone technology and enhance their use on the battlefield. They have deployed increasingly sophisticated and deadlier drones, turning the war into a testing ground for the new weaponry.

Ukraine is under severe strain from a Russian push at places on the roughly 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, but analysts say its defences are largely holding firm.

With recent direct peace talks delivering no progress on US-led international efforts to halt the fighting, Russia and Ukraine are bulking up their arsenals.

Russia last month launched 5,438 drones at Ukraine, a new monthly record, according to official data collated. Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone hit an industrial plant in Izhevsk, about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) east of Moscow, injuring several people and starting a fire, Izhevsk regional Gov. Alexander Brechalov said. The plant's workers were evacuated, he said.

Ukraine has for months been using domestically produced long-range drones to strike plants, storage sites and logistical hubs deep inside Russian territory.

Andrii Kovalenko, the head of the counter-disinformation branch of Ukraine's Security Council, indicated on the Telegram messaging app that Tuesday's target was a local plant producing Russian drones and air defence systems.

Senate stalls as GOP backs Trump's bill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Washington

The Senate's long day of voting churned toward evening Monday, with Republican leaders grasping for ways to shore up support for President Donald Trump's big bill of tax breaks and spending cuts while fending off proposed amendments from Democrats who oppose the package and are trying to defeat it.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota acknowledged the Republicans are "figuring out how to get to the end game".

And House Speaker Mike Johnson signalled the potential problems the Senate package could face when it is eventually sent back to his chamber for a final round of voting, which was expected later this week, ahead of Trump's July 4 deadline.

"I have prevailed upon my Senate colleagues to please, please, please keep it as close to the House product as possible," Johnson, the Louisiana Republican, said as he left the Capitol around dinnertime.

It's a pivotal moment for the Republicans, who have control of Congress and are racing to wrap up work with just days to go before Trump's holiday deadline Friday. The 940-page "One Big Beautiful Bill Act", as it's formally titled, has consumed Congress as its shared priority with the president, with no room politically to fail, even as not all Republicans are on board.

The GOP leaders have no room to spare, with narrow majorities in both chambers. Thune can lose no more than three Republican senators, and already two — Thom Tillis of North Carolina, who warns people will lose access to Medicaid health care, and Rand Paul of Kentucky, who worries the tax breaks will pile onto debt — have indicated they will vote no. Tillis abruptly announced over the weekend he would not seek reelection after Trump threatened to campaign against him.

Ahead of Monday's voting, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said the "hardest choices" for Republicans are still to come.

"With every rewrite Senate

Republicans have made their bill more extreme," Schumer said. "All to give tax breaks to billionaires."

Democrats have proposed dozens of amendments in what's called a vote-a-rama, though most are expected to fail. Democrats are united against the Republican president's legislation and eagerly lined up to challenge it.

A new analysis from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found 11.8 million more Americans would become uninsured by 2034 if the bill became law. The CBO said the package would increase the deficit by nearly \$3.3 trillion over the decade.

The White House said it was counting on Republican lawmakers to "get the job done".

"Republicans need to stay tough and unified during the home stretch," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said.

But after nine hours of voting, it was slow going, another sign that Republican leaders were not yet ready to call for final passage.

Few Republicans appear fully satisfied as the final package emerges, in either the House or Senate. Tillis said it is a betrayal of the president's promises not to kick people off health care, especially if rural hospitals close.

At the same time, some loosely aligned conservative Senate Republicans — Rick Scott of Florida, Mike Lee of Utah, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin and Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming — have proposed steeper cuts, particularly to health care. That drew their own warning from Trump not to go "crazy".

As the first few Senate amendments came up Monday — to strike parts of the bill that would limit Medicaid funds to rural hospitals or shift the costs of food stamp benefits to the states — some were winning support from a few Republicans. Senator Susan Collins joined Democrats on the rural hospitals amendment, and Senator Lisa Murkowski joined Democrats on both votes.

None of the amendments so far has won majority support to substantially change the package.

Keir Starmer faces revolt over welfare reform

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer marks a year in office this week, fighting a rebellion from his own party over welfare reform and reckoning with a sluggish economy and rock-bottom approval ratings.

It's a long way from the landslide election victory he won on July 4, 2024, when Starmer's center-left Labour Party took 412 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons to end 14 years of Conservative government.

In the last 12 months Starmer has navigated the rapids of a turbulent world, winning praise for rallying international support for Ukraine and persuading US President Donald Trump to sign a trade deal easing tariffs on UK goods.

But at home his agenda has run onto the rocks as he struggles to convince British voters - and his own party - that his government is delivering the change that it promised. Inflation remains stubbornly high and economic growth low, frustrating efforts to ease the cost of living.

Starmer's personal approval ratings are approaching those of Conservative Prime Minister Liz Truss, who lasted just 49 days in office in 2022 after her tax-cutting budget roiled the economy.



British Prime Minister Keir Starmer

PTI

John Curtice, a political scientist at the University of Strathclyde, said Starmer has had "the worst start for any newly elected prime minister."

On Tuesday, Starmer faces a vote in Parliament on welfare spending after watering down planned cuts to disability benefits that caused consternation from Labour lawmakers. Many balked at plans to raise the threshold for the payments by requiring a more severe physical or mental disability, a move the Institute for Fiscal Studies think tank estimated would cut the income of 3.2 million people by 2030.

After more than 120 Labour

lawmakers said they would vote against the bill, the government offered concessions, including a guarantee that no one currently getting benefits will be affected by the change. It pledged to consult with disability groups about the changes, and do more to help sick and disabled people find jobs.

Some rebels said they would back the bill after the concessions, but others maintained their opposition. The welfare U-turn is the third time in a few weeks that the government has reversed course on a policy under pressure. In May, it dropped a plan to end winter

home heating subsidies for millions of retirees. Last week, Starmer announced a national inquiry into organised child sexual abuse, something he was pressured to do by opposition politicians - and Elon Musk.

"It's a failure of leadership for a prime minister with such a big majority to not be able to get their agenda through," said Rob Ford, professor of politics at the University of Manchester. "I can't think of many examples of a prime minister in postwar politics suffering such a big setback when presiding over such a strong position in the Commons."

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Tougher visa measures for foreign workers tabled in UK Parliament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ London

The British government on Tuesday tabled the first set of tougher visa norms in the House of Commons to curb the recruitment of foreign skilled workers across different sectors, including the care industry, dubbing it a "complete reset" of the country's immigration system.

The new rules, proposed as part of an 'Immigration White Paper' back in May, will involve the skills and salary thresholds for foreign workers - including Indians - rise, overseas recruitment for care workers end, and more than

100 occupations including chefs and plasterers being taken off the shortage list which allowed certain visa exemptions.

These changes, once approved by Parliament and effective from July 22, are designed to attract graduate level or above workers by making several low-paid jobs ineligible for visas.

"We are delivering a complete reset of our immigration system to restore proper control and order, after the previous government allowed net migration to quadruple in four years," said UK Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

"These new rules mean stronger controls to bring

migration down, to restore order to the immigration system and to ensure we focus on investing in skills and training here in the UK," she said.

The minister said her department's tougher approach "values skills, tackles exploitation and ensures those who come to the UK make a genuine contribution".

According to a Commons statement tabled by Home Office minister Seema Malhotra, skilled workers already in the UK will be exempt from the increased skill level requirement which stipulate a Bachelor's degree or equivalent for applications from July 22 onwards when these changes come into force.

"Salary requirements for work visas are being raised in line with the latest Office for National Statistics data, ahead of an upcoming thorough review of salary requirements (including discounts) by the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC)," reads Malhotra's parliamentary statement.

Overseas recruitment for social care worker roles will close on July 22 and while new overseas applications will no longer be accepted, transitional provisions will allow "in-country switching" for care workers already in the UK for another three years until July 2028.

These changes restore order

to the points-based system, focusing on higher skills, lower numbers and tighter controls, the UK Home Office said. They are an important step in ending the UK's reliance on overseas, lower skilled recruitment, it added.

Only time-limited access below degree level will be allowed for certain professions on a "temporary" shortage list of so-called "critical roles", with the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) commissioned to conduct a review of this time-limited list - including occupations, salaries and benefits.

"Workers in occupations on the temporary shortage

list will no longer be able to bring dependants and will not be permitted salary and visa fee discounts. The occupations included on the List are time-limited until the end of 2026 and will only remain beyond that date if the independent Migration Advisory Committee recommend it," the Home Office said.

The next set of changes recommended in the White Paper are also in line to be implemented by the end of this year, including raising the immigration skills charge on companies employing overseas workers and toughening English language requirements on visa applicants.

Government approves ₹1.07 lakh crore ELI Scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The central Government on Tuesday approved an Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme with an outlay of ₹1.07 lakh crore to create 3.5 crore jobs over the next two years through social security schemes run by the retirement fund body Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). The ELI scheme to support job generation, enhance employability and social security across all sectors, with special focus on the manufacturing sector, was approved by the Union Cabinet in a meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. The scheme aims to incentivise the creation of more than 3.5 crore jobs in the country over two years, an official statement said. The scheme will provide incentives to employees as well as employers to boost job creation. Under the scheme, while the first-time employees will get one month's wage (up to



Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw briefs the media on union cabinet decisions in New Delhi on Tuesday

₹15,000), the employers will be given incentives for a period of two years for generating additional employment, with extended benefits for another two years for the manufacturing sector. The ELI scheme was

announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 as part of the package of five schemes to facilitate employment, skilling and other opportunities for 4.1 crore youth with a total budget outlay of ₹2 lakh crore. The ELI scheme aims to incentivise the

creation of more than 3.5 crore jobs in the country over a period of 2 years, it stated. Out of these, 1.92 crore beneficiaries will be first timers, entering the workforce. The benefits of the scheme would be applicable to jobs created between August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2027. The plan consists of two parts, with Part A focused on first timers (employees) and Part B focused on employers. Targeting first-time employees registered with EPFO, this Part A will offer a one-month wage up to ₹15,000 in two instalments. Employees with salaries up to Rs 1 lakh will be eligible. The first instalment will be payable after 6 months of service, and the second instalment will be payable after 12 months of service and completion of a financial literacy programme by the employee. "To encourage the habit of saving, a portion of the incentive will be kept in a savings instrument or deposit account for a fixed period and can be withdrawn by the employee at a later date. Part A will benefit around 1.92 crore first-time

employees," the statement said. Part B of the scheme will cover the generation of additional employment in all sectors, with a special focus on the manufacturing sector. The employers will get incentives with respect to employees with salaries up to ₹1 lakh. The Government will incentivise employers, up to Rs 3,000 per month, for two years, for each additional employee with sustained employment for at least six months. For the manufacturing sector, incentives will be extended to the 3rd and 4th years as well. Establishments, which are registered with EPFO, will be required to hire at least two additional employees (for employers with less than 50 employees) or five additional employees (for employers with 50 or more employees) on a sustained basis for at least six months. The benefit to the employer (per additional employment per month) will be up to ₹1,000 for employees with a monthly wage of ₹10,000, while this will be ₹2,000 for employees with wages of more than ₹10,000 and up to

₹20,000. Employees with wages up to ₹10,000 will get a proportional incentive. The benefit will be ₹3,000 per month to the employers for employees with a wage of more than ₹20,000 (up to a salary of ₹1 lakh per month). Part B (for employers) is expected to incentivise employers for the creation of additional employment for nearly 2.60 crore persons. All payments to the first-time employees under part A of the scheme will be made through the DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) mode using the Aadhar Bridge Payment System (ABPS). Payments to employers under Part B will be made directly into their PAN-linked Accounts. With the ELI scheme, the Government intends to catalyse job creation in all sectors, particularly in the manufacturing sector, besides incentivising youth joining the workforce for the first time. An important outcome of the scheme will also be the formalisation of the country's workforce by extending social security coverage for crores of young men and women.

Gross GST collections up



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Gross GST collections increased by 6.2 per cent to over ₹1.84 lakh crore in June, as per Government data released on Tuesday. Gross GST collections during the same month a year ago was ₹1,73,813 crore. During the last month, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection was ₹2.01 lakh crore. The GST collection touched a record high of

₹2.37 lakh crore in April this year. In June, gross revenues from domestic transactions rose 4.6 per cent to about ₹1.38 lakh crore, while GST revenue from imports grew 11.4 per cent to ₹45,690 crore. The gross Central GST revenues stood at ₹34,558 crore, State GST revenues at ₹43,268 crore and Integrated GST at about ₹93,280 lakh crore in June. Revenues from cess was at ₹13,491 crore. Meanwhile, total refunds during the month rose by 28.4 per cent to ₹25,491 crore.

India's manufacturing growth hits 14-month high in June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

India's manufacturing sector growth rose to a 14-month high of 58.4 in June marked by improved trends in output and new orders, alongside a record upturn in employment, a monthly survey said on Tuesday. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index - an indicator of sector performance - was 57.6 in May. In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "India's manufacturing PMI reached a 14-month high of 58.4 in June. Robust end-demand fuelled expansions in output, new orders, and job creation," said Pranjal Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC. June also saw a quicker upturn in new order inflows. The rate of expansion was the strongest in close to a year. According to panel members, the increase was supported by marketing efforts and a substantial rise in exports. Indeed,



growth of new export orders gained considerable momentum in June. "To keep up with strong demand - particularly from international markets, as evidenced by the substantial rise in new export orders - Indian manufacturing firms had to tap deeper into their inventories, causing the stock of finished goods to continue shrinking," Bhandari said. Companies also welcomed one of the fastest increases in external orders in the over 20 years of survey history. Goods producers lifted input buying to the greatest extent in 14

months, which supported a further expansion in stocks of purchases. "Finally, input prices moderated while average selling prices rose as some manufacturers passed on additional cost burdens to clients," Bhandari said. Robust sales boosted hiring among manufacturers, the survey said, adding that employment rose at a record pace, with panelists mostly pointing to short-term recruitment. On the price front, cost inflation eased to its lowest mark since February and was relatively negligible.

Bangladesh resolves Adani's power purchase pact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Bangladesh made its single largest payment of \$437 million in June, clearing pending dues, including carrying costs, and issues related to the power purchase agreement, reaffirming the Indian conglomerate's asset as a reliable and cost-competitive power source for meeting the country's growing energy needs, sources said. Bangladesh is now regular in payments. Additionally, an LC (Letter of Credit) worth about two months of billing and sovereign guarantee for all dues as additional security has been established, sources aware of the matter said. Since payment-related matters are resolved, Bangladesh has asked Adani Power to supply power from both units as per BPDB (Bangladesh Power Development Board) schedule, they added. Sources said Bangladesh has resolved Adani Power's dues, including the carrying cost. Over the last 3-4 months, the country has been paying \$90-100 million per month, and in June, it paid \$437 million. The



LCs are worth about two months of billing and sovereign guarantee for all dues, as additional security has put Adani in a very comfortable situation. Concerns raised related to investigations into the PPA by the Bangladesh authorities have been resolved, with no adverse aspects found. With all these developments, lenders are confident of improving APL's credit rating to AA+ from the current AA. Adani Power supplies electricity to Bangladesh from a dedicated 1,600 MW plant located in Godda district of Jharkhand, meeting 10 per cent of the country's power demand. The company sup-

plies among the most competitively priced power to Bangladesh, as is evident from BPDB's merit order dispatch data, which is an essential requirement. Bangladesh had in the past struggled to meet its payment obligations under the 2017 deal, as rising import costs - following the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022 and domestic political turmoil, which led to the ouster of the prime minister - strained the country's finances. As a result, Adani halved its supply last year, and full supplies were resumed in March 2025 after the country's monthly payments started covering some of the dues.

Sources said over the last three to four months, Bangladesh had started paying \$90-100 million per month, and in June, the company received the single largest chunk of payment of \$437 million, thereby clearing all dues. Adani Power's Godda unit was housed under a separate subsidiary, which has now been merged with the parent, providing greater operational and financial synergy. With all these developments, lenders are confident of improving Adani Power's credit rating to AA+ from the current AA, which will further bring down its cost of funds. The current developments vindicate the contract established between the Bangladesh Government and Adani Power. The Godda asset is now well integrated into the Bangladesh Power system successfully. Under the 2017 deal, Adani Power's Godda power plant in Jharkhand was to supply 100 per cent of the electricity generated from burning coal to Bangladesh for a period of 25 years. After payment defaults, Adani had cut supplies by half in November 2024. It restored full electricity supply,

which is around 1,600 MW, in March after the country reduced its liabilities. Bangladesh stepped up repayments from July last year, clearing monthly dues. The development comes after the country suffered from increased power shortages in rural areas. It has been struggling to generate sufficient dollar revenues to cover the cost of essential imports like electricity, coal, and oil. Its foreign currency reserves declined amid months of student-led protests and political unrest, which culminated in the ousting of the Sheikh Hasina Government in August 2024. The interim Government that succeeded her sought an additional \$3 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on top of the existing \$4.7 billion bailout package. Adani's power deal with Bangladesh was one of many under Sheikh Hasina, which the current interim Government has called opaque. Besides Adani Power, other Indian state-owned firms also sell power to Bangladesh, including NTPC Ltd and PTC India Ltd.

Stock markets close higher on buying in Reliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Mumbai

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher in a range-bound trade on Tuesday, helped by gains in index heavyweight Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank. The 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 90.83 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at 83,697.29 with 13 of its constituents closing higher and 17 in the red. During the day, it rallied 267.83 points or 0.32 per cent to 83,874.29.

The 50-share NSE Nifty gained 24.75 points or 0.10 per cent to close at 25,541.80. Among Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics was the lead gainer, rising by 2.51 per cent after the company announced securing orders worth Rs 528 crore. Reliance Industries advanced 1.84 per cent as analysts expressed optimism over the launch of a solar manufacturing facility. Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank were also among the major gainers. Axis

Bank, Trent, Eternal and Tech Mahindra were among the laggards. "Markets traded lacklustre and ended almost unchanged, taking a breather after Monday's decline. Following an initial uptick, the Nifty moved in a narrow range and eventually settled at 25,541.80. Buoyancy in global markets - especially the US - along with stable domestic cues suggests that the prevailing trend is likely to continue," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. The BSE

smallcap gauge dipped 0.18 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.07 per cent. Among BSE sectoral indices, telecommunication rose by 0.52 per cent, energy by 0.46 per cent, consumer durables by 0.43 per cent and metal by 0.30 per cent. FMCG declined 0.68 per cent, power (0.41 per cent), utilities (0.32 per cent), IT (0.24 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (0.25 per cent). As many as 2,025 stocks advanced while 1,985 declined and 154 remained unchanged on the BSE. "Domestic indices

traded within a narrow range, following last week's strong rally. Investors are closely monitoring developments, seeking clarity on U.S. Tariffs as the 90-day pause approaches its end," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said. In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled in the positive territory while Japan's Nikkei 225 index ended lower. Markets in Hong Kong were closed. European markets were trading mostly lower.



Minister Hardeep Singh Puri with President ICAI Charanjot Singh Nanda and CA Prasanna Kumar D Vice-President of (ICAI) during the 77th CA Day celebration in New Delhi on Tuesday

PESB recommends TSC Bosh for REC limited

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB) has recommended TSC Bosh for the post of Director (Projects) at REC Limited, a Maharatna Central Public Sector Enterprise under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power, Government of India. Bosh is presently serving as Executive Director and CEO of REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited (RECPDCL), a wholly owned subsidiary of REC Limited. A seasoned professional in the power sector, he brings over 30 years of comprehensive experience in project execution, consultancy services and power infrastructure development. His recommendation by the PESB follows a rigorous selection process and reflects his outstanding leadership, strategic vision and proven track record in driving complex infrastructure projects in India's evolving energy landscape.



Yara India unveils third sustainability report, reaffirms commitment to ESG goals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Yara India, a subsidiary of Norwegian multinational Yara International, launched the third edition of its Sustainability Report 2024, titled "Greener Pathways: Fostering a Nature-Positive Food Future," at the Royal Norwegian Embassy. The report underscores Yara India's continued focus on environmental stewardship, inclusive growth and agricultural innovation. Aligned with GRI Universal Standards 2021 and assured by TÜV SÜD South Asia, the report highlights key ESG achievements across Yara's operations, especially at its Babrala plant in Uttar Pradesh and through its community initiative, Kiran. Highlights include: reaching over 650,000 farmers via agronomy and digital plat-



forms; reducing carbon emissions through a shift to rail logistics, saving \$205,000, reusing 967 million litres of water, afforesting 7.4 acres and empowering 699 MSMEs through the Yara Leadership Academy. The company also targets 30 per cent women in senior

leadership roles by 2025. Sanjiv Kanwar, Managing Director of Yara South Asia, stated, "This report reflects our mission to empower farmers, support women in agriculture and foster a regenerative future." Norwegian Ambassador May-Elin Stener praised Yara's

efforts, calling it "a testament to Norway's commitment to sustainability and responsible business." Yara India plans to expand regenerative practices, bio-stimulant use and low-emission logistics to drive a climate-smart and inclusive food system forward.

Rupee further rises 25 paise to close at 85.51

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

Rupee appreciated 25 paise to close at 85.51 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, supported by weakness of the American currency in the overseas market and a positive tone in the domestic equities amid rise in risk appetite. Forex traders said the US dollar is trading at lowest levels since February 2022 as President Donald Trump's growing influence on Federal Reserve policy revived fears over the central bank's independence. Moreover, Brent crude prices remained subdued, offering a buffer to India's import bill and helping cool inflation. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.66 against the greenback. During the day, it witnessed an intraday high of 85.34. The domestic unit settled for the day at 85.51 (provisional), registering a rise of 25

paise over its previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled 26 paise down at 85.76 against the dollar. "We expect the rupee to gain on the decline in US dollar and rise in risk appetite in global markets. Gold is trading at lowest levels since February 2022 and 10-year US bond yields briefly slipped below 4.2 per cent," Anuj Choudhary - Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan said. "However, recovery in crude oil prices may cap sharp gains. Traders may take cues from ISM manufacturing PMI, and JOLT's job data from the US and Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech," Choudhary said, adding that "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.20 to 85.85." Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.46 per cent to 96.43. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, went down 0.24 per cent to \$66.58 per barrel in futures trade.

Cabinet approves Khelo Bharat Niti

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Calling it a “strategic roadmap” for India’s elevation into the top five of world sports, the Cabinet on Tuesday approved the Khelo Bharat Niti to create “world-class systems” of coaching and athlete support along with a robust administrative set-up to make the country a strong contender for the 2036 Olympics.

It is a landmark day for India’s efforts to encourage sporting talent and become a hub for sports, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday following his government’s approval of the ‘Khelo Bharat Niti’, a national sports policy.

In a post on X, he said this policy is anchored in five pillars: excellence on the global stage, sports for economic development, sports for social development, sports as a people’s movement and integration with education through the National Education Policy.

“May Indian sporting talent always flourish,” he said.

Previously called the National Sports Policy and introduced for the first time in 1984, the Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 will supersede the 2001 policy. It is a “guiding document” to formulate plans and schemes for betterment of the



country’s sporting ecosystem. “We have used the experience of the last 10 years and the new policy will work towards improvement of sports. Major objective is to make India a top-five sporting nation by 2047. That’s the overall objective,” Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told reporters while unveiling the policy and other Cabinet decisions.

“The PM has given a different kind of emphasis to sports, especially in rural areas,” he said. “It’s a well thought through policy which addresses all matters related to sports. It also includes the framework

for sports governance,” he added. India is bidding to host the 2036 Olympic Games for which there has been a massive push to create infrastructure and bring events of international stature to the country.

A statement from the Press Information Bureau described the new policy as an outcome of “extensive consultations” involving central ministries, NITI Aayog, State Governments, National Sports Federations (NSFs), athletes, domain experts and public stakeholders.

It seeks to link sports with tourism and economic development. “So many people

travel to watch an IPL, a football game. So that boosts tourism and economic development,” Vaishnaw said. The document also seeks to align with the National Education Policy by making sports an integral part of school curriculum. It states that the objective is to equip educators and physical education teachers with specialised training to promote sports education.

Among the listed goals is to establish a robust regulatory framework for sports governance and development of innovative financing mechanisms, including private sector participation through PPPs and

CSR. Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya called it a transformative step towards reshaping India’s sporting ecosystem. “This landmark policy outlines a strategic roadmap to promote sports culture at the grassroots, enhance infrastructure, support athlete development, and establish India as a formidable force in global sports,” he posted on X.

The changes it makes to the previous policy includes calling for greater participation of private companies, something that Mandaviya has already spoken about.

The minister had recently stated that he has held consultations with over 40 companies, who are keen on adopting individual Olympic sports.

The sports ministry is also working towards promoting a “league culture” across disciplines, including financing those which need funding. Creating leagues is also a stated objective of the new policy.

The document also seeks to promote more inclusivity and increase participation in sports among under-represented groups such as women, economically weaker sections and tribal communities.

“Creating and maintaining such facilities can significantly reduce barriers and promote active participation among them,” the policy states.

India plots against Iraq for AFC women’s cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Chiang Mai (Thailand)

The Indian football team will be open to experimentation when it clashes with a comparatively easy rival Iraq in a Group B clash of the AFC Women’s Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers, here on Wednesday. Winger Soumya Guguloth, who suffered a nasal bone fracture during the match against Timor-Leste, has been ruled out of the contest.

India currently sit atop the table with six points and a goal difference of +17 after wins against Mongolia (13-0) and Timor-Leste (4-0). Thailand are in second place, also with six points but with a goal difference of +11. Iraq have already played three games and are on four points. They must defeat India to have any chance of staying alive on the road to Australia.

While it has turned into a race between India and Thailand to increase their goal difference before they meet on the final day (July 5), Blue Tigresses coach Crispin Chhetri affirmed that earning three points are the bigger priority, and the focus is only on the game against Iraq for now.



“Thailand is the last match, but for now, our full focus is on Iraq. We shouldn’t worry about how many goals Thailand or we have scored, or will score. The priority is to approach the Iraq match with a positive mindset and go for the win,” said Chhetri.

After defeating Timor-Leste on Sunday, Chhetri and his coaching staff stayed at the stadium to watch Iraq suffer a 0-7 drubbing at the hands of the hosts. It has been a rollercoaster ride for the 173rd-ranked West Asians, who were held goalless by Timor-Leste in the first game, before defeating Mongolia 5-2 to earn their first-ever victory on the international stage.

Giving his opinion on the Iraq side coached by their former men’s international Abdul-Wahab Abu Al-Hail and ranked 103 places below India, Chhetri said, “For me, Iraq are not as weak as people might think. They’re a good side, but

they’ve been playing back-to-back matches, so we may have an advantage in terms of recovery.” Overall, I don’t see a big difference between Iraq and Timor-Leste. I feel Timor-Leste were more organised. So, I think we’ll get more opportunities to play our game against Iraq. It should be a good match for us to try a few new things as well.”

With only two days to prepare after the match against Timor-Leste, the Blue Tigresses utilised their break fruitfully with recovery in the pool and a gym session on Monday morning, followed by a full training session on Tuesday morning.

“We worked on the areas where we fell short in the matches against both Timor-Leste and Mongolia. We’re now giving players specific responsibilities, whether it’s in attack or in 1v1 defending. That was the main focus of the preparation,” said Chhetri.

Anderson Peters pulls out of Neeraj Chopra Classic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Bengaluru

Two-time World Championship gold-medallist javelin thrower Anderson Peters on Tuesday pulled out of the Neeraj Chopra Classic due to an ankle injury, dealing another blow to the showpiece.

The 27-year-old Grenada stalwart, who had taken the bronze medal behind Neeraj

at the Paris Olympics last year, has been replaced by Poland’s Cyprian Mrzyglód in the event schedule for Saturday. Mrzyglód is a 2019 European U23 champion and his best throw of 84.97 metres came during the event.

“Anderson Peters has been ruled out of the Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025 due to an ankle injury sustained during his last competition. Poland’s Cyprian Mrzyglód has been named as his replacement in

the final lineup,” the organisers said a statement. Organised by double Olympic medallist Neeraj Chopra in collaboration with JSW Sports and sanctioned by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI), the world-class event featuring 12 javelin throwers, including five Indians, has already seen three replacements.

Peters has had a long rivalry with Chopra. He successfully defended his World

Championships title in 2022, defeating Neeraj with three throws over 90 metres. Peters then went on to win a silver medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, where Neeraj did not compete.

On Monday, Indian thrower Kishore Jena, struggling with an ankle injury, had pulled out of the NC Classic and was replaced by Yashvir Singh.

On June 6, Poland’s Martin Konecny had replaced Asian

Games bronze medallist Genki Dean of Japan. India’s first-ever international javelin competition, originally slated for May 24, was postponed due to military tensions between India and Pakistan.

The confirmed international lineup now includes Mrzyglód, Poland’s Martin Konecny, 2016 Olympic gold medallist Thomas Röhler (Germany), 2015 world champion Julius Yego (Kenya), Curtis Thompson

(USA), Luiz Mauricio da Silva (Brazil), and Rumesh Pathirage (Sri Lanka).

The Indian contingent will feature Asian Championships silver medallist Sachin Yadav, Rohit Yadav, and Sahil Silwal, Yashvir Singh besides Neeraj.

The event, granted Category A status by World Athletics, is considered a “dream project” of Chopra and aims to establish India as a credible host of elite-level athletics events.

India’s Kush Maini joins Mahindra Racing in Berlin



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

India’s Kush Maini was on Tuesday named as one of the drivers for Mahindra Racing at the upcoming ABB FIA Formula E World Championship Rookie Test in Berlin, Germany on July 14.

It marks the latest collaboration between Maini and Mahindra Racing, the only Indian team currently competing at World Championship level in motorsport, as part of the FIA’s all-electric racing series.

“I was really impressed with the Mahindra M11Electro in Jeddah, it’s a great car to drive and I can’t wait to experience it again in Berlin,” Maini said in a release. “Mahindra is a manufacturer I’ve worked with first-hand a lot over the last 18 months, and I’ve seen the hard work and development that has gone into improving the team’s results on-track.

“It’s a great source of pride

for me to represent them, and to help them push on and keep that rate of development going.” Earlier this season, Maini, 24, set the benchmark time under the lights in a dedicated Rookie Free Practice session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, his first taste of the Mahindra M11Electro and Formula E’s GEN3 Evo era.

That followed on from Season 10, in which Maini served as Mahindra Racing’s official Reserve Driver and also participated in last year’s Rookie Test around the Tempelhof Airport Street Circuit.

Maini has also impressed in his full-time racing activities in FIA Formula 2. He recently claimed victory on the streets of Monaco, taking his tally to two career victories and seven podium finishes as one of the series’ standout names. Maini will conduct a full day of running at the test, with the team set to confirm its other participating driver in due course.

Yes, Wimbledon can be serious about getting rid of line judges

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ London

John McEnroe — he of “You cannot be serious!” call-arguing fame — is quite all right with Wimbledon’s latest of many steps into the modern era, choosing technology over the human touch to decide whether a ball lands in or out.

There were no line judges at the All England Club’s matches for Monday’s start of the oldest Grand Slam tournament, with rulings instead being made by an electronic system that uses recorded voices to announce when a shot lands astray.

“In some ways, the players, and even the fans, miss that interaction, but at the same time ... If it’s accurate, I think it’s great, because then at least you know that you’re getting the right call,” said McEnroe, who won Wimbledon three times during his Hall of Fame career and is a TV analyst at this year’s event for ESPN and the BBC. “My hair,” the 66-year-old McEnroe joked, “wouldn’t be quite as white as it is now.”

Wimbledon joins most top tennis tournaments with electronic line calls. The new system puts Wimbledon in line with nearly every other top-tier



tennis event on all surfaces - although the French Open, played on red clay, remains an exception, sticking with judges - and Monday’s debut seemed to be mostly seamless, as far as players were concerned.

Indeed, Frances Tiafoe, an American seeded 12th, didn’t even notice there were no line judges at his first-round victory.

What he did notice, and chuckled about afterward, was when the chair umpire wasn’t even paying all that much attention at one point, grabbing the phone on his stand to place a call and request that more towels be

brought to the court on the hottest Day 1 in tournament history.

“It takes him completely out of play,” Tiafoe said about the on-court official, “other than just calling the score and calling time violations.”

Players like that Wimbledon’s removal of line judges removes doubt, too. Number 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka liked that the All England Club’s switch to electronic line-calling eliminated the need for her to question whether she should contest a ruling. From 2007 until last year, players were allowed to ask for a video replay to check whether a decision was

correct. “If you have line umpires, you (are) always thinking, like, Should I challenge or shouldn’t I?” she said. “It’s a lot of doubt in your head.”

Cam Norrie was pleased that there no longer is a reason to get angry about what’s perceived as a wrong decision, the way McEnroe — and plenty of others through the years — used to. “To be honest, it’s good. You get on with it. There’s no kind of getting mad at anyone for missing a call or saying something or moving during the point or something happening,” said Norrie, a British player who won Monday. “It’s pretty black-or-white with the calls. In, out, and you hear it. There’s no mistake.”

Not everything is favourable in his view, though.

The familiar scene of officials sitting or standing around the court “looks cool,” Norrie said. Plus, he noted the loss of work for some of the 275 line judges the tournament used in the past (80 were brought back as “match assistants” to help chair umpires from behind the scenes).

“The decision we’ve made there, I suppose, is very much about the way in which Wimbledon has always balanced heritage and tradition with

innovation and how we walk that line. We’re always very conscious of that. ... For us, it was time to make that change,” All England Club CEO Sally Bolton said. “It’s not a money-saving exercise. It’s about evolving the tournament and making sure that we’re providing the most effective possible line-calling.” At Wimbledon, You cannot complain against the machine

Frenchman Adrian Mannarino liked having what he called “a machine” involved Monday, saying: “You cannot complain against the machine.”

“When you feel like someone is judging the ball and ... Is probably not seeing so well, and maybe not even concentrating, it’s pretty annoying,” Mannarino said. “But the fact that it’s a robot calling the balls, there’s nothing to complain about.”

He did caution that it wasn’t always easy to figure out which recorded announcements were for his win at Court 5, because it’s wedged amid other courts. Sometimes he thought an “Out!” call at an adjacent match was for his.

“It can be a little tricky with this,” Mannarino said, “but overall, I think it’s a good thing.

Putellas ready to lead Spain at Euro 2025

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Madrid

Alexia Putellas doesn’t have fond memories of the last Women’s European Championship, when she tore a knee ligament on the eve of the tournament in England three years ago.

Things are different now as Spain prepares for its campaign at Euro 2025 in Switzerland, with Putellas saying she’s better than ever and ready to try to lead Spain to its first title in the competition.

“I’m not going to lie, it’s a competition that I had in my sights after the injury I suffered just before the start of the last Euro,” she said. “I’ve been preparing for this moment for a long time and I want to enjoy it.”

The two-time world player of the year was coming off one of her most impressive seasons when she injured her left knee during a practice session just days before Spain’s

opener at Euro 2022. It kept her out of action for nearly a year and dealt a blow to Spain’s chances in the tournament, where it was ousted by England in the quarterfinals.

Putellas says she has improved a lot since then, even though other Spanish players such as Aitana Bonmati — a two-time Ballon d’Or winner herself — have emerged as top stars.

“Without a doubt I’m a better Alexia,” she said. “I know myself a lot better, I know my qualities, I know what I have been working on. In the end, all the suffering makes you evolve as a person and as an athlete. I’ve learned to manage the bad moments a lot better, as well as the good moments.”

Putellas has had another outstanding season and is again among the favorites for the world player of the year award. She thrived as Barcelona won the domestic treble and reached another Champions League final.

Al Hilal stuns Manchester City 4-3 in Club World Cup

ASSOCIATED PRESS
■ Orlando

Marcos Leonardo scored his second goal on a rebound in the 112th minute, and Al Hilal stunned Manchester City 4-3 on Monday night, eliminating the Premier League power from the Club World Cup in the round of 16.

In a back-and-forth thriller at Camping World Stadium, the Saudi Arabian club took the lead three times, including twice in extra time. Kalidou Koulibaly put Al Hilal ahead 3-2 in the 94th minute, but Phil Foden — who entered as a substitute four minutes earlier — equalised in the 104th.

Leonardo finally put Man City away. Goalkeeper Ederson saved a header by Sergej Milinkovic-Savic from inside the penalty box and the ball deflected to Leonardo, who redirected it with his right foot as he fell to the pitch near the left post.

Al Hilal moves on to face Fluminense of Italy, which took down Inter Milan earlier Monday. Leonardo also



scored in the 46th minute to even the match at 1-1.

Bernardo Silva opened the scoring in the ninth minute for Man City. Malcom put Al Hilal ahead in the 52nd and Erling Haaland found the net in the 55th to make it 2-2.

Key moment Manchester City nearly won it regulation in

the final seconds of added time on a counterattack that was thwarted by a hard challenge. Referees did not call a penalty, and Man City coach Pep Guardiola ran onto the field to argue the decision after the whistle.

Takeaways Al Hilal will face Fluminense on July 4 at

Camping World Stadium for a spot in the semi-finals.

What they said, “We defeated a very, very strong team. That looked impossible yesterday.” — Simone Inzaghi, Al Hilal coach. “It’s a pity. ... Nothing to say. We’ll have to continue. I still have the feeling this team is doing well.

FLUMINENSE GETS EARLY GOAL FROM GERMAN CANO TO KNOCK OUT INTER MILAN

Charlotte (USA): Germán Cano scored on a header three minutes into the match, and Fluminense held on to upset Champions League finalist Inter Milan 2-0 to advance to the Club World Cup quarterfinals in front of a sparse crowd of 20,030 at Bank of America Stadium on Monday. The Brazilians move on to face the Manchester City-Al Hilal winner on Friday in Orlando, Florida. Almost before both teams were able to break a sweat in the 90-degrees Fahrenheit heat, Jhon Arias sent a slightly deflected crossing pass from the right corner that Cano headed between goalkeeper Yann Sommer’s legs into the net for a 1-0 lead.

It was all they needed. The Brazilians appeared to add to their lead late in the first half, but Ignacio’s header into the net was waived off due to being offside. On the other end of the pitch, Milan kept pressing, eager for the tie. The Italians controlled the time of possession throughout the match, owning the ball 68% of the time, and certainly had its chances after

outshooting the Brazilian team 16-11. But Milan simply couldn’t will the ball into the net.

It was one bad bounce after another. And often times when one of their shots was saved there was no one there to score off a rebound. Fluminense’s Hercules eventually added a goal on a wide open shot for Fluminense in stoppage time for the final 2-0 margin. As the match was winding down Fluminense players jumped up and down on the sideline. That celebration carried over to the field after the match, where they hopped up and down in unison in a huddle, their arms wrapped around each other.

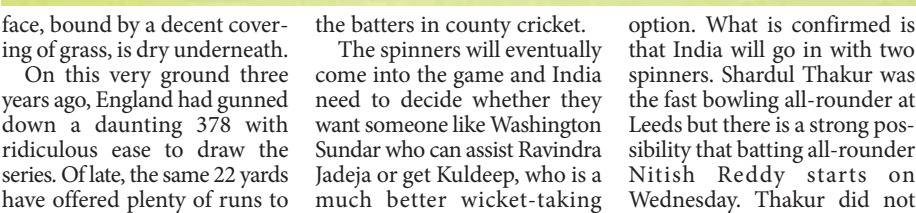
After the game, frustrated Inter Milan captain Lautaro Martínez told reporters that “whoever doesn’t want to be here should leave.” The match got heated at one point after a Fluminense player on the bench appeared to grab one of the balls on the sideline to prevent an Inter Milan advantage after a ball was kicked out of bounds. The Brazilian team received a yellow card, but not until after players exchanged shoves.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Birmingham

■ Birmingham

In the words of assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate, India are grappling to find a

The weather has been rather hot in Birmingham and the sur-



They would be wiser after that experience and if Bumran doesn't play, will have a lot to prove. Jadeja, who could not get much out of a turning pitch on day five at Headingley, would be

England, on the other hand, seem to have added a method

Being a home hero, Woakes would be expected to provide the breakthroughs with the new ball after low returns in Leeds. Josh Tongue would be sniffing blood against India's fragile lower-order. Brydon Carse also improved as the game progressed while skipper Ben Stokes, by far, got the most out of the conditions.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Nottingham

■ Nottingham

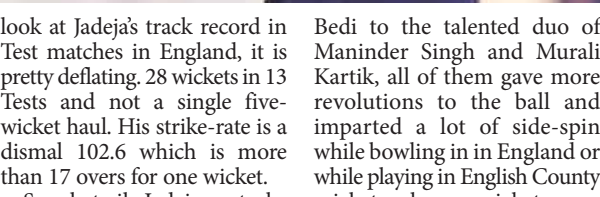
The other team could be Kolkata Knight Riders, who are unlikely to repose much

"There have been multiple approaches by multiple franchises for about six of our play-

However, with the Royals having a second base in Guwahati, Riyan remains a strong leadership.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

■ New Delhi

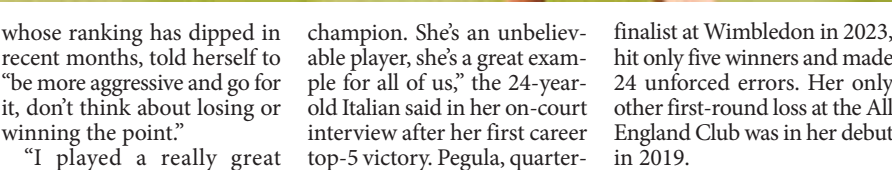


used to hitting the same area with more or less identical speeds, slowing it down considerably can lead to losing the length and bowling for hittable

Edgbaston is primarily a good batting strip and this is one ground where the team management might think twice before playing Jadeja.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
 London

■ London



"I played a really great

champion. She's an unbelievable player, she's a great example for all of us," the 24-year-old Italian said in her on-court interview after her first career top-5 victory. Pegula, quarter-

finalist at Wimbledon in 2023, hit only five winners and made 24 unforced errors. Her only other first-round loss at the All England Club was in her debut in 2019.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ St George's (Grenada)

■ St George's (Grenada)



In fact, Australia have not beaten India in their backyard since their "final frontier" tri-

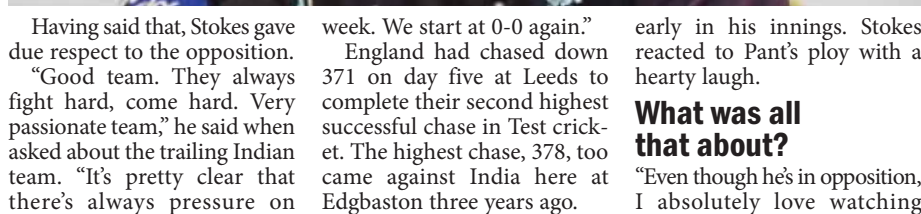
“We’ve got that opportunity



in a couple of years' time, but we've also got to take it Test by Test and make sure that we're doing everything here in West Indies right. "Then we've got a massive summer at home with

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Birmingham

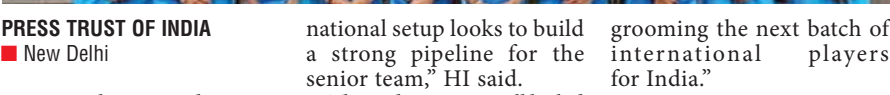
■ Birmingham



Stokes and Pant had a moment at Headingley as the latter charged down the ground against the England captain.

“Even though he’s in opposition, I absolutely love watching Rishabh play cricket. I love the way he takes it on in all formats of the game. He’s got a bit of stickiness in his time, but that type of talent, when you let that type of talent be free, that’s what can happen in the last week,”

I feel better now than I did on Thursday and Friday (laughs). Everyone was very tired in that week. It was a big week, we were on the field and bowled for another five days, so yeah, big week for everyone. I used the three days after that game to offer absolutely nothing to the world.



■ New Delhi

"We have selected a squad that balances potential and experience, and I am confident this tour will be immensely beneficial in

Forwards: Angadbir Singh, Bobby Singh Dhami, Maninder Singh, Venkatesh Kenche, Aditya Arjun Lathe, Selvam Karthi, Uttam Singh.
Standbys: Ankit Malik (goal-keeper), Sunil Jojo (defender), Sudeep Chirmako (forward).

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