The Pioneer

Paper with passion since 1865

www.dailypioneer.com
@TheDailyPioneer
facebook.com/dailypioneer
instagram.com/dailypioneer

RNI No. 2016/1957 I Late City Vol.168 Issue 179 I *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY JULY 3, 2025; PAGES 12 ₹3

PUBLISHED FROM: DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYAWADA

Cheer for middle class?

After IT relief, GST rates may come down on household items

RAJESH KUMAR ■ New Delhi

Relief for common people soon. From ghee and toothpaste to pulses and rice, besan to sewing machines, several items consumed by lower and middle class on a daily basis are likely to get cheaper. Cigarettes, carbonated drinks and high-end cars are among items that may become more expensive if proposals to this effect are approved in the upcoming 56th meeting of the Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council, expected later this month.

After a series of income tax concessions earlier this year, the Government is considering eliminating the 12 per cent GST slab altogether or reclassifying many items currently taxed at 12 per cent into the lower five per cent bracket particularly aimed at easing the burden on essential goods used by average lower and middle class households. This move is expected to lower prices of many daily-use products that are part of every household's monthly expenses, especially for middle-class and low-income families struggling with rising costs.

According to sources, the proposed tax restructuring would target items widely used by middle-class and economically weaker sections such as toothpaste and tooth powder, umbrellas, sewing machines, pressure cookers and kitchen utensils, electric irons, geysers, small-capacity washing machines, bicycles, readymade garments priced over ₹1,000, footwear priced between ₹500 and ₹1,000, stationery items, vaccines, ceramic tiles and agricultural tools, among other things. If the proposed changes are implemented, many of these items will become more affordable.

The proposed move is expected to put a burden of ₹40,000 crore to ₹50,000 crore on the Government, which is prepared to absorb the initial impact. The current GST framework operates with four primary tax brackets — five per cent, 12 per cent, 18 per cent and 28 per cent, alongside distinct rates for specific items such as precious metals and supplementary cess on sin goods. In the present structure, the five per cent category encompasses 21 per cent of GST items, the 12 per cent bracket covers 19 per cent, while 18 per cent applies to 44 per cent and the highest rate of 28 per cent is applicable to three per cent of items.

The rationale behind this hinges on an anticipated boost in consumption. The Government believes that lower prices will drive higher sales, ultimately resulting in a tax base and increased long-term GST collections.

The timing is also critical. Besides, the health cess will apply to 'sin goods' — referring to products usually taxed at higher rates due to their perceived negative impact on society — and others in the higher 28 per cent GST bracket.

Continued on >> P8

POTENTIAL CHANGES

- Proposal to reduce GST on essentials from 12% to 5%
- Ghee, toothpaste, rice, besan, sewing machines likely to get cheaper
- Cigarettes, carbonated drinks and high-end cars are among items that may become more expensive
- GST framework operates with four primary tax brackets — five per cent, 12%, 18 % and 28%
- The health cess will apply to 'sin goods' — referring to products usually taxed at higher rates
- The Clean Energy Cess will target more expensive cars and coal

India lifts ban on Pakistani YouTube channels, celebs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

After a series of bans on Pakistani YouTube channels and actors' and actresses' social media accounts in India, some of the restrictions have now been quietly lifted.

Celebrities and Youtubers, whose accounts have become accessible again, include Danish Taimoor, Ahad Raza Mir, Mawra Hocane, Yumna Zaidi, Aalia Shah are visible in India. Curbs were imposed in the wake of Operation Sindoor after Pahalgam terror attack.

Along with the Instagram accounts, the most popular YouTube channels of Pakistani daily dramas — Green TV Entertainment, ARY Digital HD, HUM TV and HAR PAL GEO are also back in India. YouTube channel Breaking Barrier with Aalia Shah also reappeared in India.

The return of these profiles has sparked discussions online, though Indian authorities have not released any statement confirming the removal of the restrictions. Mawra Hocane, actors Hania Aamir and Mahira Khan too were criticised for their support for the terror attack.

However, the accounts of Fawad Khan, Hania Aamir, Mahira Khan, Ali Zafar, Atif Aslam and Babar Azam, remain blocked in the region. While it remains unclear why only a few accounts have been restored, netizens believe that only B-list celebrity's accounts are being allowed. Many took to their social media accounts to share screenshots of these profiles.

Meanwhile, the All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) has issued a formal appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding a complete and permanent ban on the digital and media presence of all Pakistani nationals and entertainment-related entities in India.

In a statement shared through its official X account, the association expressed concern over the reappearance of Pakistani actors and media channels on Indian digital platforms.

AICWA cited the active social media presence of Pakistani celebrities such as Mawra Hocane and Yumna Zaidi, along with several Pakistan-based entertainment outlets, calling it "an emotional assault" on the families of victims of terrorism. "This is not merely a digital appearance, it is a direct insult to the sacrifice of our martyred soldiers," the association said. It referenced terror attacks including 26/11, Pulwama, Uri and Pahalgam as part of its appeal, reiterating its long-standing position that Pakistan is responsible for continued cross-border terrorism.

The organisation called for a nationwide digital blackout of Pakistani social media accounts and media channels, a ban on all future collaborations involving Pakistani citizens across Indian media, OTT platforms, advertising and a permanent cultural disconnect with Pakistan, as a tribute to India's armed forces and martyrs.

Continued on >> P8

Encounter breaks out in Kishtwar

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

A fierce encounter broke out on Wednesday evening between security forces and terrorists in the Chatroo area of Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir, just as preparations were underway for the first batch of Amarnath pilgrims to begin their trek to the holy cave shrine.

At least two to three Pakistani terrorists, believed to be affiliated with the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) terror group, are reportedly trapped in the ongoing operation, codenamed "Op CHAS." According to the Nagrota-based White Knight Corps, the operation was launched based on specific intelligence inputs indicating the presence of terrorists in the Kanzal Mandu area of Kishtwar. Contact was established with the terrorists, leading to an exchange of fire.

"Based on specific intelligence, a joint search operation was underway in Kanzal Mandu, Kishtwar. Contact has been established with the terrorists and operations are in progress," the White Knight Corps stated in a post on X.

The encounter site, located in a forest area, has been cordoned off by security forces to prevent the terrorists' escape. Additional reinforcements have been deployed to support the ongoing operation, which aims to neutralise the threat.

The operation is described as challenging due to the dense forest terrain, which provides cover for the hiding terrorists.

Continued on >> P8

The ByStander

PIONEER IN SHORT

Gill ton take India to 310 for 5 on Day 1

Birmingham: Skipper Shubman Gill scored a classy century while Yashasvi Jaiswal missed out on a deserving ton as India battled hard to reach 310 for 5 against England on the opening day of the second Test here on Wednesday. This was Gill's (114 batting, 216 balls) second successive hundred in the series after scoring 147 at Headingley. He is one of those rare Indian skippers to have scored back-to-back centuries in his first two Tests as captain. His century came off 199 deliveries. In all, Gill hit 12 fours.

While Jaiswal once again gave India a solid start with an aggressive 87, laced with 13 boundaries, Gill showed a lot of composure and discretion in shot selection to score his seventh Test century.

Sheikh Hasina gets 6-month jail term

Dhaka: Bangladesh's deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was on Wednesday sentenced to six months in prison in a contempt of court case by the International Crimes Tribunal, while it now tries her on a major charge of committing crimes against humanity in absentia. A three-member panel of the tribunal-1 (ICT), led by Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, simultaneously sentenced to two months a fugitive leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, Shakil Akanda Bulbul, in the same case.

It marks the first time that 77-year-old Hasina has been sentenced in any case since she left office in August last year. "According to the verdict, the sentence will come into effect from the day of her arrest or surrender before the court," chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam told reporters after the verdict was handed down.

A State-appointed lawyer is defending Hasina, now staying in India, in the tribunal which earlier declared her a "fugitive" while her trial was opened on Monday initially over the murder of student protester Abu Sayeed.

Anil Ambani again in trouble: SBI classifies loan account as 'fraud'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Mumbai

State Bank of India (SBI) has decided to classify the loan account of beleaguered telecom firm Reliance Communications as "fraud" and to report the name of its erstwhile director — Anil Ambani to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The move is expected to be followed by other lenders who have given loans to Reliance Communications Ltd (RCom). CBI and Enforcement Directorate are expected to register case against the company and Anil Ambani soon.

Reliance Communications in a regulatory filing said that it has received a letter dated June 23, 2025 from the State Bank of India (SBI) to this effect. SBI has decided to report the loan account of the company as "fraud" and to report the name of Anil Ambani (erstwhile director of the company) to the RBI, as per the extant RBI guidelines, it said. As per the RBI guidelines, after a bank classifies an account as 'fraud', the lender should then report the fraud to RBI within 21 days of detection and also report the case to CBI/police.

According to the filing, the Reliance Communications and its subsidiaries received a total loan of ₹31,580 crore from banks. SBI in the letter sent to the RCom said, it has found deviation in utilisation of the loans involving complex web of fund movements across multiple group entities.

"We have taken cognisance of the responses to our show cause notice and after due examination of the same it is concluded that sufficient reasons have not been provided by the respondent, to explain the non-adherence to the agreed terms and conditions of the loan documents or the irregularities observed in the conduct of the account of RCL to the satisfaction of the bank," it said.

Accordingly, the letter said, the Fraud Identification Committee of the bank has decided to classify the loan account of RCL as 'fraud'. As per the RBI guidelines, the penal provisions are applicable to the fraudulent borrower including the promoter director and other whole-time directors of the company.

Continued on >> P8

NATIONAL HERALD CASE

Gandhis made ₹2,000 cr for ₹50 lakh: ED

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday told a Delhi special court that Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi acquired complete ownership and ₹2,000 crore worth assets of Associated Journals Limited (AJL), the publisher of National Herald newspaper, by paying a mere ₹50 lakh. Additional Solicitor General (ASG) SV Raju said that AJL owns properties in Delhi, Lucknow, Bhopal, Indore, Panchkula, Patna and other places, and all these properties have been provided by the Central Government and various State Governments after 1947 for newspaper printing and publishing.

However, soon after taking over AJL, Young Indian (an entity controlled by the Gandhis) declared that it would not indulge in any newspaper publishing including the National Herald, Raju said. "To take over the entire company of ₹2,000 crore, they paid ₹50 lakh," the ASG highlighted. The submissions were made before Special Judge (PC Act) Vishal Gogne of Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court.

ED's case stems from the complaint filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, currently on the trial stage. The Special Court is hearing arguments about whether it should take cognisance of the ED's prosecution complaint in the National Herald money laundering case. During the hearing, the ASG also said close associates of Gandhis were appointed directors of AJL and that fraudulent transactions were done to funnel money. The hearing will continue on Thursday.

The National Herald case involves allegation that a ₹90 crore loan advanced by the Congress party to Associated Journals Ltd (AJL) was assigned to Young Indian for a consideration of ₹50 lakh. It has been alleged that there was misappropriation of assets of over ₹2,000 crore in the controversial matter. In his private complaint, Swamy had accused Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Motilal Vora, Oscar Fernandes, Suman Dubey, Sam Pitroda and Gandhi family-controlled Young Indian of cheating, criminal conspiracy, criminal breach of trust and misappropriation of property.

The ED filed a prosecution complaint against the Gandhis as well as Pitroda and others on April 15 this year.

Dalai Lama reveals his successor plan

SANJAY KAW ■
Dharamshala/New Delhi

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama speaking via a video message PTI

Exiled spiritual leader Dalai Lama on Wednesday said the 600-year-old institution would continue after his death and it would choose his future reincarnation, effectively excluding China from any role over appointing the 15th Dalai Lama. Beijing, however, rejected the Dalai Lama's succession plan, insisting that any future heir must receive its seal of approval, adding a new chapter to Tibetan Buddhism's decades-long struggle with the Chinese ruling Communist Party.

The Gaden Phodrang Trust was founded by the Office of Dalai Lama in 2015. The statement made by the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, who is also called Lhama Thondup, on May 21, 2025, was released by his office on Wednesday. A 5.57-minute video of his speech in Tibetan was also released.

The statement, released just four days before his 90th birthday, has far-reaching implications for his millions of Buddhist followers worldwide. It also came as a message to Beijing, which has long sought to control Tibetan religious traditions to tighten its grip over the region.

Earlier, the Dalai Lama had maintained that the Tibet's most sacred tradition could be wound up, or his successor could be a woman or someone born outside China. Beijing, however, which considers Lhama Thondup as a separatist, had stated that Beijing would approve the identity of the successor through a centuries-old ritual. The week-long celebration to mark the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday commenced at Tsuglagkhang, the main temple at McLeodganj near Dharamshala, on June 30. The occasion is significant, as the Dalai Lama had said in 2011 that at the age of 90, he would decide whether the institution would continue or not.

"I am affirming that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue and I hereby reiterate that the Gaden Phodrang Trust has the sole authority to recognise the future reincarnation. No one else has any such authority to interfere in this matter," the statement released on Wednesday said.

Continued on >> P8

Sheesh Mahal restored to former glory

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

Delhi's "Sheesh Mahal" welcomed visitors on Wednesday. This one was not the same structure that was allegedly renovated by former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and was linked to his political controversies.

Located in Northwest Delhi's Shalimar Bagh area, this "Sheesh Mahal" is a 17th-century palace built by Emperor Shah Jahan, renowned for its intricate mirror work and Mughal-style architecture.

An integral part of the larger Mughal garden complex, the Sheesh Mahal has recently undergone restoration. It also inspired the name referred to by the Bharatiya Janata Party for Kejriwal's official residence at 9, Flag Staff Road — a property that became a major poll issue during the recent Assembly elections due to its allegedly "luxurious" renovation.

After unveiling the restored Sheesh Mahal, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta took a dig at Kejriwal and said, "He had made a Sheesh Mahal for his own comfort, now this Government has made a Sheesh Mahal for people. This is the difference. I only want to say that may this Sheesh Mahal stand tall." Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said that the park, including Sheesh Mahal, holds a rich history and has been a matter of pride for Delhi for over 400 years.

Unfortunately, after independence, except for a few periods, the successive Governments in Delhi largely failed to preserve such historical heritage.

Continued on >> P8

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Trader's kin held for abetment to suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In the tragic triple suicide case of a city-based cloth merchant and his family, Chowk police on Wednesday arrested two accused — Mudita Rastogi, the elder sister of the deceased woman Suchita and her husband Vivek Siddharth — on charges of abetment to suicide. The arrests come a day after the brother of the deceased trader lodged a complaint alleging that sustained financial harassment by the accused drove his brother, sister-in-law, and teenaged niece to end their lives.

According to ACP Chowk Raj Kumar Singh, the deceased had borrowed around Rs 40 lakh from bank and from private moneylenders and handed it over to Mudita and Vivek who had promised to refund it after the sale of a family-owned plot in Nepalganj, Nepal.

The victims were told that the land was in Mudita's name.

However, a recent trip to Nepal by the deceased couple revealed the land was not registered in Mudita's name, but in the names of her children. Feeling betrayed and financially trapped, Sobhit along with his wife and their daughter committed suicide.

On Sunday evening, the victim businessman had handed over his house keys to his elder brother while saying they planned to go for an outing.

The next morning, his minor daughter made a distress call to a relative. When help arrived, all three family members were found unconscious. Doctors at the trauma centre declared them dead.

Man loses over ₹1 crore in 'digital arrest' fraud; 7 held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Shahjahanpur

Uttar Pradesh Police on Wednesday arrested seven men who allegedly impersonated officials from the ED and the CBI to "digitally arrest" a Shahjahanpur resident and swindle more than Rs one crore through a fabricated online court proceeding, an official said.

The gang's modus operandi involved convincing the victim, 60-year-old Sharad Chand, that he was under investigation for an alleged illegal transaction of Rs 2.8 crore, the officer said.

The fraudsters allegedly first contacted him via phone on May 6, posing as ED and CBI officers. Then they escalated the deception by impersonating a judge and conducting fake virtual hearings through WhatsApp for almost a month, according to the police.

Digital arrest is a term used in cyber frauds where victims are falsely told they are under surveillance or legal custody through digital means. They are often isolated via continuous video or call surveillance by fraudsters posing as officials, and manipulated into following instructions without alerting others — often leading to extortion or fraud.

Shahjahanpur Superintendent of Police Rajesh Dwivedi told PTI that during these "virtual hearings", fake lawyers and judges allegedly intimidated Chand, ultimately coercing him into transferring Rs 1.04 crore across 40 bank accounts belonging to nine alleged "advocates."

The victim, associated with an NGO, did not inform anyone at the time of the "digital arrest" but reported the matter to the police once he realised that he had been conned.

During the investigation, police discovered suspicious transactions of Rs nine crore in a bank account linked to the case. That account is also under scrutiny, Dwivedi said.

Those arrested have been identified as Sachin, Prashant, Gautam Singh, Sandeep Kumar, Syed Saif, Aryan Sharma, and Pawan Yadav — all aged between 20 and 28 years.

They have been booked under sections 318 (cheating), 319 (cheating by impersonation), 204 (impersonating a government official) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and sections 66(c) and 66(d) of the IT Act. All have been sent to jail, the police added.

Uttar Pradesh Police has cautioned citizens against cyber frauds like digital arrest and asked them to report any such experiences to their nearest police station or on the dedicated helpline number 1530.

Ex-pradhan's grandson shot due to rivalry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a sensational incident in Basti district, the 17-year-old grandson of a former pradhan was shot dead. It is believed that the attackers had come to shoot the son of former Pradhan Santosh Yadav alias Jamalu, but the target became his grandson Ashok. SP Basti, Abhinandan said that the incident was carried out due to the rivalry for the post of pradhan. A case has been registered against four people for attempted murder and they have been taken into custody. The police are investigating all the aspects related to the incident.

Niyamatpur resident Santosh Yadav alias Jamalu Yadav's grandson Ashok Yadav was a high school student in Sardar Vallabhai Patel Inter College of the same police station area. Ashok's grandfather remained as the village pradhan thrice. Ashok's father Santosh Yadav had complained to the Lokayukta about the work done by the current gram pradhan Ram Ujagir Yadav. The investigations arecurrently going on. The family members allege that the opposition attacked late on Tuesday night due to this rivalry.

Ashok Yadav was sleeping on a cot outside the house. The attackers mistook him for Santosh Yadav and shot him in the head. After the firing, the attackers fled. Hearing a loud sound, the family reached the spot and were stunned to see their son soaked in blood. Ashok was taken to Medical College Ayodhya, from where he was referred to Medical College Lucknow.

On receiving information, SHO Pradeep Kumar Singh reached the spot with the force. In a short while, SP Abhinandan, CO City Satyendra Bhushan Tiwari, CO Kalwari Pradeep Kumar Tripathi also reached the spot. The forensic team also collected evidence. Late in the night, a case of attempt to murder was registered against four people including gram pradhan Ram Ujagir Yadav, pradhan's representative Santosh Yadav alias Babban Yadav and they were taken into custody.

Injured Ashok died during treatment on Wednesday morning. Police force has been deployed in view of the tension in the village after the incident. Along with amending the case under the section of murder, the police is also interrogating some other people by taking them into custody.

Rival's family behind Madeyganj murder

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The brutal murder of murder accused Mohammed Sabir of Rae Bareli at Gomti embankment in Madeyganj in Lucknow was a well-orchestrated plan to execute the crime, DCP Central Ashish Srivastava said on Wednesday.

He was answering media queries on the surrender of prime accused, Munna Ghosi, at a court in Lucknow on Tuesday.

According to DCP, Sabir's murder was being planned since Sabir was released from jail on court's order.

Sabir was doing time in jail for stabbing to death prime accused Munna Ghosi's son Pappu, aka Abul Wafa, in 2017.

During his time in jail, Sabir developed a good rapport with another murder accused, Mohammed Rashid.

On the other hand, prime accused Munna and his wife Shabana were not satisfied with the arrest of Sabir in their son's murder case, and they wanted to avenge their son's murder.

They collected details about Sabir's jailmate through their common acquaintances and roped Rashid in after he was also released from jail.

Munna offered Rs 4 lakh to Rashid to lure Sabir and bring him to Lucknow.

Rashid defected from Sabir, and he agreed to Munna's plan.

Meanwhile, Munna formed a gang of his aides, which included his nephew Nasim and the house owner Saeed Ahmad of Madeyganj.

Sabir was taken to the house of Saeed Ahmed below the Gomti embankment opposite the Shivnagar slope in Madeyganj, where Munna Ghoshi, his other son Shadab, nephew Naseem, house owner Saeed Ahmed, and driver Anil Sonkar killed Mohammad Sabir by hitting him with an axe, shovel, and hammer.

Later Rashid was given money for this work by Munna Ghoshi's wife, Shabana, on completion of the work.

It further surfaced that Munna Ghosi and his aides initially tried to trap Sabir by tricking Rashid. Rashid was asked to make his friend Sabir talk to the accused, who only wanted to know from Sabir about the prime culprit who had killed Pappu. But Sabir did not fall for the bait.

Later Rashid succumbed to the greed of money, and he brought Sabir to the place where he was killed.

The DCP said besides Rashid of Rae Bareli, Anil Sonkar, Saeed Ahmed, and Khurshid (porter), all of Rae Bareli were involved in Sabir's murder.

He said the prime accused are Munna's wife Shabana, their son Sammy alias Abul Fazal, Taimir and Naseem, who is Munna's nephew, in the murder conspiracy.

Yet another 'dead' man found 'alive'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Just a fortnight after a 'dead' man walked to the police station in Kanpur claiming to be alive, in yet another case in Auraiya, a man, who was already cremated, was found to be 'alive'.

The police later found it to be a case of mistaken identity but now they were puzzled about how to maintain the identity of the person, whose cremation was already done after post-mortem examination.

Reports said that the body of a 40-year-old youth was found last Friday afternoon near the Kashi brick kiln located in Purva Rahat village of Sadar Kotwali area. The deceased was roaming in the village for two-three days.

The villagers informed that the youth whose body was found was mentally ill. He was seen roaming around the village for two-three days. To identify the body, the police made his photos viral on social media.

Seeing the photos uploaded by the police on social media, Samshul, son of Gulmir, a resident of Senganpur, and his neighbour Yusuf Khan reached the mortuary with the police.

They identified the body from the face as Samshul's nephew, 40-year-old Noor Mohammad.

They said that Noor Mohammad used to do a private job in Mumbai. After this, the police got the post-mortem done and handed over the body to the family. The family brought the body home and buried it in the cemetery of the village. After the last rites, they were busy preparing for the 40th day rituals and other rituals.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday evening, Noor Mohammad talked to his family members on a video call and informed them about coming home on Muharram.

The villagers and family members were stunned to know that Noor was alive. But now it has become difficult for the police to identify the deceased. Area Officer Ajitmal Mahendra Pratap Singh said that according to the family, the identification happened by mistake due to the lookalike.

The matter will be clear only after Noor Mohammad comes to the village. Information about the incident has been given to higher officials.

Hathras stampede: Families still in mourning as legal battle continues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Hathras

"If Baba really had any powers, he would have shown a miracle that day," says Vinod, who lost three generations of his family — his mother, wife and daughter — in a stampede that claimed 121 lives during a religious congregation a year ago.

Vinod, 46, runs a shop in Sokhana village in Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district and manages daily chores that come with taking care of three children. But the grief wears him down. "Kuch nahi, bas mitti kharab ho rahi hai (There's nothing left, just my life is crumbling)."

On July 2, 2024, lakhs of followers gathered for a satsang of self-styled godman Suraj Pal alias Bhole Baba in Mughal Garhi village of Sikandra Rao area. Permission was granted only for 80,000 people, but over 2.5 lakh reportedly attended.

Chaos erupted after the event when devotees surged towards Bhole Baba's vehicle, allegedly to touch his feet and the ground he walked on.

On the slippery field, the uncontrolled crowd crush left 121 dead, mostly women and children. Vinod's mother Jaywati, wife Rajkumari, and daughter Bhoomi were among them. Jugnu from Navipur, who lost his mother Munni Devi, says the sorrow will haunt him forever. "She didn't deserve to die like that."

Investigations into the stampede revealed massive lapses in planning and crowd control, with insufficient exit routes and no effective security plan.

A year on, families of victims remain devastated, the tragedy continues to be in public memory, as court hearings carry on, and the road to accountability still seems some distance away.

While Bhole Baba was questioned by a probe panel once in Lucknow, he was not named an accused. The police booked 11 of his aides, including event organiser Devprakash Madhukar, under various sections. All are currently out on bail. The government formed a judicial commission, which submitted its report on February 21, 2025. The report gave a clean chit to Bhole Baba, stating no direct evidence linked him to the stampede.

The case is being heard in Hathras' Additional Sessions Court-1, where senior Supreme Court advocate A P Singh is representing Bhole Baba's followers. "The incident of July 2, 2024, was a conspiracy. The police hurriedly filed a false chargesheet," Singh told PTI.

He also said that 31 hearings have taken place so far, with the next scheduled for July 19 as arguments continue over the framing of charges.

Notably, four judges have changed over the course of these hearings.

Singh said the police have filed a 3,200-page chargesheet supported by 676 witness statements. The 11 accused, including two women, who were all part of Bhole Baba's sevadars (volunteers) and engaged in managing the large event, have been granted bail by the Allahabad High Court.

After the judicial panel's probe, six government officials, including the then SDM and circle officer, were suspended for negligence. The district magistrate and superintendent of police were also transferred after the tragedy.

Following the incident, the state government announced Rs 2 lakh ex gratia for the families of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for the injured.

However, for the families of those killed, the emotional vacuum left by the loss is immeasurable. "I miss her every day," says Rekha of Sokhana village, who lost her mother-in-law in the stampede. Naina Devi from Navipur too is devastated as she breaks down remembering her mother-in-law who also died in last year's stampede.

Financial support extended to over 35.78L women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

Reinforcing its commitment to compassionate and inclusive governance, the Uttar Pradesh government has provided vital financial support to over 35.78 lakh destitute women in the first quarter of FY 2025–26.

A total of Rs 3,000, at the rate of Rs 1,000 per month, was transferred directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under the Pension Scheme, ensuring transparency and timely support. Additionally, 47,800 new beneficiaries were added during this period, reflecting the government's resolve to ensure that no eligible woman is left behind.

In the final quarter of 2024–25, a total of 35,30,311 women received this benefit. The increase in beneficiaries is evidence that the Yogi government is steadily expanding the reach and inclusivity of the scheme. The scheme not only provides financial support to women facing hardship after the loss of their spouses, but also empowers them to live with dignity.

The Pension Scheme is designed for women who have lost their husbands and are struggling to sustain themselves. The Yogi government has ensured that only genuinely needy women are included in the scheme through a strong and transparent verification process. As per current data, 28,56,821 beneficiaries are from rural areas, while 7,21,290 belong to urban regions. To avail the scheme, a woman must be a permanent resident of Uttar Pradesh, above 18 years of age, and widowed. Additionally, her annual family income should not exceed Rs 2 lakh, and she must not be receiving any pension under other central or state government schemes. The application process has been meticulously structured. Once an application is received, the concerned department verifies documents within 45 days. Following this, the BDO, SDM or Nagar Magistrate provides approval within 15 days.

AI, drones keep check on illegal mining in state

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

In a decisive move to curb illegal mining and mineral transportation in Uttar Pradesh, the government has deployed advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI), drones, and satellite-based monitoring systems. Demonstrating an unprecedented level of vigilance, the state has blacklisted over 21,477 vehicles found involved in unlawful transportation activities.

As part of this crackdown, 57 AI and IoT-enabled check gates have been established across the state to monitor vehicles engaged in mining operations. These automated checkpoints, set up with the support of the Transport Department, utilize Weigh-In-Motion (WIM) technology to detect and prevent overloading of vehicles.

In addition to real-time vehicle monitoring, the Directorate of Geology and Mining is using advanced satellite imagery and mapping tools such as Google Earth, Arc-GIS, and LISS-IV data to both detect illegal mining sites and identify untapped mineral zones.

The department's Remote Sensing Lab (PGRS Lab) is preparing geological maps and monitoring approved mining leases. This has helped in identifying new areas rich in sand, morang, and other minor minerals. To track the transport of minerals more effectively, AIS 140-compatible GPS devices are being installed in vehicles under the Vehicle Tracking System (VTS). These devices will be connected to the department's VTS module, enabling real-time tracking, route deviation alerts, and detailed reports (MIS) to prevent illegal transportation. For the first time, transporters are also being registered as stakeholders to bring them into the system. The use of drone technology has made it possible to measure the length, width, and depth of mining areas. Volumetric analysis through drones helps accurately estimate the amount of mining done, and action is taken based on these findings. Drones are also being used to analyze the volume of stored minerals and to mark out mineable areas for proper lease management. This ensures the best use of available mineral zones. These steps by the government have significantly helped in controlling illegal mining. Regular inspections and tech-based monitoring have improved transparency and curbed the activities of mining mafias.

These efforts not only promote environmental protection but also strengthen governance and accountability in the mining sector. Uttar Pradesh's strict and technology-driven approach is now being seen as a model for other states to follow.

the pioneer CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I Akash S/o Rakesh Kumar ward no. 11 Kanti Hadha Achalganj Unnao have changed my name to Akash kumar for all future purposes

NOTICE

My son's name wrongly written Anil kumar in my service record when right name Anil kumar Bajpai S/o1529776-N, SPR, Shyam sunder, -H.no.-313, Bandhu haar, Unnao (UP)

NOTICE

I, Aishwarya Agnihotri, adult W/o Ashutosh Bajpai, R/o H. No. 4/66-A, New Azad Nagar, Thana Chakeri, Kanpur Nagar, hereby declare that after marriage my name is Aishwarya Bajpai. In all government and private offices, my name should be recorded as Aishwarya Bajpai, and all people should recognized me by this name.

NOTICE

Notice

It is hereby informed to the general public that my daughter's correct name is Angel Srivastava, D/o-Late Anuj Kumar Srivastava as recorded in her educational documents. Due to a mistake, her name has been mentioned as Anushka Srivastava in her Aadhaar card bearing number 277743091526, which is incorrect. In the future, my daughter should be known and recognized by her correct name Angel Srivastava, D/o- Late Anuj Kumar Srivastava. It is hereby certified that all the legal and formal procedures related to this matter have been duly completed by me personally.Rashmi Srivastava,W/o- Late Anuj Kumar Srivastava -B-102, Plot No. 48, Vimal Nagar, Kamta, Chinhat, Lucknow-227105, Uttar Pradesh

NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

That the Original sale dated 04.01.2003 executed by Lucknow Development Authority, Lucknow in favour of Ramesh Kumar S/o Ram Gulam and Smt Guddi W/o Ramesh Kumar The said sale deed is registrar-II, Lucknow, in Book No.1, Volume 3416 pages-255/268 on Serial No.57 dated-04.01.2003 in respect to House No. E-3/592, admeasuring 30 Sqm, situated at Vineet Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow. The Present owner Smt Reesha W/o Jalish Asgar has been lost Original sale deed dated-04.01.2003 and Allotment Letter and as such any person claiming to be the said property covered by the said document may file claim before me within 15 days from the date of publication of notice failing which it will be presumed that the property in question is free from any encumbrance and any claim in respect thereof against the applicant as mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 days of publication of the notice. **Munendra Mishra (Advocate)**

R/o- H.No. D-205, Saraswati Apartment, Gomti Nagar Extension, Lucknow, Ph: 9455743939

आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है।

इरम कालेज

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

0522–2310712

Email: info@eramedu.org
+eramedu@gmail.com

प्रबन्धक

NOTICE

My mother's correct name is Taranjeet Kaur, but due to an error, it's recorded as Taran Anand in my high school marksheet. Both names refer to the same person. She should be recognized as Taranjeet Kaur in the future.Aarav Veer Singh R/o 120/500-9, Lajpat Nagar, Hans Nagar, Kanpur

NOTICE

Be it known to all that my name is Moin Uddin and my correct date of birth is 23/08/1943. My name was wrongly written as (MOEEN UDDEEN) and date of birth as 20/02/1948 in my passport. My correct name is Moin Uddin and date of birth is 23/08/1943. I be known and identified by this name for all future purposes. Moin Uddin son of Hasan Akhtar resident of 43 A, Washarat ka Hata Purawaldi, Kydganj, Pargana and Tehsil Sadar, Prayagraj.

NOTICE

It is informed that my son ANKUSH PATEL, S/o RAM SAROJ VERMA, resident of Village ASHRAFPUR BHUVA, Post MAINPUR, Tehsil JALALPUR, Dist AMBEDKAR NAGAR, has his name incorrectly printed as AVINASH in his Aadhaar Card no-858333410087. The correct name ANKUSH PATEL, is mentioned in all other official records, and it should be corrected in Aadhaar card.RAM SAROJ VERMA (Father).

NOTICE

I, Pooja Gupta D/o Indrasan Gupta, R/o Khadia Bazar, Post - Yogi Chaura, Shakti Nagar, Sonbhadra, U.P., declare that my name have been incorrectly written as KM Pooja and Pooja in my educational certificate and marksheet. The correct names is Pooja Gupta.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from VIVEK KUMAR AGRAWAL to VIVEK KUMAR AGARWAL S/o LATE. SUNDAR LAL AGRAWAL R/o - 128/568, -K, Block Kidwai Nagar Kanpur. In future I would be known & recognise by this name only.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from SHWETA AGRAWAL to SHWETA AGARWAL W/o VIVEK KUMAR AGARWAL R/o - 128/568, -K, Block Kidwai Nagar Kanpur. In future I would be known & recognise by this name only.

NOTICE

It is to inform that in army service records army no JC850218K my name is incorrectly mentioned as Shailendra Kumar whereas in my Aadhar and PAN Card my name is Shailendra Kumar Tiwari which true and correct. Shailendra Kumar Tiwari S/o Ram Lochan Tiwari vill paraspur barasin post Kudwar Thana Baldirai Distt Sultanpur

NOTICE

I Umesh Shukla s/o sh. Ramesh Chandra Shukla ,R/O Near capital cinema , South Jahanabad, Rae Bareli,have changed my name to Umesh Chandra Shukla for all future purposes.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Vijay Kumar Srivastava To Vijay Kumar S/o Gurbax Lal R/o 2C/402, Water Park Road Hanspuram, Naubasta Kanpur for future purposes

PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
MARINE DEPARTMENT

No. MD/ACCTS/WK/R-05/2025/828 Date: 26/06/2025

E-TENDER CALL NOTICE (E-TCN) No.MD/ACCTS/WK/R-05/2025/506, dtd. 15/04/2025

Name of the Work : Chartering off Green Tug (Green Tug Transition Programme Compliant)- Manning, Operation, Maintenance and Complete Technical Management of Service Provider Owned 01 No.60 T Bollard Pull New Battery Electric Tug for 15 Years at Paradip Port Authority. Estimated cost put to tender for hire charges for one year: **Rs.24,47,28,667/-** Last date & time of submission of tender through online bidding is **15:00 Hours on 21/07/2025.** Date & time for opening of Technical Bid is **15:30 hours on dt.22/07/2025.** For further details, please log on to the Website: **https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.**

Sd/- Deputy Conservator, Paradip Port Authority

PPA/PR/24/2025-2026 dtd.01.07.2025

E-Tender Notice
GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR
SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE

Short Term E-Tenders are invited for the purchase of Victor 2D Fluorometer (DELFIA Express) and fully Automated Hemoglobin System II be submitted online latest by **17-07-2025 upto 4:00 p.m.** Detailed information can be obtained from website **www.eproc.punjab.gov.in.** Any corrigendum / addendum related to these e-tender will be uploaded, if required, on Punjab Govt. website: **eproc.punjab.gov.in**

Director of Research

2426/12/2025-26/783
Dated CHD :- 02/07/2025

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)

ई-प्रोक्यूरमेंट निविदा सूचना

क. 874/निर्माण/2025 दिनांक 27.06.2025

एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु (Online) आनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (₹ लाख में)	निविदा डालने की अंतिम तिथि
1	नगर पालिक निगम कोरबा क्षेत्रांतर्गत सर्वमंगला नगर जोन अंतर्गत 10 नग नवीन आंगनबाड़ी भवन का निर्माण कार्य (जिला खनिज न्यास मद) (प्रथम निविदा)	130.00	21.07.2025 (T.No. 171020)

उपरोक्त कार्यों की निविदा की जानकारी ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट वेब पोर्टल http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है, साथ ही निगम के वेब साईट www.korbamunicipal.in पर भी देखी जा सकती है।

।। स्वच्छ भारत निर्माण में योगदान दें।।

कार्यपालन अभियंता
नगर पालिक निगम कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Powermen to observe strike on July 9

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

More than 27 lakh power sector employees will observe a day-long nationwide strike on July 9, in protest against the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to privatise two power distribution companies covering 42 districts.

Shailendra Dubey, chairman of the All-India Power Engineers' Federation (AIPEF), said on Wednesday that the state government has decided to privatise Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (PVVNL) and Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (DVVNL), which cover 42 of the state's 75 districts.

"On the call of the umbrella body, National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers (NCCOEEE), power employees, junior engineers, and engineers across the country have staged massive demonstrations against the privatisation of the discoms," he said.

Dubey added that the umbrella body has now called for a massive protest on July 9 by 27 lakh power employees opposing the privatisation of the two UP discoms.

Demonstrations will mainly be held in Hyderabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayawada, Chennai, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Nagpur, Raipur, Bhopal, Jabalpur, Vadodara, Rajkot, Guwahati, Shillong, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Ranchi, Srinagar, Jammu, Shimla, Dehradun, Patiala, Jaipur, Kota, Hisar, and Lucknow. The strike on such a large scale may also affect the power supply across the country.

"We will not be responsible if power supply is affected," Dubey warned.

The power sector employees' union alleged that the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd and certain senior state government officials are colluding with selected private players. They accused them of attempting to sell discom assets worth crores of rupees to private companies at throwaway prices. The AIPEF chairman said that if the discoms are privatised, farmers and economically weaker sections will be deprived of several benefits.

Earlier in June, the Uttar Pradesh government invoked provisions of the Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1966 (ESMA), prohibiting strikes in the electricity department for a period of six months. A notification to this effect was issued by the government.

According to the notification, the strike ban covers all services under the following entities: Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (UPPCL); Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd. (UPRVUNL); Uttar Pradesh Power Transmission Corporation Ltd (UPPTCL); Kanpur Electricity Supply Company Ltd (KESCO); Madhyanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (MVVNL); Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (PuVVNL); Paschimanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (PVVNL); Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (DVVNL); UP Renewable and EV Infrastructure Ltd.

The government said the decision was taken to ensure an uninterrupted power supply and prevent any disruption in essential electricity-related services across the state.

LMC to check licenses of pets

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

The Animal Welfare Department of Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) will soon launch a drive to check the licenses of pets. The decision has been taken in view of the increasing complaints aout unlicensed pet dogs and the noticeable decline in the number of registered licenses compared to the previous year.

According to the LMC, only 1,450 dog licenses have been issued so far, while the estimated number of pet dog owners in the city exceeds 10,000. This significant gap between the actual and registered pet dogs has raised concern within the department.

As per the existing rules, any individual found keeping a dog without a valid license will be charged a late fee of ₹50 per day, calculated from the beginning of the financial year, with a maximum penalty of ₹5,000. If a pet dog is found without a license during the checking drive, a fine of up to ₹5,000 will be imposed, and legal action may also be initiated. Dog owners are advised to immediately obtain or renew their licenses by logging on to the official LMC website.

Resolve grievances promptly: CM Yogi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Gorakhpur

During his stay in Gorakhpur, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended the Janata Darshan at Gorakhnath Temple for the second consecutive day on Wednesday, patiently hearing public grievances. He directed officials to resolve all issues promptly, transparently, and responsibly, warning against any negligence. He stressed that timely and satisfactory redressal of public concerns remains a top government priority.

The Chief Minister heard the concerns of around 200 people gathered in the auditorium of the Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan, located on the temple premises, and assured them of justice. He referred their applications to the concerned officials, directing them to ensure swift and effective resolution, reaffirming the government's firm commitment to supporting every citizen in need.

The chief minister urged officials to act with sensitivity and ensure justice for all, warning against any exploitation or land encroachment and calling for strict legal action in such cases.

He also assured full government support to those seeking medical aid, directing officers to expedite treatment estimates and submit them promptly for approval.

Maya against merger of schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supremo Mayawati on Wednesday termed the merger of government schools in Uttar Pradesh as unfair and anti-poor. She said that the government should withdraw this decision and if it does not, then this decision will be cancelled when the BSP government comes to power.

Former UP CM took social media handle 'X' and claimed that the decision taken by the Basic Education Council, Uttar Pradesh government to close many schools under the pretext of combining/integrating primary schools is not justice to the easy and cheap government education system provided to crores of poor children near their homes, rather it clearly appears unfair, unnecessary and anti-poor at first glance. The government should immediately withdraw this decision of combining/integrating in the larger interest of poor students. If the government does not withdraw this decision, then our party wants to assure all their parents and guardians that when our party (BSP) government is formed, this decision will be cancelled and the old system will be restored in the state again. However, it is expected that the UP government will definitely consider changing its decision sympathetically in view of the wider interest of the poor and the education of the common man, Mayawati asserted.

On Tuesday, former Congress president and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi also strongly attacked the above development model of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He said that this model is going to snatch the right to education from the poor, especially SC, ST and OBC children. Sharing screenshots of some media reports on social media platforms Facebook and X, Rahul Gandhi claimed that between the years 2014-15 and 2023-24, the number of government schools across the country has decreased by 8%, while private schools have increased by 14.9%.

Rahul said that more than 5,000 government schools are being closed in Uttar Pradesh alone. He said that since 2014, 84,441 government schools have been closed across the country, most of which are in BJP-ruled states - UP, MP and Assam. Also, referring to a report, the Congress leader said that in 2023-24, the enrollment of SC students has decreased by 16.2 lakhs as compared to last year, while the enrollment of ST students has decreased by 5.1 lakhs and the enrollment of OBC students has decreased by 38.5 lakhs. Further, Rahul Gandhi described it as not just an action to close schools, but a direct attack on the right to education given in the Constitution and the historic law brought by the UPA government. He said that Baba Saheb Ambedkar had said that education is the milk of a lioness, whoever drinks it will roar. But today that same education is being snatched away. He said students and teachers are protesting on the streets, but instead of listening to them, the government is harassing them and further weakening the education system. Whereas there is a need to provide equal, accessible and quality education to every child.

Two officials suspended

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

The state government has taken action against two state tax officials on charges of colluding with bogus firm Rajdhani Enterprises Company and causing loss to the government.

Assistant Commissioner Ritesh Kumar Barnwal and Deputy Commissioner Manish Kumar have been suspended in Rae Bareli. Additional Commissioner, Kanpur, Samuel Pal has been appointed as the investigating officer. Apart from these two, Devendra Singh has been accused of not informing the higher officials despite knowing about the matter. Along with Ritesh Kumar and Manish Kumar, there will also be a departmental inquiry against Devendra Singh.

Special Secretary in the State Tax Department Shyam Prakash Narayan issued an order on Tuesday. In the suspension order in the case of Deputy Commissioner Manish Kumar and Rae Bareli Assistant Commissioner Ritesh Kumar Barnwal, it was said that they caused loss to the UP government by fraudulently forwarding IGST-ITC of over ₹10.76 crore to the firm outside the state in a bogus manner. Due to this, they are suspended and a departmental inquiry has been initiated against them.

Additional Commissioner Kanpur Samuel Pal will investigate the allegations against them in a month and submit the report. During the suspension period, Manish Kumar and Ritesh Barnwal will remain attached to Joint Commissioner State Tax Office, Banda. Departmental inquiry will also be conducted against Devendra Singh, the then Joint Commissioner (Executive). It is accused that when the matter came to light, Devendra Singh did not promptly inform the officials of the State Tax Headquarters and Central GST about this irregularity. He did not take immediate action to protect the revenue. Due to this, departmental inquiry will also be conducted against him by Samuel Pal.

CBI raids medical college, owner's residence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

The sleuths of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raided the NCR Medical College and residence of Bharatiya Janata Party leader and former MLC Dr Sarojini Agarwal in Meerut, on Tuesday.

This action was taken after complaint of irregularities in the allocation of MBBS seats in the medical college.

The CBI team simultaneously conducted a thorough investigation of documents at the college and her residence and also questioned family members and staff. The search operation continued till late in the night.

Earlier on Monday, a team of the Medical Council of India (MCI) had also inspected the college. This raid has created a stir in political circles, as Dr. Sarojini Agarwal has been a prominent leader of the Samajwadi Party before joining the BJP.

On Tuesday morning, the CBI team reached NCR Medical College in Kharkhoda, Meerut and Dr Sarojini Agarwal's private residence in Begumbagh.

A complaint was received that the medical college does not have faculty as per the standards. The registration of students and their studies are also not meeting the standards. The NMC team had also received complaints of fraud in the admission of patients and OPD in the medical college.

The CBI conducted the raid after the NMC report and the arrest of six people including three doctors in Lucknow by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for taking bribes in the name of getting medical colleges recognised.

The CBI team raided the medical college in Kharkhoda at around 3 pm on Tuesday. Apart from the computer, the team of five CBI officers took all the documents, availability of teachers, registration of students, details of admitted patients, OPD register etc. in their possession. After a continuous investigation of five hours in the college, the team reached their residence from there at 8 pm.

The CBI team conducted a raid at Dr. Sarojini Agarwal's residence near Begumpul at 8.30 pm. The team reached the residence and took the mobiles of Dr. Sarojini Agarwal, her husband Dr. OP Agarwal, daughter Shivani in their possession.

The team took all the documents related to the medical college in their possession. Checked all the files and also searched the records. The team also questioned the doctors and staff. The raid continued till around midnight.

According to the college staff, the CBI made them sit in another room and maintained a distance from the media during the entire search.

Dr Sarojini Agarwal is a well-known politician of Meerut. After becoming the District Panchayat President in 1995, she started politics with the Samajwadi Party. She was an MLC twice and was considered close to Mulayam Singh Yadav and Azam Khan. After joining the BJP in 2017, she became an MLC again in 2018. Her family is also active in the education sector and runs many medical and engineering colleges, schools and other properties in Meerut and Noida.

This is not the first time that the Agarwal family has come into controversy. In 2016, a case of fraud was registered against them. It was alleged that about Rs 9.62 lakh was collected from a person in the name of getting a flat under the Samajwadi Awas Yojana, but possession was not given. An FIR was also registered in this case at Lisadi Gate police station. Now the latest raid has once again brought this family under investigation.

During the raid, the media tried to contact the family, but no one picked up the phone. Dr Sarojini, her daughter Dr Himani and colleague Dr Rajesh kept a distance from the media.

UP STF busts inter-state oxytocin racket; 3 held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) on Wednesday arrested three suspected members of an inter-state gang allegedly involved in the illegal trafficking and supply of oxytocin injections to be misused in milch animals and vegetables.

Acting on a tip-off, the STF seized nearly 5,87,880 ml of oxytocin — valued at approximately ₹1.20 crore — during a raid at a house on Mohan Road near Buddheshwar crossing in Lucknow's Kakori police station area. The arrested men have been identified as Anmol Pal, Awadhesh Pal, both Lucknow residents, and Khageshwar of Sitapur district, the agency said.

Police also recovered ₹12,000 in cash, 800 empty vials, rubber and aluminum caps, plastic funnels, pipes, packets of salt, and a transport vehicle. Three mobile phones were also seized, the STF said.

According to the STF, the gang was procuring high-density oxytocin disguised as mineral water parcels from Bihar.

"Once received, they repackaged it into smaller ampoules and illegally distributed it in Lucknow and adjoining districts. The oxytocin was allegedly used to artificially stimulate milk production in cattle and accelerate the growth of fruits and vegetables, posing serious health hazards to both animals and humans," the STF said in a statement. "The injections were being diluted and filled into unlicensed vials in unhygienic conditions," the agency said, noting that "its misuse is not only illegal but extremely dangerous". It further said that the samples have been sent for laboratory testing to verify contamination and potency.

A case has been registered at Kakori police station under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including sections 318 (cheating), 280 (making atmosphere noxious to health), 276 (adulteration of drugs), and 112 (petty organised crime). Further investigation is underway to identify the Bihar-based supplier and other possible accomplices, the STF added.

SP leader flays profiling of street vendors

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

Samajwadi Party leader ST Hasan, former MP from Moradabad, on Wednesday condemned the actions of some Hindu organisations engaged in religious profiling of eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route. He equated such acts with terror incident in Pahalgam on April 22.

"Asking hotel staff and local vendors to reveal their names and forcing them to undress to identify their religion is no different from what terrorists did in Pahalgam. This too is a form of terrorism," Hasan said.

He, however, added "there is nothing wrong in asking the owners to display the name of the owner of the restaurant/eatery, but communal profiling and asking people to undress to confirm their religious identity is outrageous and the state government must intervene to stop this practice.

He alleged that such incidents are taking place openly while the Uttarakhand government is turning a blind eye.

"It seems the state government is silently supporting these acts. In a secular country like India, this kind of behaviour is shameful. It should be stopped," Hasan said.

The remarks came amid reports about local Hindu outfits in several towns in Uttarakhand allegedly checking the identities of eatery staff, targeting individuals suspected to be Muslims. Videos circulating on social media reportedly showed volunteers coercing people to prove their religious identity. Hasan called for immediate intervention by the Central and state governments to ensure that such communal practices are checked.

The Uttarakhand government has made it mandatory for eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route to prominently display their food licences or registration certificates.

Owners of hotels, dhabas, food carts and stalls along the pilgrimage route will have to display a clean copy of their licence or registration certificate prominently so that consumers can easily see it, Health Secretary and Commissioner Food Safety and Drug Administration R Rajesh Kumar said. This includes small traders and food cart owners as well.

The Kanwar Yatra is an annual pilgrimage during the Hindu month of Shravan, drawing thousands of devotees.

The UP government in July 2024 had issued directives to all eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route from Meerut to Haridwar to display the name of the owner. The Samajwadi Party had criticised the move will create a gap between two communities and calling such practices were prevalent during the Nazi rule in Germany under dictator Adolf Hitler.

As per the directive issued by UP government in 2024 every food shop, including roadside carts, will have to display the owner's name on the board. The initiative, the government said, was to ensure smooth conduct of the Kanwar Yatra, which begins in month of Shravan.

HDFC BANK
We understand your world

Legal Cell : HDFC Bank Ltd, 2nd Floor, Experio Building, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010.

"APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of HDFC Bank Ltd. Secured Creditor, will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is"** on **30/07/2025**, for recovery of **Rs.10,92,077/-** o/s as on **06-SEP-2021** along with further interest and charges applicable due to the HDFC Bank Ltd. Secured Creditor from (i) **M/s. Shakti Industries Through Its Proprietor Sh. Anan Raj Singh (Borrower), (ii) Sh. Anan Raj Singh S/o Sh. Ghanshyam Singh (Co-Borrower) & (iii) Sh. Murlidhar Singh S/o Late Brinda Singh (Co-Borrower & Mortgagor).** The reserve price will be **Rs. 17,70,000.00/-** and the earnest money deposit will be **Rs. 1,77,000.00/-**

Short description of the immovable property

Unit No A1/301, Type Great, On The Third Floor Of Block No. A1, Situated At Sahara City Homes, Hardoi By Pass Road, Near IIM Lucknow, Having Super Area Approx 74.21 Sq Mtr, Tehsil Bakshi Ka Talab, District Lucknow.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in HDFC Bank Ltd, Secured Creditor's website **https://www.hdfcbank.com/personal/resources/important-notices.**

Date: - 03.07.2025, Place: - Lucknow **Authorised Offier, HDFC Bank Ltd.**

एन एच पी सी NHPC **NHPC Limited**
(A Government of India Navratna Enterprise)

NHPC Office Complex, Sector-33, Faridabad-121003 (Haryana).
CIN : L40101HR1975GOI032564

SCHEDULE

[To be published in pursuance of Clause (7) of Regulation 23 of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (Conduct of Business) Regulations, 2023]

1. The petitioner above-named has filed a petition before the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, New Delhi for determination of tariff for **Parbati-II Power Station.**

2. The beneficiaries of the generating station are:

i)	UPPCL – Uttar Pradesh	vi)	UPCL – Uttarakhand
ii)	HPPC – Haryana	vii)	JVVNL, JdVVNL & AVVNL – Rajasthan
iii)	Engg. Dept. – UT Chandigarh	viii)	PDD – UT J&K
iv)	BRPL, BYPL & TPDDL – Delhi	ix)	WBSEDCL, West Bengal
v)	CSPDCL, Chhattisgarh	x)	DVC, Kolkata
xi)	HPSEB – Himachal Pradesh		

3. Capacity of the generating station : 800 MW
4. Approved capital cost of the project : Rs. 3919.59 crore (Dec. 2001 P. L.)
5. Authority which has approved the capital cost : CCEA on 11.09.2002
6. Scheduled date of commercial operation : 10.09.2009
7. Actual date of commercial operation : 01.04.2025 (Unit-I, II & III) & 16.04.2025 (Unit-IV)
8. Capital cost on the date of commercial operation : Rs.13607.37 Crores
9. Details of tariff:

Sl. No.	Hydro Power Generating Station	Tariff for the previous year (2024-25)	Year-wise tariff sought to be determined				
			2025-26		2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
			01.04.2025 - 15.04.2025	16.04.2025 - 31.03.2026			
1.	Annual Fixed Charges (Rs. in Lakhs)	NA	9,831.68	236,620.38	246,247.43	244,456.03	242,366.75
2.	Primary Energy Charges	Primary Energy Charges are part of Annual Fixed Charges and is 50% of Annual Fixed Charges					

10. A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website: https://www.nhpcindia.com.
11. The suggestions and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the petition may be filed by any person, including the beneficiaries through the e-filing portal of the Commission, with a copy to the Petitioner within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place : Faridabad
Date : 27.06.2025

(Ajay Shrivas)
General Manager (Comml.), Commercial Division

Chain-snatcher nabbed after encounter

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
Lucknow

A seasoned chain snatcher, named in as many as 30 cases of chain loot, and carrying a bounty of Rs 1 lakh was arrested by a team of Gomti Nagar police in an encounter on Tuesday night.

The accused, identified as Anubhav Shukla, aka Raja of Lakhimpur Kheri, suffered a police bullet injury in the encounter and has been admitted to a CHC. He confessed to his crime during preliminary interrogation.

DCP East Shashank Singh said the police were working on cases of chain loot that took place in Gomti Nagar, Krishna Nagar, and other police station areas, and the Gomti Nagar police arrested a chain snatcher, Brijesh Tiwari, on Tuesday. "The accused Brijesh Tiwari disclosed the name of his mentor as Anubhav Shukla and also disclosed that he, along with Anubhav, had committed chain snatching in Gomti Nagar and Krishna Nagar. The victims of these incidents also identified the accused, Brijesh," the DCP said.

He said the Gomti Nagar police developed the information and started checking in the area. "We were conducting checks at the Gwari railway crossing when a suspect seemed to be approaching the checkpoint on foot. But the suspect suddenly turned back and fled. The team ran after him, and the suspect opened fire on the police team. In retaliatory firing, the suspect suffered bullet injuries in his leg and was overpowered. He disclosed his identity as Anubhav Shukla, whom the police were looking for. He was admitted to a hospital then and is under police custody," the DCP said.

The DCP said a looted gold chain, pistol, cartridges, and shells have been recovered from the accused, Anubhav. Suruchi, wife of the additional private secretary posted in the secretariat and resident of Geetapalli, Krishna Nagar, went for a morning walk at around 5 am. The accused Brijesh and Anubhav had looted her chain. Padma Pandey, a resident of Gomti Nagar Vivek Khand, had her chain and pendant looted. When they were chased, they fled through the lanes. Earrings were looted from Mahendra Pratap Jaiswal's mother near Tulsi Park, Vikas Nagar, on the pretext of buying paan masala.

Meanwhile, the Krishna Nagar police arrested a hardcore chain snatcher identified as Mohammed Asif of Kanpur on Wednesday.

DCP South Nipun Agarwal said the police were tipped off that the accused, wanted in the snatching of a chain from the wife of a CRPF personnel and an attempt to snatch a gold chain from the wife of a sub-inspector, was passing via Ganga Khera underpass. "We laid a trap and nabbed him. Asif is a hardcore criminal. He was using a motorcycle stolen from Kanpur in committing the crime. He presently was staying in Badali Khera on Sarojini Nagar and worked as a car driver," he said.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Higher education institutions' challenges discussed at BHU

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE CONDUCTS STUDY TOUR

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Lucknow

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports conducted a study tour of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on Tuesday. The members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha led by former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Digvijaya Singh held a meeting with the top officials of BHU and other higher educational institutions at its central office. The members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee — Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, Dr Bhim Singh, Rajiv Rai, Rekha Sharma, Brijmohan Agrawal, Amardev Sharaddhav Kale, Dr Hemang Joshi and Shobhanaben Mahendrasingh Baraiya were also present in the meeting.

Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh and other MPs during their BHU visit in Varanasi

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, SK Baranwal, Vice-Chancellor (acting) of BHU Prof Sanjay Kumar, Director of Institute of Medical Sciences, BHU, Prof SN Sankhwar, Director, Institute of Management Sciences, BHU, Prof Ashish Bajpai, Director, Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) Prof Amit Patra, Director, Apprenticeship Training Board, Kanpur, Vivek Kumar, Registrar, Central University Allahabad,Prof Ashish Khare, Dean (Teaching, Motilal Nehru NIT), Allahabad, Prof Laxmi Kant Mishra and Vice-Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi, Prof AK Tyagi. The representatives of the Higher Education Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh, were also present. During the meeting, best practices and major achievements in teaching, industry-academia collaboration and research ecosystem and challenges (financial, human resource, space and administrative) faced by higher education institutions were discussed. During this, senior officials of Banaras Hindu University and officials and representatives of other institutions were present. After the meeting, the committee members visited the CDC Bhawan, where they were apprised of various aspects of research and innovation in the university. Apart from this, the committee members also visited the Student Activity Centre and Precision Engineering Hub (PEH) located at Indian Institute of Technology (BHU). This visit was important to understand the academic and technological innovations.

Earlier, the committee members were given a grand welcome at the main gate of BHU. After this, the committee members reached Malviya Bhawan, where floral tribute was paid to the founder of the university, Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya by garlanding his statue. The programme was coordinated by Dr Sanjay Kumar, Joint Registrar and Nodal Officer of BHU.

INT'L EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Prof Vipul Sharma of Faculty of Dental Sciences, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) led a team of eight members in the 'International Exchange Programme' organised by the Indian Orthodontic Society. This programme was held at the Cleft and Craniofacial Center, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok, Thailand recently.

Prof Sharma is presently a member of the executive committee of this society. During the programme, participants had the opportunity to learn about both surgical and non-surgical techniques for treating cleft lips and palates. Prof Sharma presented a clear and comprehensive vision of the functioning and future direction of the Indian Orthodontic Society, both nationally and internationally. Dean of the Faculty of Dental Sciences Prof HC Barnwal congratulated Prof Sharma on this achievement. Former dean of the faculty Prof TP Chaturvedi also appreciated and encouraged him.

Two killed as car collides with dumper

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

Two persons were killed when their speeding car collided with a stationary dumper in Shivrajpur police station area early on Wednesday morning. Police have sent the bodies for post-mortem. As per reports, the speeding car rammed into the dumper parked on the highway in Shivrajpur around 3 am on Wednesday. As a result two youths died while the dumper driver fled after the incident. Babu (30) and Dhirendra (38) of Uttaripura town under

Bilhaur police station had gone to Kanpur in their car for some personal work.

While returning from there, the car rammed into the dumper parked on the highway near Bhaunatpur village under due to high speed. Babu and Dhirendra died on the spot in the accident. On receiving information, the police reached the spot and took both of them to a hospital, where the doctors declared them dead. Police station in charge Varun Sharma said the details of the dumper were being extracted by investigating the footage of the CCTV cameras installed around the incident spot.

CCSU completes 60 years

V-C THROWS LIGHT ON FUTURE PLANS

CORRESPONDENT ■ Meerut

The Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCSU) completed its 60 years on Tuesday. This historic moment was ceremoniously welcomed on the university campus with various events.

Under the leadership of CCSU Vice- Chancellor Professor Sangeeta Shukla, garlands were first offered to the statues of great men located in the campus. After this, the ritual of *havan puja* and remembering the rich tradition of the university was completed. Uttar Pradesh Governor and Chancellor of the university Anandiben Patel congratulated the university family via X (formerly Twitter) and praised the achievements of the institution. In her address, the vice-chancellor shared the glorious history of the university.

She said that the university was established on July 1, 1965, as Meerut University, which was later given the current name in honour of the great farmer leader and former prime minister Chaudhary Charan Singh.

This institute is established as a pillar in the higher education system of Uttar Pradesh which has given the country prime ministers, chief ministers, judges, sportsmen, ministers and many other distinguished personalities. The vice-chancellor said that the state-of-the-art library, laboratories, research centres and sports facilities in the university inspire students and teachers for education and research. A free health laboratory is also being run by the Department of Yoga Science of the University, in which not only the university family but also the citizens of the city are benefiting. This institute has also been a pioneer in the field of national and international seminars, conferences and research paper publications. The publications made by the researchers of the university in various prestigious journals have strengthened its educational reputation at the global level. The university has established academic collaborations with several international universities and research institutes, which have provided new opportunities for students and faculty to conduct research and education at the global level. Throwing light on the future plans, the vice-vhancellor said that the institute was committed to scaling new heights of quality-based higher education, innovation and research.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Professor Mridul Kumar Gupta, Registrar Dr Anil Kumar Yadav, Finance Officer Ramesh Chandra Niranjan, Controller of Examinations Virendra Kumar Maurya, Prof Neelu Jain Gupta, Prof Krishnakant Sharma, Prof Birpal Singh, Prof Bhupendra Singh, Prof Naveen Chand Lohani, Prof Atveer Singh, Prof Alok Kumar, Dr Jamal Ahmed Siddiqui, Professor Saru Kumari, Dr Sanjeev Kumar, Dr Dushyant Chauhan, Dr. Sachin Kumar, Dr Gulab Singh Ruhal, Dr Vivek Tyagi, Dr Jitendra Singh, Dr Dharmendra Kumar, Dr Dhanpal Singh besides Mitendra Kumar Gupta, Praveen Pawar, Manish Mishra, Manoj Kumar and Dr Ompal Shastri, Sarvottam Sharma, Amit Sharma, Praveen Sharma, Rajiv Pal, along with many senior teachers, officers, employees and students were present.

Honesty very important: CVO

NER CVO TK Pandey addressing a seminar at DRM Office in Varanasi on Wednesday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

A vigilance seminar was organised in the Bharatendu auditorium room of the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Office here on Wednesday in which Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) and Senior Deputy General Manager of North Eastern Railway (NER) Tushar Kant Pandey was the chief guest. Addressing the seminar, NER CVO said that honesty was very important for living life.

"We contribute to the building of the society, whatever we do, we should do it with honesty. If we give the wrong kind of benefit to anyone, then it is corruption. All railway employees should do their work with honesty. In this, they will be given every kind of support and every problem will be solved. But if there is a lack of honesty, then they will have to bear the consequences", he said, adding that the train runs only when all the departments of the railway work together. "We all should work with honesty towards our institution and give our best. We all should always work with honesty and make it a part of our life, only then the nation will prosper", he said.

Pandey, while referring to the Indian Railway Vigilance Manual, said that vigilance has been defined in a very comprehensive manner in it.

DRM Vineet Kumar Srivastava said that the monitoring of the system should be such that there was no scope for corruption in it.

This seminar was conducted by Divisional Personnel Officer (in charge) Abhinav Kumar Singh and vote of thanks was proposed by Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Operation) Rajesh Kumar Singh. It was also attended by ADRM (Infra) Ajay Singh, Chief Project Manager (Gati Shakti) Kaushalesh Singh and others.

PKU dharna continues

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

The dharna of Purvanchal Kisan Union (PKU) at a garden in Ganjari village against the urban township, sports city and four-lane road widening near the under construction international cricket stadium continued for the 26th day here on Wednesday. During the meeting held at the dharna site under the chairmanship of comrade Lalmani Verma, it was decided that committees will be formed by going from village to village.

After that, a unanimous decision will be taken to gherao the tehsil and district headquarters by taking out a padyatra from the dharna sites and the date will be decided by giving an ultimatum.

Boats anchored near a temple submerged in the swollen Ganga river at Manikarnika Ghat in Varanasi on Wednesday
PTI

Three-year-old girl hit by loader, dies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Kanpur

A three-year-old girl Sona tragically lost her life after being hit by a loader carrying LPG gas cylinders in Bhainsaya village under Rasoolabad police station area of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday morning. The incident occurred when the child was playing outside her house around 9 am. The loader, which had arrived from Ratanpur to deliver cylinders, accidentally ran over the girl, killing her on the spot. The driver fled the scene, abandoning the vehicle.

Her mother, Kiran, went into shock after the accident. Police seized the loader and initiated a search for the absconding driver. Inspector Harameet Singh said further action would be taken based on the post-mortem report and formal complaint from the family.

In another incident, Sanjay (27) from Jhade ka Purwa village under Mangalpur police station, Kanpur Dehat,, died on Tuesday night after a speeding truck collided with his bike near Balharamau village on the Auraiya-Kanpur Highway under Derapur police station area. Sanjay had visited his aunt Bhuri Devi in Taranpur under Barour police station area and was returning home when the accident occurred. The impact was so severe that he was thrown far from the road and critically injured. Police rushed him to the Akbarpur Medical College, where doctors declared him dead. His family was shell-shocked on hearing the news of his death. The police are searching for the truck driver, who fled after the incident. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination and further legal action would be taken after the family's official complaint, he added.

MEMO SUBMITTED

A delegation of advocates met the City Police Commissioner Akhil Kumar on Wednesday and submitted a memorandum demanding strict enforcement of the Allahabad High Court's directions regarding the conduct of the Lawyers' Association elections.

HEALTH COMMITTEE

On National Doctors' Day, while expanding the Kanpur Health Committee formed by Muskuraye Kanpur with health experts of every therapy to make the health services of Kanpur more effective, founder and chief advisor Dr Sidhanshu Rai said that Ayurvedacharya Dr Vandana Pathak would be its patron and Arogya Bharti State President Dr B N Acharya, Paras Hospital, Regency Hospital would be the associates.

Grassroots hockey clinic concludes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Varanasi

The UP Rudras Grassroots Hockey Clinic, an initiative aimed at identifying and nurturing young hockey talent in Uttar Pradesh, concluded on Wednesday after a high-impact series of sessions held in Lucknow (June 26–28) and Varanasi (June 30–July 2). Over six days, the clinic engaged 150 young players — 70 in Lucknow and 80 in Varanasi — along with several regional coaches. The programme focused on foundational skills, game awareness and performance-driven training, while inspiring young athletes from Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions to dream bigger in sport.

The sessions were led by Cedric D'Souza, technical director, UP Rudras and former national coach, who brought his experience and structure to elevate the level of coaching and mentorship delivered. "At the grassroots, it's not just about technique—it's about planting belief. The enthusiasm and raw talent we've witnessed in both cities are clear indicators of UP's potential to become a hockey powerhouse," said D'Souza. The clinic was designed not only for players but also included dedicated modules for regional coaches, helping align grassroots training methods with national and international standards. The closing ceremony in Varanasi was graced by Regional Sports Officer Vimala Singh, who expressed her appreciation for the initiative: "It's heartening to see such structured efforts coming to our region. The clinic offered a valuable platform for young players and coaches alike. Initiatives like these can truly transform the hockey landscape of UP." Adding to the excitement, Lalit Upadhyay, 3-time Olympian and international hockey star, joined the Varanasi sessions and interacted with the young athletes.

Efforts to promote use of Hindi highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj

A meeting of the Divisional Official Language Implementation Committee of the Prayagraj Division, North Central Railway, was held under the chairmanship of Sanjay Singh, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (General). Addressing it Singh emphasised that conducting official work in the the official language, Hindi, was not only a constitutional obligation but also a national and moral responsibility. He said that since the Prayagraj Division falls entirely within the Hindi speaking region, it was expected that there should be 100 per cent implementation of Hindi in all areas of official work.

He acknowledged the increasing use of Hindi within the division but stated that further efforts were needed to fully achieve the targets set by the Government of India. He stressed that documents falling under Section 3(3) of the Official Language Act must be issued bilingually (in Hindi and English) without exception. He urged all branch officers to ensure strict compliance with the Official Language Policy in their respective offices so that the Prayagraj Division can set an example in the effective use of Hindi. He further stated that persistent efforts were required to promote the use and spread of Hindi in official domains.

At the beginning of the meeting, Naveen Prakash, Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infrastructure) and Additional Chief Official Language Officer of Prayagraj Division, briefed the committee about the initiatives taken to promote the use of Hindi within the division. He informed that regular Hindi typing workshops were being organised to provide practical training to employees in working on computers in Hindi.

He also mentioned that important stations and offices were regularly inspected to ensure and enhance the use of Hindi. He added that there has been a consistent increase in the usage of Hindi, even in technical work, which is now being handled with greater ease in the division. All branch officers of the division were present in the meeting. They shared the efforts being made in their respective departments to promote the use of Hindi and also offered various constructive suggestions for its further implementation.

The meeting was coordinated by Assistant Personnel Officer-cum- Official Language Officer Aadesh Kumar Mishra.

Labourer dies in accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj

A 37-year-old labourer died in a road accident under the Soraon police station area on Wednesday. The deceased, identified as Raju, was a resident of Bhadri village under Kunda police station in Pratapgarh. The accident occurred when Raju was returning from his in-laws' house in Dadouli village, Soraon. While getting off an auto-rickshaw on the highway, he was hit by a speeding vehicle. The impact was so severe that Raju died on the spot. Raju was the sole breadwinner of his family. He had married Sushila Devi six years ago. The couple did not have any children. Raju earned his livelihood by doing daily wage labour

Soraon SHO Radhe Kishan said that the upon receiving information, the local police reached the scene and sent the body for post-mortem examination.

MoU to foster academic collaboration in defence and strategic studies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Prayagraj

The Allahabad University and the Central Command of the Indian Army have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster academic collaboration in the areas of defence and strategic studies. The agreement was signed in the presence of Vice-Chancellor Prof Sangeeta Srivastava. The MoU was signed by Major General Rajesh Bhat, General Officer Commanding (GOC), East UP & MP Sub Area, on behalf of the Indian Army Headquarters, Central Command, and the Registrar of the University on behalf of Allahabad University. Following the signing, a formal exchange of folders took place between Major General Rajesh Bhat and V-C Prof Srivastava, symbolising the commitment to this institutional partnership.

The MoU will offer opportunities to serving and retired officers of the Indian armed forces to pursue postgraduate and research programmes at the University of Allahabad. Additionally, the university will now be able to undertake joint research projects, organise seminars and conferences and co-author research publications on topics of national and strategic importance in collaboration with the Indian Army. To ensure smooth execution of this partnership, a Coordination Committee has been established. This committee will oversee the implementation and develop a long-term academic and strategic roadmap. The MoU aims to promote national interests and institutional development through the synergy of academic excellence and military expertise. It represents a significant step towards bridging the gap between academic research and policy-making, enriching national discourse and contributing to human resource development in areas crucial to India's security and growth.

The signing ceremony was also attended by Prof Bharti Das, Head of the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Devesh Goswami, Deputy Registrar, Dr Sarveshtha Dhami, Faculty Member, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies and Nikhil Anand, Assistant Registrar.

BLOOD DONATION CAMP HELD

The Inner Wheel Club of Allahabad once again demonstrated its commitment to humanitarian service by organiSing a blood donation camp here on Wednesday. The camp was held at the Anaha Charitable Blood Center, located near Girls' High School in the Civil Lines area. Speaking at the event, Club President Nupur Kapoor said, "One unit of blood can save up to three lives. A small act like this can become a life-saving gesture for someone. We encourage more and more people to come forward and contribute to this noble cause."

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

BRICS vital for emerging economies: PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India is committed to BRICS as a vital platform for cooperation among emerging economies as he left on a week-long visit to five countries, including Brazil where he will attend the bloc's meeting.

"Together, we strive for a more peaceful, equitable, just, democratic and balanced multipolar world order," he said in his departure statement.

During the week-long travel, the PM will visit Ghana, Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil and Namibia.

Ghana will be his first port of call. Modi said that at the invitation of President John Dramani Mahama, he will be there on July 2 and 3.

Ghana is a valued partner in the Global South and plays an important role in the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States, he said, adding that he looked forward to talks aimed at further deepening the two countries' historical ties and opening up new windows of cooperation, including in the areas of investment, energy, health, security, capacity building and development partnership.

He said, "As fellow democracies, it will be an honour to speak at the Parliament of Ghana."

For the next couple of days after visiting Ghana, he will be in Trinidad and Tobago, a country with which India shares deep-rooted historical, cultural and people-to-people connect.

Modi will meet President Christine Carla Kangaloo, who was the chief guest at this year's Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, and Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar, who has recently assumed office for the second term.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves as he emplanes for Accra, Ghana PTI

"Indians first arrived in Trinidad and Tobago 180 years ago. This visit will provide an opportunity to rejuvenate the special bonds of ancestry and kinship that unite us," the Indian prime minister said.

Modi will then travel to Buenos Aires, the first bilateral visit by an Indian prime minister to Argentina in 57 years.

He said Argentina is a key economic partner in Latin America and a close collaborator in the G20 and that he looked forward to discussions with President Javier Milei, whom he had met last year.

"We will focus on advancing our mutually beneficial cooperation, including in the areas of agriculture, critical minerals, energy, trade, tourism, technology, and investment," Modi said. He will attend the BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro on July 6 and 7.

As a founding member, India is committed to BRICS as a vital platform for cooperation among emerging economies, he said.

"Together, we strive for a more peaceful, equitable, just, democratic and balanced multipolar world order," he added.

On the sidelines of the summit, Modi will meet several world leaders.

"I will travel to Brasilia for a bilateral State Visit, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in nearly six decades. This visit will provide an opportunity to strengthen our close partnership with Brazil, and work with my friend, President H.E. Luiz InÃ¡cio Lula da Silva, on advancing the priorities of the Global South," he said.

Namibia, which Modi described as a trusted partner sharing a common history of struggle against colonialism, will be his last destination.

He will meet President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and chart a new roadmap for cooperation for the benefit of the two peoples, regions and the wider Global South, Modi said.

He added, "It will be a privilege to also address the Joint Session of Namibian Parliament as we celebrate our enduring solidarity and shared commitment for freedom and development."

Modi expressed confidence that his visits to the five countries will reinforce India's bonds and friendship across the Global South, strengthen their partnerships on both sides of the Atlantic, and deepen engagements in the multilateral platforms such as BRICS, the African Union, ECOWAS and the CARICOM.

Enactment of new criminal laws only created confusion, says Chidambaram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Senior Congress leader and former home minister P Chidambaram on Wednesday said the exercise of enactment of the three new criminal laws was a "waste" and has only created confusion in the administration of justice among judges, lawyers and the police.

Chidambaram also claimed the new Acts are an overwhelmingly 'cut and paste' exercise, with a few new provisions added.

His remarks came a day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed the enactment of the three criminal laws as the biggest reform in independent India and said they will make the judicial process not only affordable and accessible but also simpler, time-bound and transparent.

Slamming Chidambaram over his remarks, BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said in a social media post, "It is truly remarkable how someone who has served as both Finance Minister and Home Minister still doesn't have a single transformative piece of legislation to his name."

Chidambaram also claimed the new Acts are an overwhelmingly 'cut and paste' exercise, with a few new provisions added

"Your legacy? Being accused of bugging the office of the late Pranab Mukherjee and writing dissent notes as a member of the opposition. That is the sum total of your contribution to Indian governance," Malviya added.

Hitting out at the government, Chidambaram said it has claimed repeatedly that the three Criminal Law Bills, now Acts, are the biggest reforms since Independence, but "nothing can be farther from the truth".

"I had sent a dissent note to the Parliamentary Standing Committee that examined the three Bills, and it is part of the Report tabled in Parliament," the former home minister said on X.

"In my dissent note, after comparing section by section the IPC, CrPC and Indian Evidence Act with the corresponding new Bill, I had asserted that: 90-95 per cent of the IPC, 95 per cent of the CrPC and 99 per cent of the Evidence Act, have been cut and pasted in the corresponding new Bill," he said.

Chidambaram's assertion in his dissent note was not challenged in Parliament or elsewhere. "I maintain that the new Bills, now Acts, are overwhelmingly a 'cut and paste' exercise, with a few new provisions added — some acceptable and some not acceptable," he said.

"The whole exercise was a waste and has only created confusion in the administration of justice among judges, lawyers and the police," Chidambaram said.

Addressing an event marking one year of the rolling out of the three criminal laws, Shah on Monday stressed that the Narendra Modi government framed the new laws — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) — to ensure that all rights of citizens are protected and no criminal goes unpunished.

Shah had said since all processes are online, nothing will be overlooked and justice will be delivered on time.

"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 had said.

Water levels at 11 river monitoring stations across India breach warning level: CWC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Water levels at 11 river monitoring stations across India have breached the warning level, but none have reached the danger or extreme flood thresholds, the Central Water Commission (CWC) said on Wednesday.

This alert is part of the commission's daily flood bulletin released by the Central Flood Control Room.

The bulletin indicates there are currently no sites in the "severe" or "extreme" flood situation categories, meaning that no location has reached or surpassed its danger mark or highest historical flood level.

However, 12 sites in Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh were flagged for "above-normal" flood situations, where water levels have crossed the warning threshold but remain below danger levels.

In Assam, the Kushiyara River in Karimganj and the Brahmaputra at Neamatighat in Jorhat are among those nearing concern levels.

Bihar remains under observation, with elevated water levels in the Kosi at Baltara, Bagmati at Benibad and Gandak at Dumariaghat. Uttar Pradesh is closely monitoring four sites, including the Ganga at Fatehgarh and Kachhla Bridge, Ghagra at Elginbridge, and Gandak at Khadda, which touched the warning level at 95 metres. Odisha reported above-normal levels at Mathani Road Bridge and Rajghat on the Subarnarekha, both in Baleshwar district.

Flood forecasting system launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil on Wednesday launched C-FLOOD, a web-based flood forecasting system, designed to sound an alarm at the village level up to two days in advance.

The system has been developed by the Central Water Commission (CWC), the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).

It has been made operational under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), jointly steered by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST). "This is a transformative step in India's flood management journey," Patil said.

The minister also directed the CWC and allied institutions to prepare a national plan for inundation studies and expand coverage to all major river basins.

At present, the system provides real-time flood maps and water level forecasts for the Mahanadi, Godavari, and Tapi river basins using a 2-D hydrodynamic model.

Forecast simulations for the Mahanadi basin are conducted on high-performance computing systems at C-DAC Pune, while outputs for the Godavari and Tapi basins are integrated from models developed by NRSC under the National Hydrology Project.

Patil stressed the importance of integrating the forecasts with the National Disaster Management Emergency Response Portal and improving accuracy through satellite validation and on-ground verification.

No linkages between coronavirus vaccines, sudden deaths, says Health Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

In the wake of Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah linking heart-related deaths in Hassan district to Covid vaccine, the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday said extensive studies by ICMR and AIIMS have conclusively established no linkages between coronavirus vaccines and sudden deaths.

Siddaramaiah had on Tuesday said "hasty approval and distribution" of the Covid vaccine to the public could also be a reason for these deaths. He urged everyone to visit the nearest health centre immediately for a check-up if they have symptoms such as chest pain or difficulty breathing, and not to ignore these signs.

The ministry said the matter of sudden unexplained deaths has been investigated through several agencies in the country and these studies have conclusively established that there is no direct link between COVID-19 vaccination and reports of sudden deaths.

Studies by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) affirm that COVID-19 vaccines in India are safe and effective, with extremely rare instances of serious side effects, it said.

Sudden cardiac deaths can result from a wide range of factors, including genetics, lifestyle, pre-existing conditions, and post-Covid complications, the ministry said in a statement.

The ICMR and NCDC have been working together to understand the causes behind sudden unexplained deaths, especially in young adults between the ages of 18 and 45 years.

To explore this, two complementary studies were undertaken using different research approaches — one based on past data and another involving real-time investigation.

The first study conducted by ICMR's National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) was titled "Factors associated with unexplained sudden deaths among adults aged 18-45 years in India — a multi-centric matched case control study."

This study was carried out from May to August 2023 across 47 tertiary care hospitals in 19 states and Union territories, the statement said.

It looked at individuals who appeared to be healthy but died suddenly between October 2021 and March 2023.

The findings have conclusively showed that COVID-19 vaccination does not increase the risk of unexplained sudden deaths in young adults.

Delhi HC seeks authorities' response on plea over penalty to petrol pump owners

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the response of the Delhi Government and Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on a plea against orders prosecuting and penalising petrol pump owners for non-compliance with the "no fuel to end of life vehicles".

According to latest rules, petrol pumps across Delhi have been asked not to provide fuel to end-of-life vehicles (ELV) starting July 1 under the directions of the CAQM, with the transport department along with Delhi Police and traffic personnel putting in place a detailed enforcement strategy to ensure strict compliance.

Justice Mini Pushkarna issued notice to the Delhi Government and CAQM in NCR and adjoining areas on the petition filed by Delhi Petrol Dealers Association

Justice Mini Pushkarna issued notice to the Delhi Government and Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and adjoining areas on the petition filed by Delhi Petrol Dealers Association.

The court asked the authorities to file their replies to the plea and posted the matter in September.

The petitioner has moved court against the move which reportedly requires petrol pump owners to enforce the directions for which they do not have any legal authority in law or face penalty for non-compliance.

Advocates Anand Varma, Adyasha Nanda and Apoorva Pandey, representing the petitioner, submitted the dealers were not opposed to the implementation of CAQM's directions which restrict fuel supply to ELVs.

"We are aggrieved by the application of Section 192 of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to petrol pump owners which is otherwise not applicable to them in law," the counsel said.

It was further argued, "In essence, petrol pump dealers are being required to enforce the directions for which they do not have any authority in law, and then they are also being penalised for any non-compliance which may happen due to sheer inadvertence."

The lawyers said the court also recorded that if there was any action taken under the MV Act, the same should be brought to its attention.

Seeking to set aside the orders, the plea said the orders failed to appreciate that petrol pump owners were merely private entities operating pumps under license agreements with respective oil marketing companies, without power or authority to perform law enforcement duties essentially performed by State entities.

NCB dismantles transnational drug trafficking syndicate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has successfully dismantled a transnational drug trafficking syndicate with Union Home Minister Amit Shah terming the crackdown stellar example of multi-agency coordination.

Shah also said that the Narendra Modi Government is determined to eliminate every drug cartel and protect the country's youth, no matter where they operate from.

In one of the most far-reaching crackdowns against the illegal pharmaceutical drug trade, the NCB has successfully dismantled a transnational drug trafficking syndicate that used encrypted digital platforms, drop shipping models and cryptocurrency to smuggle controlled medicines across four continents, an official statement said.

"Congratulations to NCB and all agencies on busting a global drug cartel. The probe set a stellar example of multi-agency coordination, resulting in 8 arrests and seizures of 5 consignments while triggering crackdowns in the US and Australia against the ring that operates across 4 continents and 10+ nations," Shah said.

He said the agencies are constantly monitoring the sophisticated modes like crypto payments and anonymous drop shippers used by these gangs.

"PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji-led govt is determined to saw off every drug cartel and protect our youth, no matter where they operate from," he said.

What began with a routine vehicle interception in New Delhi unravelled into a sophisticated criminal web operating across India, US, Australia, and Europe — showcasing the global reach of illicit pharma networks and NCB's capability to lead coordinated international enforcement actions, the release said.

This operation uncovered a global network spanning four continents and more than 10 countries.

On May 25, acting on secret intelligence, the NCB team intercepted a car near Mandi House in Delhi.

From the possession of its two occupants — both B Pharma graduates from a private university in Noida — 3.7 kg of Tramadol tablets were seized.

Congratulations to NCB and all agencies on busting a global drug cartel
— AMIT SHAH, UNION HOME MINISTER

The duo confessed to operating a vendor profile on a major Indian B2B platform, from where they sold pharmaceutical pills to clients across US, Europe and Australia.

Leads from the interrogation led to a stockist in Roorkee, followed by the arrest of a key associate in Mayur Vihar in Delhi, who revealed connections with a contact in Udupi (Karnataka) responsible for organizing bulk orders for shipments to the US.

From Udupi, the NCB uncovered data on 50 international consignments, including: 29 packages from US to US, 18 from Australia to Australia, one each to Estonia, Spain and Switzerland, the statement said.

The above information was shared with global counterparts and Interpol, leading to the identification and arrest of a bulk re-shipper and money launderer in Alabama in the US by the US DEA, along with a massive haul of controlled medicines.

The syndicate operated on encrypted communication platforms like Telegram, relied on cryptocurrency payments, PayPal, Western Union and used anonymous international drop shippers to evade detection.

Further digital forensics led to arrests of two more Indian nationals from New Delhi and Jaipur, who handled logistics and supply-side operations, the statement said.

The operators never shipped in their home countries and coordinated through other drop-shippers in network to avoid legal consequences.

The kingpin, who coordinated international linkages and finances, has been identified and located in the UAE, the statement said, adding the NCB is actively working in collaboration with UAE authorities.

Investigations further revealed the existence of a clandestine pill manufacturing facility in Australia, directly tied to the syndicate. Law enforcement in Australia has successfully dismantled this unit. Operations in other jurisdictions are still ongoing.

Following intelligence shared by the NCB, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (US DEA) has apprehended a key player in an international drug trafficking network, the release said.

Joel Hall, a major re-shipper based in Alabama, was arrested following a coordinated operation, leading to the seizure of over 17,000 tablets of controlled medication.

During the crackdown, authorities also uncovered multiple cryptocurrency wallets and active parcels linked to the syndicate, indicating a sophisticated and tech-enabled trafficking operation. Investigative and enforcement actions concerning these digital assets and parcels are actively ongoing.

Adding to the breakthrough, an Indian-American individual identified as a key money launderer in the network is now facing indictment in the US, marking a critical step in dismantling the financial backbone of this illegal enterprise.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Editor's TAKE

A crucial opportunity amid unrelenting crisis

If the ceasefire comes into effect in Gaza, as announced by Trump, it would give people a chance to recuperate

It has been almost a year and a half since the Israel-Hamas conflict started. In the name of obliterating Hamas, Israel rained miseries on the people of Gaza, with the world watching haplessly as the bombs flattened Gaza, sparing no one — not even hospitals, children, and women. The indiscriminate shelling has resulted in untold miseries for the people; even food and medical supplies are not reaching Gaza. But now it looks like there may be some respite in sight. US President Donald Trump has announced that Israel has agreed to a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza, but subject to "necessary conditions." The proposal, however, is still awaiting a formal response from Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that governs the Gaza Strip. Trump shared the announcement via a post on Truth Social, stating that the ceasefire proposal would be delivered by Qatar and Egypt, two key mediators that have consistently played crucial roles in negotiations between the two sides. This announcement comes just days before Trump is set to meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House. Trump has urged Hamas to seize the opportunity.

For the people of Gaza, the ceasefire could mean a much needed respite. Since hostilities reignited, the region has seen widespread destruction and a humanitarian catastrophe unfolding on a daily basis. Over 50,000 people are estimated to have lost their lives in Gaza since the beginning of this latest war, with thousands more injured, displaced, or missing. Entire neighbourhoods have been reduced to rubble, schools and hospitals have been completed destroyed, and aid has barely trickled in since the ceasefire breakdown in March. If the ceasefire holds, it would mark the first sustained pause in violence since the breakdown. It could pave the way for renewed humanitarian assistance, medical evacuations, and the restoration of basic infrastructure. More importantly, it might offer a brief but crucial chance for exhausted civilians to recover, mourn, and rebuild what little remains of their lives. While Israel's agreement to the ceasefire is a significant step, history suggests that such truces have been violated by both sides and resumed hostilities. The previous ceasefire that began on January 19 unraveled within weeks, with both sides accusing each other of violations. In March, Israel resumed its strikes, alleging Hamas breached the terms of the truce — a claim Hamas denied.

This time, the Trump administration appears to be applying heavier diplomatic pressure to bring all parties to the table. Yet, scepticism remains high. Hamas has not issued a formal response and is likely weighing its options in the context of mounting civilian casualties and international scrutiny. Meanwhile, hardline factions within Israel's political establishment may also resist a prolonged ceasefire if it is perceived as a concession or weakness. Beyond politics and geopolitics, this ceasefire — if implemented — could serve as a turning point for Gaza's devastated population. The region cannot withstand much more. The violence must stop, even temporarily, for the sake of innocent civilians.

A grand celebration, a sobering reckoning

On July 4, 2026, the United States turns 250. Amid fireworks and fanfare, the day invites reflection on a nation shaped by bold ideals, hard-won progress, and enduring contradictions

On July 4, 2025, the United States turns 250-a semiquincentennial that marks a remarkable journey from a colonial rebellion to a global superpower. As Americans gather with fireworks, parades, and nostalgic anthems to mark the adoption of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the occasion invites not just celebration but introspection.

For this birthday is more than spectacle; it is a moment of reckoning-with ideals pursued, promises broken, and the uncertain road ahead. At its birth, America dared to proclaim that "all men are created equal," launching a revolutionary political experiment in representative democracy.

From those founding words, it grew into the world's oldest continuous democratic republic. The passage of the Bill of Rights in 1791 enshrined key freedoms: of speech, religion, and assembly.

The Civil War tested and reshaped the Union, while Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address echoed across generations with its solemn promise that "Government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

Through the 20th century, the US ascended the global stage by fusing its liberal values with geopolitical ambition. At Bretton Woods in 1944, American leadership birthed the IMF and World Bank to stabilise postwar finance. A year later, it spearheaded the United Nations, laying the foundation for a new multilateral order.

With New York as the new diplomatic hub, America leaned into liberal internationalism, promoting democracy in a world emerging from fascist devastation. Yet American history has always been a study in contradiction. The nation that spoke of liberty denied it to millions. The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments abolished slavery and laid the groundwork for civil rights, but true justice remained elusive. Leaders like Martin Luther King Jr and Malcolm X emerged to challenge the nation's conscience-King with his soaring moral vision of integration, Malcolm with his demand for dignity and self-determination.

Their competing voices helped frame the American experiment not just in political terms but moral ones, pushing the country toward an ever-expanding definition of freedom. The American presidency, from Washington to Roosevelt, Kennedy to Reagan, has served as both compass and mirror. Washington's refusal to become king set a lasting precedent.

FDR's New Deal remade the social contract. Eisenhower warned of the growing might of the military-industrial complex. Kennedy's idealism and Nixon's cynicism pulled the country in opposite directions. In more recent decades, Barack Obama's rise symbolised progress, while Donald Trump's presidency marked a pivot toward nationalism and populism. His slogan — "Make America Great Again"— tapped into nostalgia, economic grievance, and cultural unease. Trump's unapologetic "America First" doctrine marked a break from postwar multilateralism, fueling debates about the nation's role in an increasingly multipolar world.

SANTHOSH MATHEW

The Trump era also underscored the growing influence of non-elected power centres in American life. Powerful lobbying groups like the Zionist American organisations, the National Rifle Association (NRA), and pharmaceutical and defence lobbies have shaped policy well beyond the ballot box.

The NRA, in particular, has stymied gun control reforms even amid rising gun violence. Meanwhile, influential think tanks such as the RAND Corporation, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Brookings Institution play an outsized role in shaping foreign policy narratives, often serving as the intellectual fuel behind defence spending, geopolitical posturing, and trade frameworks. These institutions, while contributing to policy discourse, are often funded by vested interests, blurring the line between objective research and ideological agenda. American innovation remains unparalleled.

The Apollo moon landing, the internet revolution, and the tech giants of Silicon Valley — Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, and Google — have reshaped the global economy. America's universities continue to draw the brightest minds, and its cultural output-from Hollywood to hip-hop-extends its soft power across borders. Yet this innovation has come with ethical dilemmas: surveillance capitalism, misinformation, job displacement by AI, and widening economic inequality.

America's military might, once justified as a safeguard of global stability, is increasingly scrutinised. From Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, its interventions have left deep scars and unresolved legacies. The post-9/11 world order saw the rise of the Bush Doctrine and a militarised foreign policy under the banner of counter-terrorism and regime change. The burden of being the world's "indispensable nation" has often been accompanied by charges of overreach and imperial arrogance.

Within its borders, the republic is deeply polarised. Debates over immigration, racial justice, climate change, and gun control remain bitterly divisive. The Capitol riot of January 6, 2021, revealed a dangerous fragility in democratic institutions. Partisan media ecosystems, rising distrust in electoral systems, and the proliferation of conspiracy theories have cast long shadows over civic life. Despite this, American patriotism endures-often in complex, contradictory forms. For some, patriotism means saluting the flag; for others, it means kneeling before it in protest. To love America, for many, is to challenge it. From debates over Confederate monuments to conversations around reparations and historical memory, the struggle over who gets to define the American story continues. The 250th anniversary has spurred national projects like the Garden of American Heroes and public exhibitions on democracy and dissent, signalling an ongoing contest over the meaning of freedom and the figures who represent it. On the world stage, the United States now faces rising powers like China and India, as well as a resurgent Russia.

The European Union offers an alternative model of regional governance. The challenges ahead-climate crises, AI regulation, pandemics, and mass migration-require cooperation, not confrontation. As power becomes more diffuse, America's leadership must adapt-with humility, innovation, and a renewed moral compass. Henry Kissinger once observed, "It may be dangerous to be America's enemy, but to be America's friend is fatal"— a blunt reminder that the line between idealism and self-interest has always defined the United States. At 250, the nation remains a paradox: powerful yet insecure, visionary yet flawed, a republic born in revolution still struggling to live up to its revolutionary promise.

(The author is a Professor at Pondicherry Central University. Views expressed are personal)

PIC TALK

Lost in the silent beauty of the Gangotri mountains.
A moment of pure peace.

PHOTO: PANKAJ KUMAR

A call for holistic development and global well-being

SECOND Opinion

The world we live in today is caught up in a vicious circle, which none of us would deny, because most of the problems it faces are interlinked and each one of them feeds the fires of others. One of the reasons why we cannot solve or lessen the severity of these problems is that we do not apply or do not have a solution that attacks all the problems simultaneously.

In other words, our approach to our problems is not holistic: it is piecemeal. We try to make use of solutions for each problem separately, and the result is that, in the meantime, other problems increase and bring back the problem that we are already trying to tackle! Secondly, we have an infatuation with the old theories.

RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Little do we realise that our present problems have been caused, directly or indirectly, by such socio-economic, psychological and political theories and concepts that gained currency during the past about three hundred years or a little more. We should have thought that these theories have proved not only ineffective in the long run but have also given rise to new problems or have aggravated our old problems. We should, therefore, have discarded them as outdated, for the world scene has changed tremendously since then. We should have known by now that something is wrong with our very approach to the problems of elimination or alleviation of sufferings in the world, and our paradigm of a better world is erroneous. Our main emphasis, in our present approach and model, has been on economic development. We have been measuring, and we still measure, the advancement of a nation by its GDP and its per capita income.

Our major concern is to see whether this paradigm of development has been able to raise the economic standard of living of the people. This has been based on the assumption that greater enjoyment of material goods leads to greater happiness. It has thus given us a wrong model of development. Our assumption has been wrong because man does not live by bread alone. He needs mental and cultural development, and he needs peace of mind.

Our goal should, therefore, be the well-being of man rather than material wealth. There is now a need for a paradigm shift and a shift in our emphasis. We have to work for the holistic development of everyone rather than the mere economic development of a few.

Presently, the disparity between techno-scientific and psycho-spiritual development has grown tremendously. This has resulted in great imbalances and also social, cultural and moral distortions. The critical situation we face today has been brought about by the deterioration in morals and an overemphasis on the physical and material. This has led to fixing up of wrong priorities, wrong imperatives, wrong attitudes and wrong goals. We find that our knowledge of Nature and its forces has tremendously increased during the past few centuries, but our moral and spiritual development has not kept pace with it. As a result, our relations at the inter-personal, inter-communal and international levels have greatly degenerated.

If we cannot solve the problems of nuclear race or poverty today, it is because our relationships today, at all levels, are not based on goodwill, friendship, love and co-operation. The present crisis is, therefore, mainly a moral crisis. All our current problems arise from a lack of moral and spiritual strength and the absence or lack of co-operation.

If, therefore, we wish to reduce sufferings in the world or eliminate them, or, in other words, if we wish to build a better world, then we have to create the necessary moral climate and build up goodwill and co-operation on a global scale. The belief that there can be a world without sufferings and the problems we have today is not a utopian belief. It seems utopian when we use the current assumptions and paradigms. The paradigm shift would make it look quite feasible. Let us, therefore, follow the moral imperative if we wish to have a better world to live in. Let us have world welfare and not mere economic welfare as our aim. It is only then that we will have the co-operation of all.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher and a popular columnist. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

International Plastic Bag Free Day

Plastic, an organic polymer macromolecule, plays a significant role in daily life — from shopping bags to PVC pipes. However, single-use plastic bags, though convenient, have devastating impacts on the environment, harming humans, animals, and both land and marine ecosystems. These bags take 100 to 500 years to decompose, clog drains, pollute water bodies, and kill nearly 100,000 marine animals annually. Globally, we produce 5 trillion plastic bags each year — about one million bags every minute — with the average person using a bag for just 25 minutes.

To address this crisis, International Plastic Bag Free Day is observed every year on July 3, aiming to raise awareness about plastic pollution and promote eco-friendly alternatives. Citizens are encouraged to reject plastic bags, organise clean-up drives, and switch to sustainable options like cloth, jute, or recycled-material bags.

Plastic was first developed in the 1930s, and shopping bags became widespread by the 1970s. But today, change is crucial. Small shifts — like using reusable bottles, refusing straws, avoiding excess packaging, and reusing containers — can greatly reduce our plastic footprint.

Let us all act responsibly to protect marine life, reduce pollution, conserve energy, and ensure a cleaner, greener future.

BURRA MADHUSUDHAN REDDY | KARIMNAGAR

Wimbledon stands tall

It will not be an exaggeration to say that Wimbledon has withstood the vagaries of change, as, over 150 years since its inception, little has changed in terms of its traditional fervour and royal insignia. Amidst the decadence of monarchy, its roots are kept still intact by such gestures and symbolism of the classical game.

What began as a simple seasonal refreshment in 1877 has continued to form a part of yearly celebrations, signifying the charm and grace of the game. The true meaning of the dictum that the more things change, the more they remain the same cannot be truer, as Wimbledon remains the only bastion of grass-court tennis, standing tall against many modern games that are not only symbolically rich but also physically demanding. Its enduring legacy lies in its staying true to tradition.

As the 2025 edition of the game is underway, the global audiences will never fail to get mesmerised by its unique blending of tradition and modernity while keeping its simplicity intact, spanning from grassroots to elite, from Centre Court to viral TikTok. In these turbulent times when people devour everything but value nothing, Wimbledon making inroads into the lives of global audiences has kept up the promises of simple but enduring things.

VIJAY SINGH ADHIKARI | NAINITAL

Breakdown of law and order in Tamil Nadu

In a notable development, five police personnel in Tamil Nadu have been incarcerated following the custodial death of a young security guard, Ajith Kumar, who was allegedly involved in the theft of ten sovereigns of jewellery in Sivaganga district. This incident underscores a broader concern regarding law and order in the state. During the current term of the DMK Government, the reported tally of custodial deaths, now standing at 24, has drawn considerable scrutiny. While the specific case has been transferred to the CB-CID for further probe, the Superintendent of Police, Ashish Rawat, has been placed on compulsory wait. The state of law and order, which falls under the direct purview of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, has faced repeated challenges.

These concerns range from the incidence of burglaries and the reported availability of illicit drugs, to serious crimes such as rape and murder on the Anna University campus, and now, the escalating number of custodial deaths. Such occurrences collectively prompt questions regarding the state's ability to maintain public safety and order. The most pressing concern at this juncture pertains to the overall law and order situation, which remains under the direct control of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, and is currently perceived to be in a regrettable state, causing considerable distress to the populace.

AP THIRUVADI | CHENNAI

MAMDANI SHAKES UP NYC POLITICS, DRAWS TRUMP'S IRE

In a dramatic turn in New York City politics, 33-year-old Democratic Socialist Zohran Mamdani has emerged as a powerful challenger in the upcoming mayoral election — so much so that President Donald Trump has threatened to cut off federal funds if Mamdani, "doesn't behave himself," is elected. Mamdani, born in Kampala to Indian-origin parents, moved to New York at age seven. His mother is renowned filmmaker Mira Nair, and his father, Mahmood Mamdani, is a Columbia University Professor.

A self-proclaimed follower of Martin Luther King Jr, Mamdani has championed a progressive platform focused on wealth redistribution — seeking to raise taxes on New York's wealthiest and ease the burden on overtaxed outer borough homeowners.

His proposals have drawn sharp criticism from Republicans, who label him a pro-Palestinian Muslim sympathiser. His remarks calling for a "global intifada"— a term he insists meant "struggle," not "uprising" — have provoked widespread condemnation. Mamdani has also stirred controversy for calling Indian PM Narendra Modi a war criminal and opposing the Ram Temple construction at Ayodhya.

Despite polarising opinions, Mamdani's ability to connect with New York's large Muslim population and immigrant communities has boosted his per cent of the vote in the first round, he is set to run as the Democratic nominee in the November 4 general election.

His rise comes at a time when the Democratic Party is undergoing a soul-searching phase post-Kamala Harris's defeat. Whether Mamdani's fiery rhetoric and grassroots appeal can translate into electoral victory remains to be seen — but his candidacy signals a potential shift in the city's political landscape.

YASH PAL RALHAN | JALANDHAR

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

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

The urgent call for smarter crowd management

The Puri tragedy symbolises not only an administrative shortcoming but also a human one, underlining how systems can fail when vigilance wanes. As the size of religious gatherings continues to rise, India must take assertive steps to protect the lives of those who come together in faith

FIRST Column

The devastating stampede in Bangalore, which resulted in the tragic loss of eleven lives and stunned the nation, remains vivid in our minds. Now, another sorrowful event has transpired during the honoured Rath Yatra in Puri. This stampede has taken the lives of three pilgrims and left many others wounded, turning a moment of spiritual devotion into one of confusion and grief. Despite having thousands of security personnel and employing advanced surveillance technology, such as drones, CCTV cameras, and AI, this tragedy could not be averted. This occurrence, like many others before it, raises urgent questions: Why do these incidents continue despite past lessons? What more can be done to protect the millions who participate in these events with hope and faith?

India has a troubling history with stampedes, particularly during religious celebrations, in temples, and at pilgrimage sites. Since 1996, there have been over 4,000 reports of such incidents, resulting in numerous fatalities. The Kumbh Mela, known globally as one of the largest gatherings, has faced multiple disasters despite thorough planning. The recent tragedy in Puri underscores the urgent need to reassess our strategies for managing large crowds, moving beyond mere barricades and police presence to adopt intelligence-driven, holistic approaches that can predict and prevent such catastrophes.

A key challenge in managing crowds stems from the unpredictability of human behaviour. A stampede can often be set off by a minor incident-such as a loud sound, a rumour, or a blockage-that incites fear. People may flee in different directions, escape routes become blocked, and within moments, lives can be lost.

In Puri, initial reports indicate that poor sector organisation and a failure to disperse the crowd on time contributed to the deadly incident. While authorities may have enhanced crowd management tactics over time, understanding the psychology and dynamics of moving crowds is a vital area that requires focus.

What is especially concerning is the possibility of deliberate disruptions. Evidence from social media and local news indicates that organised groups or troublemakers may attempt to provoke unrest during major gatherings. This highlights the need for improved intelligence networks-not just nationally but also within local communities. It is essential to engage reliable informants, community leaders, and local law enforcement to collect real-time intelligence about any potential threats or attempts to create disorder.

The time has come to shift from reactive tactics to a proactive, intelligence-driven approach to crowd management. Effective preparation should go beyond simply predicting crowd numbers and setting up barriers.

It must include comprehensive risk assessments that consider human behaviour, infrastructure readiness, and security intelligence. Frameworks like the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction establish a global standard for these approaches, underscoring the significance of grasping risks, investing in preventive actions, and enhancing early warning and response systems.

SATENDRA SINGH

IN PURI, INITIAL REPORTS INDICATE THAT POOR SECTOR ORGANISATION AND A FAILURE TO DISPERSE THE CROWD ON TIME CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEADLY INCIDENT

While technology can significantly aid this process, it cannot operate in isolation. Surveillance tools such as facial recognition, drone-based thermal imaging, and AI-enhanced crowd analytics depend heavily on the skills of those who interpret and act on the data. It is vital to train staff in crowd psychology, emergency response, and real-time communication.

Likewise, mobile apps that provide instant updates, emergency alerts, and navigation help attendees avoid high-risk zones. Biometric and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)-based access control systems can effectively mitigate overcrowding in sensitive areas. Nevertheless, these sophisticated solutions must be integrated into a comprehensive preparedness strategy that prioritises community involvement. Residents, shopkeepers, and volunteers-those who best understand the surroundings-should be engaged in security planning and monitoring.

Their vigilance and prompt reporting of unusual activities can help avert disasters. India should also learn from international best practices. Countries like Japan have adeptly managed large public events with clearly marked exits, organised crowd flow, and robust communication systems. These tactics can be adapted to suit India's religious and cultural circumstances with suitable planning and political commitment. Furthermore, the importance of analysing incidents after the fact cannot be emphasised enough. Each stampede should be meticulously examined to pinpoint failures in execution and establish corrective measures. The duties of various stakeholders — event organisers, law enforcement, and municipal officials-must be clearly defined and coordinated under a unified command framework. Publicising investigation findings and implementing their recommendations can enhance transparency and build public trust.

The Puri tragedy symbolises not only an administrative shortcoming but also a human one, underlining how systems can fail when vigilance wanes. As the size of religious gatherings continues to rise, India must take assertive steps to protect the lives of those who come together in faith. Belief should never invoke fear.

Only through a unified, forward-thinking strategy that merges intelligence, community participation, behavioural insights, and cutting-edge technology can we hope to ensure the safety of such events. The moment to act is now-before another holy day turns into a National Day of Mourning.

Major Stampede Incidents in India Over the Last Two Decades

- January 2005: A stampede at the Mandher Devi Temple in Satara, Maharashtra, resulted in over 300 deaths due to a fire and overcrowding during a religious fair.
- August 2008: At the Naina Devi Temple in Himachal Pradesh, a stampede led to 145 fatalities, with many victims being women and children.
- September 2008: A devastating stampede during Navratri at the Chamunda Devi Temple in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, claimed more than 220 lives.
- January 2011: An incident occurred on a narrow forest path during the Sabarimala pilgrimage in Kerala, resulting in the deaths of over 104 devotees after a vehicle overturned.
- 2013: A stampede at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad (now Prayagraj), Uttar Pradesh, at the railway station caused at least 36 deaths.
- October 2013: Around 115 people lost their lives in a stampede near the Ratangarh Temple in Madhya Pradesh, reportedly sparked by rumours of a collapsing bridge.
- July 2015: A tragic stampede during the Godavari Maha Pushkaram festival in Andhra Pradesh led to at least 27 fatalities.
- September 2017: Twenty-three people died and 36 were injured in a stampede on the narrow bridge connecting the Elphinstone Road station of the Western Railway to Parel station of the Central Railway in Mumbai.
- January 2022: A surge in the crowd at the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu and Kashmir resulted in the deaths of at least 12 pilgrims near the Bhawan complex.
- July 2024: A stampede during a religious gathering in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh, left more than 120 individuals dead, predominantly women, following a spiritual discourse.
- January 8, 2025: At the Tirupati Temple in Andhra Pradesh, a stampede resulted in the deaths of 6 people and left several others injured.
- February 2025: A stampede during the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, led to the deaths of over 30 pilgrims and injured many more, highlighting ongoing crowd management issues.
- June 2025: A tragic incident in Bengaluru occurred when a stampede at the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) stadium resulted in several fatalities.

(The writers Former Executive Director, National Institute of Disaster Management, GOI. View are personal)

Monsoon 2025: How much is too much for Indian agriculture and economy?

The southwest monsoon, a lifeline for Indian agriculture, has ushered in a promising 2025 season with forecasts of above-normal rainfall at 106 per cent ± 4 per cent of the long period average (LPA), as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD). This bountiful monsoon, critical for the Kharif cropping season from June to September, supports the livelihoods of 42.3 per cent of India's population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the nation's GDP. With agriculture serving as the backbone of rural economies, the anticipated robust rainfall is poised to enhance crop yields, stabilise food prices, and stimulate economic growth. However, challenges such as uneven rainfall distribution and the risk of excessive precipitation loom large. The monsoon is the lifeblood of Indian agriculture, particularly for Kharif crops such as rice, maize, cotton, sugarcane, pulses, and oilseeds, which rely heavily on seasonal rains. Approximately 50 per cent of India's arable land depends on monsoon irrigation, making timely and adequate rainfall critical for sowing and crop growth. The 2025 forecast of above-normal rainfall, particularly in June at 108 per cent of LPA, promises an early onset that supports timely Kharif sowing.

This is a marked improvement over last year's extended monsoon, which led to flooding and crop damage in several regions. Beyond irrigation, the monsoon replenishes groundwater reserves, essential for both Kharif and Rabi seasons. Adequate groundwater levels reduce reliance on expensive irrigation systems, lowering costs for farmers. The IMD's prediction of normal to above-normal rainfall across most regions, except parts of peninsular and northeast India, augurs well for groundwater recharge and sustained agricultural productivity. A robust monsoon directly impacts India's economy through increased agricultural output, which stabilises food prices and curbs inflation. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported in April 2025 that headline CPI inflation moderated to a six-year low of 3.2 per cent, driven by declining food inflation for six consecutive months. The expected bumper Kharif harvest, supported by record wheat production and higher yields of key pulses in the Rabi season, should further ease inflationary pressures.

This stability aligns with the RBI's goal of maintaining inflation near its target, providing room for monetary policy flexibility, as evidenced by the recent 50-basis-point repo rate cut to 5.50 per cent on June 6, 2025. Higher agricultural productivity also boosts rural incomes, driving demand for goods and services. ICRA projects agriculture, forestry, and fishing GVA growth at 3.5-4.0 per cent for FY2026, following a 4.6 per cent expansion in FY2025. This growth fuels rural consumption, benefiting sectors like cement, tractors, two-wheelers, edible oils, and sugar. For instance, the cement sector, with 35-37 per cent of demand tied to rural housing, is expected to see 6-7 per cent volume growth in FY2026, driven by monsoon-induced rural prosperity. Similarly, the tractor industry anticipates 4-7 per cent volume growth, reflecting improved farm cash flows. India's position as the world's largest rice exporter is set to strengthen with surplus production, enabling increased exports of rice, sugar, and onions while reducing edible oil imports. It is obvious that above-average rains for the second consecutive year will support India's export ambitions, enhance foreign exchange earnings and bolster the trade balance. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has reinforced agricultural optimism by announcing significant Minimum Support Price (MSP) hikes for Kharif crops in the 2025-26 marketing season. The Government has ensured remunerative prices to the growers for their produce. The highest absolute increase in MSP over the previous year has been recommended for nigerseed (₹820 per quintal), followed by Ragi (₹596 per quintal), Cotton (₹589 per quintal) and Sesamum (₹579 per quintal). These hikes, exceeding April 2025 mandi prices, incentivise farmers to expand sowing, particularly for oilseeds and pulses, which saw MSP growth of 6-9 per cent.

PHOTOS: PAMKAJ KUMAR

BK JHA

However, the effectiveness of MSP hikes depends on rainfall distribution. Uneven or excessive rainfall could disrupt sowing, negating the benefits of higher prices. The Government's proactive measures, including investments in irrigation and crop insurance, aim to mitigate these risks, ensuring farmers can leverage the monsoon's potential.

Despite the optimistic forecast, monsoon variability poses significant challenges. Excessive rainfall, while beneficial for water supply, can lead to waterlogging, soil erosion, and crop damage, particularly during the ripening stage. Last year's extended monsoon caused flooding that damaged crops in several regions, underscoring the risks of concentrated heavy rains. The IMD's forecast indicates potential below-normal rainfall in parts of northwest and northeast India, which could affect regional crop yields and exacerbate disparities in agricultural productivity. Uneven spatial and temporal rainfall distribution remains a critical concern. An even distribution is paramount to maximising crop yields and supporting rural demand. Episodes of heavy rainfall could disrupt sowing schedules, damage young crops, or lead to post-harvest losses. Climate change further complicates monsoon predictability. While neutral El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are expected to persist in 2025, long-term climate trends could introduce volatility, affecting agricultural planning. Investments in climate-resilient crops, improved weather forecasting, and robust irrigation infrastructure are essential to address these challenges. Expanding crop insurance schemes and improving access to credit will empower farmers to mitigate risks and invest in high-yield crops.

The RBI's accommodative monetary policy, coupled with Government support through MSP hikes and infrastructure investments, creates a conducive environment for agricultural growth. By addressing challenges like uneven rainfall and climate volatility, India can harness the monsoon's full potential to drive rural prosperity and economic growth. As India navigates these opportunities and challenges, the monsoon's magic can transform the agricultural landscape, fostering economic resilience and prosperity.

(The writer is a columnist and writes on agriculture and environment. Views are personal)

Higher education: Growth, challenges and road ahead

India's higher education sector is undergoing a dynamic transformation marked by significant growth, diversification of academic programme, and the rise of hybrid learning models. With a reported 14 per cent growth in sectoral revenue, the momentum is being driven by changing learner expectations, technological advancements, and policy shifts aimed at increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which currently stands at 28 per cent. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions raising this to 50 per cent in the next decade-an ambitious target that demands both structural reform and innovative delivery mechanisms.

A key trend shaping the higher education landscape is the shift from traditional, siloed disciplines to industry-aligned, multidisciplinary programs. Institutions across the country are increasingly introducing courses in emerging domains such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, fintech, sustainable development, and digital marketing. The rise of hybrid learning models — combining online and offline components — has played a critical role in democratising access. The post-2020 acceleration of digital platforms has brought education to remote and underserved areas, while simultaneously catering to urban learners who value flexibility and autonomy. Hybrid models are especially attractive to the current generation of learners, who seek personalised and modular learning journeys rather than rigid, one-size-fits-all programme.

AJITESH BASANI

International enrolment is also contributing to the sector's vibrancy. Students from Africa, Southeast Asia, and parts of the Middle East are increasingly looking to India for higher education due to its relative affordability, quality assurance, and English-language instruction. With clearly defined academic roadmaps and regulated institutional frameworks, India is emerging as a credible global education hub.

However, the rapid transformation has brought with it new challenges. Chief among them is the need for constant curriculum renewal to keep pace with industry disruptions, especially those led by technology. As the pace of change accelerates, the traditional model of revising curricula every few years has become inadequate. Institutions that offer autonomous programs are now introducing mechanisms such as biannual curriculum reviews in collaboration with industry experts.

This allows for agile course updates and incorporation of real-world applications. In the realm of business education in particular, job readiness has become a central concern. The success of any academic program is increasingly being measured by how well it prepares students for the workforce. This includes not just academic knowledge, but also a portfolio of practical skills, exposure to current tools, and adaptability to new technologies. Institutions are addressing this by embedding certification modules from industry leaders, offering hands-on training, and introducing placement preparation from the first semester.

The implementation of NEP 2020 marks a significant departure from previous policies by encouraging multidisciplinary learning, vocational integration, and skill-based education. While the policy is well-framed in its vision, its execution remains uneven across states. Variations in adoption timelines and curricular frameworks have led to fragmented outcomes. For instance, students within the same institution may follow entirely different academic models depending on state-level directives. This lack of cohesion hinders scalability and national benchmarking. Policy clarity is especially critical in defining institutional roles. The NEP envisages categorising institutions into research universities, teaching universities, and autonomous colleges. Such classification allows for targeted development and funding, but ambiguity in criteria and overlapping mandates have caused operational uncertainties. A unified and phased approach to implementation, led by both central and state Governments, is essential to streamline the transition.

Another area of concern is teacher training. As student expectations evolve, the role of educators is shifting from knowledge dispensers to facilitators and mentors. This transition requires a new set of competencies-ranging from digital literacy and interdisciplinary thinking to the ability to guide students through personalised learning paths. The forthcoming national teacher education framework, set to launch in 2026, may address some of these gaps, but continuous professional development and pedagogical innovation must remain a priority. The changing perception of degrees and certifications also warrants attention. In today's job market, demonstrable skills often outweigh formal qualifications. Employers are increasingly emphasising problem-solving ability, communication skills, and digital proficiency over academic transcripts. This shift is especially evident in sectors like media, design, IT, and entrepreneurship. As a result, institutions must realign their assessment systems and course outcomes to reflect competence, not just compliance.

Going forward, the future of higher education in India lies in meaningful collaboration. Academic institutions must build deeper partnerships with industries to ensure relevance, internships, mentorships, and placements. Specialisation, adaptability, and a commitment to lifelong learning will be key differentiators. Institutions that invest in these areas will be best positioned to prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

(The writer is the Executive Director — Administration at Acharya Bangalore B-School (ABBS). Views are personal)

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY| JULY 3, 2025

Air India pilots carry simulator test after Ahmedabad crash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

A group of senior Air India (AI) pilots recreated on simulators some adverse conditions, such as flying with higher weight and temperature and with gear down and retracted flaps at 50 feet, with the results showing the Boeing 787-8 aircraft continued flying, sources said on Wednesday.

The simulator test was carried out independently by the Air India Boeing 787 aircraft fleet trainers during a training session at the airline's Mumbai facility within days of the crash of an Air India Dreamliner in Ahmedabad.

When contacted, Air India said pilots conducted the tests on their own and the airline had no role in it.

Among various theories doing the rounds initially regarding the possible causes of the Air India aircraft crash on June 12 that killed over 260 people, was that the pilot flew the aircraft with retracted flaps and gear down.

According to a source : "The pilots simulated AI 171 flight conditions on their own during the training session. They attempted to create some slightly adverse conditions like with higher weight and higher temperature, while keeping gear down and retracting flaps at 50 feet altitude. In the simulator, the aircraft continued flying." Flaps are movable panels, located along the trailing edge of the wings of the aircraft, which get extended during takeoff and landing to increase the wing's surface area to provide more 'lift' that keeps the plane flying. This additional aerodynamic force is crucial during low-speed flight, like takeoff or landing.

Flaps are adjusted manually by either pilot, depending on the situation. In cruise flight, they remain retracted.

The crash, one of the worst air disasters in India in decades, involved a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner operating as Air India flight AI 171. The aircraft was en route to London's Gatwick Airport when it crashed into a medical hostel complex in Ahmedabad's Meghani Nagar area shortly after takeoff.

Of the 242 people onboard, 241 were killed, with only one survivor. The total death toll stood at 260, including casualties on the ground.

India's nodal aircraft accident probe agency, AAIB, launched a probe after the tragedy and constituted a multidisciplinary team on June 13.

The team includes representatives from the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), an air traffic control officer and an aviation medicine specialist.

Last week, the Government said data is being extracted from black boxes, and analysis of the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder is underway to reconstruct the sequence of events that led to the fatal crash.

Delhi CM orders smart classrooms, immediate repairs for city schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday directed the immediate operationalisation of 2,000 smart classrooms, the installation of modern science laboratories in all Government schools, urgent repairs of dilapidated school buildings, and prompt recruitment to fill vacant teaching posts for schools across the city. She also ordered improvements to the entry gates of Thyagaraj and Chhatrasal stadiums, underlining her Government's commitment to creating a comprehensive and modern educational environment for students in the capital.

These directives were issued during a high-level review meeting chaired by the Chief Minister at the Delhi Secretariat, where she met senior officials of the Education Department to assess ongoing infrastructure projects, review staffing gaps and chart strategies to ensure quality education across all Delhi Government schools. "Our Government is working with full commitment on both resource and policy levels to ensure every child in Delhi, irrespective of their background, receives equal opportunity and world-class education," said CM Gupta following the meeting.

To strengthen science education, she instructed that every school be equipped with state-of-the-art laboratories to promote hands-on, experiment-based learning. "This will enhance students' understanding and help develop a scientific temperament," she said. Emphasising the need for robust infrastructure, the Chief Minister directed officials to prepare a detailed list of school buildings in poor condition and undertake repair and renovation work on a priority basis. The stadium gate upgrades were also ordered with the comfort of student-athletes in mind. A major focus of the review was on addressing the shortage of teachers. The Chief Minister asked the Education Department to ensure that all vacant teaching posts — from primary to senior secondary levels — are filled without delay. "There must be no compromise in recruiting qualified, trained teachers," she said.

Additionally, the CM pushed for rapid progress on the smart classroom initiative. In the first phase, 2,000 smart classrooms are to be completed and fully equipped with internet connectivity, interactive digital panels or projectors, and audio-visual tools to modernise the learning experience. Reiterating her Government's priority, the Chief Minister concluded, "Every initiative related to the future of Delhi's children is a top priority for our Government. Education should not be confined to classrooms alone — it should reflect in the entire atmosphere."

Cheer for middle class?

Continued from >> P1

The Clean Energy Cess will target more expensive cars and coal and is seen as aligning with the Government's overall push to renewable or non-polluting energy sources.

If implemented, the change would not only streamline the GST structure but also provide a clear signal that the Government is addressing inflation concerns head-on — especially as rising living costs continue to strain household budgets. The GST collections grew 6.2 per cent year-on-year to ₹1.85 lakh crore in June 2025 against ₹1.73 lakh crore in June 2024. The GST collections, however, dropped sequentially with the figures crossing the ₹2.01 lakh crore-mark in May 2025.

According to a recent data released by the Finance Ministry, the country's gross GST collection for May 2025 reached ₹2.01 lakh crore, marking a 16.4 per cent increase from the ₹1.72 lakh crore collected in May 2024.

Encounter breaks out in Kishtwar

Continued from >> P1

Preliminary reports suggest that the trapped terrorists may be linked to Jaish-e-Muhammad, a Pakistan-based terror outfit responsible for several attacks in the region.

The local administration has urged residents to stay indoors and remain vigilant.

Last week, a Pakistani terrorist was neutralised by the joint team of security forces on June 26 in the Basantgarh area of Udhampur.

On April 12, three terrorists, including a top commander of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorist outfit, were killed during a four-day-long encounter in the Naidgam area of Chatroo in the Kishtwar district without suffering any collateral damage.

JMI to establish library science department

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi

In a landmark development nearly four decades in the making, the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) is set to establish a Department of Library and Information Science, following the education ministry's recent approval of six teaching posts for the university.

The move marks a major academic expansion, as the university has been offering the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (B.Lib.I.Sc.) course since 1985 without any permanent faculty, an official statement from JMI said.

The sanctioning of these posts will provide much-needed academic infrastructure and is expected to invigorate the popular programme with fresh pedagogical energy and direction, it said.

Vice Chancellor Mazhar Asif and Registrar Md. Mahtab Alam Rizvi expressed deep gratitude to the Union Government and the University Grants Commission (UGC) for approving the long-pending proposal.

They hailed the support as "instrumental" in bolstering JMI's academic offerings and called it a "milestone" in the university's journey.

Asif described libraries as the "cornerstone of academic life", emphasising their role in shaping research and advancing knowledge in the digital age.

"My vision is to strengthen teaching in librarianship and information science by setting up a full-fledged department to train the next generation of highly skilled librarians," he said.He also highlighted the department's potential contribution to the study and digitisation of the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

Rizvi noted the strategic importance of libraries in a technologically advancing world, saying, "It is imperative that we train and equip our students with the right tools and insights so JMI can emerge as a leader in library sciences."

Dalai Lama reveals his successor plan

Continued from >> P1

During a meeting of the heads of Tibetan spiritual traditions on September 24, 2011, the Dalai Lama had stated that "as far back as in 1969, I had made clear that people concerned should decide whether the Dalai Lama's reincarnations should continue in future." He had stated that when he would be 90 years old, he would consult the high Lamas of the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, the Tibetan public, and other people who follow Tibetan Buddhism to evaluate whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue or not.

"I have received messages through various channels from Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhists living in other parts of the world requesting that the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue. I am affirming that the institution of the Dalai Lama will continue," his statement said.

The spiritual leader added that the responsibility to recognise the reincarnation rests with the members of Gaden Phodrang Trust, who will consult heads of various Tibetan Buddhist traditions and the reliable oath-bound Dharma Protectors linked to the lineage of the Dalai Lamas. "They should carry out the procedures of search and recognition in accordance with the tradition," the statement added.

The Dalai Lama's announcement is set to intensify tensions with Beijing. "The Dalai Lama's reincarnation must follow the principles of domestic recognition, the 'Golden Urn' process, and approval by the central Government, in line with religious traditions and laws," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told a media briefing while responding to the Dalai Lama's announcement.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu, however, welcomed the reaffirmation by the 14th Dalai Lama on the continuation of the institution of the Dalai Lama saying this decision brings immense joy and spiritual reassurance to millions across the Himalayan region and the world. Khandu said on behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, especially the Monpa community and the entire Buddhist fraternity, he expresses community's heartfelt gratitude to the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama, who fled to India in 1959 after a failed uprising against Chinese rule in Lhasa, has since lived in exile along with thousands of Tibetans. While China brands him a separatist and a rebel, the Dalai Lama remains for many a global icon of non-violence, compassion and the Tibetan struggle to preserve their identity.

The successor issue of the Dalai Lama, who has made Dharamshala his "adopted" home is also expected to flare up fresh tensions between Beijing and Washington as China's policy comes in conflict with the US Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2020, which reaffirmed America's steadfast support for the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Buddhism.

The reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, the second-high priest of Tibetan Buddhism, has to go through the centuries-old tradition of the Golden Urn law procedure started by the 18th century Qing dynasty, Mao said.

The current 14th Dalai Lama himself was recognised after his predecessor's death following traditional rituals, but his recognition was granted directly by the then-central Government, exempting him from the Golden Urn process, Mao said. She also spoke about how the traditional ceremony was incorporated in 2007 into China's official regulations, along with a clause explicitly banning interference by overseas individuals and parties.

Significantly, the question and Mao's reply related to the Dalai Lama's succession plan was conspicuously missing from the official transcript of the media briefing posted on the Chinese Foreign Ministry website on Wednesday. Mao also defended the "sinicisation" of Tibetan Buddhism and other religions under the guidelines issued by Chinese President Xi Jinping. "I believe that sinicisation of religion is not about restricting religious practice; rather, all religions must adapt to the social, cultural and historical context of the country. Tibetan Buddhism in China is a prime example of a religion that has integrated Chinese characteristics, exemplifying the process of sinicisation," Mao said.

In New Delhi, China's Ambassador to India Xu Feihong said the practice of Living Buddha reincarnation has continued for over 700 years and has formed rigorous religious rituals and historical conventions. "The 14th Dalai Lama himself was searched for in strict accordance with religious rituals and historical conventions after the passing of the 13th Dalai Lama, and enthroned after being granted exemption from the lottery with the then central Government's approval," he posted on X. He said the Government of China implements a policy of freedom of religious belief.

"It protects the tradition of reincarnation of Living Buddhas in accordance with the law. The reincarnation of the Dalai Lama must follow the process that consists of search and identification in China, lot-drawing from the Golden Urn, and central Government approval, and comply with religious rituals and historical conventions as well as Chinese laws and regulations," he added.

The Dalai Lama is revered by the vast majority of over six million Tibetans as a living manifestation of Chenrezig, the Buddhist god of compassion. He is regarded as the most consequential spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism as unlike his predecessors he had to confront the atheist regime headed by the Communist Party of China.

A commentary on the Dalai Lama's succession carried by state-run Xinhua news agency Tuesday ruled out official recognition without proper rituals. Any so-called "reincarnation" that bypasses traditional religious rituals, whether conducted within or outside the Chinese territory, lacks religious legitimacy and will by no means be recognised by Tibetan Buddhist followers, it said.

Notably ahead of the much-expected announcement by the Dalai Lama, China-appointed Panchen Lama, the second most important Buddhist monk in Tibet after the Dalai Lama, met President Xi here on June 6 and swore his loyalty to the ruling Communist Party. Meeting the Panchen Lama, Xi asked him to make greater contributions to promoting ethnic unity and religious harmony, as well as the stability, development and progress in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Xi also asked him to make continued efforts to promote the "sinicisation of religion".

Since he came to power in 2012, Xi has been calling for the "sinicisation" of all religions in the country, including Buddhism and Islam, to re-orient them to function under the guidance of the CPC, which ideologically remained atheist.

The 35-year-old Panchen Lama was appointed by China at the age of five in 1995, ousting the Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was chosen as the 11th Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama. Beijing has in the past accused the Dalai Lama of indulging in "separatist" activities and trying to split Tibet and considers him as a divisive figure.

The Nobel Peace Prize-winning spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism has, however, insisted that he is not seeking independence but "genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet" under the "Middle-Way approach". The Chinese Government held nine rounds of talks with the Dalai Lama's representatives from 2002 to 2010, without any concrete outcome. No talks were held on record after Xi took over power in 2012.

In the talks, the Tibetan side pitched for genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people in line with the Dalai Lama's middle-way policy. But China consistently rejected his autonomy plan, stating that it covered vast stretches of the Himalayan region beyond the current Tibet Autonomous Region.

India lifts ban on Pakistan...

Continued from >> P1

Right after the Pahalgam incident, the Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE) announced a "blanket boycott" of Pakistani artists in light of the attack. Fawad Khan-starrer Abir Gulaal, a Bollywood film, was the first casualty of the boycott. The curbs began in late April when the Indian Government blamed Pakistan for an attack in Pahalgam, a region in Indian-occupied Kashmir. Utilising the emergency powers under the IT Rules, 2021, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 2021, vide two separate orders on 22.04.2022, issued directions for blocking of over three dozen YouTube channels and accounts of celebrities of Pakistan for their support on Pahalgham terror and anti India stand.

YouTube channels based in Pakistan were found to have been used in a coordinated manner to post fake news about India on various subjects such as the Indian Army, Jammu and Kashmir and India's foreign relations in the light of situation in Ukraine, etc. The content of these channels was observed to be completely false, and sensitive from the perspective of national security, sovereignty and integrity of India and India's friendly relations with foreign States.

Sheesh Mahal restored to former glory

Continued from >> P1

As a result, places like Shalimar Bagh and its historical structures like Sheesh Mahal fell into disrepair and were nearly ruined. However, thanks to the personal interest taken by the LG and the joint efforts of the DDA, the restoration carried out has truly restored the grandeur and magnificence of the park," he said.

Like other monuments, Sheesh Mahal too had been in a dilapidated state. An important heritage structure protected as a National Monument, it had also shown signs of neglect over time. Taking note of the Sheesh Mahal's dire conditions, Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena, had directed the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to undertake the project to restore its lost glory. The task set by the LG was to expedite the conservation work on the monument and heritage structures along with improvement of its overall landscape on an urgent basis.

While the ASI restored Sheesh Mahal's heritage elements, a Mughal-style Char Bagh landscape design was developed by the DDA to complement the monument.

The DDA has also restored three heritage cottages and a baradri, which had dilapidated to the point of structural risk. Through meticulous conservation efforts, these historic buildings have now been returned to their former glory.

After restoration, two of the cottages have been adaptively re-used for community-focused purposes. The Readers Café Corner, a book café aimed at fostering literary engagement and Café Shalimar, a cafeteria for park visitors, now occupy these restored spaces, reviving their relevance and making them hubs of cultural and social interaction.

A smaller third cottage has also been restored and repurposed to a contemporary usage for official purposes while still preserving its unique architectural legacy. Additionally, the historic baradari, possibly constructed alongside the Sheesh Mahal and once buried under silt and debris, has been carefully restored using traditional materials and techniques such as lime concrete, lime surkhi, lakhauri bricks and natural binders such as gud, belgiri and urad to ensure authenticity and strength.

Shalimar Bagh, built in 1653, has seen many phases of history, from the Mughal period to British rule. It has witnessed many historical events and changing rulers over time. Today, within the District Park of Shalimar Bagh, the majestic Sheesh Mahal - ASI protected monument and a few heritage structures from the 1930s remain.

The DDA is also actively working to protect and restore heritage structures across Delhi through dedicated conservation efforts. Projects like the restoration of Mehrauli Archaeological Park, St James Church, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, and heritage structures at Sanjay Van demonstrate this commitment. These restored sites provide new avenues for the public to engage with the city's history while also serving as spaces for recreation.

Anil Ambani again in trouble: SBI classifies loan account as 'fraud'

Continued from >> P1

In particular, borrowers who have defaulted and have also committed a fraud in the account would be debarred from availing finance from banks, development financial institutions, Government owned NBFCs, etc, for a period of five years from the date of full payment of the defrauded amount.

After this period, it is for individual institutions to take a call on whether to lend to such a borrower and no restructuring or grant of additional facilities may be made in the case of fraud accounts. As per the report of the Fraud Identification Committee out of the total loan, ₹13,667.73 crore, about 44 per cent, was utilised for the repayment of loans and other obligations. An amount of ₹12,692.31 crore, 41 per cent of total loan, was utilized to pay connected parties.

According to the filing, ₹6,265.85 crore was used for repaying other bank loans and ₹5,501.56 crore was paid to related or connected parties which were not aligned with sanctioned purposes.

Further, an ₹250-crore loan from Dena Bank (meant for statutory dues) was not utilised as per the sanctioned use. The loan was diverted to RCom Group Company Reliance Communications Infrastructure Ltd (RCIL) as an Inter-Corporate Deposit (ICD) and was later claimed to repay an External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) loan.

The committee found that a loan of ₹248 crore was sanctioned by IIFCL for meeting capital expenditure but RCom paid ₹63 crore to Reliance Infratel Ltd (RITL) and ₹77 crore to RIEL for repayment of loans. "But instead of transferring the fund directly to these companies it was routed through RCIL, reason for that has not been given by management or by Anil Ambani. These (Dena Bank and IIFCL loan use) appear to be misappropriation of funds and breach of trust," the report said.

The committee observed potential routing of bank loans by RCom Group including mobile tower firm RITL telecom service company Reliance Telecom Ltd (RTL), RCIL, Netizen, Reliance Webstore (RWSL) etc. The report said RCom, RITL and RTL engaged in ICD (inter-corporate deposit) transactions totalling ₹41,863.32 crore of which only ₹28,421.61 crore was traceable. RCom used a ₹100 crore intraday limit to cycle funds through group entities including RWSL, RTL, RCIL multiple times in a single day.

"These transactions do not appear to be genuine or conducted in a normal course of business. It appears that RCom has utilised intra-day limits to finance RWSL to pay collection proceeds worth ₹1,110 crore. "As a result, debtors of RTL got reduced by that extent... Transactions can be termed as manipulation of books of accounts through fictitious accounts," the report said.

The committee raised a question on funds transactions involving Netizens as "an attempt of diversion of funds by manipulation of books of accounts through fictitious account/fictitious entries." It is to be noted that RCom is under corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) pursuant to the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

With effect from June 28, 2019, its affairs, business and assets are being managed by, and the powers of the board of directors are vested in, the Resolution Professional, Anish Niranjan Nanavaty, appointed by National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench, order dated June 21, 2019. The credit facilities or loans referred to in the letter from SBI dated June 23, 2025 pertain to the period prior to the CIRP of the company and are required in terms of the IBC, to be necessarily resolved as a part of a resolution plan or in liquidation, as the case may be.

Anil Ambani's lawyers have written to SBI protesting against classification of loan accounts of bankrupt Reliance Communications as fraudulent, saying the move violated RBI guidelines as well as court directions. In the July 2 letter, the counsel said the SBI's order was shocking and has been passed ex-parte, and in violation of the principles of natural justice. SBI's order is in direct contravention of various judgments of the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court, as well as RBI guidelines, the counsel said.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

China confirms President Xi to miss BRICS summit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Beijing

China on Wednesday said Premier Li Qiang will attend the BRICS summit in Brazil later this week, confirming reports that President Xi Jinping will skip the meeting of the emerging economies for the first time since he took over power 12 years ago.

Li will attend the 17th BRICS Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from July 5 to 8 upon invitation, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here.

She, however, parried a question on why Xi, who never missed a BRICS summit during his 12-year tenure in power, decided to skip the event.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the Rio summit.

BRICS consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa has been expanded with five additional members Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The BRICS summit at Kazan in Russia last year became significant as both Modi and Xi met there, breaking the four-year deadlock over the frozen

BRICS consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa has been expanded with five additional members Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE

bilateral ties due to the standoff at eastern Ladakh.

After their meeting, both sides agreed to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms.

Following the Modi-Xi talks, the two sides held a series of meetings in the last few months, aimed at normalising the bilateral relations.

In view of Xi's decision to skip the Rio summit, the next opportunity for the Xi-Modi meeting could be the SCO summit to be held in China if the Prime Minister attends it.

China, the current chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, plans to hold the summit later this year.

About the BRICS summit, Mao said the grouping serves as the most important platform for solidarity and cooperation among emerging markets and developing countries and represents a key force in advancing an equal and orderly multipolar world and inclusive economic globalisation.

She said this year's summit is the first since the accession of new member Indonesia and 10 partner countries, with several international and regional organisations from other emerging markets and developing nations also invited to attend the event.

She said China looks forward to working with all parties to strengthen the BRICS strategic partnership, contribute to upholding multilateralism, promoting common development, improving global governance, and driving high-quality development of the BRICS cooperation framework.

Pakistan records one more poliovirus case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Islamabad

One more case of poliovirus has been confirmed in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, taking the total countrywide tally to 14, officials said.

The new case, a 19-month-old boy, was reported in the North Waziristan district of the province, the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health (NIH) Islamabad said on Tuesday.

With the latest case, the total number of polio cases in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has risen to eight. Four cases were confirmed in Sindh and one each in Punjab and Gilgit-Baltistan earlier this year.

Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic.

Despite global efforts to eradicate the virus, challenges such as security issues, vaccine hesitancy and misinformation have slowed progress. This year, Pakistan has undertaken three nationwide polio campaigns so far — in February, April, and May. Polio eradication efforts in Pakistan routinely face security issues.

The case is the second one to be confirmed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa within a week after an 18-month-old child from the Union Council Amakhel in Tank district was confirmed as the seventh case on June 27.

Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic

In May, Pakistan launched its third drive of the year against the crippling disease, aiming to vaccinate 45 million children under the age of five.

The Government has vowed to eradicate polio by the end of this year.

Polio is a highly infectious and incurable disease that can cause lifelong paralysis.

The only effective protection is through repeated doses of the oral polio vaccine for every child under five.

Quad group calls for punishing perpetrators of Pahalgam attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Washington

The Quad grouping has called for bringing the perpetrators, organisers and financiers of the Pahalgam terror attack to justice without any delay and urged UN member nations to extend cooperation for it.

The foreign ministers of the four-nation grouping condemned the April 22 attack in the strongest terms that claimed the lives of 26 civi-lians and firmly pitched for action against cross-border terrorism.

In a joint statement, the ministers, however, did not mention Pakistan or the four-day military conflict between the Indian and Pakistani militaries in May.

The meeting at the US capital city on Tuesday was attended by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and her Japanese counterpart Takeshi Iwaya.

The Quad foreign ministers condemned "in the strongest terms" the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, that claimed the lives of 25 Indian nationals and one Nepali citizen, while injuring several others.

"We express our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and extend our heartfelt wishes for a swift and full recovery to all those injured," they said.

"We call for the perpetrators, organisers and financiers of this reprehensible act to be brought to justice without any delay and urge all UN Member States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in this regard," they added.

The Quad meeting also announced the grouping's plan to launch a Quad Ports of the Future partnership in Mumbai this year.

The ministers said they remained seriously concerned about the situation in the East China Sea and the South China Sea.

"We reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion," they said, referring to Chinese military actions.

Hamas says it's open to Gaza ceasefire but won't accept Trump proposal

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Cairo

Hamas suggested on Wednesday that it was open to a ceasefire agreement with Israel, but stopped short of accepting a US-backed proposal announced by President Donald Trump hours earlier, insisting on its long-standing position that any deal bring an end to the war in Gaza.

Trump said Tuesday that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen. The US leader has been increasing pressure on the Israeli Government and Hamas to broker a ceasefire and hostage agreement and bring about an

end to the war.

Trump said the 60-day period would be used to work toward ending the war - something Israel says it won't accept until Hamas is defeated. He said that a deal might come together as soon as next week.

But Hamas' response, which emphasised its demand that the war end, raised questions about whether the latest offer could materialise into an actual pause in fighting.

Hamas official Taher al-Nunu said that the militant group was "ready and serious regarding reaching an agreement." He said Hamas was "ready to accept any initiative that clearly leads to the complete end to the war."

A Hamas delegation is expected to meet with Egyptian and Qatari mediators in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss the proposal, according to an Egyptian official. The official spoke on condition of anonymity, because he wasn't authorised to discuss the talks with the media.

Israel and Hamas disagree on how the war should end

Throughout the nearly 21-month-long war, ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas have repeatedly faltered over whether the war should end as part of any deal.

Hamas has said that it's willing to free the remaining 50 hostages, less than half of whom are said to be alive.

Iran's President orders to suspend cooperation with IAEA

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Dubai

Iran's President on Wednesday ordered the country to suspend its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after American and Israeli airstrikes hit its most-important nuclear facilities, likely further limiting inspectors' ability to track Tehran's programme that had been enriching uranium to near weapons-grade levels. The order by President Masoud Pezeshkian included no timetables or details about what that suspension would entail. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi signalled in a CBS News interview that Tehran still would be willing to continue negotiations with the United States. "I don't think negotiations will restart as quickly as that," Araghchi said, referring to Trump's comments that talks could start as early as this week. However, he added: "The doors of diplomacy will never slam shut." Pressure tactic, Iran has limited IAEA inspections in the past as a pressure tactic in negotiating with the West — though as of right now Tehran has denied that there's any immediate plans to resume talks with the United States that had been upended by the 12-day Iran-Israel war.

Tesla sales plunge

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ New York

Sales of Tesla electric cars fell sharply in the last three months as boycotts over Elon Musk's political views continue to keep buyers away, a significant development given expectations that anger with the company's billionaire CEO would have faded by now.

The company reported a 13% plunge in sales on Wednesday in a sign that Musk's embrace of US President Donald Trump and far-right politicians in Europe has had a deep and enduring impact on Tesla's brand appeal.

The new figures show rival electric-vehicle makers have wasted no time to pounce on the company's weakness to steal market share and suggest Tesla's quarterly earnings report later this month could also disappoint.

Sales fell to 384,122 in April through June, down from 443,956 in the same three months last year. During the latest period, Musk formally left the Trump administration as a cost-cutting czar, and hopes rose that sales would recover. Musk himself recently said that Tesla was in the midst of a "major rebound" in sales.

Still, some parts of the report were encouraging. Sales of the Models 3 and Y totaled 373,728, above the estimate of 356,000 from Wall Street analysts. Tesla shares rose 3.7% in morning trading.

"The numbers weren't as bad as thought with all the analyst forecast cuts we saw over the past week," said Morningstar's Seth Goldstein, though he added the report overall showed the company faces big challenges.

"The current product lineup is at market saturation and Tesla will need the new affordable vehicle to grow deliveries."

Musk has promised a cheaper EV model would be coming this year that would boost sales.

It's not clear yet if Musk's latest feud with Trump will help lure back buyers who have been angry at the billionaire's political positions.

After Musk once again took to social media to criticise Trump's budget bill, the president threatened Tuesday to use the power of his office to hurt his companies, including Tesla, pushing its stock down more than 5%.

Four officials killed in blast in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Peshawar

Four Government officials, including an assistant commissioner, were killed and 11 others injured in a bomb blast in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Wednesday, police said.

The blast, which occurred near Mela Ground in Khar Tehsil in the Bajaur tribal district bordering Afghanistan, targeted the vehicle of Assistant Commissioner of Bajaur district's Nawagai tehsil Faisal Sultan. The other deceased were identified as Assistant Sub-Inspector Noor Hakeem, Levies Tehsildar Wakil Khan and Constable Rasheed.

Security forces swiftly cordoned off the area, while a search operation and investigation into the attack are underway. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Adviser on Information, Barrister Saif condemned the bomb blast, terming it a "highly tragic incident". "The loss of precious lives, including the assistant commissioner and tehsildar, is deeply saddening," he said in a press release. "We will not allow anti-state elements to succeed in their nefarious designs," he added. He further said that Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has ordered a thorough investigation into the incident and directed the provision of immediate medical assistance to the injured.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs acquitted of most serious charges

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ New York

Sean "Diddy" Combs was convicted of prostitution-related offences but acquitted Wednesday of sex trafficking and racketeering charges that could have put one of hip-hop's most celebrated figures behind bars for life.

The mixed result still could send Combs, 55, to prison for as long as a decade, and is likely to end his career as a hitmaking music executive, fashion entrepreneur, brand ambassador and reality TV star.

After hearing the verdict, Combs held his hands up in a prayer motion, looking at jury and hugged defence lawyer Teny Geragos. Combs' relatives and supporters in the audience could barely contain their relief, despite the judge's admonition to avoid outbursts: When the first "not guilty" was read aloud, someone shouted, "Yeah!"

Combs later continued to pump his right fist subtly, seemingly satisfied that he was acquitted on the most serious charges.

Combs was convicted of flying people around the country, including his girlfriends and paid male sex workers, to engage in sexual encounters, a felony violation of the federal Mann Act.

Wisconsin SC strikes down 176-year-old abortion ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS ■ Madison

The Wisconsin Supreme Court's liberal majority struck down the state's 176-year-old abortion ban on Wednesday, ruling 4-3 that it was superseded by newer state laws regulating the procedure, including statutes that criminalise abortions only after a fetus can survive outside the womb.

The ban state lawmakers adopted in 1849 made it a felony when anyone other than the mother "intentionally destroys the life of an unborn child."

It was in effect until 1973, when the US Supreme Court's landmark Roe v. Wade decision legalising abortion nationwide nullified it. Legislators never officially repealed the ban, however, and conservatives argued that the US Supreme Court's 2022 decision to overturn Roe reactivated it.

Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul, a Democrat, filed a lawsuit that year arguing that the ban was trumped by abortion restrictions legislators enacted during the nearly half-century that Roe was in effect.

Kaul specifically cited a 1985 law that essentially permits abortions until viability. Some babies can survive with medical help after 21 weeks of gestation.

Sheboygan County District Attorney Joel Urmanski, a Republican, defended the 1849 ban in court, arguing that it could coexist with the newer abortion restrictions, just as different penalties for the same crime coexist.

Dane County Circuit Judge Diane Schlipper ruled in 2023 that the 1849 ban outlaws feticide — which she defined as the killing of a fetus without the mother's consent — but not consensual abortions. Abortions have been available in the state since that ruling but the state Supreme Court decision gives providers and patients more certainty that abortions will remain legal in Wisconsin.

Urmanski had asked the state Supreme Court to overturn Schlipper's ruling without waiting for a decision from a lower appellate court. It was expected as soon as the justices took the case that they would overturn the ban. Liberals hold a 4-3 majority on the court and one of them, Janet Protasiewicz, openly stated on the campaign trail that she supports abortion rights.

The justices concluded that "the legislature impliedly repealed" the ban "by enacting comprehensive legislation about virtually every aspect of abortion including where, when, and how healthcare providers may lawfully perform abortions," Justice Rebecca Dallet wrote for the majority. "That comprehensive legislation so thoroughly covers the entire subject of abortion that it was clearly meant as a substitute for the 19th century near-total ban on abortion."

In a dissent, Justice Annette Ziegler called the ruling "a jaw-dropping exercise of judicial will." She said the liberal justices based the decision on their personal preference to allow abortions.

Urmanski's attorney, Andrew Phillips, didn't immediately respond to an email Wednesday morning seeking comment. Kaul's spokesperson, Riley Vetterkind, also didn't immediately return an email.

Democratic-backed Susan Crawford defeated conservative Brad Schimel for an open seat on the court in April, ensuring liberals will maintain their 4-3 edge until at least 2028. Crawford has not been sworn in yet and was not part of Wednesday's ruling. She'll play pivotal role, though, in a separate Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin lawsuit challenging the 1849 ban's constitutionality. The high court decided last year to take that case. It's still pending.

Keir Starmer marks one-year milestone as UK PM amid turmoil, Chancellor in tears

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ London

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Wednesday addressed an extraordinary House of Commons session with his Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, seen fighting tears behind him as he defended his government's efforts to manage the country's mounting social welfare benefits bill.

Starmer, who is marking one year as UK PM this week since his Labour government was elected in the July 4 general election last year, had narrowly averted a rebellion within his own ranks after offering a last-minute concession to win a parliamentary vote on welfare reforms on Tuesday night.

It led Opposition Conservative Party Leader Kemi Badenoch to use the Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) session in the Commons on Wednesday to pile on the pressure as she dubbed Reeves as a "human shield" forced to bear the brunt of the financial pressure of the government's concession to Labour rebels.

"This man (Starmer) has forgotten that his welfare bill was there to plug a black hole created by the Chancellor. Instead they're creating new ones," said Badenoch.

Then turning to Reeves seated next to the Prime Minister on the front bench, the Opposition Leader leader described her as looking "absolutely miserable".

"Labour MPs are going on the record saying that the Chancellor is toast, and the reality is that she is a human shield for his incompetence. In January, he said that she would be in post until the next election. Will she really," she asked.

While Starmer refused to answer the question directly in Parliament, his Downing Street spokesperson later told reporters that the Prime Minister fully backed his finance minister.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Chancellor claimed Reeves was seen teary due to a "personal matter".

The dramatic Commons display only served to further fan speculation around Starmer's leadership prospects and his Chancellor's future one year since taking charge at No. 10 and 11 Downing Street.

On Tuesday night, there was a momentary sense of relief as a much diluted Universal Credit and Personal Independent Payment Bill, aimed at saving the Treasury GBP 5 billion, was backed by a majority of 75 in a tense vote. However, with as many as 49 Labour MPs voting against the government's bill, it also marked one of the biggest challenges to a British Prime Minister in their very first year in office.

Having forced Starmer into multiple concessions, the bill in the end left all sides of the House questioning how the funds to make up the shortfall would be found.

The government has resorted the standard line that all spending plans will be laid out in the next fiscal event or budget statement, But this hasn't helped calm the turmoil in Westminster, triggering a surge in the odds on Starmer facing a serious leadership challenge in the week he would have liked to celebrate his one-year anniversary as PM.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Markets end lower, sensex sheds 288 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

Benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 287 points on Wednesday due to profit selling in HDFC Bank, L and T and Reliance Industries shares and caution ahead of the impending US tariff deadline.

Paring its early gains, the BSE Sensex closed lower by 287.60 points or 0.34 per cent at 83,409.69. During the day, it dropped 546.52 points or 0.65 per cent to 83,150.77.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 88.40 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 25,453.40.

Flight of foreign capital from equities and a mixed trend in global equities impacted market sentiment, traders said.

Among Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen and Toubro, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Bharat Electronics and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major laggards.

However, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, and Trent were the biggest gainers.

"Mixed global cues, particularly ahead of the impending tariff deadline, are driving investor caution. Market attention is gradually shifting to crucial Q1 earnings, which have high expectations.

"Underlying trends such as robust macroeconomic fundamentals and increased government expenditure continue to support market resilience. However, being at the breach level of the recent rally, a cautiousness is expected to continue in the near term," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.20 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.18 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, realty dropped 1.36 per cent, financial services (0.92 per cent), industrials (0.84 per cent), power (0.77 per cent), bankex (0.69 per cent) and capital goods (0.69 per cent).

Metal (1.44 per cent), consumer durables (1.22 per cent), commodities (0.90 per cent), telecommunication (0.55 per cent) and auto (0.22 per cent).

As many as 2,205 stocks declined while 1,809 advanced and 157 remained unchanged on the BSE. 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.

Gross GST collection increased by 6.2 per cent to over ₹1.84 lakh crore in June but slipped below the ₹2 lakh crore mark recorded in the previous two months.

The GST mop-up stood at ₹1.74 lakh crore a year ago, as per government data released on Tuesday.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled lower while Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher.

European markets were trading in positive territory in mid-session deals.

The US markets ended on a mixed note on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.86 per cent to $67.69 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹1,970.14 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data. On Tuesday, the Sensex rose by 90.83 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at 83,697.29. The Nifty gained 24.75 points or 0.10 per cent to close at 25,541.80.

India, UK to sign social security pact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

India may soon have a social security pact with the UK as an in-built component of the free trade agreement (FTA) which has been finalised between the two countries, a source said on Wednesday. The source said that from now onwards, the social security agreement (SSA) will be an in-built component of all free trade agreements to be negotiated in future.

"UK is believed to have agreed on the social security component under the FTA negotiations, which would be ratified in the near future," the source said. The SSA, a reciprocal arrangement between two or more countries, ensures that an employee while on a foreign assignment does not have to contribute to the social security coverage fund in that country but get the full benefit of employment period for pension calculation, while the employers are saved from making double social security contributions on behalf of their workers. The Indian employees posted abroad or on foreign assignment are required to obtain a certificate of coverage (CoC) from retirement fund body EPFO, which helps them avoid paying social security contribution in countries where they are posted.

The Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has been authorised to issue the Certificate of Coverage to employees posted in nations that have signed an agreement with India.

Cabs can charge double during peak hours, says Government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

The road transport ministry has allowed cab aggregators such as Uber, Ola and Rapido to charge up to two times the base fare during peak hours, as against 1.5 times earlier, while for non-peak hours the fare has to be a minimum of 50 per cent of the base fare. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in its 'Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2025' said "the aggregator shall be permitted to charge a minimum of 50 per cent lower than the base fare and a maximum dynamic pricing of two times the base fare specified under sub-clause (17.1)."

Moreover, the base fare chargeable shall be for a minimum of three kilometers to compensate for "dead mileage" -- including the distance travelled without a passenger and the distance travelled and fuel utilized for picking up the passenger(s).

As per the guidelines, the fare notified by the state government for the respective category or class of motor vehicles, shall be the base fare chargeable to passengers availing services from the aggregator. States have been advised to adopt the revised guidelines within three months.

In case of cancellations, a penalty of 10 per cent of the fare not exceeding Rs 100, shall be imposed on the driver, if the cancellation is made without a reason identified as valid by the aggregator.

A similar penalty will be imposed on the passenger when such cancellation is made without a valid reason.

As per the guidelines, the fare notified by the state government for the respective category of motor vehicles, shall be the base fare chargeable to passengers availing aggregator services

The guidelines said the Central government shall develop and designate a portal to enable for single-window clearance of application for licence as aggregator. "The licence fee payable by the aggregator shall be ₹5 lakhs and the licence shall be valid for a period of five years from the date of its issue," it said.

Aggregators have been mandated to ensure that drivers have health and term insurance of at least ₹5 lakh and ₹10 lakh respectively.

The guidelines also specified that a Grievance Officer shall be appointed by the aggregator. "An aggregator shall not onboard vehicles which have been registered for more than a period of eight years from the date of initial registration of the vehicle and shall ensure that all vehicles onboarded by it should not have exceeded eight years since the date of initial registration of the vehicle," as per the guidelines.

To ensure passengers safety, the aggregators have been directed to ensure installation of the Vehicle Location and Tracking Devices (VLTD) in vehicles and to make sure that Vehicle Location and Tracking Devices are functional all the time. Further, cab aggregators should make certain that the driver follows the route indicated in the app through an in-built mechanism and in case of any deviation, the app shall signal the control room, which shall then connect with the driver and the passenger immediately.

As per the guidelines the aggregator shall establish a call centre with an active telephone number and e-mail address, displayed clearly on its website and on the App, which shall be operational 24x7, providing assistance in English and along-with the official language of the state. "The aggregator shall mandatorily adhere to the targets fixed for inclusion of electric vehicles in their fleet, the guidelines said," adding that the targets shall be fixed by an appropriate government organization responsible for regulating air quality or by the state government. In 2020, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued the "Motor Vehicle Aggregator Guidelines 2020" under Section 93 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

Switch data reporting to real-time: RBI DG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao has asked credit information companies like TransUnion Cibil to switch to real-time data reporting from fortnightly at present.

Speaking at a conference organised by Cibil here on Tuesday, Rao said quicker relaying of data from the CICs will help in deepening trust, efficiency and transparency in the system for everybody.

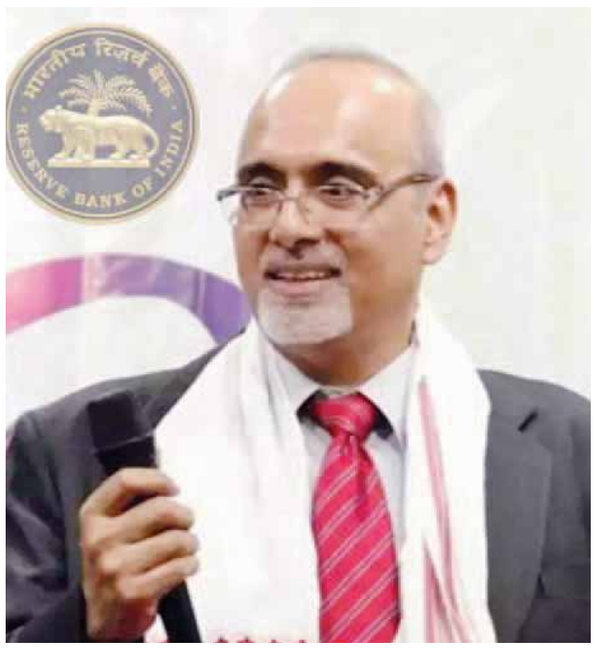
The speech was posted by the RBI on Wednesday.

"We must aspire to more frequent updates. Real-time or near-real-time credit reporting will improve underwriting precision, enable timely reflection of borrower actions like loan closures or repayments and deliver a superior consumer experience," Rao said.

Admitting that this entails costs because of investments in technology, process reengineering, and change management, Rao underlined that the benefits will far outweigh the costs.

He also asked the CICs and other companies competing with Cibil, including Experian and CRIF High Mark, to move towards having a "unique borrower identifier", which is uniform across the system.

"Another key challenge is identity standardisation. CICs rely on credit institutions to provide accurate and validated IDs. Without this, duplication and misreporting remain risks," he said, explaining the rationale for having such a system.


RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao

Rao also exhorted the industry to ensure that innovation is "responsible and accountable", and not at the cost of an individual's rights to data privacy.

The use of complex artificial intelligence and machine learning models introduces concerns around model risk, especially when these models are not thoroughly tested, validated, or monitored for biases and performance drifts, Rao highlighted.

"Rigorous validation protocols, continuous monitoring, and robust governance frameworks are essential to ensure that these models remain fair, transparent, and aligned with regulatory and ethical standards," the DG said.

Core values of integrity, transparency, and commitment to public service should drive innovation, he said.

With the rapid use of AI and machine learning in credit delivery, Rao said that it is not far when what is called "alternate data" to extend credit to individuals considered "ineligible", becomes mainstream.

Microfinance will be one of the biggest beneficiaries of the adoption of AI and ML, he added.

The unified lending interface will be able to harness data from e-commerce platforms, and gig economy apps could open new doors for credit inclusion for small sellers, delivery workers, and freelancers, he noted.

Rao also pitched for tokenisation, which involves generating and recording a digital representation of financial or real assets on a programmable platform, on the credit delivery front.

"It (Tokenisation) could favour small and medium enterprises'(SMEs') access to credit by narrowing the information gap. Further, SMEs could improve their collateral offering by tokenising real assets or trade receivables, thus improving their standing in the credit markets," he said. There is a "promising scope" for deeper integration between OCEN (Open Credit Enablement Network) and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), Rao said, adding that such interoperability could democratise credit access further and open new avenues for MSMEs to participate in digital commerce.

He said CICs will play an important role in ensuring that the micro, small and medium enterprises, which are called the backbone of the economy, get adequate and timely credit from the formal finance system.

Ministries, industry to attend IESW 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Government officials and industry representatives from over 20 countries are expected to participate in the 11th edition of India Energy Storage Week (IESW) 2025, scheduled from July 8 to 10 in the capital.

More than 150 key partners, exhibitors, and over 1,000 companies from Australia, Germany, France, the UK, Finland, Canada, the US, Israel, and South Korea are expected to participate in the IESW 2025 event at the Yashobhoomi Convention and Expo Centre in New Delhi, a statement said. India Energy Storage Week (IESW), hosted by India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA) has announced the participation of Ministries, Government Representatives, and Companies from over 20 Countries, it stated.

IESW 2025 will also explore emerging and futuristic energy storage technologies, including VRFB, solid-state batteries, Lithium Sulphur, Sodium Ion and other technologies from across the globe. One of the distinguishing features of IESW 2025 is its spotlight on cutting-edge solutions.

Rupee falls 9 paise to close at 85.68 against US dollar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai

The rupee depreciated 9 paise to close at 85.68 (provisional) against US dollar on Wednesday, on weak domestic equity markets and a rise in crude oil prices.

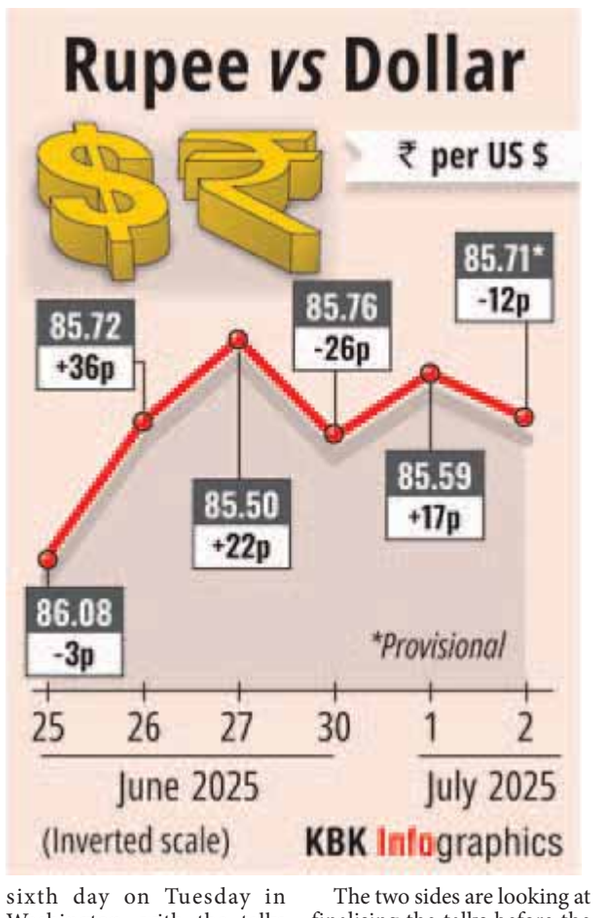
Forex traders said a slight recovery in the US dollar too weighed on the rupee as market players await the conclusion of India-US trade deal, which is at its final stage.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.59 against the greenback and touched an intra-day high of 85.57 and a low of 85.75 against the greenback during the day.

At the end of Wednesday's trading session, the local unit was at 85.68 (provisional), down 9 paise over its previous closing price. On Tuesday, the rupee appreciated 17 paise to close at 85.59 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.14 per cent to 96.95. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, went up by 0.92 per cent to $67.73 per barrel in futures trade.

"We expect the rupee to decline on trade tariff uncertainty as the July 9 deadline is approaching. Incoming statements by US President Donald Trump regarding tariffs is keeping the markets on the hook," said Anuj Choudhary – Research Analyst at Mirae Asset Sharekhan.

Hectic negotiations between India and the US entered the sixth day on Tuesday in Washington, with the talks reaching a crucial stage and New Delhi demanding greater market access for its labour-intensive goods.



The Indian team, headed by special secretary in the Department of Commerce Rajesh Agrawal, is in Washington for negotiations on an interim trade agreement with the US.

The two sides are looking at finalising the talks before the July 9 deadline.

The 10-year US bond yields are also off the lows.

However, improved global risk sentiments amid ceasefire between Israel and Iran may support the rupee at lower levels, Choudhary said, adding, "USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 85.45 to 86.05."

Stocks up amid Trump tariff worries

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Manila (Philippines)

Global shares were mostly higher on Wednesday as the July 9 deadline for the US to strike deals with trading partners or impose higher tariffs looms.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX rose 0.5 per cent to 23,778.11. In Paris, the CAC 40 added 1.2 per cent to 7,754.34, while Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.3 per cent to 8,811.42.

The futures for the S and P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average edged 0.1 per cent higher.

Shares fell in Japan, hit by jitters over a lack of progress in trade talks with the US, but they recovered much of their lost ground, closing 0.6 per cent lower at 39,762.48.

Stephen Innes, managing partner at SPI Asset Management, pointed to President Donald Trump's declaration that there will be no extension of his tariff pause, which is just a week away from ending.

"The message was blunt: if Tokyo won't yield, it will pay. Tariffs of 30 per cent, 35 per cent or whatever number we determine' are now openly back on the table," he said. "The negotiating table just became a pressure cooker."

Hong Kong's Hang Seng advanced 0.6 per cent to 24,221.41, and the Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1 per cent lower to 3,454.79.

South Korea's KOSPI fell 0.5 per cent to 3,075.06 after the government reported that inflation rose in June.

Australia's S and P ASX 200 climbed 0.7 per cent to 8,597.70. Taiwan's Taiex edged up 0.1 per cent while the Sensex in India lost 0.3 per cent.

On Tuesday, the S and P 500 dipped 0.1 per cent and the Dow industrials added 0.9 per cent. The Nasdaq composite fell 0.8 per cent.

Tesla tugged on the market as the relationship between its CEO, Elon Musk, and President Donald Trump soured even further. Once allies, the two have clashed recently, and Trump suggested there's potentially "BIG MONEY TO BE SAVED" by scrutinizing subsidies, contracts or other Government spending going to Musk's companies.

Tesla fell 5.3 per cent. It has lost just over a quarter of its value so far this year, 25.5 per cent, in large part because of Musk's and Trump's feud.

Drops for several darlings of the artificial-intelligence frenzy also weighed on the market. Nvidia's decline of 3 per cent was the heaviest weight on the S and P 500.

But more stocks within the index rose than fell, led by several casino companies. They rallied following a report showing better-than-expected growth in overall gaming revenue in Macao, China's casino hub. Las Vegas Sands gained 8.9 per cent, Wynn Resorts climbed 8.8 per cent and MGM Resorts International rose 7.3 0per cent.

Trump's tariffs to cost US employers $82.3 billion: Analysis

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Washington

An analysis finds that a critical group of US employers would face a direct cost of $82.3 billion from President Donald Trump's current tariff plans, a sum that could be potentially managed through price hikes, layoffs, hiring freezes or lower profit margins.

The analysis by the JPMorganChase Institute is among the first to measure the direct costs created by the import taxes on businesses with $10 million to $1 billion in annual revenue, a category that includes roughly a third of private-sector US workers. These companies are more dependent than other businesses on imports from China, India and Thailand - and the retail and wholesale sectors would be especially vulnerable to the import taxes being levied by the Republican president.

The findings show clear trade-offs from Trump's import taxes, contradicting his claims that foreign manufacturers would absorb the costs of the tariffs instead of US companies that rely on imports. While the tariffs launched under Trump have yet to boost overall inflation, large companies such as Amazon, Costco, Walmart and Williams-Sonoma delayed the potential reckoning by building up their inventories before the taxes could be imposed. The analysis comes just ahead of the July 9 deadline by Trump to formally set the tariff rates on goods from dozens of countries. Trump imposed that deadline after the financial markets panicked in response to his April tariff announcements, prompting him to instead schedule a 90-day negotiating period when most imports faced a 10 per cent baseline tariff. China, Mexico and Canada face higher rates, and there are separate 50 per cent tariffs on steel and aluminum.

The findings show clear trade-offs from Trump's import taxes, contradicting his claims that foreign manufacturers would absorb the costs of the tariffs

Had the initial April 2 tariffs stayed in place, the companies in the JPMorganChase Institute analysis would have faced additional direct costs of $187.6 billion. Under the current rates, the $82.3 billion would be equivalent on average to $2,080 per employee, or 3.1 per cent of the average annual payroll. Those averages include firms that don't import goods and those that do. Asked Tuesday how trade talks are faring, Trump said simply: "Everything's going well." The president has indicated that he will set tariff rates given the logistical challenge of negotiating with so many nations. As the 90-day period comes to a close, only the United Kingdom has signed a trade framework with the Trump administration. India and Vietnam have signalled that they're close to a trade framework.

There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that more inflation could surface. The investment bank Goldman Sachs said in a report that it expects companies to pass along 60 per cent of their tariff costs onto consumers. The Atlanta Federal Reserve has used its survey of businesses' inflation expectations to say that companies could on average pass along roughly half their costs from a 10 per cent tariff or a 25 per cent tariff without reducing consumer demand.

The JPMorganChase Institute findings suggest that the tariffs could cause some domestic manufacturers to strengthen their roles as suppliers of goods.

But it noted that companies need to plan for a range of possible outcomes and that wholesalers and retailers already operate on such low profit margins that they might need to spread the tariffs costs to their customers.

The outlook for tariffs remains highly uncertain. Trump had stopped negotiations with Canada, only to restart them after the country dropped its plan to tax digital services.

He similarly on Monday threatened more tariffs on Japan unless it buys more rice from the US.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Shastri stunned as Bumrah dropped from Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Birmingham

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri expressed disbelief at India's decision to rest a fully fit Jasprit Bumrah from the second Test against England, asserting that the pace spearhead should not have been given the option to sit out of a crucial game.

India, enduring a rough patch in Test cricket since October last year, have managed just one win in their last nine matches, marking their worst run in over a decade. Shubman Gill and his men lost the opening Test against England by five wickets in Leeds. "If you look at the run, India has had, this becomes a very, very important test match. You've lost three against New Zealand, you've lost three against Australia," Shastri told 'Sky Sports'.

"You've lost the first Test match here and you want to get back to winning ways. You have the best fast bowler in the world, and you make him sit out after seven days of rest, it's something very hard to believe," he said.

Bumrah had claimed his 14th five-wicket haul in the first innings at Leeds.

After the toss on Wednesday, Gill told former England batter Michael Atherton that Bumrah was rested to manage his workload. "Just to manage his workload. We did get a good break and this is an important match for us. But the third Test being at Lord's, we think there will be more in that pitch so we'll use him there," Gill said.

Shastri, however, completely disagreed with the decision.

"This is a very important match, they have had a week off. I am a little surprised Bumrah is not playing this game," the cricketer-turned-commentator said. "It should be taken out of the player's hand. It should be the captain and the head coach that should decide who should be playing the 11. "This is an important game in the context of the series, he should be playing this game more than anything else. Lord's can come later. This is the important game where you have to counter-punch almost straightaway." The Indian team management had made it clear before the series that Bumrah would feature in a maximum of three Tests, owing to workload considerations. "Play this one. Make it 1-1 and then give him the option: 'you want to rest at Lord's, rest at Lord's. You think he'll rest at Lord's? No chance if you win this," Shastri said.

Bumrah, who missed three months of action earlier this year due to a back spasm suffered during the Sydney Test against Australia, became the first Asian pacer to claim 150 wickets in SENA (South Africa, England, New Zealand, and Australia) countries during the opening Test.

Akash Deep In, England bowl in second Test

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Birmingham

England skipper Ben Stokes won the toss and elected to bowl against India, who will be without pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, in the second Test of the five-match series here on Wednesday. England fielded an unchanged side that won the opening Test by five wickets.

India decided to rest premier pacer Bumrah with Akash Deep replacing him.

While all-rounders Nitish Kumar Reddy and Washington Sundar came in for Sai Sudharsan and Shardul Thakur in the playing XI. Asked why Bumrah was left out, India skipper Shubman Gill said: "Just to manage his workload, this is an important match but third match being at Lords, there will be a bit in the wicket, and we thought we'll play him there."

There was also no Kuldeep Yadav and Gill said they looked to add depth to the batting following the defeat in the series opener. "We were tempted to play him but we thought of adding a bit of depth in our batting," said Gill.

England will wear black armbands on Wednesday in memory of former England, Northamptonshire and Durham cricketer Wayne Larkins, who passed away on June 28.

Sammy urges justice amid West Indies sexual assault claims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
St George's (Grenada)

West Indies cricket has been rocked by allegations of sexual abuse against an unnamed current player and the team's head coach Darren Sammy has called for justice to be served but also stressed on the need to follow the due process.

A report published last week by Guyana-based Kaieteur News claimed that 11 women, including a teenager, have come forward with allegations of sexual offences against the cricketer, some reportedly dating back to 2023. No formal charges have been filed yet.

Addressing the media ahead of the second Test against Australia, Sammy acknowledged the gravity of the situation while underscoring the importance of respecting legal procedures.

"We are all aware of what's been going on in the media. I'm very close to my players. I have had conversations with them.

One thing I could say is, we believe in justice. We are a community that believes justice must be served," the former captain Sammy. "However there's a process. There's allegations and we will continue to support in whatever way we can, to make sure that due process and the right system is followed," he added. Sammy, who has been West Indies' white-ball coach since May 2023, added that it's essential to allow the legal procedure to take its course before drawing conclusions.

"It's allegations. We know the justice system, you've got to wait for things to process. I'm not a judge, I'm not a prosecutor. The information that has come out is what we have. I'm pretty sure at the end of the day, justice will be served," he added.

When asked whether Cricket West Indies had launched an internal investigation, Sammy declined to confirm. "I can't answer to that to be honest.

Amanjot, Rodrigues lead second T20I vs England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Bristol

Indian juggernaut in the white-ball tour continued as Amanjot Kaur and Jemimah Rodrigues hit radiant fifties to propel the visitors to a commanding 24-run win over England in the second T20 International here.

Tuesday night's win handed Harmanpreet Kaur's side a 2-0 lead in the five-match series, having won the opener by a record-shattering 97-run margin last week.

Amanjot (63 not out off 40 balls), who scored her maiden T20I fifty, and Rodrigues (63 off 41 deliveries) posted a formidable 181 for 4 after being asked to bat.

The Indian bowlers, led by spinners, then did their bit to restrict the home side to 157 for 7 in 20 overs despite Tammy Beaumont's 35-ball 54, marking the first time any team has been able to beat England in a women's T20I in Bristol.

"Good win for us, the way the entire team performed today was special to see. The way Jemimah and Amanjot played gave us a platform. When boundaries were not coming they were looking for twos. Still it's a long time to see how it'll be in the World Cup. Just focus on this series. Spin is our strength and I want to back that," Harmanpreet said after the win.

India's innings began in disarray with opener Shafali Verma (3), last game's centurian Smriti Mandhana (13) and skipper Harmanpreet (1), who returned after missing the first match, all back in the dug-out inside the powerplay.

After a shaky start, the elegant Rodrigues, who scored nine boundaries and a six, and spirited Amanjot not only resurrected India from 31 for 3 with 93-run stand for the fourth wicket but also laid the foundation for a towering 181 for 4, hitting a flurry of boundaries.

Rodrigues eventually perished in the 15th over, caught by Sophia Dunkley off Lauren Bell, but Amanjot marched on. Amanjot, whose innings was laced with nine boundaries, then stitched a 57-run stand with the big-hitting Richa Ghosh (32 not out off 22 balls), who provided the final flourish as India recorded the second-highest total in WT20Is here.

India were sharp in the field as they effected as many as three run outs including that of Sophia Dunkley (1) in the first over.

Seasoned spinner Deepti Sharma struck of the very next ball to dismiss Danni Wyatt-Hodge (1) as both England openers' stay was short lived.

Amanjot returned to the spotlight, dismissing the ever-dangerous Nat Sciver-Brunt, as England, like India, too suffered a batting collapse to slump to 17 for 3 by the fourth over.

Beaumont and keeper-batter Amy Jones (32) kept England afloat with a 70-run stand.

Under-fire Marquez quits as India coach after AIFF deal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Embattled India football head coach Manolo Marquez stepped down on Wednesday after reaching a "mutual agreement" with the All Indian Football Federation (AIFF), which was under pressure to fix accountability for the recent downward spiral of the national team.

The AIFF Executive Committee, in its meeting here, agreed to relieve the 56-year-old Marquez after he expressed his desire to do so despite one year still left in his contract. "The AIFF and Manolo decided to mutually part ways without any financial implications to any of the two parties. So, he is relieved from being India coach. The AIFF will shortly advertise for the post of head coach," AIFF Deputy Secretary General K Satyanarayana told PTI.

The Spaniard was appointed as head coach in June 2024 for a two-year tenure.

He worked in a dual role last year as he was also the head coach of Indian Super League side FC Goa in 2024-25 season.

India lost 0-1 to lower-ranked Hong Kong in an away match of the AFC Asian Cup qualifiers on June 10, which left the country in danger of missing out on qualifying for the continental showpiece in 2027.

India logged just one win from their last eight matches under Marquez's tutelage, the lone victory coming against Maldives in March.

This year, India have so far played four matches, out of which they have won one, drew another, and lost two.

The poor results prompted the return of former skipper and iconic striker Sunil Chhetri to the squad but that has done little to improve the team's fortunes.

Coco Gauff is disappointed by her Wimbledon loss

ASSOCIATED PRESS
London

Before Wimbledon began, Coco Gauff reflected on the significance of her breakthrough performance at the place six years ago - a run to the fourth round at age 15 - and what aspirations she harbored as she prepared to return.

"Even when I see videos of me during that time, it just doesn't feel like it's me. It felt like a dream. I'll always have special memories from that run and, I guess, it definitely fueled the belief that I can be on tour and live out my dream," she told The Associated Press.

"It's something that always holds a special place in my heart. Obviously, I would love to win this tournament just for it to be like a full-circle moment," she continued. "I feel like it would be like the start of the dream, and - I don't want to say the finish,' because I obviously have a lot of career left, but - a full-circle type of situation." A week after that conversation, the No. 2-ranked Gauff was out of the bracket at the All England Club in the first round with a 7-6 (3), 6-1 loss to unseeded Dayana Yastremska at No. 1 Court on Tuesday night. Gauff was undone by serving troubles, including nine double-faults, and more than two dozen unforced errors in all, not to mention Yastremska's hard, flat groundstrokes.

It was an abrupt, and mistake-filled, exit for Gauff, who so recently earned her second Grand Slam title - at the French Open via a three-set victory over No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the final.

After Tuesday's defeat, Gauff said, "I definitely was struggling in the locker room. I don't like losing. The main thing I'm sure my team and everyone is going to tell me (is): 'You did well at Roland-Garros. Don't be so upset.' Things like that."

But as much as she'll want to move on and focus on what's to come, the 21-year-old American acknowledged as she dabbed away the tears welling in her eyes during her news conference that she felt "a little bit disappointed in how I showed up today."

It's instructive to remember - setting aside that captivating 2019 debut, which featured a victory over Venus Williams - that Wimbledon's grass courts actually have produced Gauff's least successful Grand Slam results. Yastremska's take? She said she considers Gauff "much better on clay court and hard court than on grass."

This was the second time in the past three years that she was sent home in the opening round.

She's never been past the fourth round at the All England Club, whereas at every other major tournament, including the hard-court Australian Open, she's at least reached the semifinals.

Her first Slam trophy arrived on the hard courts of the U.S. Open in 2023 when she was 19. She already was the 2022 runner-up on the red clay at the French Open before going one step better this time.

Wimbledon: Record 23 seeds, including Gauff, exit in first round

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
London

There was three-time Grand Slam finalist and Number 3 seed Alexander Zverev, outplayed over five sets in a first-round loss at Wimbledon to 72nd-ranked Arthur Rinderknech, who entered with a 1-4 career record at the All England Club and zero trips past the third round in 18 appearances at majors.

There was No. 7 Lorenzo Musetti, a semifinalist at Wimbledon last year and at the French Open last month, sent home Tuesday by Nikoloz Basilashvili, a qualifier ranked 126th who only once has made it as far as the fourth round in his 31 previous Grand Slam tournaments.

And, most striking of all, as night arrived, there was No. 2 Coco Gauff going from the champion at Roland-Garros to a quick exit at Wimbledon, beaten 7-6 (3), 6-1 by Dayana Yastremska. And on and on went the upsets on Day 2 at the grass-court major, meaning 23 seeds - 13 men, 10 women - failed to get to the second round, equaling the highest total at any Grand Slam tournament since they began assigning 32 seeds in each singles bracket in 2001.

Number 3 Jessica Pegula also was among those leaving. The American was the runner-up at last year's U.S. Open and was coming off a grass-court title in Germany over the weekend, defeating Iga Swiatek in the final, yet didn't pose much of a challenge to 116th-ranked Elisabetta Cocciaretto in a 6-2, 6-3 loss that lasted less than an hour.

Two other major finalists, No. 5 Zheng Qinwen and No. 15 Karolina Muchova, were eliminated Tuesday, as were No. 26 Marta Kostyuk and No. 25 Magdalena Frech, whose opponent, 18-year-old Canadian Victoria Mboko, lost in qualifying last week and only got into the field when another player, Anastasia Potapova, withdrew with an injured hip.

Nothing was quite as out-of-nowhere, though, as Rinderknech's success. At least Yastremska has been a major semifinalist, at last year's Australian Open.

"What a moment. Such emotions," Rinderknech, a 29-year-old from France, said after completing his 7-6 (3), 6-7 (8), 6-3, 6-7 (5), 6-4 victory across 4 hours, 40 minutes against Zverev in a match suspended Monday night at a set apiece.

"I don't even know where to start."

He ended things with a backhand winner, then dropped to his stomach, face down, on Centre Court.

Zverev joined Musetti - who hadn't played since a leg injury forced him to stop at Roland-Garros and was a 6-2, 4-6, 7-5, 6-1 loser against Basilashvili - as top-10 losers on Tuesday, a day after No. 8 Holger Rune and No. 9 Daniil Medvedev departed. Other seeded men exiting on Day 2 included No. 18 Ugo Humbert, No. 27 Denis Shapovalov, No. 28 Alexander Bublik and No. 30 Alex Michelsen. Rinderknech pulled off his win thanks to some terrific serving, delivering 25 aces and saving all nine break points he faced. He converted three break chances against Zverev and won the point on 44 of his 55 trips to the net.

Two-time champion Petra Kvitova played her final match at the All England Club, bowing out 6-3, 6-1 against No. 10 Emma Navarro.

"This place holds the best memories I could wish for," said the 35-year-old Kvitova, who will retire after the U.S. Open. "I never dreamed of winning a Wimbledon and I won it twice."

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova bids farewell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
London

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova waved goodbye to her favorite Grand Slam tournament. The 35-year-old Czech player, who won at the All England Club in 2011 and 2014, plans to leave the tour after the U.S. Open, which ends in September.

Her Wimbledon farewell was a 6-3, 6-1 loss to 10th-seeded Emma Navarro of the United States on No. 1 Court Tuesday.

"This place holds the best memories I could wish for," an emotional Kvitova said in an on-court interview that is usually granted to the match winner. "I never dreamed of winning a Wimbledon and I won it twice. This is something very special.

"I will miss Wimbledon for sure," she continued. "I will miss tennis, I will miss you fans. But I'm ready for the next chapter in life as well, and I can't wait to be back as a member." Kvitova, who accepted a wild-card invitation, missed last year's tournament while on maternity leave.

The 24-year-old Navarro said Kvitova has been "an incredible player and obviously won this tournament twice, and then had a kid and came back, which is definitely an inspiring story from her end."

In 2011, Kvitova beat Maria Sharapova 6-3, 6-4 in the final. Three years later, Kvitova earned her second trophy, defeating Eugenie Bouchard 6-3, 6-0 in the title match.

"I think it's the best tournament in the world," she said.

The U.S. Open, she assures, will be her last one.

"I am sure," Kvitova said, noting it's not just the toll on her body.

The Pioneer
LUCKNOW | THURSDAY | JULY 3, 2025

Gill ton, Jaiswal's 87 take India to 310 for 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Birmingham

Skipper Shubman Gill scored a classy century while Yashasvi Jaiswal missed out on a deserving ton as India battled hard to reach 310 for 5 against England on the opening day of the second Test here on Wednesday.

This was Gill's (114 batting, 216 balls) second successive hundred in the series after scoring 147 at Headingley. He is one of those rare Indian skippers to have scored back-to-back centuries in his first two Tests as captain.

His century came off 199 deliveries. In all, Gill hit 12 fours.

While Jaiswal once again gave India a solid start with an aggressive 87, laced with 13 boundaries, Gill showed a lot of composure and discretion in shot selection to score his seventh Test century.

Karun Nair (31) and Rishabh Pant (23) threw away their wickets after getting starts while Nitish Reddy (1) was completely clueless when a Chris Woakes nip-backer jagged back sharply.

India were in a spot of bother at 211 for five but veteran Ravindra Jadeja once again showed his true value as a batter in SENA countries with an unbeaten 41 off 67 balls. The duo added 99 runs for the unbroken sixth-wicket stand.

For England, Chris Woakes took two wickets while skipper Ben Stokes, Brydon Carse and Shoaib Bashir took a wicket apiece.

SCOREBOARD

India 1st Innings: Yashasvi Jaiswal c Smith b Stokes 87, KL Rahul b Woakes 2, Karun Nair c Brook b Carse 31, Shubman Gill batting 114, Rishabh Pant c Crawley b Shoaib Bashir 25, Nitish Kumar Reddy b Woakes 1, Ravindra Jadeja batting 41

Extras: (B-1, LB-4, NB-4) 9

Total (For 5 wkts, 85 overs) 310

Fall of wkts: 1-15, 2-95, 3-161, 4-208, 5-211.

Bowling: Chris Woakes 21-6-59-2, Brydon Carse 16-2-49-1, Josh Tongue 13-0-66-0, Ben Stokes 15-0-58-1, Shoaib Bashir 19-0-65-1, Joe Root 1-0-8-0.

100m hurdler Yarraji suffers injury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Asian champion and national record holder 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji has suffered a "freak" knee injury while training a "few days back", in a big blow to her World Championships hopes later this year.

Yarraji, also an Asian Games silver medallist, has a high chance of qualifying for the World Championships in Tokyo in September. However, the recent injury could derail those ambitions.

No. RMSA/CW/Str(18-19)Pkg-12/1459/2021/102

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam invites bids for the following building works from registered eligible Class-I (A, B & C) contractor as per Govt. Notification No. DASR.132/2018/2 dated 20-07-2018 under PWD (Building), Assam having experience of similar nature of work in Assam.

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e., www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office signboard of the undersigned during office hours from 30.06-2025 (0900 hours) to 22.07-2025 (1400 hours).

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Pkg. No.	District	Name of work	Approximate value of work (In Rupees)	Time of completion (in month)	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) General	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) Reserved category	Tender cost (In Rupees)
1.	Dhemaji	Construction of various balance civil works activities of existing secondary school under Samagra Shiksha, Assam at **Sripani HS School in Dhemaji** District	69,42,813.48	6	138856.00	69428.00	1389.00

Note:
1. Online mode of submission for both Technical and Financial Bid is mandatory.
2. A hard copy of the technical bid submitted online is also to be submitted at the office of the undersigned on or before 22-07-2025 up to 1400 hrs for evaluation purpose. For any discrepancy between the online bid and the hard copy of the bid, the online bid will govern and will be considered for evaluation.
3. Along-with the hard copy of the technical bid, the following documents (in original) must also be submitted on or before 22-07-2025 up to 1400 hrs :-
   a. Original Power of Attorney for signing the BID, if any.
   b. Bid Security in the form of Original TDR/ FDR from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank.
   c. Original DD/ Banker's Cheque of the specified amount against the works should be in favour of "Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam" payable at Guwahati towards cost of Bid documents for the job
4. Bidders are advised to scan their Technical Papers at a resolution of 100 dpi (in colour mode) in ".pdf" format for multiple pages with maximum file size of 25 MB. If the file size exceeds 25 MB, the bidders are advised to create multiple files and upload the same in "Upload Additional Document" stage.
5. In the event of date of bid opening being a holiday, the activities will take place on the next working day.
6. All the interested bidders are requested to read the bid document carefully before submission of their bid.

DIPR/CF/PIO/884/3-Jul-2025

समग्र शिक्षा Samagra Shiksha

Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Preparation for classical chess requires efforts: Praggnanandhaa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Teenage Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa believes players like Magnus Carlsen and Hikaru Nakamura gradually moving away from classical chess has to do with the mental and physical exhaustion that comes with playing the long format for a long time.

Magnus, the five-time world champion, and world number two American Grandmaster Nakamura have played fewer classical games, and instead focused on freestyle, rapid and blitz formats.

Praggnanandhaa, who has won three major classical titles this year, feels players don't really enjoy the hours of preparations that goes into classical chess, and find the rapid and blitz more gratifying.

"It's difficult to play classical chess because everyone is well prepared. The opening preparation part is huge in classical chess. If you compare it to freestyle, you don't have to prepare before a game, while in classical chess, you're basically forced to.

"I don't think anyone actually enjoys that process, but you're forced to and you have to have a plan for everything. That requires a lot of effort," said Praggnanandhaa, who has won the Tata Steel Masters, Superbet Classic and Uz Chess Cup this year.

The 19-year-old from Chennai feels chances of burnout also increase with years of playing classical chess.

"And when you play a lot of such tournaments, then your energy is also (drained). I mean you can also be mentally and physically exhausted. So all these things happen. I think that's the reason why everyone prefers other formats," Praggnanandhaa said. "I mean, I myself like freestyle much more because of the fact that you don't have to prepare before a game. That doesn't mean we don't want to work on (our) chess. We enjoy working on chess.

"But the fact that you have to (put endless hours in preparations). You're forced to do before the game like three-four hours of preparation, then it's not really something that everyone enjoys. So yeah, I like freestyle. I like rapid and it's a bit more than classical for sure. But I think classical is still the main thing."

Praggnanandhaa credits his professional growth to the support being provided by the Adani group for the last year and a half. "Adani Sportsline have been supporting me for the last one-and-a-half years already. And it's quite important because we do travel a lot and training is also expensive than what people think," says Praggnanandhaa.

"For example, last year, I played in the Candidates, which required a team to help and then also like in-person camps. So all these things require support and that's where I think the Adani group has been supporting me in a huge way.

No. RMSA/CW/Str(19-20)Pkg-11/1421/2021/143

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam invites bids for the following building works from registered eligible Class-I (A, B & C) contractor as per Govt. Notification No. DASR.132/2018/2 dated 20-07-2018 under PWD (Building), Assam having experience of similar nature of work in Assam.

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e., www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office signboard of the undersigned during office hours from 30.06-2025 (0900 hours) to 22-07-2025 (1400 hours).

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Pkg. No.	District	Name of work	Approximate value of work (In Rupees)	Time of completion (in month)	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) General	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) Reserved cetegory	Tender cost (In Rupees
1.	Dhemaji	Construction of various balance civil works activities of existing secondary school under Samagra Shiksha, Assam at **Somkong High School in Dhemaji district**	6672578.29	6	133452.00	66726.00	1335.00

Note:
1. Online mode of submission for both Technical and Financial Bid is mandatory.
2. A hard copy of the technical bid submitted online is also to be submitted at the office of the undersigned on or before 22-072025 up to 1400 hrs for evaluation purpose. For any discrepancy between the online bid and the hard copy of the bid, the online bid will govern and will be considered for evaluation.
3. Along-with the hard copy of the technical bid, the following documents (in original) must also be submitted on or before 2207-2025 up to 1400 hrs :-
   a. Original Power of Attorney for signing the BID, if any.
   b. Bid Security in the form of Original TDR/ FDR from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank.
   c. Original DD/ Banker's Cheque of the specified amount against the works should be in favour of "Mission Director, SamagraShiksha, Assam" payable at Guwahati towards cost of Bid documents for the job.
4. Bidders are advised to scan their Technical Papers at a resolution of 100 dpi (in colour mode) in ".pdf" format for multiple pages with maximum file size of 25 MB. If the file size exceeds 25 MB, the bidders are advised to create multiple files and upload the same in "Upload Additional Document" stage.
5. In the event of date of bid opening being a holiday, the activities will take place on the next working day.
6. All the interested bidders are requested to read the bid document carefully before submission of their bid.

DIPR/CF/PIO/887/3-Jul-25

समग्र शिक्षा Samagra Shiksha

Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Athletes get reduced bans for drug test skip

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

The four-year bans on track and field athletes Pooja Rani, Kiran, Pankaj and Chelimi Pratyusha for evading dope tests has been reduced by one year after they accepted their offence within 20 days of being charged.

The quartet was among several athletes who were suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) earlier this year under Article 2.3 of the anti-doping rules, which deals with "evading, refusing or failing to submit to sample collection by an athlete" without compelling justification.

The maximum ban period for a first offence is four years but Article 10.8 of the NADA Rules provides for "results management agreements" under which athletes can get reduced punishment based on early admission and acceptance of sanction.

Article 10.8.1 allows athletes charged with a four-year ban to benefit from a one year reduction if they admit the violation and accept the penalty within 20 days of being charged.

Article 10.8.2 provides an opportunity for the athlete to enter into a Case Resolution Agreement with NADA and WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) in which the applicable period of ineligibility can be agreed upon based on the facts of the case. Pooja Rani's three-year ban period has already begun from August 13, 2024, the same as that of Kiran and Pankaj.

Westwood qualifies for British Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ Irvine (Scotland)

Lee Westwood had rounds of 70-67 at Dundonald Links to earn his way into the British Open, his first major since the former world number one joined Saudi-funded LIV Golf three years ago.

Lee was among 20 players who earned their places at Royal Portrush through Final Regional Qualifying, held over four courses in England and Scotland, each awarding five spots.

He was among three LIV players from the 15 who showed up for qualifiers.

Anjum, Saurabh back in India reckoning after shooting trials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
■ New Delhi

Olympian shooters Anjum Moudgil and Saurabh Chaudhary are back in reckoning for India team spots along with world championship bronze medallist Mehuli Ghosh, following their encouraging performances in the National Selection Trials 3 and 4 for rifle and pistol in Dehradun recently. India's leading female rifle shooter and two-time Olympian Anjum had missed out on the first half of the international season comprising three World Cups, but following her fine showing in the 50m rifle 3-positions event she is back among the top-three having replaced Paris Olympian Shriyanka Sadangi, as per the National Rifle Association of India's latest domestic rankings list for Group A (eligible for India selection) shooters.

World record holder Sift Kaur Samra remains the top-ranked 3P woman shooter in the country with an average of 593.38, followed by Ashi Chouksey (592.25) and Anjum (591.68). Shriyanka (589.90), Mehuli (588.58), and Surabhi Bharadwaj (588.08) complete the top six in the highly-competitive field.

Former Asian Games gold medallist Chaudhary is back as India No.1 in men's 10m air pistol with an average score of 583.93, followed by Aditya Malra (582.75) and Anmol Jain (582.33). Amit Sharma (582), Nishant Rawat (582), and Samrat Rana (581.45) are fourth, fifth and sixth respectively. Among 10m air rifle shooters, 2024 Asian Championship gold medallist Mehuli has regained the domestic No. 1 spot with an average of 633.65, followed by Elavenil Valarivan (633.28) and Ananya Naidu (632.83).

Arya Rajesh Borse (632.25), Ramita (632.05), and Sonam Uttam Maskar (631.60) also feature in the top six.

In women's 10m air pistol, Suruchi continues to dominate the national circuit with an average score of 588.25. She enjoying a nearly 10-point lead over her number two Palak (578.38). Paris Olympics double bronze medallist Manu Bhaker and Surbhi Rao both average 578 after the trials. Rhythm Sangwan (577.88) and Esha Singh (577.83) follow closely at fifth and sixth spots, respectively.

No. RMSA/CW/Str(19-20)Pkg-28/1431/2021/318

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

The Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam invites bids for the following building works from registered eligible Class-I (A, B & C)/ Class-II contractor as per Govt. Notification No. DASR.132/2018/2 dated 20-07-2018 under PWD (Building), Assam having experience of similar nature of work in Assam.

Details of the bid may be seen at e-procurement portal website i.e., www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office signboard of the undersigned during office hours from 30-06-2025 (0900 hours) to 22-07-2025 (1400 hours).

The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Pkg. No.	District	Name of work	Approximate value of work (In Rupees)	Time of completion (in month)	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) General	Earnest Money Deposit (In Rupees) Reserved cetegory	Tender cost (In Rupees
1.	Lakhimpur	Construction of various balance civil works activities of existing secondary school under Samagra Shiksha, Assam at **Kakoi Rajgarh High School in Lakhimpur District**	45,56,530.42	6	91131.00	45565.00	911.00

Note:
1. Online mode of submission for both Technical and Financial Bid is mandatory.
2. A hard copy of the technical bid submitted online is also to be submitted at the office of the undersigned on or before 22-072025 up to 1400 hrs for evaluation purpose. For any discrepancy between the online bid and the hard copy of the bid, the online bid will govern and will be considered for evaluation.
3. Along-with the hard copy of the technical bid, the following documents (in original) must also be submitted on or before 2207-2025 up to 1400 hrs :-
   a. Original Power of Attorney for signing the BID, if any.
   b. Bid Security in the form of Original TDR/ FDR from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank.
   c. Original DD/ Banker's Cheque of the specified amount against the works should be in favour of "Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha, Assam" payable at Guwahati towards cost of Bid documents for the job.
4. Bidders are advised to scan their Technical Papers at a resolution of 100 dpi (in colour mode) in ".pdf" format for multiple pages with maximum file size of 25 MB. If the file size exceeds 25 MB, the bidders are advised to create multiple files and upload the same in "Upload Additional Document" stage.
5. In the event of date of bid opening being a holiday, the activities will take place on the next working day.
6. All the interested bidders are requested to read the bid document carefully before submission of their bid.

DIPR/CF/PIO/890/3-Jul-25

समग्र शिक्षा Samagra Shiksha

Sd/-Mission Director
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Lucknow only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group's will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

Printed and Published by Kushan Mitra for and on behalf of CMYK Printech Ltd., 4th Floor, Sahara Shopping Centre, Faizabad Road, Lucknow-226016 and Printed at The Indian Express Pvt Ltd., C-26 Amausi Industrial Area, Nadarganj, Lucknow. Executive Editor Deepak Kumar Jha, Resident Editor Vijay Prakash Singh. RNI No. 2016/57. Lucknow Telephones: EPABX: 4036600 Fax: 2345582. Allahabad Office: (0532) 2420818, 2421018, 3290460. Kanpur Office: (0512) 2304006, 2304416. Varanasi Office: (0542) 2414294, 2414295. Delhi Office: 100K, Milap Bhawan, 8/A, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110 002, Phone: 011-40110455. Corporate Office:- 201-205, 2nd Floor, Pratap Bhawan 5, B.S.Z. Marg, New Delhi-110002 Phone: 011-46035729, 011-69342500.