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Centre notifies census

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Home Minister Amit Shah reviewing preparations for the forthcoming census PIONEER PHOTO

The Government on Monday issued a notification for conducting India's 16th decadal census, 16 years after the last census in 2011. Census 2027 will include caste enumeration for the first time since the Independence. The census will be carried out with a reference date of October 1, 2026 in the snow-bound areas like Ladakh and March 1, 2027 in the rest of the country, the notification said.

"The reference date for the said census shall be 00.00 hours of the 1st day of March, 2027, except for the Union territory of Ladakh and snow-bound non-synchronous areas of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the States of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand," it said. In respect of Ladakh and snow-bound non-synchronous areas of the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir and the States of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the reference date shall be 00:00 hours of the first day of October, 2026, it said.

The massive exercise, which is expected to cost the Government over ₹13,000 crore to give population-related data from across the country, will be conducted by about 34 lakh enumerators and supervisors and around 1.3 lakh census functionaries armed with digital devices. Union Home Minister Amit Shah reviewed the preparation for the census with Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India Mritunjay Kumar Narayan, and other senior officials here on Sunday.

This is the 16th census since the exercise started and the eighth after Independence, a Government statement said. According to Article 246 of the Constitution, the census is a subject listed at 69 in the Union List in the Seventh Schedule. The census is the primary source of data collection from every section of the society and a decennial activity.

The last comprehensive caste-based count was done by the Britishers between 1881 and 1931. Caste was excluded from all census operations conducted since Independence. The decision to include caste enumeration in the upcoming census was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 30.

"Considering all these circumstances, and to ensure that our social fabric does not come under political pressure, it has been decided that caste enumeration should be included in the main census instead of being conducted as a separate survey," an official statement had said. In 2010, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had assured the Lok Sabha that the matter of caste census would be considered in the cabinet. A group of ministers was formed to deliberate on this subject and majority of the political parties recommended conducting a caste census. However, the previous Congress-led Government opted for a survey instead of a caste census, known as the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC).

The SECC conducted in 2011 under the UPA Government did collect caste data but it was never fully published or utilised. Bihar and Telangana have conducted caste surveys in the last three years. While some States have conducted surveys to enumerate castes, these surveys have varied in transparency and intent, with some conducted purely from a "political angle, creating doubts in society", the Government had said.

In the upcoming exercise, the provision of self-enumeration will also be made available to the people. The two-phased census will start with the first step of house-listing operation (HLO) in which the housing conditions, assets and amenities of each household will be collected. This will be followed by the second phase of population enumeration in which the demographic, socio-economic, cultural and other details of every person in each household will be gathered.

Very stringent data security measures would be kept in place to ensure data security at the time of collection, transmission and storage.

Iran missile attacks on Israel kill eight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Tel Aviv

Iran fired a new wave of missile attacks at Israel early Monday, killing at least eight people, while Israel warned hundreds of thousands of people in the middle of Tehran to evacuate ahead of new strikes.

The warning came on the fourth day of the conflict, when the Israeli military claimed it had achieved air superiority above the Iranian capital and could fly over the city without facing major threats. The military has issued similar evacuation warnings for civilians in parts of Gaza and Lebanon ahead of strikes.

The warning affected up to 330,000 people in a part of central Tehran that includes the country's State TV and police headquarters, as well as three large hospitals, including one owned by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

"At this time, we can say that we have achieved full aerial superiority over Tehran's skies," said Israeli military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin.

The military said it had destroyed more than 120 surface-to-surface missile launchers in central Iran, a third of Iran's total.

Israeli military officials also said fighter jets had struck 10 command centres in Tehran belonging to Iran's Quds Force, an elite arm of its Revolutionary Guard that conducts military and intelligence operations outside Iran.

The Israeli strikes "amount to a deep and comprehensive blow to the Iranian threat," Defrin said.

Iran's State-run news agency reported that State-run television abruptly stopped a live broadcast after an Israeli strike.

EMBASSY ENGAGED WITH INDIAN STUDENTS

New Delhi : Amid the Iran-Israel conflict, the Centre on Monday said the Indian Embassy in Tehran was continuously monitoring the security situation and engaging Indian students in Iran to ensure their safety while also relocating them to safer places in some cases.

The Ministry of External Affairs' statement read, "The Indian Embassy in Tehran is continuously monitoring the security situation and engaging Indian students in Iran to ensure their safety."

The statement continued, "In some cases, students are being relocated with Embassy's facilitation to safer places within Iran. Other feasible options are also under examination. Further updates will follow. Separately, the Embassy is in touch with community leaders regarding welfare and safety."

"ADVISORY In view of the current situation in Iran, all Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin in Iran are requested to remain vigilant, avoid all unnecessary movements, follow the Embassy's Social Media accounts and observe safety protocols as advised by local authorities," the Indian Embassy in Iran's post on X read.

People walk under umbrellas amid rains in Mumbai PTI

ED issues fresh summons to Vadra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate has issued a fresh summons to Robert Vadra for questioning in a money laundering case linked to UK-based arms consultant Sanjay Bhandari. He has been asked to depose before the federal probe agency here on June 17 for the recording of his statement in this case that is being investigated under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), said officials on Monday.

Vadra, 56, was called for questioning in the case on June 10 but he skipped, saying he had flu-like symptoms on June 9 and had undertaken a COVID test as per protocol. His lawyer had then said that Vadra had no intention of avoiding summons and was ready to appear before the ED anytime before or after his travel abroad later this month. The agency is understood to have summoned Vadra to record his statement under the PMLA and subsequently file a chargesheet in the case.

The ED had questioned the businessman for three consecutive days in April in a separate money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in a 2008 land deal in Haryana.

He is being investigated in three money laundering cases by the ED. Bhandari (63) fled to London in 2016, soon after the Income Tax Department raided him in Delhi.

A UK court earlier this month refused an application filed by the Indian Government seeking permission to appeal in Britain's Supreme Court against the discharge of Bhandari in an extradition case, virtually ruling out chances of him being brought to the country to face the law.

The ByStander

India has nuclear edge: SIPRI

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

India continues to maintain an edge over Pakistan in nuclear capabilities, with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) noting that New Delhi has not only expanded its nuclear arsenal from 172 warheads in 2024 to an estimated 180 in 2025, but also made significant progress in developing advanced nuclear delivery systems. However, the more significant development lies not in the number of warheads, but in technological advancements and evolving military posture.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report, India's new 'canisterised' missiles, which allow warheads to be pre-mounted and transported more safely, could potentially carry nuclear warheads even during "peacetime".

If these systems are deployed with warheads, it would mark a major doctrinal shift, enabling faster launch readiness and possibly indicating a move toward a more flexible deterrence strategy.

These next-generation systems may also be able to deliver multiple warheads using a single missile in the near future.

Three India-bound 787s return mid-air

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi/Mumbai/Hyderabad

In a concerning turn of events, three Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft bound for India were forced to return mid-air within a span of just 36 hours due to a bomb threat and technical snags, raising fresh safety concerns among air passengers and authorities. The incidents involved flights heading to Delhi, Chennai, and Hyderabad, operated by Air India, British Airways, and Lufthansa respectively. These incidents comes days after an Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft bound for London crashed in Ahmedabad, shortly after takeoff, killing 241 of the 242 passengers on board.

A Delhi-bound Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner from Hong Kong returned to its airport of origin on Monday within an hour of takeoff after the pilot in command suspected a technical issue.

The pilots of the Delhi-bound Air India flight, which returned to Hong Kong after nearly 90 minutes of take-off, didn't want to continue their journey after a suspected technical glitch was detected in the aircraft. The pilot could be heard telling Air Traffic Control, "We don't want to continue further." An audio of the pilot's conversation with the Air Traffic Control has emerged where they are heard saying that they don't want to continue and return to the airport.

Pilots of the Air India flight, which returned to Hong Kong didn't want to continue their journey after a suspected technical glitch was detected

The aircraft involved in the incident was also a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, the same aircraft model which crashed shortly after taking-off from Ahmedabad airport on Thursday, June 12, killing 241 out of 242 on board.

The flight, AI 315, landed safely in Hong Kong and all passengers have disembarked from the plane, the airline said in a statement, adding that the aircraft is undergoing inspection.

BJMC anniversary shrouded in grief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Ahmedabad

A year ago, the mood was celebratory as the BJ Medical College and Hospital marked its foundation day. On Monday, the scene spelt devastation and despair - families awaiting identification of their kin killed when an Air India plane crashed into the complex, medics who lost their colleagues soldiering on stoically and everywhere the ruins of what once was.

This foundation day, its 146th, will forever stand out for its stark sorrow. The BJMC, one of the oldest medical colleges in India, has been the epicentre of action following the June 12 crash, which killed 241 people on board and 29 on the ground, including five MBBS students.

While families, their faces grim with grief and anxiety, waited for DNA identification so they could claim the bodies of their loved ones, the environs reflected their state of mind.

Thick layers of soot are still deposited on its buildings, damaged as a result of the crash. On June 16 last year, many of its students and alumni had taken to social media to wish their college and alma mater a "happy birthday", but grief and chaotic scenes are what is evident on the campus right now, as survivors and family members struggle to come to terms with the crash.

Rescue operation underway after an Air India plane crashed in near the Ahmedabad airport FILE PHOTO

The London-bound flight AI171 — Boeing Dreamliner 787-8 — crashed moments after taking off from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport on Thursday afternoon, and fell onto the campus of the medical college in the Meghaninagar area, before going up in flames.

A total of 99 victims have so far been identified through DNA matching, and 64 bodies, including that of former Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani who was on board the ill-fated aircraft, have been handed over to their families, officials said on Monday.

Many medical students and resident doctors had just sat for their meal at the hostel mess when the tail-side portion of the aircraft rammed into it, turning an ordinary lunch hour into a horrific nightmare.

The images of the detached tail portion of the aircraft precariously lodged near the roof of the hostel mess building, pieces of the fuselage scattered on the ground and inside buildings, and piles of charred bodies still haunt many who have been affected by the tragedy.

A day after the crash, Arun Prashant, a Chennai native and second-year MD student at the Byramjee Jeejeebhoy Medical College (BJMC), recalled the horror and how he jumped from the first floor of a hostel building to escape.

"I came to have lunch around 1:30 pm. While having lunch, I heard a loud explosion, and suddenly there was smoke everywhere.

I ran downstairs and then jumped from the first floor of the building," Prashant told reporters. "We were around 20-30 people at Atulyam (hostel)... We got to know it was a plane crash only after coming out of the building," he recalled.

Beginning its journey in 1871 as the Ahmedabad Medical School, the institute has been a cornerstone of medical education since its inception.

Initially affiliated to the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, it began with just 14 students training as hospital assistants.

In 1879, a generous donation of ₹20,000 by Sir Byramjee Jeejeebhoy led to the school being renamed BJ Medical School, according to the institute's official website.

A Goan sustenance secret

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Panaji

Goan women pick wild vegetables from the forest region PTI

The Goa Government is taking steps to preserve the old tradition of locals foraging for wild vegetables during the monsoon in the State's forests, aimed at protecting the cultural heritage and promoting sustainable food practices, officials said.

Backed by the Government's initiative, Goa assembly speaker and Canacona MLA Ramesh Tawadkar has been spearheading a campaign to create awareness about the wild vegetables, popularly known as *Raan Bhaji*, in the coastal State.

The Pramod Sawant-led Government has been promoting the campaign during the monsoon and supporting the *Raan Bhaji* festival, which will be held sometime in September this year, Tawadkar said.

"In the olden days, villagers in Goa included wild vegetables in their diet. These are organic varieties, naturally found in forest areas and untouched by pesticides and fertilisers," Tawadkar said.

"Life expectancy was higher in the earlier times. People used to consume vegetables according to seasons. There is a need to promote these vegetables today. You could say it is part of the BJP Government's 'Fit India' initiative," he said. These vegetables also have medicinal properties and are beneficial for people of all age groups, he said.

During the *Raan Bhaji* festival held in 2023 and 2024, it came to light that at least 40 different kind of wild vegetables are found in the forests of Goa, the 56-year-old legislator said.

500-year-old Banyan tree bears heritage fruits

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ Patna/
New Delhi

In a significant move toward preserving Bihar's ecological and cultural legacy, the Bihar Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change through Bihar Biodiversity Board, has shortlisted 32 trees across five districts — Buxar, Aurangabad, Munger, Jamui, and Bhagalpur — for designation as Biodiversity Heritage Trees. A senior Bihar Government officer shared that among these, 28 trees are estimated to be over 100 years old, with most remarkable being the majestic Banyan tree in Madanpur block of Aurangabad near Gaya, believed to be approximately 500 years old.

Selection of tree was made from an initial list of over 1,500 trees following rigorous field verification through various sources including the chain of elderly people. Detailed guidelines for heritage tree identification were issued to district collectors and divisional forest officers.

PIONEER PHOTO

Criteria included tree age (typically more than three generations), historical or mythological significance, ecological uniqueness, endangered species status, or scientific value.

Final list features a diverse range of species: Banyan (12), Peepal (6), Pakad (3), Mahua (2), Neem (2), Khirni (1), Semal (2), Gular (1), Tamarind (1), Kalpavriksha (1), Kanak Champa (1). 500-year-old Banyan tree in Aurangabad stands as the oldest among them, while remaining trees range in age from 70 to over 100 years. To foster citizen engagement and ensure sustained protection, Bihar Government has also launched a 'Bihar Heritage Tree App'. Through this digital platform individuals and local representatives can upload images and GPS-tagged details of notable trees in their locality, their district, neighborhood, panchayat, or block, along with GPS locations.

"If the information is verified and the tree is found to have unique significance, it will be considered for inclusion in the heritage list. Submissions that meet heritage criteria will be evaluated and potentially added to the official list. Nature not only sustains life but also preserves history. Some trees standing tall on the soil of Bihar are more than just trees—they are living witnesses to centuries of social, cultural, and natural legacy," added the Bihar Government official.

Schools, hospitals, and public spaces to be declared smoke-free in East Singhbhum

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a significant move to curb the use of tobacco products and protect public health, the East Singhbhum District Administration has decided to declare all educational institutions, health centers, and major public places as smoke-free zones. The decision was taken during a meeting of the District Level Coordination Committee on Tobacco Control, held at the Collectorate Auditorium on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Karn Satyarthi.

The meeting, chaired by ADM Law and Order Aniket Sachan, was attended by Dhalbhum SDO. Shatabdi Majumdar, Ghatsila SDO Sunil Chandra, Civil Surgeon Dr. Sahir Pal, District Public Relations Officer Panchanan Oraon, and senior officials from the Education Department, Municipal Corporation, Police, Food Safety, Labor Department, and other concerned wings.

The focus of the meeting was the effective implementation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, and enforcement of strict penalties for violations. ADM Sachan stressed that all departments must adopt a zero tolerance policy on tobacco usage and take punitive action, including fines and legal penalties, against violators of the Act.

The meeting also emphasized the urgent need for public awareness campaigns. Officials were directed to organize posters, banners, wall writings, and community dialogue programs to inform people about the dangers of tobacco and legal prohibitions in place.

Educational campaigns will particularly target students and vendors near school zones.

ADM Sachan instructed the three-tier flying squads—already constituted for enforcing COTPA—to conduct regular inspections, especially near schools, colleges, hospitals, and public transport hubs, and ensure that no tobacco products are sold within 100 yards of educational institutions.

Vendors selling tobacco products will be issued warning notices, detailing relevant provisions of the law.

The committee also reviewed the progress of the Tobacco Control Programme in the district and discussed challenges related to enforcement.

It was decided that all departments must work in close coordination to ensure the campaign's success and regularly monitor the declared smoke-free zones.

On the occasion, all present officials took a pledge to refrain from tobacco use and committed themselves to spreading awareness about the mission to make the district—and ultimately the state—tobacco-free.

The East Singhbhum administration's move is expected to have a far-reaching impact on public health, especially by protecting children and youth from exposure to harmful tobacco use and second-hand smoke.

Swami Pragyanananda Illuminates Bhagavad Gita's Teachings at Yogoda Satsanga Ashram

KRISHNA BIHARI MISHRA

Swami Pragyanananda delivered an insightful discourse at the Yogoda Satsanga Ashram in Ranchi, highlighting the profound teachings of the Bhagavad Gita's eighth chapter.

Addressing a gathering of devoted followers, he emphasized the significance of spiritual remembrance in one's final moments.

Drawing from Lord Krishna's words in the Gita, Swami Pragyanananda explained that the one who recalls God while departing from this world attains His divine form. However, he cautioned that such remembrance requires deep spiritual discipline and is not easily achieved. "One's actions alone shape their destiny," he stated, underscoring the role of karma in determining an individual's spiritual journey.

Elaborating on the essence of Brahman, spirituality, and karma, the revered swami cited verses from the Gita and insights from Paramahansa Yogananda to simplify these concepts for the audience. He explained that Brahman is none other than the supreme and eternal syllable Om—a force that embodies *truth, consciousness, and bliss*, permeating all existence. He reiterated Krishna's teaching that the soul itself is spirituality and that renunciation leading to creation is karma. Swami Pragyanananda further conveyed the significance of chanting Om at the time of passing, stating that such devotion liberates one from the cycle of birth and death, leading to ultimate salvation. He described God as omniscient, subtler than the subtlest, and beyond all darkness. "Those who take refuge in Him need not be reborn—they attain supreme perfection," he affirmed. The discourse left a deep impact on attendees, reinforcing the Gita's timeless wisdom and inspiring many to embrace spiritual remembrance in their daily lives.

Scholar & Astrologist Avanendra Pratap predicted and cautioned, 'Airlines Danger' one week before the Ahmedabad Plane Crash

PNS : RANCHI

Known Scholar Dr. Avanendra Pratap aka Adisesha Acharya, described and predicted about the Airlines precautions and danger on 5th June, one week before the tragic Air India plane crash in ahmedabad, gujrat. He mentioned in his Facebook handle, regarding upcoming 14th June transit & nearby Planetary scenarios that is going to be dangerous for Airlines, as per the astrological chart of India. He wrote; "Airlines should be highly cautious during this transit, as in Gemini, showing communication issues & failures that can lead to Danger". Following this; on 12th June, India witnessed a disastrous plane crash, and on 13th June, again an Air India flight from Phuket to Delhi made an emergency landing after the bomb threat news.

The IAF on 14th June, Sunday evening confirmed that a British Royal Navy F-35B fighter jet made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram airport. On 15th June, a helicopter crashed near kedarnath which killed 7. On the morning of 15th June, smoke & sparks were detected from the wheels of a Saudia Airlines aircraft that landed at Lucknow airport from Jeddah. The Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) team rushed to the spot. Two more incidents on 15th June, Technical issue halts Air India flight takeoff at Kolkata - Hindon Airport and same day matter of Board, deboard and repeat; Air India Express Guwahati-Kolkata flight delayed by 18 hours, "Airline blamed Technical glitch", on 15th June, respectively. Air India Dreamliner returns to Hong Kong after a technical issue on 16th June.

Eventually, Indigo also issued advisory for flight delays, extended travel times due to the impact of the Israel-Iran war. These all show the ongoing airlines unrest in India. His article was based upon, focusing on the various aspects of Jupiter Transit in Gemini, Ardra Nakshatra for India, nearby 14th June and onwards. In a recent interview with News 18, Avanendra Pratap explained his calculation, astrological dialogues and his major earlier & previous predictions.

Fatal mishap in Logistics Operations at Tata Steel

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR:

A fatal accident occurred under the Logistics Operations (Inbound) at the West Marshalling Yard of Tata Steel's Jamshedpur plant in the early hours of Monday. The incident took place at approximately 1:30 AM and involved a vendor employee, Sunil Kumar Singh, aged 34, who was associated with M/s RITES.

Initial reports indicate that the accident occurred during operational activities in the yard area. While the exact cause and sequence of events are yet to be ascertained, company sources have confirmed the unfortunate demise of Singh.

In a preliminary statement, Tata Steel expressed deep sorrow over the incident and confirmed that further details are currently awaited. "We are keeping all concerned authorities and the media informed to prevent the spread of unverified or unfounded news," said a company spokesperson.

The management has assured that a thorough investigation will be conducted to determine the cause of the accident, and necessary safety protocols are being reviewed. Relevant statutory bodies and internal safety teams have been notified and are expected to carry out a detailed inquiry.

Jeevan appeals to support youth mental health in college life

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Amid rising concerns surrounding mental health, 'Jeevan' Suicide Prevention Centre, Jamshedpur has issued a vital appeal highlighting the emotional challenges faced by today's youth—especially students transitioning into college life in new cities. The Centre emphasized that many young individuals grapple with stress, loneliness, and academic pressure, leading to increased risks of depression and suicidal tendencies.

According to mental health experts at the Centre, students who move away from home for higher education often face multiple challenges simultaneously—adjusting to unfamiliar surroundings, living without their usual support system of friends and family, becoming self-reliant, and striving for strong academic performance. The cumulative pressure from these experiences can become overwhelming for many.

A volunteer at Jeevan Suicide Prevention Centre stated that it is important to acknowledge and accept one's emotions. "It is completely normal to feel anxious or lonely at times," they said, adding that giving oneself the space to feel and process these emotions is essential. They further advised students to stay positive, maintain an optimistic mindset, and continue motivating themselves as part of caring for their mental well-being.

Maintaining physical health was also underscored—by eating a nutritious, balanced diet, getting adequate sleep, and engaging in regular physical exercise. The volunteer stressed the importance of staying connected with friends and family through social media, phone calls, or messages to avoid emotional isolation.

"In times of distress, do not hesitate to seek help—whether from teachers, counselors, or someone you trust," the volunteer urged. They also emphasized the need for self-care, encouraging students to occasionally take a break from daily routines and give themselves moments of rest and relaxation.

The Centre has also called on schools and colleges to pay greater attention to the mental well-being of students. Institutions were encouraged to organize regular counseling sessions and mental health awareness programs to create supportive environments on campus.

Parents were advised to engage in open conversations with their children, build trust, and understand their emotional needs. Jeevan cautioned that signs such as persistent sadness, irritability, guilt, disinterest in studies, or social withdrawal should not be ignored—and professional mental health support should be sought immediately if such symptoms appear.

The organization appealed to all parents to build emotionally connected and supportive environments at home to ensure children remain mentally and physically healthy.

For those experiencing stress or emotional distress, Jeevan can be contacted at 9297777499 or 9297777500. In-person emotional support is also available at the Jeevan Centre located at 25, Q Road, Bistupur, Jamshedpur.

Lt Cdr Nitika Rai: Courage to Begin, Grace to Evolve, Power to Inspire

BY ANTARA MOHAN

After my book launch at IIM Calcutta, I found myself surrounded by a group of young serving Armed Forces officers. They were bright, articulate, and carried themselves with the unmistakable discipline of those who've served. But beneath the surface, there was a shared emotion I couldn't ignore—uncertainty.

"I don't know what comes next," one admitted quietly.

"I've served, I've led teams—but I don't know how to formulate that in a CV," said another.

These weren't just career changes—they were identity shifts. From salutes to slide decks. From standing guard at the nation's borders to navigating meetings, market analysis, and KPIs. For many, it felt like starting over from scratch.

But they aren't alone. And they certainly aren't starting from zero.

There's someone whose journey reflects their own. Someone who's walked through the same fog of doubt—and emerged stronger, clearer, and more radiant than ever.

That someone is Lieutenant Commander Nitika Rai.

Born and raised in Bareilly, a small town with deep-rooted values, Nitika's foundation was built on humility, discipline, and a quiet strength. She wasn't born into the Armed Forces, but it felt like the life she was always meant for. After completing her post-graduation, she was selected at the 33 SSB Bhopal—one of just eight women chosen out of over 300 applicants for the Logistic Branch of Indian Navy.

It marked the beginning of a powerful chapter: over a decade of service in the Indian Navy.

Her years in uniform weren't just about duties—they were about transformation. The Navy shaped her into a leader who knew how to think calmly in chaos, hold space for others, and take responsibility for every decision. It taught her resilience, composure, and the art of staying rooted even when the waves get rough.

perhaps what defined her most wasn't just the courage to serve—but the grace to evolve.

When Nitika transitioned into the corporate world, she wasn't just changing jobs. She was reconfiguring her identity. Leaving behind a life of structure and hierarchy, she entered a world that moved fast, spoke a different language, and didn't always understand the depth of her experience.

And yet, she met that transition with quiet determination.

"It wasn't easy," she admits. "You go from having a clearly defined mission to having to create your own. From being surrounded by a unit that understands you to being the only veteran in the room."

She had to learn business acumen, stakeholder dynamics, the nuances of client delivery. But what she brought with her was even more powerful: the ability to lead under pressure, clarity of communication, an unwavering moral compass, and a mission-focused mindset.

These weren't just transferable skills—they were her edge.

At every turn, Nitika reminded herself of the words her parents had often told her:

"Everything is difficult before it becomes easy."

"You have nothing to lose. Be yourself."

"Plan your day. Trust the process."

She kept reading, upskilling, and staying informed. She showed up even when it felt uncomfortable. And slowly, the pieces started falling into place. Today, Nitika holds a respected position in the corporate world, but more than that—she's a mentor, a storyteller, and a symbol of graceful transformation.

She continues to inspire with her talks, her writing, and her conversations—especially with those who feel lost in transition. She reminds every young officer that the conclusion of military service does not mark the end of one's journey. It evolves.

To those officers I met that day, and to the countless others navigating this uncertain chapter—you are not starting fresh; you are starting seasoned. Your leadership, courage, adaptability, and values matter.

As Nitika beautifully puts it:

"Purpose doesn't have to be permanent. Let it evolve. You're not leaving your strength behind—you're just applying it differently now."

Her journey is a reminder that life after the forces is not a fallback—it's a forward leap. A new terrain to serve with just as much integrity, just as much fire. Whether it's in a boardroom or a brainstorming call, your essence remains.

And if you ever feel unsure of your place—look to Lieutenant Commander Nitika Rai.

She didn't just carry the courage to begin. She brought the grace to evolve.

And in doing so, she became the power to inspire.

BSL Quality Circle teams excel at National 5S Workplace Management Convention

PNS : BOKARO

The Quality Circle teams of Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL) have once again demonstrated their commitment to excellence by delivering a remarkable performance at the national convention on the "5S Workplace Management System," held at KLN Engineering College in Madurai. The event was organized by the Quality Circle Forum of India (QCFI) and witnessed participation from several reputed organizations across the country.

BSL's contingent consisted of 14 Quality Circle teams, out of which 11 teams were awarded the prestigious Par-Excellence Award — the highest category of recognition at the convention — while 3 teams received the Excellence Award, the second-highest honor. This stellar performance significantly enhanced BSL's reputation at the national level.

The teams that received the Par-Excellence Award included Team Jigyasa from the PEB department; Teams Gautam, Kshitij, and Roopantar from BGH; Team Radiance from the Hot Strip Mill; Team Udyog from Heavy Maintenance; Teams Prayas and Stambh from CRM-III; Team Sankalp from ETL; Team Pragati from CO & CC; and Team Srijan-Jyoti from the Traffic department. The Excellence Award was conferred on Team Aakarshak from the Town Administration Water Supply section, Team Himalaya from HRCF, and Team Karna from RCL. These teams had earlier proved their mettle in the in-house "Director-in-Charge 5S Trophy 2025" competition organized by BSL's Business Excellence Department. Their outstanding performance in the internal evaluation qualified them for participation at the national level. The Business Excellence Department also played a key role in preparing and facilitating the teams for the convention.

BSL's top management lauded the efforts of all the award-winning teams and praised their dedication to promoting a culture of effective workplace management. Their contribution towards strengthening the implementation of the 5S system within their respective departments is seen as a significant step in enhancing operational efficiency and organizational excellence.

Stir over advertisement for 4th grade recruitment in Palamu

PNS : DALTONGANJ

A stir against the advertisement for the post of the fourth grade personnel. Palamu administration has very recently put in an advertisement for the 585 posts of the fourth grade personnel in this district. More than 300 posts are reserved out of 585. It is under the order of the Supreme Court which had directed the authorities here to advertise the posts within 6 months of the quashing of the appointments in fourth grade coming into effect on and from February 10, 2025 by the judgement of the Supreme Court in the Civil Appeals.

The BJP has openly criticized the move. It has tried to convey an impression that the party stands with the retrenched fourth grade personnel.

Crowd of people protesting against the advertisement on Monday in the portico of block A of the Palamu collectorate. PNS

Buoyed with the support of the BJP, nearly hundred people in two batches on Monday staged protest against the advertisement demanding the test, lowering down of the minimum educational qualification from 10th pass to 8th pass and absorption of the retrenched fourth grade. No protester had any idea about what the Supreme Court judgement is. The judgement is neither retrogressive nor obstructive. It asks recruitment to be in accordance with the Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution and in accordance with the extant Rules and observations'.

Palamu administration has taken measures to keep off the middlemen. There is no affidavit of Notary. A candidate has to swear it in his own text and with his signature. There is a suitable age relaxation to people whose employment was quashed by the Supreme Court.

The Pioneer
RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE, 17 , 2025

HC seeks replies from Centre, State on Gupta's appointment as DGP

PNS : RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court on Monday granted another opportunity to the state government, central government, and the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to submit their responses in connection with a contempt petition filed by BJP leader Babulal Marandi. The petition challenges the appointment of Anurag Gupta as the Director General of Police (DGP) of Jharkhand.

The division bench, headed by Chief Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao, had earlier heard the matter on March 24 and directed all respondents to file their replies by June 16. However, during Monday's hearing, the court decided to provide one final opportunity for compliance.

Advocate Sumit Gadodia told media that the next hearing of the case will be on July 15.

The Advocate General told the division bench that this matter is also pending in the Supreme Court.

Marandi, who is also the LoP in the Jharkhand Assembly, in his petition, has alleged that the appointment of Anurag Gupta violated the Supreme Court's directives and UPSC guidelines regarding the selection process for the post of DGP.

He contended that the state government removed former DGP Ajay Kumar Singh before the completion of his two-year tenure without any substantial allegations, in contravention of top court's guidelines. The contempt petition names several top officials as respondents, including Chief Secretary Alka Tiwari, Home Secretary Vandana Dadel, DGP Anurag Gupta, Chairman of the DGP Selection Committee Justice (Retd) Ratnakar Bhengra, and former DGP Neeraj Sinha, who was also a member of the selection panel.

The Advocate General informed the division bench comprising Chief Justice S. Ramchandra Rao and Justice Deepak Roshan that a related case is also pending before the Supreme Court.

In his PIL, Marandi alleged that the state government bypassed constitutional norms and misused the police administration for political gain.

He pointed out that the Supreme Court had mandated that appointments of DGPs must follow a UPSC-led selection process unless the state enacts a formal law. Instead of legislating, the Jharkhand government framed a rule in 2025 and sought to implement it retrospectively, which Marandi criticised as a deliberate attempt to subvert legal procedures.

He further accused the government of rushing Gupta's appointment despite his controversial past, including being an accused in an electoral fraud case, facing suspension, and being kept away from election duties by the Election Commission. Marandi claimed the appointment was aimed at extending Gupta's tenure, as he was due to retire in April 2025.

The opposition leader has also requested that the High Court take suo motu cognisance of the matter and order a CBI investigation. Additionally, he has filed a contempt petition in the Supreme Court, challenging the constitutional validity of the newly framed appointment rules in light of previous apex court judgments.

Agriculture Minister lays foundation of shed construction scheme

Sheds to be build worth Rs. 1.73 crore in Chanho and Mandar

PNS : RANCHI

The process of changing the face of dilapidated Haat _ Bazaar buildings in the rural areas of Jharkhand has begun. A shed construction plan has been prepared to give a new look to the rural Haat _ Bazaar. In this series, the state's Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperative Minister Shilpi Neha Tirkey laid the foundation stone of the shed construction scheme in Tangar Krishi Haat Bazaar of Chanho block and Tangar Basli Haat Bazaar of Mandar block. About Rs. 1 crore 73 lakh will be spent on shed construction in both the markets.

This will include construction of shed on 23 hundred square feet, solar light facility in the market premises, construction of separate toilets for men and women along with provision of pure drinking water. The Agriculture Department has set a target to develop the Haat Bazaars of the state as modern agricultural markets.

On the occasion of the foundation stone laying ceremony, Minister Shilpi Neha Tirkey said that strengthening the rural Haat Bazaar is necessary to improve the rural economy.

While being an MLA, she got the work of construction of four sheds done in both these markets. Today, after becoming the Agriculture Minister of the state, the foundation stone of a big scheme has been laid to change the face of the market. The Minister said that now in such Haat Bazaars, farmers will not have to face the brunt of the weather to sell their produce.

Farmers and sellers used to face the most problems during the rainy season. The objective of the Agriculture Department is to get the right price for the farmers' produce and to make arrangements for the maintenance of their produce. She said that the government and the department prepare plans for the public. The public itself will have to monitor how the scheme is implemented exactly on the ground. Election-minded leaders only work to divide the society in the name of religion. They do not seem serious about how the public should be developed.

Agriculture Minister Shilpi Neha Tirkey laid the foundation stone of shed construction scheme worth Rs. 1 crore 73 lakh in Chanho and Mandar blocks on Monday. PNS

The Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperative Department has prepared a magazine for correct information about the schemes. In this magazine, the objective of the scheme run by the department, the benefits of the scheme and the process of availing the benefits of the scheme have been given in detail.

Tirkey said that the innocent people of the village are not even aware of the government's scheme. The government's scheme has to reach such people standing in the last row of the society. Congress leaders and workers including Mohammad Ishtiaq, Shiv Oraon, Ajit Singh, Mangal Oraon, Mahadev Oraon, Zulfikar, Priyanka Oraon, Irshad Khan, Shashi Sahu, Manga Oraon, Abid Ansari, Bandhu Toppo, Tasleem Ansari, Aslam Ansari, Jose Oraon, Belus Toppo, Seraphina Minj, Bernadette were present in the foundation stone laying programme.

JMM doubts completion of Census in time, raises Sarna Code issue

PNS : RANCHI

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) has raised many serious questions within a few hours of the notification of Census issued by the Centre on Monday. Expressing the threat of data hacking, the party has said that this census will not be completed before the 2029 general elections. It also alleged that this is a political experiment to put the Nari Shakti Vandan Act on hold.

In a press conference here on Monday, JMM general secretary cum Spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya called the notification issued by the Home Ministry of the Central Government misleading. He said that the announcement of two different dates regarding the census makes it clear that this process will not be completed before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. He said that the proposed census will be person-based, which will include demographic information as well as caste details and it will be completely digital. The government will record this data in the National Population Register (NPR).

Bhattacharya raised the question that it has not been made clear in the notification issued today which digital format will be used for the census. He termed it a 'big game' and alleged that a conspiracy is being hatched to fragment the castes through NPR. He said that this is an attempt at data hacking at the government level, which is a very sensitive and serious subject. If the population data is hacked, it can become a big threat to the country.

JMM General Secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya during a press conference in Ranchi on Monday. PNS

Bhattacharya also asked the central government whether there will be a column of 'Sarna Dharma Code' in the form of caste census to be held in Jharkhand from March 2027. He said that the format of the census should be made public in advance, so that people can give their information correctly. Otherwise, the officials who come during the digital census will fill anything and go away and the common man will not have any information about it. Notably, the Central government has issued a notification for the census. With this, the way has been cleared for the first caste census since independence. Now caste census will be conducted across the country with a reference date of March 2027. However, five months before this, in October 2026, this process will be completed in the hill states.

NUSRL's CLAP wins 2nd place in MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship 2025

PNS : RANCHI

The Centre for Legal Aid Programme (CLAP) at the National University of Study and Research in Law (NUSRL), Ranchi won the second place in the internationally acclaimed MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship 2025 on June 11. The esteemed recognition is conferred by the Talloires Network of Engaged Universities in partnership with the MacJannet Foundation and is accompanied by a grant of $7,500 in acknowledgement of CLAP's exemplary contribution to community engagement and the advancement of access to justice.

The recognition from the Talloires Network which comprises over 400 universities in 92 countries highlights NUSRL's growing global footprint in engaged legal education. The prize will assist the Centre in expanding its outreach efforts, strengthening projects such as Project Saarthi (prison- based legal aid and rehabilitation) and initiating further collaborations in rural and tribal areas of Jharkhand.

The prize celebrates exceptional student- led initiatives worldwide that embody the values of civic engagement, global citizenship and social responsibility. This recognition places CLAP among a distinguished list of international programmes working at the grassroots to bring about meaningful change. Following the National Law School of India University (NLSIU) in Bengaluru which secured the second place in 2014, NUSRL is the second National Law University in India to receive the award.

CLAP works in close collaboration with several institutional partners including the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), the Jharkhand State Legal Services Authority (JHALSA) and a network of civil society organisations and grassroots NGOs. These partnerships have enabled the Centre to expand its impact and reach particularly among marginalised and underrepresented communities across Jharkhand.

Over the years, CLAP has undertaken a wide range of impactful initiatives like the village adoption project which aimed at providing sustained legal awareness and support to rural populations; welfare programmes for senior citizens which was designed to address the legal, financial, and emotional concerns of the elderly and prison visits and interventions, focusing on access to legal aid, rehabilitation and reintegration of inmates.

The Centre has also actively conducted speed mentoring sessions for legal literacy, sensitisation programmes in government schools to promote constitutional values and child rights and client counselling sessions to address the legal grievances of underserved individuals.

In addition to these outreach efforts, CLAP has organised legal aid certificate courses, guest lectures by eminent legal scholars and practitioners, panel discussions and national-level seminars to foster academic discourse and build student capacity. Through these multifaceted activities, CLAP not only fulfills its mission of advancing access to justice but also serves as a living laboratory for law students to cultivate ethical leadership, empathy and civic responsibility.

For its continued work over the years, it has been recognised at the national level and has also won the National Legal Award for Legal Aid and Social Justice Activities by Knowledge Steez for two consecutive years 2023 and 2024 and has also secured the Best Faculty Coordinator Award at the second Prof VS Mallar Memorial Legal Aid Competition organised by NLSIU, Bengaluru.

"This award is a powerful recognition of CLAP's unwavering commitment to social justice and a reflection of NUSRL's vision of cultivating legally aware and socially responsible professionals. We are proud of our students for leading with empathy, integrity and purpose," said Prof. (Dr) Ashok R Patil, Vice Chancellor of NUSRL

The current leadership of the Centre includes faculty convenors Dr Mrityunjay Mayank and Dr Shweta Mohan along with student convenor Anannaya K Sangra, Secretary Aman Ayush and Treasurer Vaishnavi Bhardwaj, student advisors Harsh Anmol and Dewanshi Agarwal and senior members Sejal, Akash Kachhap and Vishrut Veerendra, who collectively contribute to the execution of the Centre's wide- ranging initiatives.

State Women's panel defunct for five years: BJP

Term of the chairperson and members of the State Women's Commission ended in the year 2020

PNS : RANCHI

The State BJP has raised the issue of non-functional State Women's Commission. State BJP spokesperson Rafiya Naaz said that non-functional of State Women's Commission is not only an administrative failure, but also exposes the government's thinking towards women. BJP state spokesperson Rafia Naz reacted sharply to this and said that now it has become completely clear that the government is not at all serious about the issues of women empowerment and women's rights.

Rafia Naz said that the term of the chairperson and members of the State Women's Commission ended in the year 2020, but the commission has not been reconstituted since then. She said, "This is a clear indication that the government's intentions are flawed." Due to the non-formation of the Women's Commission, thousands of women of Jharkhand are deprived of justice today. This commission gives women a platform where they can register their complaints without fear and discrimination, and demand quick action. It is not only an advisory body, but it also has constitutional powers to conduct investigations, submit reports and fix accountability from the government.

Rafia Naz said that in the absence of the commission, more than 5,200 cases are pending today, which include serious cases like sexual abuse, domestic violence, dowry harassment, child marriage and workplace harassment. She said, "There is no hearing of these thousands of victims, and their files are gathering dust in government offices. Is this the Jharkhand model of women's respect and security?"

Rafia said that announcements were made to establish special courts for speedy disposal of crimes against women, but no concrete work was done at the ground level.

She further said that the establishment of women police pickets has also been limited to the announcements of the state government. Women, especially in rural and remote areas, do not have any security system. Police stations are far away, there are less women police personnel and in many cases it takes months for the victim to even register an FIR. Due to the inaction of the Women's Commission, women are feeling completely insecure and helpless.

Rafia Naz said that Hemant ji's government is doing politics of only slogans and announcements. She said, "When the daughters of the country are hoisting the flag of India on Chandrayaan, the daughters of Jharkhand are wandering from door to door for justice. It is shameful that the state government has failed to keep even a minimum justice platform running for women."

Citing NCRB data, she said that in the year 2023, 6,313 cases of crime against women were registered in Jharkhand, including 1,052 cases of rape, 1,498 cases of molestation and 890 cases related to dowry. It is a matter of concern that in more than half of these cases, charge sheets have not been filed yet. These figures are proof that the government has become insensitive.

Rafia also said that women, especially from tribal and rural areas, are being affected the most due to the absence of the commission. More than 1,400 cases of child marriage have been registered between 2021 and 2023, but action is incomplete in more than 80% of these. She said, "When constitutional institutions themselves become inactive, how will the fight against social evils and crimes be fought?" Women are being murdered every day in the name of witch hunting and the state government is silent....

Rafia also said that while the central government is empowering women through programs like "Nari Shakti Vandan Yojana", "Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana" and "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao", the Jharkhand government is not even able to form a constitutional body. She said, "This is not duplicity, but political hypocrisy."

The BJP state spokesperson warned, "We will become the voice of every victim and will continue the struggle till every daughter of Jharkhand gets justice."

In the end, Rafia Naz asked the state government in clear words - "Now answer why there is an intention to deprive women of justice? The absence of a women's commission is itself a crime - when will the Jharkhand government wake up?

Gang making fake seals of Indian Army busted, two held

PNS : RANCHI

Ranchi Police have busted a gang involved in making fake stamps of Indian Army and have arrested two persons. Senior Superintendent of Police, Ranchi received secret information that a fake institution named Rathore General Store on the premises of Military Hospital Namkum was making fake stamps of senior officers of the Indian Army. Considering the sensitivity of the information received, the SSP took immediate action and formed a police team from Namkum Police Station for verification and necessary action.

In the course of verification of the information, a large quantity of rubber stamps and pre-inked flash stamps made in the name of various army officers, a Poco company mobile, a sample of making a stamp on a plain paper, and a WhatsApp screenshot given to the shopkeeper for making stamps were recovered from Rathore General Store located on the premises of Military Hospital Namkum. On demanding authorization letter and other valid documents for making Indian Army's seal from Rathore General Store owner Sarvesh Kumar Singh, age 43 years, father Shri Ramjatan Singh, permanent address S. Devhaliyon, Police Station Ramgarh, District Kaimur, Bhabua (Bihar), present address Chai Bagan Inter Council Namkum, Police Station Namkum, District Ranchi, no valid documents were produced by him.

Police seized the recovered goods and on his information, Das Sound shop operator Ashish Das, age 47 years, father Sachindranath Das, address Lower PP Compound, Police Station Hindpiri, District Ranchi, who made and provided stamps, was arrested. Also, a computer CPU was duly seized from his shop. The arrested accused persons have accepted their crime. During interrogation, it was found that Sarvesh Kumar Singh often got official seals made for the officers of Namkum Military Station and this work was being done by him for the last four years. Ranchi Police are also investigating the involvement of other persons in the case.

CMPDI Yoga Boot Camps see continued enthusiasm

On the third day of its week-long Yoga Boot Camps, CMPDI continued to witness robust participation from employees and their families, both at Headquarters and across its Regional Institutes. The boot camps, running from June 14th to 20th, 2025, serve as a vibrant prelude to the International Day of Yoga 2025. Embracing this year's theme, "Yoga for One Earth, One Health," CMPDI's Yoga Boot Camps are designed to nurture a culture of health, unity, and holistic well-being among its workforce and their loved ones. The organization remains committed to fostering wellness and togetherness through such engaging and meaningful activities

16 PAS students qualify NEET (UG) 2025

The Pentecostal Assembly School (PAS), Bokaro has proudly announced the success of 16 of its students from the current batch who have qualified the NEET (UG) 2025 examination, one of India's most competitive medical entrance tests. The successful candidates are Vedant Vatsa, Priya Kumari, Aaraish Rifat Tahriq, Ankit Kumar, Ansh Kumar, Anshika Kumari, Khushi Raj, Nandana Kumari, Somya Verma, Shreya Choudhary, Om Kumar Dubey, Jay Singh, Aditi Raj, Ayush Raj, Rahul Kumar, and Ishteyaque Ahmad — all from class 12-B. Their achievement reflects both their dedication and the academic support provided by the school. The school management and faculty extended heartfelt congratulations to the students for their remarkable success and wished them the very best in their future pursuits in the field of medicine

The Pioneer
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Congress always betrayed OBCs: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Union minister and BJP leader Bhupender Yadav

The BJP on Monday accused the Congress of always deceiving and betraying the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) as it hit out at the party following the Karnataka Government's decision to junk an earlier caste count and go for a fresh enumeration.

Union minister and BJP leader Bhupender Yadav asked for fixing accountability, noting that over ₹165 crore of public money was spent in carrying out the earlier survey and claimed that the plank of social justice is merely a show for the Congress to engage in social division for electoral purposes.

With the Congress asking the Centre to adopt the "Telangana model" for not just caste enumeration but also in bringing out detailed data on socio-economic parameters during the nationwide census, the key OBC face of the BJP questioned why the opposition party did not follow the same practice in Karnataka.

The Congress' inner contradictions have been exposed as the party has no real commitment to social justice and resorts to such political gimmicks for electoral purposes, he said. At a press conference, Yadav also demanded an apology from RJD supremo and former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav after a political row erupted over the placement of a picture of Dalit icon Bhim Rao Ambedkar near his feet on his birthday.

"It shows his (Lalu's) arrogance. Most backward classes and Dalits faced most injustice during his Government," he alleged.

Speaking to reporters, Yadav claimed that the Congress has a history of betraying the OBC interests as he recalled that its Governments at the Centre had ignored the Kaka Kalelkar Commission report on empowering the backward classes. The party also opposed the Mandal Commission recommendations, he said.

He cited Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's statement that the decision for a fresh caste enumeration was not his Government's but the Congress leadership's, questioning the party's interference in the State Government's decision-making.

Yadav compared it with the alleged interference from Sonia Gandhi-headed National Advisory Council during the UPA Government.

The Congress has said that the fresh exercise has been announced to address the concerns of certain communities. Also, the earlier caste survey data was 10 years old and needed to be updated, it said.

It is the Modi Government, Yadav said, which has worked for the socio-economic empowerment of the backward classes with its numerous schemes. It also accorded constitutional status on the National Commission for Backward Classes, he added.

He said the Karnataka Government's decision not only highlights the internal contradictions of the Congress but also stressed that social justice is mere optics for the party which has "no commitment" to the idea. The Congress, he alleged, resorts to electoral engineering, data manipulation and vote bank appeasement in the name of social justice, and invariably deceives the backward classes.

He noted that the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission recommended an eight per cent quota under the 2B category meant for Muslims, claiming it exposed the Congress' preference to vote bank appeasement over social justice.

Asked about the Congress crediting its leader Rahul Gandhi for the Modi Government's decision for caste enumeration, Yadav mocked the main opposition party. It cannot step out of its wont to give credit to the Nehru-Gandhi family for 100 years, he said. "It is their slavery," he added.

The Government took a decision after considering every aspect and making full preparation, he said on the day the Centre issued a notification for conducting India's 16th Census with caste enumeration in 2027.

Replying to a question over the BJP slamming the fresh list of OBC communities notified by the West Bengal government for including a large number of Muslim castes, Yadav said Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is fully steeped into appeasement politics while denying the most deprived sections of the benefits of the Central Government's schemes.

To a question about the opposition demand of raising the 50 per cent cap on reservation for OBCs, SCs and STs, Yadav said the BJP believes in 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' and will implement on ground the quota benefits allowed by the Constitution. All sections of society will be empowered and the BJP works for each of them, he said.

Gazette notification on census damp squib: Jairam Ramesh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Terming the notification on the 16th census as a "damp squib", the Congress on Monday said it is silent on the inclusion of caste in the exercise and asked whether this is another "U-turn" by the Government. The Opposition party also asserted that the Centre must adopt the Telangana model for not just caste enumeration but also in bringing out detailed data on socio-economic parametres caste-wise.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said the much-touted gazette notification on the 16th census to be conducted in late 2026 and early 2027 has just been issued and is a "damp squib".

"It is quite a damp squib and merely repeats what had already been announced on April 30, 2025," Ramesh wrote on X. He further said that it is entirely because of the persistence and insistence of the Congress that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "surrendered" to the demand for a caste census.

"He (Modi) had called Congress leaders as urban Naxals for making this demand. Both in Parliament and in the Supreme Court, the Modi Government had rejected the very idea of a caste census — which it announced 47 days back," Ramesh said. "Today's Gazette Notification is, however, SILENT on the inclusion of caste in the 16th Census. Is this yet another U-turn by the ustad of U-turns? Or will details be announced later?" he wrote.

The Congress firmly believes that the 16th census must adopt the Telangana model for not just caste enumeration but also bringing out detailed data information on socio-economic parameters caste-wise, he asserted.

Later, Ramesh also hit out at the BJP for accusing the Congress of always deceiving and betraying the Other Backward Classes following the Karnataka Government's decision to junk an earlier caste survey in favour of a fresh count.

The Congress leader also claimed that the RSS had opposed the Constitution of India, back in November 1949. He pointed out that as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution; the census is the responsibility of the Central Government.

Ramesh said that if the Centre does not want to carry out the census then states are left with no option but to do caste surveys. He cited the examples of Telangana, Bihar and Karnataka.

India emerges as global leader in disaster management, says Amit Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Amit Shah addressing the annual conference of Relief Commissioners and Disaster Response Forces in New Delhi on Monday PTI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said India has become a global leader in the field of disaster management due to the excellent works carried out by the NDMA, NDRF and others.

Addressing a conference of the relief commissioners and disaster response forces of all States and Union Territories (UTs) here, Shah also said 10 years ago, the approach of the disaster mitigation organisations was for minimum casualties and after 10 years, the approach is to achieve the target of zero casualties.

"Whenever the history of India's disaster response will be written, the last 10 years of the Modi Government will be recorded as a transformative decade. In these 10 years, we have made significant achievements in all four areas — capacity, efficiency, speed and accuracy," he said.

The Home Minister said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has effectively carried out policy, subject structure, research work and dissemination of various exercises to the public, development of several applications and overall coordination and policy-related work. In the last 10 years, NDMA, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) have strongly positioned India to become a global leader in the field of disaster management, he said.

Shah said in the last two years, work has been done to create a platform of ideas with a whole-of-Government approach by bringing together workshops and meetings of all the agencies related to relief and disaster management.

"When the heads of all the disaster relief teams discuss on a single platform, many shortcomings are removed and the country also benefits in being prepared to deal with a disaster," he said.

The Home Minister also suggested that every year, some districts and tehsils sensitive to disasters should be included in this conference so that the disaster management being considered at the national level gradually reaches the tehsil and district levels as well.

All relief commissioners should prepare a district disaster management plan for every district in their State within 90 days, he said.

He also praised the role of NDMA, saying it has effectively carried out policy, subject structure, research work, dissemination of various exercises to the public, development of several applications and overall coordination and policy-related work.

Shah said the NDRF has earned nationwide recognition, built a strong reputation and gained respect while the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) has also played a significant role in this structure.

He said due to climate change and global warming, the entire world is grappling with disasters and there is a need to move forward with environmental conservation as a core component.

"In the coming days, while everyone is fully prepared to tackle disasters, there is also need to address their root causes," he said.

"Not only has our capacity to handle disasters been increased but it has also been enhanced and extended to the tehsil level. Attention has been given to speed, as saving lives during a disaster is of utmost importance," he said.

The Home Minister said efficiency has been improved through the use of cutting-edge technology and the dedicated approach of disaster response forces. Additionally, by providing accurate forecasting and early warnings, society has been made aware and successfully engaged in relief and rescue operations, he said.

Shah said during the Modi Government's tenure, there has been a significant shift in the approach related to disaster management.

Earlier, the approach was relief-centric, but now, the goal of "zero casualty" has been successfully achieved and the focus has shifted from relief-centric to a comprehensive and integrated approach, he said.

He emphasised the importance of anticipating future disasters, conducting advanced research, compiling global ideas in this field and adapting them to suit India's geographical conditions. The Home Minister said in the last decade, India has made significant efforts for financial empowerment and greatly increased the Government's Budget.

"We have also pursued institutional empowerment deliberately and by design, along with structural empowerment. Combining all these, we have also adopted a multidimensional approach as a policy," he said. Shah said from 2004 to 2014, the Budget of the SDRF was ₹38,000 crore, which increased to ₹1.44 lakh crore from 2014 to 2024.

Similarly, the Budget of the NDRF was ₹28,000 crore from 2004 to 2014, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi increased to ₹84,000 crore.

"Overall, we have nearly tripled the total Budget from ₹66,000 crore to ₹2 lakh crore," he said.

SC Bar body protests ED summons against senior lawyer Arvind Datar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association on Monday protested against the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoning senior advocate Arvind Datar after he gave legal advice to a firm. The notice, which was subsequently withdrawn by the ED, was issued to Datar after he reportedly gave legal advice to Care Health Insurance on the ESOP (employee stock ownership) issued to former Religare Enterprises Chairperson Rashmi Saluja.

The SCAORA said such a notice was a "chilling message to the legal community at large and threatens the foundational right of every citizen to receive independent legal counsel without fear or intimidation". Advocate and president SCAORA Vipin Nair said the ED action was not only unwarranted but also reflected a disturbing trend of investigative overreach that threatened the independence of the legal profession and undermined the very foundation of the rule of law.

"Datar is a respected Senior Advocate of unimpeachable integrity, who has consistently upheld the highest standards of professional conduct and legal ethics," said SCAORA secretary Nikhil Jain in the statement. Summoning a senior member of the Bar for discharging his professional responsibility, he said, was a misuse of authority and an affront to the sanctity of the advocate's role.

"The independence of the judiciary and the independence of the Bar are twin pillars of our constitutional democracy. The effective functioning of courts is impossible without fearless and independent advocates. When investigative agencies resort to coercive measures against advocates merely for giving legal opinions, they do not just target individuals, they strike at the institutional structure that ensures justice," the statement added.

The SCAORA further said undermining the professional independence of advocates ultimately threatened judiciary's independence. It also pointed to several judgments shielding advocates from the purported actions of their clients for merely giving legal opinions. "The ED's action conflates legal advice with criminal complicity, a proposition that is constitutionally untenable and legally unjustifiable," it said.

If advocates can be subjected to coercive measures for providing legal advice, it would paralyse the functioning of the legal system and erode public confidence in the justice delivery mechanism, it added. Though the summon was withdrawn by the ED, the SCAORA lodged its "strong protest" against the "arbitrary exercise of executive power".

Railway Ministry to fill up 6,374 vacant positions

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

The ministry has urged all zones to revise the vacant positions in all 51 categories and upload them on the online system in consultation with the chairman of RRB

The Railway Ministry has decided to fill up 6,374 vacant positions in 51 categories of technical posts, including signal and telecommunication department, across all 17 railway zones and various production units in the country.

Earlier on June 10, the ministry wrote to all zonal railways and said that it assessed the vacancies of technicians placed by them in the online human resource management system and "approved to issue Centralised Employment Notification for 6,374 vacancies of technicians in 51 categories for the year 2025".

The ministry has urged all zones to revise the vacant positions in all 51 categories and upload them on the online system in consultation with the chairman of Railway Recruitment Board (RRB), Bengaluru.

Nodal RRB will consolidate the indents placed by the Railways/PUs (production units) and issue the Centralised Employment Notification, the ministry said.

The vacant positions across various categories, according to officials, are much more than the ministry's current initiative. This move will, however, help reduce the pressure, they said.

The Indian Railway S&T Maintainers Signal and Telecom Union (IRSTMU) has welcomed the decision and called it a right move in the safety of rail operations. The Union had earlier written to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and requested him "to fill up the vacancies of Signal and Telecom Department in all categories of Group C posts to strengthen the S&T maintenance activities".

"The last recruitment in the Signal and Telecom Department was done in 2017 and thousands of posts are lying vacant for eight years. So, the Railway Recruitment Board should be directed to complete the recruitment process as soon as possible," IRSTMU general secretary Alok Chandra Prakash had said in his letter dated June 3.

Prakash opposed one of the ministry's recent decisions to recruit S&T staff on a contractual basis due to an increase of workload on the existing employee strength.

He argued that S&T work is crucial for safe rail operations and allowing contractual staff to become familiar with crucial safety operations might make it vulnerable to sabotage in future.

Hardeep Puri dismisses pro-Khalistani protests in Canada

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday dismissed the recent pro-Khalistani protests in Canada ahead of the G7 Summit, calling the demonstrators hired stooges who should not be taken seriously.

"One more video is going viral in which these people are protesting against the neighbouring country after they did not get funding from them," Puri said.

"*Yeh jo kiraye ke tattu hain* (These are hired stooges). Don't take them seriously," he said.

The minister made the remarks while inaugurating exhibition on 11 years of PM Narendra Modi's Government and 100 days of the Delhi Government at the Delhi BJP headquarters at 14, Pant Marg in Lutyens' Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to arrive in Canada to attend the G-7 summit from Cyprus on the second leg of his visit, at the invitation of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

Addressing concerns around rising fuel prices amid the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict, Puri assured that India's energy reserves remain robust.

"Today we have an energy situation where we have enough stocks, our own production is going up," he said. "Who thought in 2014, when our bio-fuel blending was 1.4 per cent, that it would reach 20 per cent now?"

He also noted recent advancements in India's green energy sector.

70 per cent vaccines sourced by WHO are from India: Anupriya Patel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
New Delhi

Union Minister of State for Health Anupriya Patel said on Monday 70 per cent of total vaccines sourced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and 14 per cent of generics imported by the US are from India.

She delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session of the Second Policymakers' Forum organised by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) here. An international delegation of policymakers and drug regulators from 24 countries is participating in the forum.

Aimed at promoting the recognition of the Indian Pharmacopoeia and collaboration in India's initiative for flagship affordable medicines — the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) — the Forum is being organised by the IPC under the aegis of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in association with the Ministry of External Affairs.

In her keynote address, Patel emphasised India's commitment to ensuring equitable access to quality-assured medicines and stressed the importance of regulatory harmonisation in facilitating global health equity.

She also highlighted that "under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has emerged as a global hub for affordable healthcare solutions and continues to deepen its partnerships with nations through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building and health diplomacy".

Underlining the importance of the Jan Aushadi Kendras, Patel said, "Our Jan Aushadhi Kendras are the shining examples of India's commitment to provide quality and affordable medicines to all our citizens. Jan Aushadhi has been one of the most powerful instruments of bringing down the out-of-pocket expenditure of our citizens." Highlighting India's strides made in the direction of providing vaccines, Patel said India continues to be a leading supplier of vaccines. "As much as 70 per cent of WHO's total vaccines are sourced from India," she said. She said during the COVID-19 pandemic, India started the 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative and supplied vaccines to more than 100 friendly countries, which depicts India's deep sense of responsibility towards global health and its intention of helping friendly countries in times of distress.

Patel said, "India continues to be a leader in drug manufacturing, especially when it comes to generic medicines. 14 per cent of generics imported by the US come from India while India also has the maximum number of US FDA (Food and Drug Administration) recognised drug manufacturing plants."

She further underlined that "70 per cent of our generics are exported to the highly regulated markets and our pharmacopoeia regulations are regularly visited to meet the global benchmarks".

Patel said, "We have retained the WHO's Global Benchmarking Tool (GBT) framework, Maturity Level 3 (ML3) status which reflects the robustness of India's regulatory framework. Presently, 15 countries in the world recognise Indian Pharmacopeia as a book of standards for drugs, Cuba recently becoming the 15th country to recognise the Indian Pharmacopeia."

The Pioneer
RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE 17, 2025

Wipe out terrorists and their ecosystem: LG Manoj Sinha

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha PIONEER PHOTO

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Monday, announced a resolute stance against terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, granting a "free hand" to the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Indian Army, and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) to decisively tackle terrorists and their support ecosystem.

Speaking at the Passing-out Parade of the 17th Batch of Probationary Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySsP) and 26th Batch of Probationary Sub-Inspectors (PSIs) at the Sher-i-Kashmir Police Academy (SKPA) in Udhampur, Sinha emphasised a coordinated effort to eradicate terrorism in the region.

"I have given a free hand to the Jammu and Kashmir Police Force and security forces to deal with the terrorists and terror eco-system within J and K. I want the mighty police force, the most powerful Indian Army, and the valiant CAPF to work together to wipe out the terrorists and their support system," Sinha declared.

He called for intensified, targeted strikes on Over Ground Workers (OGWs) and those providing logistical and financial support to terrorists, stressing that such elements must face justice.

A total of 49 Deputy Superintendents of Police and 1,112 Probationary Sub-Inspectors completed their rigorous training at SKPA, Udhampur.

Congratulating the new officers, Sinha urged them to uphold the values, traditions, and ethos of the J and K Police. He extended his felicitations to the trainers, academy officials, and families of the passing-out officers for their unwavering support.

Sinha underscored the importance of intelligence-driven anti-terror operations, stating, "Complete eradication of terrorism from the soil of Jammu and Kashmir is our top priority."

He advocated a multi-pronged approach, integrating modern technology like Artificial Intelligence for enhanced data collection and analysis to counter security threats, prevent radicalisation and address adverse situations.

Highlighting the enduring value of beat policing and area policing, he said, "Despite remarkable changes in technology, there is no alternative to beat policing and area policing. We must strike a fine balance between Techint and Humint to strengthen overall counter-terrorism efforts."

The Lieutenant Governor also emphasized fostering collective vigilance within communities to enable a coordinated response against terrorism and build trust across society. "This collective vigilance will not only ensure a robust response against terrorists but also strengthen ties with all sections of society," he added.

Garib Dass, Director, Udhampur Police Academy, briefed about the programme and various activities conducted during the Training course.

The training program equipped recruits with high proficiency in New Criminal Laws, Artificial Intelligence, cybercrime, narco-terrorism, general warfare, field craft and tactics, counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, human rights and law and order. Nalin Prabhat, DGP J and K; Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Saloni Rai, Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur; senior officials of Police, Security Forces and civil administration, local public representatives and family members of the passing out DySsP and PSIs were present.

Woman threatens fuel station employee with gun in UP

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ Hardoi

A woman threatens a petrol pump salesman with a revolver, at a fuel station in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh PTI

A chilling video from Uttar Pradesh's Hardoi district has gone viral, showing a woman brandishing a revolver and threatening to shoot a CNG station salesman during a heated altercation.

The woman, identified as Ariba Khan, was caught on CCTV pointing the weapon at the employee's chest and shouting, "*Itni goliyaan maaroongi ki ghar wale pehchaan nahi payenge*" ("I will shoot so many bullets that your family would not be able to recognise you").

The incident occurred on Sunday evening at a CNG refuelling station when a family, led by Ehsan Khan, arrived in their car to refill gas.

For safety reasons, the station's salesman Rajnish Kumar asked the family to step out of the vehicle — standard protocol during CNG refuelling. However, the request did not go down well.

According to CCTV footage, Ehsan Khan got out of the car and began hurling abuses at Rajnish Kumar. As the argument escalated, Kumar tried to maintain distance by pushing Khan back with his elbow. This led to Khan's daughter, Ariba, jumping into the confrontation — first by pushing the salesman and then rushing back to the car.

Moments later, Ariba returned with a licensed revolver, walked up to Rajnish Kumar, and pointed the weapon directly at him, delivering the now-viral threat. Despite the grave provocation, Rajnish stood his ground and continued to argue. Ariba's mother eventually intervened and pulled her daughter away, after which the trio left the scene. Rajnish Kumar later filed a police complaint, following which Ehsan Khan, Ariba, and her mother were taken into custody.

The police have since seized the revolver, which is registered in Ehsan Khan's name.

Hardoi police officials confirmed that an investigation is underway and appropriate legal action will be taken based on the findings. A senior police official confirm that that revolver of Ariba Khan has been confiscated.

ED files chargesheet against Pakistani man

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet under the anti-money laundering law against a Pakistani man, living as an Indian in Kolkata, after illegally procuring as many as five vital government IDs including Aadhaar, voter card and passport.

He was laundering funds by making "fake" Indian IDs for Bangladeshis who came here and through other illegal activities like hawala, the ED said in a statement on Monday.

The ED said it has submitted the prosecution complaint against the man named Ajad Mallik alias Ahammed Hossain Azad and Azad Hossain before a special Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) court in Kolkata on June 13. The court has taken cognisance against the "Pakistani national" and fixed a date for hearing, it said.

The ED, which carried out raids in this case in April, had then said in a press statement that Mallik was a Bangladeshi national. It arrested Mallik under the anti-money laundering law and the probe brought to light that he was indeed a Pakistani national.

The agency found that the man operated a hawala network to facilitate illegal cross-border remittances between India and Bangladesh

The ED case stems from a West Bengal Police FIR against Mallik and unidentified others for violation of the Foreigners Act of 1946.

"Probe found that the man was a Pakistani national illegally living in India," the ED statement said.

"A Pakistani driving licence dating back to 1994 was recovered from his mobile phone bearing the name Azad Hossain and featuring the photograph of Ajad Mallik alias Ahammed Hossain Azad. It listed his father's name as Mumtaz-Ul-Haque and a permanent address in Pakistan," the ED said.

It said the driving licence recorded his date of birth as 14.08.1971 and it was issued by the Licensing Authority in Hyderabad, Pakistan.

In order to "conceal" his true identity, the ED said, the man adopted the alias "Ajad Mallik" and procured multiple Indian identity documents like Aadhaar, PAN (Permanent Account Number issued by the income-tax department) card, driving license, voter ID and passport by submitting "forged" and "fabricated" documents, as per the ED.

The agency found that the man operated a "hawala" network to facilitate illegal cross-border remittances between India and Bangladesh, collecting payments in cash and UPI, before transferring equivalent amounts to Bangladesh using platforms like 'Bkash', an online financial transaction platform of Bangladesh.

"He was also involved in illegal money transfers and document forgery and was actively involved in facilitating the preparation of visas and passports for Bangladeshi nationals seeking to travel to countries like Dubai, Cambodia and Malaysia," the ED said.

The Pakistani man collected payments in Bangladeshi Taka, US Dollar, and Indian Rupee and deposited these amounts into his own bank account or transferred them to the accounts of associates engaged in fraudulent visa or passport processing, the ED alleged.

He played a "significant" role in "fraudulent" activities carried out at certain forex changers (full-fledged money changers) based in Kolkata, in which "huge" cash deposits were declared as proceeds from legitimate foreign currency sales to customers but were actually "proceeds of crime" linked to "unlawful" activities, the ED said.

Principal Secretary to PM, PK Mishra reviews key infrastructure projects in Gujarat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Ahmedabad

PK Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, conducted site inspections and high-level review meetings in Dholera and Lothal in Gujarat assessing key infrastructure projects on Monday.

These projects are aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for industrial and economic growth. Mishra visited the under-construction Ahmedabad–Dholera Greenfield Expressway, implemented by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

He highlighted the expressway's potential to reduce travel time between Ahmedabad and Dholera to 45 minutes and emphasised timely execution with global-quality road standards.

At Dholera Special Investment Region (DSIR), Mishra assessed the progress of Dholera International Airport.

Officials informed him that cargo operations would commence by October 2025.

He directed authorities to adhere to timelines and ensure seamless connectivity with the expressway.

Mishra inspected Tata Electronics' Semiconductor Fabrication (Fab) project, a flagship initiative in domestic chip manufacturing.

He reviewed its production scope, including chips for mobile devices, consumer electronics and automotive applications.

He also visited social infrastructure projects—schools, hospitals and residential complexes—developed by Dholera Industrial City Development Limited (DICDL). He emphasized user experience, calling for stakeholder feedback integration.

Mishra chaired a comprehensive review meeting with senior officials from DICDL, DIACL, NHAI, Airports Authority of India, and Indian Railways.

He reviewed key projects, including Ahmedabad–Dholera Expressway, Bhimnath–holera Freight Rail Link, Ahmedabad–Dholera Semi-High-Speed Rail Line, Dholera International Airport.

Mishra reiterated the Government of Gujarat's commitment to Dholera's development as a global-standard smart industrial city.

He stressed the importance of timely project completion, skilled workforce availability and robust planning.

Principal Secretary to PM, PK Mishra inspected the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC), a flagship initiative under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. He chaired a review meeting with T Ramachandran, Secretary, MoPSW and other officials from the Ministry, Gujarat Maritime Board, Archaeological Survey of India, NHAI, and Indian Railways.

Mishra emphasised that NMHC must serve as a scholarly tribute to India's maritime past, stressing the importance of in-depth research, academic collaboration, and a thoughtfully planned visitor experience. He also reviewed environmental sustainability measures, including local species plantation and water management systems.

He highlighted NMHC's unparalleled scale and significance, underscoring the need to curate artifacts that narrate India's maritime legacy from the Harappan civilisation onward. Dr Mishra also inspected Phase I-A construction, including six galleries and directed its completion by August 2025.

150 make in India locomotives to be exported to Guinea

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Patna/New Delhi

Railway Locomotive factory Marhowrah, Bihar will supply 150 Evolution Series ES43ACmi locomotives for SimFer's Simandou iron ore project in Guinea, Africa, worth more than ₹3,000 Crore.

37 locomotives will be exported in this Financial Year whereas 82 locomotives will be exported in the next Financial Year and 31 locomotives will be exported in the third Year.

All these locomotives will have AC Cabins. Each loco will have single cabin and two locomotives together will carry the load of 100 wagons with maximum permissible speed.

For manufacturing of these locomotives, three types of tracks — broad guage, standard guage and Cape guage have been laid in Marhowrah Locomotive premises.

Locomotives being manufactured in Marhowrah Plant, Bihar of Indian Railways, boosting India's industrial footprint. The project was secured via global competitive bidding, showcasing India's manufacturing excellence on a world stage.

These locomotives are equipped with 4,500 HP, AC propulsion, regenerative braking, microprocessor-based controls and modular architecture. These locomotives are built with best-in-class emission standards, fire detection systems and ergonomic crew cabins with modern amenities like refrigerator, microwave and waterless toilet system.

Fitted with DPWCS (Distributed Power Wireless Control System) for synchronised operations and superior freight handling.

This positions Marhowrah factory as a global hub for locomotive exports, strengthening local employment and technological capability.

Contributes to building infrastructure for Guinea's largest iron ore project, deepening India-Africa economic cooperation.

A shining example of Atmanirbhar Bharat powering global infrastructure through innovation and quality manufacturing

In Marhowrah factory of Bihar, 285 people are directly employed and 1215 people are getting indirect employment.

Other than these, more than 2100 people are working for the joint venture across the country for services and other work.

CM Mamata launches attack on Government

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ Kolkata

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and her nephew and Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee have launched a two-pronged attack on the BJP Government for shabbily dealing Bengali Manush and failing to fix accountability in the Pahelgam attack — even almost two months after the incident — in that order.

In an apparent bid to rouse the feelings of Bengali asmita (pride) in an election year the Chief Minister launched a scathing attack on the BJP for targeting only Bengali-speaking population so as to push them across the border after labeling them as Bangladeshis despite them having valid documents.

While delivering her speech inside the State Assembly the Chief Minister said "these people do not have any shame, they are targeting the Bengali speaking Indian citizens despite the fact that they have their valid identity proof, before pushing them back in Bangladesh, you are on one hand depriving the Indian citizens of their rights because they speak in Bengali and on the other hand you are depriving of their livelihood, this is a shame, everyone is proud about his own language, like those who talk in Gujarati, Marathi or Hindi the Bengalis too have their pride in speaking Bengali, I am proud of speaking this language."

Controversies have arisen in Bengal following a number of "genuine" Indian citizens being thrown beyond the international fence — by the Border Security Force — where they have been left stranded without food and shelter for the past several days.

The Chief Minister also took up the cause of the Sikh community in Kolkata who on Sunday demanded apologies from Bengal BJP president and junior Union Minister Sukanto Majumdar for throwing a blue "Hawaian" slippers during a protest hitting by default a Sikh man standing in the crowd outside Banerjee's Kalighat residence.

Majumdar along with his supports was on Sunday afternoon protesting outside the Chief Minister's residence against the recent communal flare-up at Maheshtala in southern fringes of Kolkata when he was detained by the police.

Though he would not name Majumdar she said "There is a half-central minister who is in love with chappals (slipper). Why don't they (BJP) open chappal shops?"

The CM launched a scathing attack on the BJP for targeting only Bengali-speaking population so as to push them across the border after labeling them as Bangladeshis despite them having valid documents

Even as the Opposition BJP MLAs rose up to protest against her speech a ruckus followed leading Speaker Biman Banerjee to suspend a saffron legislator Manoj Oraon and warn BJP MLA Shankar Ghosh. The saffron outfit later staged a walkout.

Elsewhere TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee too launched a no-holds-barred attack on the Union Government putting five "pertinent" questions regarding the Pahelgam attack and subsequent Indo-Pak conflict that led to a brief exchange of missiles last month.

The junior Banerjee wrote a long post on his social media handle writing how "It has been over 55 days since the Pahelgam terror attack. It is deeply concerning that in a democracy, neither the mainstream media, members of the opposition, nor the judiciary has stepped forward to raise these five critical questions before the Government of India."

As a "citizen committed to the nation's well-being and as a public representative entrusted with accountability," he raised "five questions before the Government of India."

Firstly he asked as to who would take the responsibility of the "massive breach in national security," whence four heavily armed terrorists managed to infiltrate the Indian borders and carry out an attack that left 26 civilians dead.

And then he went on to ask "if this was an intelligence failure, why was the Intelligence Bureau Chief granted a one-year extension, that too barely a month after the attack? Why was he rewarded rather than held accountable? What is the compulsion?"

Banerjee who is also the MP from Diamond Harbour constituency — once represented by the likes of Jyotirmoy Basu — from where he won by a record margin of almost 7.5 lakh votes raising many an eyebrow also wondered if the Government could use Pegasus spyware against the opposition politician and even the judges then "what stops it from using the same tools against terrorist networks and suspects?."

He went on to raise questions of the Pahelgam attackers wondering "Where are the four terrorists responsible for this brutal, religion-based massacre? Are they dead or alive? If they have been neutralised, why has the government failed to make a clear statement? And if they haven't, why is the silence?"

Another question from his part pegged on the Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) whence he asked "when will India reclaim Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK)? Why hasn't the government officially responded to the US President's claim that he persuaded India into a ceasefire with promises of trade?"

MCG continues anti-encroachment drive

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ Gurugram

As part of its ongoing efforts under the "Encroachment-Free Gurugram" campaign, the Municipal Corporation Gurugram (MCG) carried out a major anti-encroachment drive on Palam Vihar Road on Monday.

The campaign, led by the MCG's street vending management team, aimed to clear illegal structures and ensure smooth traffic movement and pedestrian access.

During the operation, the team removed unauthorised carts, kiosks and temporary structures that had been set up on roadsides and footpaths

During the operation, the team removed unauthorised carts, kiosks, and temporary structures that had been set up on roadsides and footpaths. Officials issued strict warnings to local vendors and encroachers, stating that any repeat violations would invite legal action.

The initiative is part of MCG's broader strategy to create a clean, organised and citizen-friendly urban environment. Officials emphasised that such efforts are essential not only for maintaining civic order but also for ensuring the uninterrupted movement of traffic and emergency services.

Local residents welcomed the move, lauding the municipal body's commitment to improving public spaces. Many highlighted the challenges posed by unchecked encroachments, which often block pathways and contribute to congestion on busy roads like Palam Vihar. MCG Commissioner Pradeep Dahiya reiterated the corporation's commitment to maintaining public order and cleanliness in the city.

"Making Gurugram a clean, safe, and smoothly functioning city remains our top priority. Encroachments not only disrupt traffic but also inconvenience the public. This campaign will continue to ensure systematic urban development," he said.

Rapido rider caught slapping woman passenger

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Bengaluru

A Rapido bike taxi rider was caught on camera for allegedly slapping a woman passenger following an argument between them over rash driving, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on June 13 when the woman, who works as a saleswoman at a jewellery shop in Jayanagar, was en route to her workplace, they said.

Owing to his alleged rash driving, she got off mid-ride and confronted him, leading to a heated argument between them. The woman reportedly also refused to pay the fare and return the helmet, police said.

When contacted, Rapido preferred not to comment on the matter, citing it as a police case.

A video of the incident that has now gone viral on social media platforms showed the biker slapping the woman. The impact of the assault was such that she fell on the ground.

According to the police, when the matter came to light, both the woman and the rider were brought to Jayanagar police station.

The woman claimed that the rider was driving rashly and jumped signals. When she questioned him, an argument broke out between them and he slapped her, a senior police officer said.

Despite persuading the woman, she initially refused to give a complaint.

However, police filed a Non-Cognizable Report (NCR) in the matter. Later, a notice was also sent to her to give a complaint, so that an FIR can be registered and further investigation can be carried out, he said.

Based on the complaint lodged by the woman, a case was registered against the accused bike taxi rider on Monday under sections 79 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) and 115 (voluntarily causing hurt) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, said Lokesh B Jagalasar, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South).

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Editor's TAKE

A watershed moment in India's policy and politics

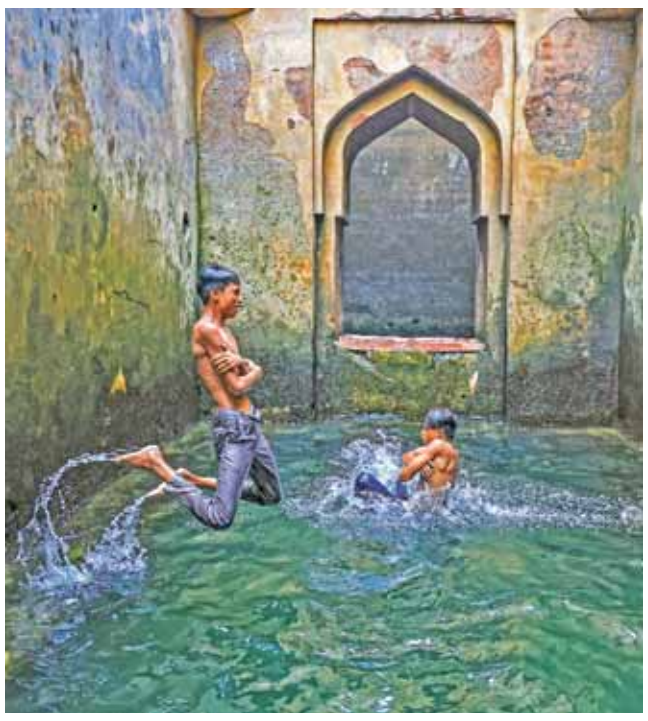
The notification of Census 2027 marks a significant step towards building an inclusive India

On June 16, 2025, Union Home Minister Amit Shah officially notified the commencement of India's 16th national Census — marking the eighth since independence — setting in motion what may become the most significant demographic exercise in the country's history. But this is not just another count of people and households. For the first time, the Indian Census will include caste enumeration, a move with potentially transformative implications for policymaking, governance, and political discourse. Originally scheduled for 2021, Census 2027 comes after a six-year delay, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its prolonged disruptions to field operations. In addition, administrative hesitations and political sensitivity around the issue of caste enumeration contributed to the postponement. Bihar's caste-based survey in 2023 laid the groundwork for this national shift. The findings there challenged long-held assumptions and triggered a broader national conversation.

As states like Maharashtra, Odisha, and Karnataka began seeking their own surveys, pressure mounted on the Centre to rise above political hesitation. The inclusion of caste data was a matter of heated debate over the past few years, with the opposition consistently demanding a caste-based Census to better understand socio-economic disparities and frame more targeted welfare policies. The Modi Government, on its part, had long resisted these demands — arguing that caste enumeration could be divisive and logistically challenging. However, growing pressure from regional parties, and even some within the NDA fold — especially in light of Bihar's caste survey in 2023 — left the Centre with few choices. The entire exercise will be conducted digitally for the first time. About 34 lakh enumerators and 1.3 lakh functionaries will be deployed, armed with mobile applications to ensure efficiency, accuracy, and real-time data management. A significant feature of Census 2027 will be the option for self-enumeration via digital platforms, empowering citizens to directly participate in the data collection process. The inclusion of caste data marks a paradigm shift.

For decades, Indian policymakers have been working with incomplete caste data — largely based on the 1931 Census, the last time caste details were officially recorded. This outdated picture has led to ambiguous policy formation, skewed welfare targeting, and inconsistent reservation frameworks. Political parties across the spectrum — especially the opposition — have argued that affirmative action and socio-economic schemes cannot be equitable without accurate caste data. Caste influences access to education, employment, healthcare, and land ownership. A detailed Census would help craft data-driven social justice policies, recalibrate reservation quotas if needed, and direct resources more effectively. Census 2027 will be a social mirror. For the first time, policymakers and citizens alike may have access to reliable, granular caste data. This opens new possibilities for targeted welfare, social reform, and participative governance. Yes, challenges abound — data privacy, political misuse, administrative errors — but the potential rewards are immense.

PIC TALK



Boys cool off in a stepwell amid scorching weather on a hot summer day, in Jaipur. PTI

Modi@11: India's cultural renaissance

From reviving sacred temples and pilgrimage routes to reclaiming lost artefacts and reinvigorating India's spiritual diplomacy, the Government's efforts have reignited a deep pride in India's identity

Over the past 11 years, India has witnessed a profound cultural resurgence that intertwines the richness of its ancient heritage with the aspirations of a modern nation. Spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this renaissance has placed India's civilisational identity at the forefront of national consciousness, transforming cultural restoration into a cornerstone of governance.

From revitalising sacred temples and pilgrimage routes to commemorating long-overlooked historical figures, the Government's efforts have rekindled a deep sense of pride and unity. These initiatives not only preserve India's timeless traditions but also integrate them into its journey towards progress and global prominence. Under the Modi Government, the cultural renaissance has not been confined to just traditions — it has become a celebration of India's spiritual diversity and civilisational unity. The inauguration of the Kartarpur Corridor in November 2019 stands as a symbol of this inclusive vision, enabling Indian Sikh pilgrims to directly access the revered Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan. This initiative reflects the BJP Government's deep respect for all faiths and their sacred geographical identities.

The consecration of Shri Ram Lalla in Ayodhya in January 2024 stands as a defining chapter in India's cultural renaissance. More than just the inauguration of a temple, it represents the realisation of a long-standing cultural commitment, restoring faith, identity, and a sense of justice. Its majestic presence reflects India's renewed spiritual pride and cultural self-confidence. The Kashi Vishwanath Corridor project is a powerful symbol of India's cultural revival, presenting a renewed connection with its sacred heritage.

What was once a labyrinth of narrow, congested lanes has been transformed into a majestic corridor, offering seamless access from the ghats of the Ganga to the revered temple. This transformation goes beyond the physical; it is a spiritual rejuvenation that has re-established Varanasi as a vibrant centre of devotion.

In Ujjain, the Mahakal Lok project has elevated the Mahakaleshwar temple complex with a harmonious blend of traditional architecture and modern infrastructure, creating a deeply immersive spiritual experience. Likewise, initiatives like the Parvati Temple and the scenic coastal precinct in Somnath continue to enrich the spiritual journeys of devotees. The revitalisation of infrastructure at the sacred Kamakhya Temple in Assam underscores the Government's commitment to cultural heritage that transcends regional boundaries, encompassing the spirit of a united Bharat. The nation's culture thrives not only in its temples and sculptures but also in its rich traditions of music, dance, language, and oral storytelling. By investing in digital preservation and institutional support, the Government has not just administered policy — it has honoured the higher duty of 'Rajdharma', safeguarding the soul of the nation.

DR KAUSHAL KANT MISHRA

Through the PRASAD scheme, the Government has carried out a comprehensive and dignified revival of religious sites across India. With over ₹1,900 crore invested, temples, mosques, churches, gurdwaras, and dargahs have been restored, not just preserving heritage but also energising local economies, promoting religious tourism, and fostering social harmony. India's spiritual and civilisational diplomacy has resonated globally as well. While only 13 stolen antiquities were recovered until 2013, more than 642 idols and artefacts have been repatriated since 2014, signalling a powerful reclaiming of the nation's cultural identity on the world stage. This cultural flame burns not just in monuments but deeply within the common people. The restoration of Nalanda University, the worldwide recognition of International Yoga Day, and the grand celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Guru Gobind Singh Ji's birth anniversaries showcase India's determination to reclaim its intellectual and spiritual heritage on the global stage. Programmes like "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat" and "Kashi Tamil Sangamam" highlight how India's regional diversity is its greatest strength. When artists, scholars, and practitioners from the South come together to celebrate culture in the North, it is the soul of India embracing its unity. The Kashi Tamil organisation in 2025, attended by over two lakh visitors and featuring hundreds of performers, is a powerful testament to India's awakened civilisational spirit. The Maha Kumbh 2025, which attracted 66 crore devotees in just one month, became a testament to India's spiritual leadership. It was not merely a festival of faith, but a grand celebration of the nation's soul, uniting every caste, community, region, and belief in harmonious togetherness. For a long time, India's judicial system was based on colonial laws aimed more at control than protecting citizens' rights.

The Modi Government's introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita marks not just a legal overhaul but a powerful affirmation of India's sovereign spirit. Since Independence, many critical issues remained unresolved due to a lack of political will and fear of losing vote banks. Controversial and sensitive topics such as the construction of the Ram Mandir, the abolition of triple talaq, the removal of Article 370, and the Citizenship Amendment Act were considered too complex to tackle. Yet, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, these challenges were confronted with clarity, determination, and a focus on long-term national interest rather than short-term political gains, thereby earning the trust and confidence of millions across the nation.

Prime Minister Modi is rebuilding more than just monuments; he is revitalising the soul of India. Today, the nation is rekindling its rich culture, deep pride, and timeless truths. This renewed awareness calls upon every citizen to remember their identity, heritage, and the direction in which the country must progress.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 11 years of decisive and effective leadership have gone beyond conventional governance to ignite a new era of national consciousness. By seamlessly blending development with heritage and progress with tradition, he has revived India's spirit and built the foundation for a self-reliant and confident nation. As India moves forward with assurance, it draws strength from the eternal wisdom of its past. This is the essence of a true renaissance, deeply rooted yet visionary. When a civilisation reconnects with its core identity, it not only awakens itself but also shines as a guiding light for the entire world.

(The author is a BJP media panelist and is known nationwide for his role in the restoration of temples. Views are personal)

Give blood, give hope: Together we save lives

SECOND Opinion

The theme for this year's World Blood Donor Day – "Give blood, give hope: together we save lives" — beautifully captures the essence of what it means to donate blood. It is more than a medical act; it is a gift of life, a symbol of solidarity, and a powerful expression of compassion. Blood donors are unsung heroes whose quiet generosity sustains the very heartbeat of healthcare systems across the world. My own journey with blood donation began early, shaped profoundly by my father's long battle with a bleeding disorder. He needed countless transfusions throughout his life, but none as urgent as during a sudden, life-threatening brain haemorrhage. Emergency surgery saved him — but only because blood had already been donated, stored, and made available. I will never forget the wave of gratitude I felt for the strangers who had given without knowing him. Each unit of blood was a thread in the web of life that held him together through the crisis. Every blood donor — whether a friend, family member, or total stranger — becomes part of a life-saving chain. Their selflessness is profound.

Blood transfusions are critical to modern medicine. They are essential for patients undergoing surgeries, dealing with trauma or accidents, suffering from severe anaemia or cancer, and managing inherited blood disorders like thalassaemia, sickle cell anaemia, and haemophilia. Often, a single donation becomes a bridge between life and death. Globally, two main donor categories exist: voluntary donors and family/replacement donors. The World Health Organisation has strongly advocated for a shift to voluntary, unpaid blood donations since 1997. These donations are considered the safest, most ethical, and most sustainable. In contrast, family or replacement donations — when someone donates blood specifically for a relative or friend — often involve emotional pressure and are less safe. They may even pose health risks, like Graft Versus Host Disease, when genetically similar donor blood attacks the recipient's body.

MANOHAR AGNANI

Recognising the importance of a safe and stable blood supply, India has taken significant strides. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, through the National Health Mission (NHM), supports blood banks with funds, equipment, manpower, and vehicles for collection and transport. The Government promotes free availability of processed blood to patients, aiming to reduce out-of-pocket expenses and encourage voluntary donation. A notable initiative is e-RaktKosh, a centralised blood bank management system developed by C-DAC. It links over 4,300 blood centres, allowing real-time access to blood availability, online donor registration, and nationwide coordination. Integrated with platforms like UMANG, e-Hospital, and Aarogya Setu, it improves efficiency, transparency, and reach. Civil society plays a crucial role as well. Organisations like the Indian Red Cross Society, Blood Connect, and Sankalp India Foundation have created robust ecosystems to support voluntary donation. From 24/7 helplines to well-organised blood camps and emergency services, their efforts save thousands of lives annually. Despite this progress, India still falls short of WHO's recommended donation rate of 1 per cent of the population. In 2022, only 0.8 per cent donated, resulting in a shortfall of nearly a million units annually.

This gap is especially alarming given India's ageing population. By 2050, over 347 million Indians will be over the age of 60 — a demographic more likely to need transfusions, yet often ineligible to donate. To meet future demands, we must strengthen both infrastructure and public awareness. Advanced technologies like AI will help optimise donor screening and inventory management, but voluntary human participation remains irreplaceable. We must continue to educate, inspire, and mobilise citizens — especially the youth — to become lifelong donors. We also draw strength from past pioneers like Leela Moolgaokar and Sir Upendranath Brahmachari, and present-day heroes like Kiran Sharma and Suresh Kumar Saini, whose dedication to voluntary blood donation has transformed lives. Their legacy is a reminder: when we give blood, we don't just donate a fluid — we offer hope, healing, and humanity. Let us honour their spirit. Let us give blood. Let us give hope. Together, we save lives.

(The writer, a retired IAS officer, is professor, Public Health at Azim Premji University at Bhopal. Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

The danger of nuclear war

The front page news 'Israel launches strike on Iran's nuclear sites' (June 14) and 'Israel warns of more attacks on Iran' (June 15) has substantially established that the nuclear ammunition, which once made countries invincible, is proving devastating for those countries themselves when drones guided by satellite images from distant locations can severely destroy the nuclear facilities, safest underground storage, their scientists, apart from radiation threats. Warfare has entirely changed in technology, ballistics, satellite data, espionage, and execution. Even Iran's major oilfields have been attacked. Iran underestimated Israel. The same blunder was made by Pakistan, and it met the fate it deserved through Operation Sindoor.

The world is determined against terrorism. The world has unmistakably identified sources of terrorism. Neither the US nor China could help Pakistan. Pakistan's case is still morose and funereal when IWT has been suspended. Doles from the IMF and World Bank can't salvage Pakistan. Currently, wars are being fought by drones and air forces while the army and navy extend logistics and field support. Iranian support to Hamas, Houthis, Hezbollah and other militant groups and militias has rendered West Asia and the Middle East disturbed and warprone for a long time. It is the right time to dismantle nuclear arms and facilities.

VINOD JOHRI | DELHI

Arms and ammunition seized in Manipur

In a massive haul of arms, the Manipur police and security forces recovered 328 guns, including sophisticated rifles, on the intervening night of June 13 and 14 in the five districts of the Imphal valley.

This included 151 SLR rifles, 65 INSAS rifles, 73 unspecified rifle types, five carbine guns, two MP5 guns, 12 light machine gun rifles, six AK series rifles, two Amogh rifles, one mortar, six pistols, two barrels, an AR-15 gun and two flare guns, as well as hundreds of rounds of ammunition. The weapons were recovered after simultaneous search operations were conducted at different locations by joint teams of the Manipur police, the Central Armed Police Forces, the army and the paramilitary Assam Rifles. Since ethnic violence first broke out in Manipur on May 3, 2023, about 7,000 weapons and lakhs of rounds of ammunition were looted from police armouries. Since May 2023, more than 250 people have been killed and over 60,000 have been displaced.

The state remains deeply divided, with physical and social barriers separating communities. Members of the Kuki-Zo community are unable to enter the capital, Imphal, while Meiteis cannot travel to the hill districts. A comprehensive approach, combining security operations with dialogue and reconciliation efforts, remains crucial for achieving lasting peace in the region.

BHAGWAN THADANI | MUMBAI

The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji

On June 16, 1606, the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev Ji, sacrificed his life, igniting a flame of faith, truth, and humanity that continues to pierce the darkness of injustice. His martyrdom is not just a chapter in Sikh history but a beacon for all of civilisation, inspiring us to stand against oppression, embrace tolerance, and live for truth. Guru Arjan Dev Ji's sacrifice is a flame that burns in every heart that refuses to bow before injustice.

At the age of 18, in 1581, he ascended to the Guruship and, over the next 25 years, transformed Sikhism into not only a spiritual force but also a symbol of social equality and human welfare.

Under his leadership, the Sikh community became organised, and his contributions gave a new direction not only to Sikhism but to Indian society as a whole. His most notable achievement is the establishment of Sri Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple).

This temple is not just a religious site but a global symbol of religious harmony and equality. Its four open doors proclaim that God's house is accessible to all — regardless of religion, caste, or class — a revolutionary concept in an era rife with religious and social discrimination. Guru Ji's vision made the Golden Temple not only a sacred pilgrimage site for Sikhs but also a living emblem of human unity.

RITESH KUMAR JAIN | BARWANI

ISRAEL APOLOGISES FOR DEPICTING WRONG INDIA MAP

In a first, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has apologised for posting an incorrect map of India's international boundaries — which omitted Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, which are constitutionally integral parts of India. Aksai Chin, which is part of Ladakh, was also excluded from Indian territory. Arunachal Pradesh was also misrepresented in the map.

Though the Modi Government has not yet responded to the IDF's wrong map, people wonder how such an incorrect map reached the hands of Israel? After reading this, all patriotic Indians are unable to understand that over the past several years (particularly in the Modi era) India and Israel have developed a friendly relationship; in fact, in 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first Indian leader to visit that country. Delhi is also now one of Tel Aviv's biggest trading partners, behind only the United States, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and China, and those trading figures are only set to increase.

Besides, India is one of Israel's largest clients for military equipment sales. Hope, Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu must instruct the IDF to delete the incorrect map of India's international boundaries, correct it, and repost it. If not, then what's the point of this apology by the IDF? Israel should not forget that, like its patriotic soldiers, our soldiers are also fighting and dying to maintain territorial integrity.

Though we call Israel our friendly country, we should learn our own lessons first. Particularly, the Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), before getting carried away over Israel, should learn that every country works in its own interest.

BIDYUT K CHATTERJEE | FARIDABAD

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

The Pioneer
RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE 17, 2025

Green Gold: India's Horticultural Leap into the Bioeconomy

Horticulture is a key catalyst to fuel a circular, green economy through its rich biodiversity, vast rural base, and untapped innovation potential. This transformation is not just an economic opportunity; it is a national imperative for sustainable prosperity

FIRST Column

India stands at a pivotal moment in its developmental journey, where the convergence of science, sustainability, and sectoral innovation is redefining traditional agriculture and horticulture. Among the most promising shifts is the rise of the bioeconomy, which encompasses the production of renewable biological resources and their conversion into value-added products such as food, bioenergy, biochemicals, and bio-based materials. The Indian bioeconomy has expanded remarkably, from USD 10 billion in 2014 to an estimated USD 165.7 billion in 2024, and is projected to reach USD 300 billion by 2030, according to the India Bioeconomy Report (2024).

This remarkable growth is not merely a consequence of technological advancement; it reflects a strategic redirection towards climate resilience, ecological sustainability, and economic inclusivity. India's horticulture sector, being the world's second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables and pioneer in the production of plantation crops, spices, medicinal and aromatic plants and floriculture, is uniquely positioned to anchor this bio-economic transformation. Horticulture offers not only the biological raw material base for a wide spectrum of bio-based industries but also the potential to deliver income diversification, rural employment, and nutritional security. As such, aligning horticultural development with the principles of a circular bioeconomy presents a timely and transformative opportunity for the country.

TEJUSVI SHUKLA

ARPAN A CHAKRAVARTY

Bioeconomic Powerhouse

The bioeconomy in horticulture extends well beyond the conventional practices of growing fruits vegetables and other crops. It involves the integration of biotechnology, bio-resource management, and value chain optimisation to develop products ranging from nutraceuticals, bioplastics, and bioenergy, to climate-resilient crop varieties. Bioconversion of post-harvest waste into compost, bio-fertilizers, or clean energy offers an opportunity to simultaneously reduce waste, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and generate additional rural incomes.

India's policy landscape has begun responding to this opportunity. The launch of the BioE3 Policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment, and Employment) represents a significant strategic shift. This policy promotes the establishment of advanced bio-manufacturing facilities, bio-foundry clusters, and Bio-AI hubs, all geared toward enabling lab-to-market transitions in bio-innovation. Initiatives such as the BioSaarthi mentorship program and the strengthening of biotech startup incubators have been instrumental in nurturing a vibrant ecosystem of entrepreneurship, innovation, and knowledge transfer.

One of the most impactful elements of this transformation is the rapid progress in bioenergy. The ethanol blending rate in India has surged from 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 15 per cent in 2023-24, saving approximately ₹78,000 crore in foreign exchange and preventing the emission of 318 lakh tonnes of Carbon dioxide, according to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (2024). This success has been driven by the development of second-generation ethanol refineries, which convert agricultural residues such as sugarcane bagasse, bamboo, and paddy straw into clean fuel, thereby reinforcing circularity and climate sustainability in rural areas.

As India accelerates its transition to a low-carbon and resource-efficient economy, horticulture can be a critical driver in delivering scalable, inclusive, and market-aligned solutions within the bioeconomy framework.

Bridging the Gaps

Despite its potential, the integration of horticulture into the bioeconomy faces several structural and operational challenges that require urgent attention. One of the most pressing issues is the infrastructure gap. Many horticultural production zones lack access to reliable cold chains, pack houses, and processing units. According to NITI Aayog (2023), post-harvest losses for perishable horticultural commodities can range from 15 to 20 per cent, primarily due to inefficient logistics, poor market access, and limited storage facilities. These losses not only reduce farmer incomes but also weaken the capacity of horticultural systems to support value addition and industrial linkage.

Equally concerning is the limited extent of value addition in horticultural produce. Most fruits, vegetables and other horticultural produce continue to be sold in raw or minimally processed forms, missing the opportunity for transformation into high-value bio-products such as bio-based packaging, plant-derived nutraceuticals, or fermented health foods. This not only restricts income potential but also prevents the sector from contributing fully to the bioeconomy's goals of waste reduction, innovation, and product diversification.

Financial constraints are another barrier. Bio-based enterprises, especially those involving new technologies or bioconversion processes, often require high initial investment, extended gestation Periods, and market uncertainties. The lack of targeted financial instruments and risk-sharing mechanisms deter private sector investment, impeding the commercialisation and scaling of bio-based ventures. Moreover, the human capital base needed to power a bioeconomy is still in development. There is an urgent need for training programs and capacity-building tailored to farmers, rural entrepreneurs, processors, and women stakeholders, enabling them to adopt new technologies and participate meaningfully in bio-economic value chains.

Finally, there are environmental and biodiversity risks that must be managed. Without adequate ecological safeguards, the aggressive exploitation of plant-based resources for bio-economic use may result in habitat loss, monoculture expansion, and disruption of local agro-ecological balances. As such, the growth of India's bioeconomy must be carefully regulated to ensure that it remains sustainable, resilient, and equitable.

Strategic Interventions: Building a Resilient and Inclusive Bioeconomy To unlock the full potential of horticulture in India's bioeconomy, a series of strategic and coordinated interventions are necessary. First and foremost, there is a need to strengthen policy and regulatory frameworks. These must be science-based, transparent, and harmonised across sectors to encourage innovation while safeguarding bio-sources and indigenous knowledge systems.

Policy clarity around biosafety, intellectual property, and benefit sharing will help create a conducive environment for investment and public trust. Second, investment in infrastructure and value chains must be prioritised.

Expanding rural cold chain networks, establishing decentralised processing units, and incentivising public-private partnerships for bio-manufacturing clusters can significantly reduce post-harvest losses and promote local-level value addition.

Models such as Rural Bioeconomy Parks, where processing, research, and training facilities co-exist, can serve as hubs for innovation and rural development. Third, there is a compelling need to promote innovation and skill development. Strengthening institutional support through Bio-AI hubs, biotech incubators, and mentorship programs like Bio- Saarthi can nurture a new generation of bio-entrepreneurs. Simultaneously, capacity-building programs aimed at women, youth, and marginalised farmers must be institutionalised to ensure inclusive participation in bio-economic growth.

Fourth, advancing climate-smart and sustainable practices in horticulture is critical. Promoting precision farming, water-saving technologies, integrated pest and nutrient management, and climate-resilient varieties will ensure that productivity gains do not come at the expense of ecological integrity.

The use of bio-inputs such as bio-pesticides and biofertilisers should be expanded, both for environmental reasons and to meet consumer demand for residue-free produce.

Finally, expanding access to finance and markets is vital for scaling the bioeconomy. Dedicated Bioeconomy Investment Funds, blended finance models, and credit guarantees tailored to bio-based enterprises can mobilise private capital and reduce the burden of early-stage risk.

Equally important is the need to develop robust market linkages for bio-based horticultural products, through branding, certification, export promotion, and integration into national and global supply chains.

The Road Ahead

India's bioeconomy offers a powerful pathway to achieve economic prosperity, ecological sustainability, and social equity. The horticulture sector, by its diversity, biological richness, and economic relevance, is well-positioned to become a cornerstone of this transformation. However, realising this vision will require deliberate action, through policy coherence, institutional innovation, infrastructure development, skill empowerment, and ecological stewardship.

As India moves into a decade defined by climate challenges and global sustainability commitments, a bioeconomy anchored in resilient and inclusive horticulture can not only meet domestic needs but also establish India as a global leader in green growth. By aligning scientific innovation with rural empowerment, and bio-based solutions with climate resilience, India can shape a future that is productive, equitable, and ecologically secure for generations to come.

(Arpan A Chakravarty is a Research Fellow at India Foundation and Tejusvi Shukla is a Doctoral Candidate at OP Jindal University. Views expressed are personal)

Gender, Grit, and Altitude: Women on Everest Rewrite the Rules of Risk, Leadership, and Sustainability

Some recent news stories highlighted that Mt. Everest peak is set to be reached by women thousandth time. However, the claim stands contested, as it has been argued that several women mountaineers scaled the peak successfully many times, like Lhakpa Sherpa, from Nepal, who did it ten times, a record for female climbers. However, according to the Himalayan Database, which tracks expeditions to the top of Everest, women climbers had scaled the peak 962 times, while men did so 11,955 times by the end of May 2025. While mountains are said to be conquered and narrated by men' (Majastre 2009). 'Mountaineering landscapes have evolved as, and remain strongly masculinised concepts, and it has been, and still is, male-dominated'(Pomfret and Doran, 2015), and 'women mountaineers' continue to be marginalised by the overwhelming male-ness of popularised mountaineering'(Hunt, 2019). No wonder that essentially masculine leadership traits shaped perceptions of who can succeed in a mountaineering space (Barratt 2010; Robinson 2008), and mountaineering leadership programmes have been imbued with a 'culture of competition, confidence, strength, toughness and proving worth' (Sharp, 2001). As a result, 'female mountaineering suffered structural oppression within that culture'. Nevertheless, the ratio of women getting to the top of the Everest is on the rise, which was one to 16 men in the 2000s, and two decades later, it is one to 10. In India, too, as of December 2024, 74 women scaled Mount Everest, among them were Arunima Sinha, the first female amputee, and very recently, Chhonzin Angmo, the first visually impaired woman.

ARCHANA DATTA

Undoubtedly, under-representation has placed many aspiring women at a disadvantage as they fail to look up to role models for inspiration. Women mountaineers on climbing expeditions, also face practical difficulties with ill-fitted mountaineering outfits and equipment, generally designed for men, which not only cause discomfort and injuries, but also psychological handicaps such as 'self-doubt and anxiety about their abilities, which considerably influence their risk perception, and decision-making in challenging climbing situations'.

While, Billi Bierling, Director, of Himalayan Database, who herself climbed Everest in 2009, commented that 'when it comes to taking risks on the mountain, women are probably a little bit more conservative… if it is too dangerous, she won't take chances and go down, while a male climber, would still go'. However, a 2018 study (Dr Jenny Hall, York St John University, UK), contended that in an essentially masculinised environment, women mountaineers created a 'place of difference while negotiating risk, amounting to the legitimate 'other' forms of mountaineering. While gendered experiences of mountaineering offered insights into different ways of confronting 'fear as a tactical emotion to negotiate positionality and coping strategies while experiencing risk', women mountaineers displayed unique qualities of leadership like cooperation, emotion, personal development, consensual decision-making and being relationship orientated. However, such differing traits have been often interpreted as their 'insufficient physical strength to endure the challenges of hard mountaineering'(Sharp).

While research in leisure studies and effectual geographies exploring women's experience in extreme sports like mountaineering is limited, particularly, in terms of how to effect influences the sentient and emotional behaviours of women(Humberstone 2016; Warren 2016; Waitt and Clifton 2013; Evers 2004, 2006, 2009). Yet, there is a persistent belief that 'gender is consequential in adventure tourism'.

The void in such scholarship demonstrates an emphasis on masculinity in the high-altitude mountaineering' (Eger et al., 2021). A 2020 study that examined the empowering benefits of constraint negotiation for women mountaineers, reiterated that the 'mountaineering space was used to resist gendered expectations and gaining empowerment' (Harris & Wilson, 2007; Little & Wilson, 2005). Analysing responses from 321 female mountaineers, it dismissed the contention that 'women are passive victims of constraints', rather 'they are active agents, motivated to pursue mountaineering aspirations despite having identified barriers'.

As in the wave of social transformation in the 20th century, the sporting milieu and mountain activities got feminised (Galissaire, Mennesson, 2004), a comparative study of 2,211 climbers making their first attempt on Everest between 1990 and 2005, and of 5,324 climbers between 2006-2019, revealed that the summit success rates have almost doubled, both, for men and women, from 32.7 per cent of 214 women and 32.9 per cent of 1,702 men to 68.2 per cent of 548 women and 64.4 per cent of 2,860 men(Himalayan Database). Between 2006 and 2019, only 0.5 per cent of 548 women vs. 1.1 per cent of 2,860 men attempting Everest did not return home alive, which led to the conclusion that 'women are more likely to reach the summit and less likely to die'.

Now adventure tourism market which includes mountaineering has been projected to reach USD 345.6 Billion this year and is expected to expand to USD 745.7 Billion by 2035, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8 per cent from 2025 to 2035. India is also slated to grow with a CAGR of 8 per cent during the period, and the tourism economy is targeted to reach USD 3 Trillion by 2047.

While, women, both, as mountaineers and inhabitants of mountainous regions, could contribute significantly to micro and macro economies. As primary managers of mountain resources and participants in local economies, particularly in agriculture, animal husbandry, and tourism, they play a vital role in generating local livelihoods and ensuring food security and biodiversity. Labour market activities like arranging homestays, crafts, and guiding will also have a broader impact on the country's overall development. Women as mountaineers can boost entrepreneurship by promoting eco-friendly mountain-related industries, sustainable tourism models, and high-altitude scientific research.

As many environmentalists and development economists red-flagged the issue of the 'commodification' of mountains, International Mountain Day 2024, rightly focused on mountain solutions for a sustainable future. While, the UN Environment, Executive Director, Erik Solheim, highlighted the role of 'women in protecting the mountain ecosystems'. Since, mountains form the most vulnerable part of the natural ecosystem, women with adequate financial and institutional support could act as change agents in building up sustainable economy and ecosystems.

(The writer is the former Director General of Doordarshan & All India Radio. Views expressed are personal)

AI-171 crash: A wake-up call for urban planning around airports

The Air India AI-171 crash near Ahmedabad airport has left behind more than just wreckage. It has left families devastated, careers cut short, and a city in grief. Amid all that's being said about aircraft performance, weather, and pilot decisions, a quieter but harsher truth is coming to light — this tragedy on the ground (at the medical college hostel) could have been avoided if proper building norms and smarter urban planning around airports had been followed.Past disasters have already shown how densely populated areas near runways can turn aviation accidents into large-scale tragedies. In 2020, Pakistan International Airlines Flight 8303 crashed into Karachi's Model Colony, a crowded residential area just short of the runway, killing 97 people. In 2012, Dana Air Flight 992 fell into a suburb of Lagos, wiping out entire families.

Even in New York, American Airlines Flight 587 crashed over the Belle Harbor neighbourhood in Queens. The tragic crash of Air India flight AI-171, along with the examples above, brings into sharp focus the urgent need for better urban planning - especially within the 5-kilometre radius of major airports. The 5 km radius around airports has long been considered a sensitive zone — not necessarily because buildings within it are illegal or too tall, but because it is a critical safety zone for aircraft during take-off and landing, the most vulnerable phases of flight. Traditionally in India, during British rule, airports (unlike railway stations) were built far away from populated areas. For example, when Delhi's Safdarjung Airport and Palam Airport were built, there were very few settlements nearby — only a few army barracks around Safdarjung (now known as Lodhi Colony) and the old, sparsely populated villages of Mehram Nagar and Palam around Palam Airport. In those days, air crashes were more frequent, and placing airports away from populated areas was a deliberate step to avoid ground casualties. Even today, airports in tier-II towns are located at a fair distance from cities, although the growing urban sprawl is now fast approaching them as well. After independence, as India witnessed a massive surge in population and rapid urbanisation, cities began expanding in all directions. The airports that were once located far from residential and commercial zones gradually found themselves surrounded by growing urban settlements. With the rise in land demand, areas around airports have become highly sought after due to their excellent connectivity and strategic location, significantly pushing up real estate values. This led to high-density development near airport boundaries.

AJAY S JASRA

However, this unchecked growth brought with it serious concerns like constructing buildings near active flight paths not just from a flight safety perspective, but also from a security point of view. As a result, managing construction and land use near airports became a critical issue, demanding a careful balance between urban development and the uncompromising need for aviation safety and security.Globally, aviation authorities, including India's DGCA and AAI, have issued detailed zoning maps for every major airport. There is a formal process to apply for height clearance of any structure. All international airports in India follow Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) — a set of 3D safety rules that make sure aircraft have enough space to climb and descend without danger. These OLS regulations, overseen by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and DGCA, are not optional. They are strict safety norms. Structures within 5 km of a runway face the toughest height limits.

The hostel where the recent crash caused casualties was most likely within the permitted height as per AAI rules. But what often escapes attention is not just height, but the density of the human population in such areas. Even if buildings technically follow all safety norms, the presence of thousands of people living or working near a runway increases the risk in case of crashes, aborted landings, or engine failure during low-altitude flights. This is what makes the crash of AI-171 even more tragic. This raises a critical and timely question: Is it time to completely rethink how we plan our cities around airports — or even relocate airports themselves? Hyderabad has already done it. The old Begumpet Airport was relocated to Shamshabad, about 24 km south of the city centre, to allow for future expansion and improved safety. With urban sprawl rapidly swallowing earlier remote zones, many airports in cities like Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Chennai now find themselves trapped amid dense residential, institutional, and commercial structures.

The AI-171 crash should serve as a wake-up call. Not necessarily because rules were violated, but because the current model of reactive urban planning — where development chases growth without long-term thinking — is failing to safeguard lives. If airports are to expand safely along with cities, we may need to reimagine their place on the map.

That means moving older airports beyond city boundaries where possible, enforcing no-build or low-density zones around newer ones, and treating the 5 km airport radius not just as a regulatory guideline, but as a life-saving buffer zone.Urban planning must take into account not just real estate needs, but safety and long-term sustainability. The tragedy of AI-171 is not just a story of an aircraft gone wrong - it's also a story of a city that grew too close to danger.

(The writer is an aviation expert. Views expressed are personal)

Narendra Modi conferred with Cyprus' highest civilian honour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Nicosia

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Monday conferred with the Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III of Cyprus, the country's highest civilian honour.

"Humbled to receive the 'Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III' of Cyprus. I dedicate it to the friendship between our nations," Modi said after receiving the award.

Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides conferred the award on the Prime Minister.

The Order of Makarios III is the senior order of knighthood awarded by the country named after the first President of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios III.

Dedicating the award to the 1.4 billion people of India, Modi said it was an award to the trusted India-Cyprus friendship.

"I am confident that in the time to come, our active partnership will touch new heights. Together, we will not only strengthen the progress of our two nations but also contribute towards building a peaceful and secure world," the prime minister said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated with Cyprus' highest honour Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III by President Nikos Christodoulides in Cyprus PTI

"President @Christodulides conferred PM @narendramodi with the 'Grand Cross of the Order of Makarios III' of Cyprus.

The honour reflects the enduring India-Cyprus bilateral partnership and shared commitment to work together for the common vision for peace, progress and prosperity," the Ministry of External Affairs posted on X.

Cyprus' award brings the total tally of international honours conferred upon the prime minister to 23.

Modi noted the award was a recognition of India's age-old philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "The World is one Family" that guides its vision for global peace and progress, an MEA statement said.

The prime minister embraced the honour as a renewed commitment to strengthening and diversifying the partnership between India and Cyprus and emphasised the award was a symbol of the unwavering commitment of the two countries to peace, security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity, the statement added.

Modi is in Cyprus on the first leg of his three-nation tour.

From Cyprus, he will travel to Canada to attend the G7 Summit and then to Croatia for a bilateral visit.

G7 summit opens in Canada with focus on trade, wars

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Kananaskis (Canada)

When US President Donald Trump last came to Canada for a Group of Seven summit, the enduring image was of him seated with his arms folded defiantly as then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel stared daggers at him.

If there is a shared mission at this year's G7 summit, which begins Monday in Canada's Rocky Mountains, it is a desire to minimise any fireworks at a moment of combustible tensions.

The 2018 summit ended with Trump assailing his Canadian hosts on social media as he departed on Air Force One, saying he had instructed the US officials who remained in Quebec to oppose the G7 joint statement endorsed by the leaders of Japan, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and, of course, Canada.

"I have instructed our U.S. Reps not to endorse the Communique as we look at Tariffs on automobiles flooding the U.S. Market!" Trump posted on the site then known as Twitter.

This time, Trump already has hit several dozen nations with severe tariffs that risk a global economic slowdown. There is little progress on settling the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and now a new and escalating conflict between Israel and Iran over Tehran's nuclear programme.

Add to all of that the problems of climate change, immigration, drug trafficking, new technologies such as artificial intelligence and China's continued manufacturing superiority and chokehold on key supply chains.

Asked if he planned to announce any trade agreements at the G7 as he left the White House on Sunday, Trump said: "We have our trade deals. All we have to do is send a letter, 'This is what you're going to have to pay.' But I think we'll have a few, few new trade deals."

At stake might be the survival of the G7 itself at a time when the Trump administration has sent mixed signals about whether the president will attend the November Group of 20 summit in South Africa.

What Trump opposed at the 2018 summit in Quebec wasn't just tariffs, but a focus on having alliances with a shared set of standards seeking to shape policies.

"The big dispute in Quebec were the references to the rules-based international order and that's where that famous photo comes from," said Peter Boehm, Canada's counselor at the 2018 G7 summit in Quebec and a veteran of six G7 summits. "I think it gave everyone the idea that G7s were maybe not business as usual."

The German, UK, Japanese and Italian governments have each signalled a belief that a friendly relationship with Trump this year can reduce the likelihood of outbursts.

"Well, I have got a good relationship with President Trump, and that's important," UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Saturday as he flew to Canada. The UK prime minister said he will have a one-on-one meeting with Trump on the sidelines of the summit to discuss finalising a trade framework, though that does not appear in the White House schedule as an official meeting.

There is no plan for a joint statement this year from the G7, a sign that the Trump administration sees no need to build a shared consensus with fellow democracies if it views such a statement as contrary to its goals of new tariffs, more fossil fuel production and a Europe that is less dependent on the US military.

German court sentences Syrian doctor to life for crimes against humanity

ASSOCIATED PRESS Berlin

A German court sentenced a Syrian doctor to life imprisonment for torture and war crimes in his Syrian homeland on Monday for killing two people and torturing nine in Syria between 2011 and 2012.

The Frankfurt Higher Regional Court also established the particular gravity of the guilt, which in practice virtually rules out early release after 15 years — as is often the case in Germany when people are sentenced to life imprisonment. The 40-year-old Syrian, who was identified as Alaa M. In line with German privacy rules, was placed in preventive detention, German news agency dpa reported.

In his verdict, presiding judge Christoph Koller described the actions of the accused in the military hospital in the Syrian city of Homs in the early stages of the civil war that began in 2011. He said the doctor had sadistic tendencies and acted them out during the torture.

Syrian doctor (center) accused of torture, war crimes in his Syrian homeland, stands next to his lawyer Oussama Al-Agi (right) in the Higher Regional Court before the verdict is announced in Frankfurt, Germany PTI

"Above all, the accused enjoyed harming people that seemed inferior and low-value to him," Koller said, according to dpa. During the trial, which lasted almost three and a half years, victims had described the most severe abuse, including beatings, kicks and the setting of wounds and body parts on fire, dpa reported.

Koller emphasised that without the willingness and courage of witnesses to share the details of their suffering the facts of the case could not have been clarified.

Mr Had lived in Germany for ten years and had worked as an orthopedic surgeon in several clinics, most recently in Bad Wildungen in northern Hesse.

UK PM appoints MI6 spy agency's first-ever female chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
London

Prime Minister Keir Starmer has announced the "historic" appointment of Blaise Metreweli as the first female chief of the UK's Secret Intelligence Service, commonly known as MI6, in the 116-year history of the organisation.

Commonly referred to as 'C', the international spy agency's chief has operational responsibility for MI6 and is the only publicly named member of the organisation, accountable to Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

Metreweli, 47, has been promoted from current role as Director General, or 'Q', responsible for technology and innovation in MI6 and has previously held a director-level role at MI5 — the UK's domestic security service.

"The historic appointment of Blaise Metreweli comes at a time when the work of our intelligence services has never been more vital," Starmer said on Sunday.

"The United Kingdom is facing threats on an unprecedented scale — be it aggressors who send their spy ships to our waters or hackers whose sophisticated cyber plots seek to disrupt our public services," he said.

Metreweli will succeed Sir Richard Moore, who leaves the service in the autumn later this year.

"I'd like to thank Sir Richard Moore for his dedicated service and I know Blaise will continue to provide the excellent leadership needed to defend our county and keep our people safe — the foundation of my Plan for Change," added Starmer.

The new spy chief expressed her pride and honour in leading the security service which she has been a part of since 1999 as a career intelligence officer, having joined the Security Service as a case officer. "MI6 plays a vital role — with MI5 and GCHQ [Government Communications Headquarters] - in keeping the British people safe and promoting UK interests overseas. I look forward to continuing that work alongside the brave officers and agents of MI6 and our many international partners," said the new 'C'.

Metreweli's current role in charge of tech at the spy agency is depicted as 'Q' in the books and films

Metreweli, who studied Anthropology at Pembroke College, Cambridge University, has spent most of her career in operational roles in the Middle East and Europe.

"With a wealth of experience from across our national security community, Blaise is the ideal candidate to lead MI6 into the future," said her boss David Lammy.

"At a time of global instability and emerging security threats, where technology is power and our adversaries are working ever closer together, Blaise will ensure the UK can tackle these challenges head on to keep Britain safe and secure at home and abroad," he said.

"Every day, our intelligence services work behind the scenes to protect our national security and compete with our adversaries.

"That's why I am proud that we are investing an extra GBP 600 million in our intelligence community so they can continue to defend our way of life," added Lammy.

Metreweli will be the 18th chief of MI6 when she takes charge from Moore.

"I am absolutely delighted by this historic appointment of my colleague, Blaise Metreweli to succeed me as 'C'. Blaise is a highly accomplished intelligence officer and leader and one of our foremost thinkers on technology. I am excited to welcome her as the first female head of MI6," said the outgoing 'C'.

Cabinet Secretary Christopher Wormald said the new C's experience and leadership in the intelligence community will help MI6 protect the "foundation of our national security and project our interests overseas".

"Blaise will be an excellent chief, who will embody the values of the Service and act as a fine role model to its staff. I would also like to thank Sir Richard Moore for his excellent leadership of the Service over the past five years and his contribution to UK national security during that time and over his long career," said Wormald.

MI6 has been famously projected in Ian Fleming authored James Bond novels and the related Hollywood film franchise, where Dame Judi Dench has taken on the role of 'C' referenced as 'M' in the fictional scenario.

Meanwhile, Metreweli's current role in charge of tech at the spy agency is depicted as 'Q' in the books and films.

Ireland prepares to excavate 'mass grave' at mother and baby home

ASSOCIATED PRESS London

Officials in Ireland began work Monday to excavate the site of a former church-run home for unmarried women and their babies to identify the remains of some 800 infants and young children who died there.

The long-awaited excavation at the former Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, County Galway in western Ireland, is part of a reckoning in an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country with a history of abuses in church-run institutions.

The home, which was run by an order of Catholic nuns and closed in 1961, was one of many such institutions that housed tens of thousands of orphans and unmarried pregnant women who were forced to give up their children throughout much of the 20th century.

In 2014, historian Catherine Corless tracked down death certificates for nearly 800 children who died at the home in Tuam between the 1920s and 1961 - but could only find a burial record for one child.

Investigators later found a mass grave containing the remains of babies and young children in an underground sewage structure on the grounds of the home. DNA analysis found that the ages of the dead ranged from 35 weeks gestation to 3 years.

Israel condemns black partition walls around its pavilions at Paris Air Show

ASSOCIATED PRESS Paris

Israel's Ministry of Defence has condemned the erection of black partition walls around its defence industry pavilions at the Paris Air Show, calling the move "outrageous and unprecedented" and demanding an immediate reversal by French authorities and event organisers.

The walls appeared overnight ahead of the air show's opening Monday, visually isolating Israeli booths from dozens of other international exhibitors.

Israeli officials say the move followed a last-minute demand from organisers to remove offensive weapons systems from display - a request they rejected.

"The French are hiding behind supposedly political considerations to exclude Israeli offensive weapons from an international exhibition - weapons that compete with French industries," the ministry said in a statement Monday, calling the action "ugly and improper".

A French appeals court ruled Friday against activist groups who sought to block Israeli companies from participating in the show due to the war in Gaza.

Despite the legal green light, Israel says it was effectively censored.

Sylvain Pavillet, a lawyer working with the air show organisers, said the final decision on who is allowed to exhibit lies with the French government, not the show itself.

"The fair is not the one who decides which countries are allowed to go to the show or not," he told The Associated Press. "That decision belongs to the government. We are not a state. We are a commercial company."

The Paris Air Show, held at Le Bourget Airport, is one of the world's largest and most prestigious events for the aerospace and defence industry.

Volodymyr visits Austria for first time since Russia's full-scale invasion of his country

ASSOCIATED PRESS Vienna

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is visiting Austria on Monday in his first trip to the European Union member country since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Austria is famously neutral - a stance it declared in 1955 after World War II - and Vienna has come under heavy criticism since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war for maintaining ties with Moscow.

Ukraine's air force said Russia fired 138 strike and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, mainly at the eastern Donetsk region. Of those, 125 were either intercepted or jammed, while 10 reached their targets. Eight others caused damage as falling debris.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with his wife Olena Zelenska, 2nd left, Austrian President Alexander van Der Bellen (right) and his wife Doris Schmidauer stand together in Vienna, Austria on Monday PTI

Zelenskyy was scheduled to meet with Austrian President Alexander Van der Bellen and Chancellor Christian Stocker, and the two presidents were set to hold a news conference later Monday.

This is Stocker's first high-profile visit from a foreign dignitary since he took office in March at the head of a previously untried three-party coalition after a record five-month wait for a new administration. Zelenskyy's wife, First Lady Olena Zelenska and Doris Schmidauer, Van der Bellen's spouse, will also host a discussion about the role of women in promoting peace and security during the trip.

A guide to what Juneteenth holiday is and how to celebrate it

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Washington

It was 160 years ago that enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, learned they had been freed - after the Civil War's end and two years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

The resulting Juneteenth holiday - it's name combining "June" and "nineteenth" - has only grown in one-and-a-half centuries. In 2021, President Joe Biden designated it a federal holiday - expanding its recognition beyond Black America. This year will be the first Juneteenth under President Donald Trump's second administration, which has banned diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, or DEI, in the federal government. This has included removing Black American history content from federal websites. Trump officials have also discouraged some federal agencies from recognising other racial heritage celebrations.

Still, many people anticipate getting Juneteenth off work. There are a plethora of street festivals, fairs, concerts and other events planned throughout the week leading into the holiday. But with the current political climate, some may wonder if their company will honour it.

"I don't think anyone should be intimidated or obligated into not celebrating the day," said Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League. "I've not heard of anyone being denied. I think it would be absolutely reprehensible." People who never gave the occasion more than a passing thought may be asking themselves, is there a "right" way to celebrate Juneteenth?

For beginners and those brushing up on history, here are some answers:

Is Juneteenth more of a solemn day of remembrance or a party? It depends on what you want. Juneteenth festivities are rooted in cookouts and picnics. Originally celebrated as Black Americans' true Independence Day, outdoor events allowed for large, raucous reunions among formerly enslaved family, many of whom had been separated.

The gatherings were especially revolutionary because they were free of restrictive measures, known as "Black Codes," enforced in Confederate states. Codes controlled whether liberated slaves could vote, buy property, gather for worship and other aspects of daily life.

Last year, the White House kicked things off early with a concert on the South Lawn for Juneteenth and Black Music Month. The atmosphere was primarily festive with Vice President Kamala Harris, the first Black vice president, dancing on stage with gospel singer Kirk Franklin.

Plans for a Juneteenth event or proclamation this year have not been decided, according to the White House press office.

Others may choose to treat Juneteenth as a day of rest and remembrance. That can mean doing community service, attending an education panel or taking time off.

"The most important thing everyone should do is be able to quickly answer the question What is Juneteenth?"" Morial said.

What if you've never celebrated Juneteenth?

Dr David Anderson, a Black pastor and CEO of Gracism Global, a consulting firm helping leaders navigate conversations bridging divides across race and culture, never did anything on Juneteenth in his youth. He didn't learn about it until his 30s.

"I think many folks haven't known about it - who are even my colour as an African American male. Even if you heard about it and knew about it, you didn't celebrate it," Anderson said.

"It was like just a part of history. It wasn't a celebration of history." For many African Americans, the farther away from Texas that they grew up increased the likelihood they didn't have big Juneteenth celebrations regularly.

In the South, the day can vary based on when word of Emancipation reached each state.

What kind of public Juneteenth events are taking place?

Search online and you will find gatherings nationwide varying in scope and tone. Some are more carnival-esque festivals with food trucks, arts and crafts and parades. Within those festivals, you'll likely find information on health care, finance and community resources.

There also are concerts and fashion shows to highlight Black creativity. There will also be panels to educate about Juneteenth's history.

The National Park Service is again making entry into all sites free on the holiday, according to its website.

Are there special Juneteenth decorations or foods?

The red, black and green African Liberation Flag, also known as the Pan-African flag, has historically been displayed at both Black History Month and Juneteenth celebrations. Red represents bloodshed and sacrifice of enslaved ancestors. Black symbolises Black people. Green represents richness of the land in Africa.

More people, however, have leaned into the Juneteenth flag created in 1997 by activist Ben Haith, who founded the National Juneteenth Celebration Foundation. Like the American flag, it is red, white and blue to indicate those freed are also Americans.

The Pioneer

RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE 17, 2025

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences

Sadiq Road, Faridkot - 151203
Ph: 01639-256232, 256236

Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot

(University Institute of Allied Health & Paramedical Sciences (UIAHPMS), Faridkot)

ADMISSION NOTICE 2025

M.Sc. (Medical Biotechnology) and

Post Graduate Diploma in Medical Biotechnology Course

Online applications are invited through University website for admission to M.Sc. Medical Biotechnology (2 Years Degree Program) and Post Graduate Diploma in Medical Biotechnology (1 Year) Courses for Session 2025 at Department of Biotechnology, University Institute of Allied Health & Paramedical Sciences (UIAHPMS), BFUHS, Faridkot from **15-06-2025 to 15-07-2025**, along with requisite fee of Rs.5000/- +18% GST (Rs.5900/-) and SC Candidates Rs.2500/- + 18% GST (Rs.2950/-) through University Payment Gateway. The prospectus for admission will be available on the University website w.e.f. **15-06-2025.**

Note: For Eligibility/Detail/Fee/Prospectus visit University website i.e. **www.bfuhs.ac.in**

For details/updates kindly visit University website **(www.bfuhs.ac.in)** regularly.

No separate communication will be made. Any corrigendum/amendments will be followed.

Registrar

3108/12/2025-26/222 Dated CHD :- 16/06/2025

Public Notice

Eldeco Goodliving Properties Limited

Registered Office: 201-212, 2nd Floor, Splendour Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi-110025, NEW DELHI, DELHI, 110025

Notice is hereby given that the Company's Proposed Group Housing Project (20379 sq m), namely "Ballads of Bliss" situated at Plot No. Gh-1a/2, Sec. 22d, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. has been accorded Environment Clearance by State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Uttar Pradesh, vide its letter dated 06.06.2025. A copy of the aforesaid Environment Clearance letter is available in the office of SEIAA at Member Secretary, Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board, TC-12V, Paryavaran Bhawan, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226010 and the aforesaid Environment Clearance is also displayed at the SEIAA website: http://www.seiaaup.in/

For Eldeco Goodliving Properties Limited

Sign
Company Secretary

Place :
Date :

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **Smt. Meena Devi owner of the PLOT NO. 112-B/B (OLD PORTION OF PLOT NO. 112-B), AREA 25.50 SQ. YDS. KHASRA NO. 29/8, SAINIK ENCLAVE, VIKAS NAGAR, UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 and Smt. Meena Devi purchase property from Smt. Neha Kumari vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 23.07.2023, now Smt. Meena Devi wants to sell aforesaid property.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client 1) **Sh. Rakesh Kaushik & 2) Smt.Asha Gupta, 3) Sh. Rakesh Kumar Gupta owner of the UPPER GROUND FLOOR,LHS FRONT SIDE AREA 60 SQ YARDS, PLOT NO.A-1/24,KHASRA NO.15/25/0, CHANAKYA PLACE, PANKHA ROAD,UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 and My Client purchase property from Sh.Satish Kumar & Smt. Ranju Gupta vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 14.02.2024, thereafter they execute authorization slip (PM Uday Cell) now My Clint wants to sell aforesaid property.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and hand over the same and apprise his claim to under signed within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **Sh. Kartar Singh owner of the Unit No C1 Front LHS Second Floor AREA 765 SQ FT PROPERTY NO-D-23, KHASRA NO-576/1/1 (2-3) & 577/1 (0-14), SITUATED AT KHANPUR EXTENSION, VILLAGE KHANPUR,TEHSIL HAUZ KHAS M.B. ROAD NEW DELHI-110080 and Sh. Kartar Singh purchase property Smt. Kamlesh vide Notari zed GPA, ATS and Will dated 27.05.2024, now Sh.Kartar Singh wants to sell aforesaid prop erty.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

Known to all that my client **Harish Joshi owner of the SECOND FLOOR, AREA 50 SQ YDS, PROPERTY NO. 5511, KHASRA NO. 106/11, SANT NAGAR BURARI, DELHI and Harish Joshi purchase property from Smt. Harjeet Kaur vide Notarized GPA, ATS and Will dated 02.03.2017, now Harish Joshi wants to sell aforesaid property.** And It is informed that any deal with said documents by any person except my said client and said institution regarding said property, shall be deemed as null and void. If any person having any claim, right in said property then he may contact and handover the same and apprise his claim to undersigned within 15 days of this publication.

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 760 - Dwarka Court Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
Mobile :- 9899013918

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that **Sanjay Sharma S/o Late Om Prakash Sharma R/o A-41,Maharani Enclave, Gali No.2, Hatsal Village, Uttam Nagar ,Delhi-110059 has applied for conversion of the aforesaid Plot No 792,Pocket-1,Block-A, Sector - 29, Rohini- Delhi from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original documents i.e Allotment Letter Possession Letter,Site Possession Slip n issued by DDA of the above plot have been lost.** An FIR to this effect has been lodged in Police Station Crime Branch Delhi & LR No.**2922066**/2025. Any person(s) claiming any right,interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write contact with above named person at above of address within 15 days form the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property can personally infor or write to **Dy Director (RL) - C- Block,2nd Floor, Vikas Sadan,INA, New Delhi**

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.) Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official **website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in** & **https://etender.up.nic.in**. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/ amendments & corrigendum etc.

A) Fresh-Tender Work:

S. No.	Job No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	10/DGM/SM(WC-5)/ 2025-26	M/o Road (P/L B.C. work on Internal Road and Raising of drain and P/F SFRC cover & M.S. Jaal etc. in Sector-35), Noida.	92.50

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 01.07.2025 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 02.07.2025 at 11.00 AM.

B) Re-Tender Work:

S. No.	Job No.	Name of the Work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
2	01/DGM/SM(WC-1)/ 2025-26	Survey and Design (Topographical Survey by Total Station and Demarcation of D.N.D. Land area Noida), Noida.	45.77

The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 23.06.2025 up to 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened/downloaded on dated 24.06.2025 at 11.00 AM.

"**महत्वपूर्ण सूचना-** नवीन ओखला औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिसूचित क्षेत्र में शासन से स्वीकृत मास्टर प्लान एवं उत्तर प्रदेश औद्योगिक क्षेत्र विकास अधिनियम, 1976 के विपरीत प्लॉटिंग या किसी भी प्रकार का अन्य निर्माण पूरी तरह अवैध है। जनसामान्य को आगाह किया जाता है कि इस प्रकार की अवैध कॉलोनियों एवं अवैध निर्मित भवनों में भूखण्डों / अपार्टमेंट / दुकान / गोडाऊन / फार्महाउस की खरीद-फरोख्त से पूर्णतः सचेत रहें तथा कॉलोनाईजर के लुभावने एवं भ्रामक विज्ञापनों से बचे। साथ ही नौएडा अधिसूचित क्षेत्र के हिण्डन एवं यमुना नदियों के डूब क्षेत्र (Flood Plain Zone) में अनाधिकृत / अवैध प्लॉट एवं फार्म हाऊसों के कारोबार में संलिप्त भूमाफियाओं के चंगुल में न फंसे।"

Dy. General Manager (Civil)
NOIDA

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME, STATION HQ (ECHS CELL), RANIKHET, PHONE NO: 05966- 297599, e-mail. echscellranikhet@yahoo.in (EMPLOYMENT NOTICE)

1. ECHS invites applications to engage following staff Medical, Para Medical & Non Medical Staff on contractual basis at ECHS Polyclinic, Almora, Bageshwar and Ranikhet for a period of one year renewable for additional period of one year/till attaining the maximum age subject to performance of candidates/other conditions according to the criteria against each post :-

Appointment	Minimum Qualification	Vacancy in ECHS Polyclinics			Remuneration
		Almora	Bageshwar	Ranikhet	
Medical Specialist	MD/MS in Specialty concerned/DNB, Min 05 years in the specialty after PG.	01	-	-	Rs. 1,00,000/-
Medical Officer	MBBS, Min 05 years after internship preferable additional qualification in medicine/surgery.	-	-	01	Rs. 75,000/-
Nursing Assistant	GNM Diploma/Class I Nursing Assistants Course (Armed Forces), Min 5 years experience.	01	01	-	Rs. 28,100/-
Driver	Education 8 class/class I MT driver (Armed Forces) Possesses a civil driving license (LMV for Bageshwar and HMV for Ranikhet), Min 5 years experience as Driver.	-	01	01	Rs. 19700/-

2. For Terms & Conditions, Application Form & Remuneration: Kindly see our website **www.echs.gov.in**. For additional details, please contact Stn HQ (ECHS Cell) Ranikhet, Telephone No 05966-297599 and email ID **echscellranikhet@yahoo.in**. Also approach concerned ECHS Polyclinic for details. Preference will be given to the Ex-servicemen.

3. Last date of receipt of application as per format given at our website: Application as per requested format alongwith self-attested photocopies of testimonials in support of Educational Qualifications and Work Experience will be submitted to **OIC, Stn HQ (ECHS Cell), Ranikhet** by **30 Jun 2025** in duplicate. Any application received after **30 Jun 2025** will not be accepted.

4. Interview Date, Timing & Venue: Candidate must reach **Conference Hall, Kumaon Regiment Centre Ranikhet** at **0900hrs on 04 Jul 2025** for the interview to be held between 1000hrs to 1200hrs. Candidate must bring all original certificates/mark sheets/degree of 10th /Matric, 10+2 & Graduation / post graduation / diploma/ course, work experience and discharge book, PPO, service record and 03 x passport size color photographs and medical fitness certificate from SEMO/CMO at the time of interview. NO TA/DA is admissible. Only candidates meeting the Qualitative Requirements may apply.

5. On Job Training (OJT): Medical Specialist & Medical Officer will carry out 10 days On the Job Training (OJT) and obtain a certificate from OIC Polyclinic before signing the contract. This duration of OJT will remain unpaid and as a mandatory requirement before assuming charge as contractual employee.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

The Divisional Engineer-IV, Northern Railway, Delhi Division for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender on prescribed form for the following work.

Name of work with its location	Supplying, Stacking & Putting in c/w TTR of points & crossing along with turnout sleepers in the section of ADEN/ROK on DLI-BTI section using T-28 M/C **(NIT 42-25-26-W-IV)**
Approx Cost of work	Rs.47,43,640/-
Earnest Money	Rs.94,900/-
Date and Staring time for filling e-tender & Tender opening time	Starting time for filling e-tender is Date:26.06.2025 at 15:00 hrs. & Tender opening time is Date: 10.07.2025 at 15:00 hrs.
Website particulars, published e-tender notice location etc. complete details of tender can be seen and web site where the tender form can be downloaded	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

No. 128-W/260/Tender Notice/24-25/W-IV Date : 16.06.2025 1791/2025

Serving Customers With A Smile

verka
Har Din Da, Har Dil Da

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.

SCO 153-155. SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66

Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

e tenders are hereby Invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Head Office, Chandigarh Di- Calcium Phosphate	Half Yearly/550 MT
2.	For Verka Chandigarh Dairy a) Loading/ Unloading Of Verka Milk, Milk Products, Corrugated Boxes/ Gutta and Sugar Bags etc. b) Hiring of Refrigerated Vehicles for Supply of Ice Cream and hiring of vehicles for transportation of MAP Milk, Beverages and Other Verka Ambient Products.	Annual Annual

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. **eproc.punjab.gov.in.**
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

1018/12/2025-26/246

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

verka
Har Din Da, Har Dil Da

THE PUNJAB STATE COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS FEDERATION LTD.

SCO 153-155. SECTOR 34-A, CHANDIGARH-160022. EPABX NO. 0172-5041812,66

Notice Inviting Tender www.verka.coop

tenders are hereby Invited for the purchase and supply of following items:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work/Item	Period/Tentative Qty
1.	For Verka Sangrur Dairy a) Hiring of single chamber insulated S.S road milk tankers for transportation of milk from MCC/BMCs to Verka Milk Plant, Sangrur for two years upto 31.08.27(capacity 10000 to 12000 kg) .(Vehicles older than seven years will not be considered as on the date of publication of notice). b) Design, fabrication, supply, erection & commissioning of boiler chimney with flue gas duct for 06 TPH boiler at Verka Sangrur Dairy including dismantling of old chimney.	12 No's 01 No.
2.	For Verka Jalandhar Dairy Supply, Installation and commissioning of color measuring equipment tintometer.	01 Unit
3.	For Verka Faridkot Dairy Auction of unserviceable material.	-
4.	For Verka Ferozepur Dairy Rate contract of advertisement material flex banners, flex board, flex board both sides, glow sign board, glow sign board both side, aluminium roll up standees, wall/ shutter painting, vehicle painting, flanges, danglers, A3 stickers with lamination, pamphlets, eco solvent vinyl print , canopy, sun board, one way vision with eco print etc.	One Year
5.	For Verka Mega Dairy, Bassi Pathana a) Job for contract for packaging of UHT tetra pack 1 ltr & 500 ml ESL Pack milk 130 ml, 250 ml & 450 ml. b) Nitric acid (52.0-54.0)	15.07.2025 to 14.07.2026 Annual
6.	For Cattle Feed Plant, Bhattian(Khanna) a) Niacin b) Red Algae based buffer with proven buffering action in cattle in cattle feed. c) Biotin d) By Pass Fat (three month from 28.07.2025 to 27.10.2025) e) Purchase of A.I material. i. Mini A.I. Sheaths 0.25 ml. ii. Mini A.I. Straws 0.25 ml	Annual for Khanna: 2.0 MTs; 350 MTs; 1.0 MTs; 150 MT Annual for GKB: 0.120 MTs; 90 MTs; 0.400 MTs; 75 MT Annual/ 5,00,000 7,00,000

NOTE:
1. For complete details regarding above tender (NIT), please visit our website i.e. www.verka.coop & e Tendering portal i.e. **eproc.punjab.gov.in.**
2. Corrigendum, if any, will be uploaded on website only.

1018/12/2025-26/241

Dy. General Manager (Purchase)

DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

Delhi Transco Ltd (A Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking) intends to invite online tenders for the following work:

Tender No.T25P111801 : Design, Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 07 no. of 400/220/33kV, 500 MVA Power Transformer at 400 KV Sub-Stations of DTL on turnkey basis (400 KV Sub-Stations Bawana, Bamnauli & Tikri –Kalan).

For complete details of the tender please visit following websites :-

https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in (Tender ID No. :2025_DTL_273564_1) and **www.dtl.gov.in** with Unique No. DTL-9602-130625.

Last date for bid submission: **04.08.2025 at 1.30 P.M.**

All Corrigendum/Addendum/ Amendments/Date of Extension/Clarifications, if any, to the above e-tenders would appear only on the above mentioned websites.

उत्तराखण्ड सीड्स एण्ड तराई डेवलपमेण्ट कारपोरेशन लि

पन्तनगर, पत्रालय-हल्दी, जनपद ऊधम सिंह नगर

ई–निविदा सूचना

निगम के उत्तराखण्ड राज्य स्थित संयंत्रों व गोदामों पर उपलब्ध गेहूँ व अन्य प्रमाणित फसलों के छानन, झाडन, स्वीपेज (अनुपचारित) मात्रा लगभग 654.86 कुन्तल एवं गेहूं/धान, अन्य बीज निगम के विभिन्न संयत्रों पर "**जहां है, जैसे है**" के आधार पर विक्रय हेतु उपलब्ध है। उपलब्ध समस्त मात्रा अथवा आंशिक मात्रा का टेण्डर भरा जा सकता है। जिसका मूल्य रू0 2,000.00+18 प्रतिशत जी०एस०टी० अतिरिक्त नगद जमा कर अथवा उक्त राशि का आर० टी० जी० एस०/एन० ई० एफ० टी० अलग से ई–निविदा प्रपत्र के साथ संलग्न करना अनिवार्य है। ई–निविदा प्रपत्र की ऑनलाईन– बिक्री दिनांक 17.06.2025 से 01.07.2025 के सांय 05:00 बजे तक की जायेगी। निविदा प्रपत्र ऑनलाईन **www.uktenders.gov.in** के माध्यम से Download एवं Upload किया जा सकता है। निविदा बेवसाईट **www.uktenders.gov.in** के माध्यम से दिनांक 17.06.2025 से 01.07.2025 के सांय 05:00 बजे तक भरी जायेगी। ई–निविदा दिनांक 02.07.2025 को पूर्वान्ह 11:00 बजे अधिकृत समिति द्वारा खोली जायेगी। अधिक जानकारी निगम के वेबसाईट: **www.ukstdc.com & www.pantnagarseeds.com** पर उपलब्ध है। ई–निविदा को **www.uktenders.gov.in** पर देखा एवं भरा जा सकता है।

प्रभारी विपणन

सेन्ट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Central Bank of India

1911 से आपके लिए "केंद्रित" "CENTRAL" TO YOU SINCE 1911

BRANCH OFFICE: 1993, RAILWAY ROAD, NARELA, DELHI-110040

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

[Under Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorized Officer of the Central Bank of India, Narela Branch, New Delhi** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) and 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated **19/03/2025,** calling upon the **Borrower: MR. ASHOK KUMAR S/O SEWA RAM Guarantor: MRS. UMA GOEL W/O ASHOK KUMAR,** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.25,95,385.22 (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Ninety Five Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Five and Twenty Two Paise Only)** (which represents the principal plus interest due as on the 19/03/2025), plus interest and other charges from 19/03/2025 to till date within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to pay the entire dues of the bank, notice is hereby given to the borrower, the Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said act, read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule 2002 on this **12th Day of June 2025.** The borrower and the Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of **Central Bank of India, Narela Branch, New Delhi** for the amount of **Rs.25,95,385.22 (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Ninety Five Thousand Three Hundred Eighty Five and Twenty Two Paise Only)** (which represents the principal plus interest due as on the 19/03/2025), plus interest and other charges from 19/03/2025.

The borrowers attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

This is in super session to previous /earlier notice 09/06/2025 issued under section 13(4) of SARFAESI Act.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SECURED AASET / MORTGAGED PROPERTY:

1. Mr. Ashok Kumar S/o Sh. Sewa Ram
2. Mrs. Uma Goel W/o Mr. Ashok Kumar
Property No.U-39, Khasra No.157, Vijay Nagar, Lampur Road, Narela, Delhi-110040, the property is a two and half storey residential building with area measuring 100 SqYd. **Bounded:**
North: Property of Mr. Mahavir Singh
South: Road
East: Portion of Mr. Om Prakash
West: Property of Mr. Mahavir Singh

PLACE: NEW DELHI (Authorised Officer)
DATE: 12/06/2025 Central Bank of India, Narela Branch, Delhi

सेन्ट्रल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Central Bank of India

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West: Property of Mr. Mahavir Singh

PLACE: NEW DELHI (Authorised Officer)
DATE: 12/06/2025 Central Bank of India, Narela Branch, Delhi

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

CHANGE OF NAME

I, No.TJ006515 Sub Vinod Kumar R/o- H.No.- 178, Vill- Pink City, PO- Pathauli, Dist- Agra, U.P.- 283105, have changed my daughter's name from Chetna to Chetana Parashar, vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2262)C

I, Kripal Singh, Father of- JC-472553A Sub Hony Lt Pawan Kumar, R/o- Vill- Santokhpura, PO- Mauri, Teh- Charkhi Dadri, Dist- Bhiwani, Haryana- 127306, have changed my name from Kripal Singh to Karpal Singh, vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2263)C

I, Anokhi Devi Mother of No.16011986W Hav Chandravir Singh R/o- Vill/PO- Rajawal, Dist.- Aligarh, U.P- 202123, have changed my name from Anokhi Devi to Anokhi, vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2264)C

I, Parkash Devi Mother of-JC-472553A Sub Hony Lt Pawan Kumar R/o- Vill- Santokhpura, PO- Mauri, Teh- Charkhi Dadri, Dist- Bhiwani, Haryana- 127306, have changed my name from Parkash Devi to Parkesh Devi, vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2265)C

I, Nitish Kumar S/o JC - 471215W Sub Maj Surender Singh R/o- Vill- Badesara, PO- Chandwas, Teh- Badhra, Dist- Charkhi Dadri, Haryana- 127308, declare that in my Father's service record my name is wrongly written as Nitesh Kumar whereas my correct name is Nitish Kumar, vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2266)C

I, No.TJ006515 Sub Vinod Kumar R/o- Vill- H No.-178, Vill- Pink City, PO- Pathauli, Dist- Agra, U.P- 283105, have changed my son's name from Yogesh Kumar to Yogesh Parashar, vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2267)C

I, Lekha Ram Father Of No.16011819A Hav Ishwar Singh R/o- Vill- Ajmeripur, PO- Karoda, Teh- Behror, Dist- Alwar, New Dist- Kotputli- Behror, Rajasthan- 301020, have changed my name from Lekha Ram to Lekh Ram vide affidavit dated 16/06/2025 before Notary Public Delhi.

PD(2268)C

I, Gurvinder Kaur Arora W/o Avtar Singh R/o WZ - 535, Plot Number - 52, Second Floor. Vishnu Garden, Delhi - 110018 that I have changed my name to Gurvinder Kaur. that Gurvinder Kaur Arora and Gurvinder Kaur is one and the same Person.

PD(2269)C

MODI INDUSTRIES LIMITED

CIN - U15429UP1932PLC000469
Regd. Office : P.O. -Modinagar - 201204. (U.P.) Tel: : 01232- 243115, 9084786567
E-mail : modiindustrieslimited@gmail.com Website : www.modiindustries.net

NOTICE OF POSTAL BALLOT

Members are hereby informed that pursuant to Section 108 and Section 110 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and other applicable provisions of the Act, Rules, Regulations, Circulars and Notifications issued thereunder (including any statutory modifications or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force and as amended from time to time), the Company has

- On Monday, the 16th June, 2025, completed the dispatch of Postal Ballot Notice along with Postal Ballot Form and a postage pre-paid self-addressed reply envelope to the members for voting who have not registered their e-mail id's with Depository Participant (s) or with the Company; and
- On Monday, the 16th June, 2025, sent an e-mail through Mas Services Limited, Registrar and Share Transfer Agents (RTA) of the Company along with the Login ID and password to the Members for e-voting who have registered their e-mail id's with Depository Participant(s) or with the Company;

for seeking approval of Members of the Company for increase in borrowing powers of Board of Directors of the company under section 180 (1)(c) of the Companies Act, 2013, as detailed in the Postal Ballot Notice dated 31st May, 2025.

The Board of Directors of the Company have appointed M/s A.N. Jaiswal & Co., Practicing Company Secretaries of New Delhi., (Membership No. 19000- CP No. 14629), as the Scrutinizer for conducting the Postal Ballot and e-voting process.

Members have an option to vote either electronically or through the Postal Ballot Form. The Company has engaged NSDL for providing e-voting facility to the Members. The detailed procedure for e-voting is enumerated in the Notes to the Postal Ballot Notice. Members are requested to note that the voting both through Postal Ballot and electronic mode shall commence from Tuesday, the 17th June, 2025 (9:00 A.M. IST) and end on Wednesday, the 16th July, 2025 (5:00 P.M. IST).

Members are requested to note that the duly completed Postal Ballot Forms should reach the Scrutinizer not later than close of working hours i.e. 05:00 p.m. on Wednesday, the 16th July, 2025. Any responses received after the date will be treated as if the same have not been received and voting whether by post or by electronic means shall not be allowed beyond the said date.

The voting rights of Member shall be reckoned as on Friday, the 06th June, 2025 which is the cut-off-date. A person who is not a Member as on the cut-off date should treat the Notice of Postal Ballot for information purpose only. The copy of the Postal Ballot Notice is available on the Company's website at **www.modiindustries.net.**

Any person who is a Member as on Friday, the 06th June, 2025 and has not received the Postal Ballot Form may download it from the website of the Company or may send an email to **modiindustrieslimited@gmail.com** for issue of duplicate Postal Ballot Form. The Company shall forward the same along with postage prepaid self addressed reply envelope to the Member.

Members, who receive Postal Ballot Notice by e-mail and who wish to vote through physical Postal Ballot Form, can download Postal Ballot Form from the website of the Company **www.modiindustries.net** from the **'Postal Ballot' page** on the website.

Members can opt for only one mode of voting i.e. either by Postal Ballot or e-voting. If members are opting for e-voting, then do not vote by Physical Ballot or vice versa. However, in case Members cast their vote by Physical Ballot and e-voting, then voting done through e-voting shall prevail and voting done by Physical Ballot will be treated as invalid.

In case of any queries/grievances, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for members and e-voting user manual for members available at the 'download section' of **www.evoting.nsdl.com** or call on 022-48867000 or send a request to Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, Senior Manager, NSDL at **evoting@nsdl.com .**

The result of the voting by Postal Ballot will be announced on Saturday, the 19th July, 2025 at the Registered Office of the Company and shall be available on the Company's website at **www.modiindustries.net.**

For Modi Industries Limited,
Sd/-
Shobit Nehra
Company Secretary, DGM (Legal)
ACS-31863

Date: 16.06.2025
Place: Modinagar (U.P.) 201204

The Pioneer
RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE 17, 2025

India-US to agree on early tranche of trade before July 9: Commerce Secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Negotiations for the proposed India-US trade agreement are in good progress and the two sides are expected to agree on an early tranche of the pact before July 9, a top government official said on Monday.

"We are working on the early tranche and as you are aware that there is a date (July 9), before that we would like to conclude this early tranche," Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told reporters here.

He said that Indian and the US teams are making visits to each other's country for trade talks. "We also visited the US twice. The US team also came here twice. There is good progress and we are hopeful that this will be done within the timelines," he added.

The US on April 2 imposed an additional 26 per cent reciprocal tariff on Indian goods but suspended it for 90 days till July 9. However, the 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed by America remains in place. India is seeking full exemption from the additional 26 per cent tariff. The US team was here from June 5 — 11 for the talks. The negotiations will continue both virtually and physically in the days to come.

When asked if the absence of the US Fast Track Trade Authority (also known as Trade Promotion Authority) could delay the proposed trade pact with India, an official said that it is up to the US authorities to decide how to navigate its local regulations for the trade agreement with India. The next date of in-person negotiations on the BTA and its initial tranche is yet to be decided but both sides are engaging virtually without a break.

The US Fast Track Trade Authority is a special mechanism that allows the American President to negotiate trade agreements and present them to Congress for an up-or-down vote, without amendments or procedural delays. According to think tank GTRI, since 2021, this authority has lapsed and has not been renewed and without this authority, any trade agreement negotiated by the US President is exposed to Congressional scrutiny, possible amendments, delays, or outright rejection.

On the FTA talks with the European Union, Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce L Satya Srinivas said that the next round of negotiations will be held from July 7 in Brussels.

"There are some tracks, we are working together on this. Momentum has picked up in the talks and frequency of meetings has gone up. Earlier negotiating rounds were held every quarter, but now we have reduced the time period between rounds," Srinivas said. The India-EU trade pact negotiations cover 23 policy areas or chapters, including Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Remedies, Rules of Origin, Customs and Trade Facilitation, Competition, Trade Defence, among others.

"We have a large number of issues on which we are trying to find a convergence so that we move towards the closure of the agreement," Srinivas said. India and the EU have agreed to conclude their FTA negotiations — which began in 2022 — by the end of this year.

On the India-UK trade pact, he said that the agreement is getting ready to be signed. The conclusion of the pact was announced on May 6. "Work on documentation is going on and legal scrubbing is in progress. The process will be completed within three months from the date of the completion of negotiations and we are sticking to that," Srinivas said.

IRAN-ISRAEL WAR

Government to meet stakeholders to assess impact on India's trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal

The Government is closely monitoring the situation arising from the Iran-Israel conflict, and a meeting with shipping lines, container firms, and other stakeholders will be held this week to assess the impact on the country's overseas trade and address any issue, a top official said on Monday.

Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal said that the impact of the war on India's trade will depend on how the situation unfolds over a period of time.

"We are watching the situation. We are also calling a meeting (this week) of all the shipping lines, the container organisations and the concerned departments, and stakeholders to understand from them that what are the kind of issues they are facing and how we can sort it out," he told reporters here. Exporters have stated that the war, if escalated further, would impact world trade and push both air and sea freight rates.

They have expressed apprehensions that the conflict is expected to impact movement of merchant ships from the Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea. Nearly two-thirds of India's crude oil and half of its LNG imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has now threatened to close.

This narrow waterway, only 21 miles wide at its narrowest point, handles nearly a fifth of global oil trade and is indispensable to India, which depends on imports for over 80 per cent of its energy needs. According to think tank GTRI, any closure or military disruption in the Strait of Hormuz would sharply increase oil prices, shipping costs, and insurance premiums, triggering inflation, pressuring the rupee, and complicating India's fiscal management.

Meanwhile, Israel's June 14-15 strike on Houthi military leadership in Yemen has also heightened tensions in the Red Sea region, where Houthi forces have already attacked commercial shipping.

For India, this poses another serious risk. Nearly 30 per cent of India's west-bound exports to Europe, North Africa, and the US East Coast travel through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, now vulnerable to further disruption, the GTRI has said. Indian export consignments gradually started moving through the Red Sea route but now again it may get impacted.

Cargo ships had gradually returned on Red Sea routes, saving them 15-20 days while moving to US and Europe from India and other parts of Asia. The present conflict that began with an attack on Israel on October 7, 2023 had brought cargo movement through Red Sea routes to a halt due to attacks by Houthi rebels on commercial shipping. After the US intervened with attacks on the rebels, the firing on commercial ships stopped.

Last year, the situation around the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, a crucial shipping route connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, escalated due to attacks by Yemen-based Houthi militants.

India's overall exports that had grown 6 per cent on year to $825 billion in 2024-25.

Sensex, Nifty rebound nearly 1 per cent on value buying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Mumbai

Shrugging off geopolitical concerns amid escalating tensions between Israel and Iran, stock markets rebounded by nearly 1 per cent on Monday following value buying in oil & gas and IT shares and gains in other Asian markets as Brent crude oil prices dropped.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 677.55 points or 0.84 per cent to settle at 81,796.15 with 27 of its constituents ending in the green and three with losses. During the day, it surged 747.22 points or 0.92 per cent to 81,865.82. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 227.90 points or 0.92 per cent to 24,946.50.

Among Sensex firms, UltraTech Cement rose the most by 2.39 per cent. Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Tata Consultancy Services, Eternal, Asian Paints, Tata Steel and Kotak Mahindra Bank were among the gainers. Tata Motors, Adani Ports and Sun Pharma were the laggards.

"Despite ongoing geopolitical tensions between Israel and Iran, the market moved higher, supported by gains in large-cap stocks, as investors maintained their focus on long-term fundamentals in the time of volatile situations. Geopolitical developments in the Middle East are likely to influence near-term market sentiment, with any signs of de-escalation being closely monitored," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

"Among sectors, oil and gas recorded strong gains, while the IT sector outperformed in anticipation of the upcoming US Fed policy meeting, which is expected to provide further clarity on the interest rate outlook," Nair added. The BSE midcap gauge jumped 0.93 per cent and smallcap index climbed 0.38 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended higher. IT jumped 1.50 per cent, followed by BSE Focused IT (1.50 per cent), teck (1.35 per cent), oil and gas (1.22 per cent), realty (1.21 per cent), services (1.10 per cent) and consumer durables (1.05 per cent).

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng settled in the positive territory. European markets were quoting in the green. US markets ended lower on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 0.81 per cent to $73.63 a barrel. Wholesale price inflation (WPI) declined to a 14-month low of 0.39 per cent in May on easing prices of food articles and fuel.

"Despite mounting global uncertainty triggered by escalating tensions in the Middle East, Indian markets remained resilient," Sundar Kewat, Technical and Derivatives Analyst, Ashika Institutional Equity — Ashika Stock Broking part of Ashika Group, said.

FATF enhances focus to combat terror financing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

Condemning the brutal Pahalgam terror attack in April, global watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Monday said it has enhanced its focus on the effectiveness of measures countries have put in place to combat terror financing.

"Terrorist attacks kill, maim and inspire fear around the world. The FATF notes with grave concern and condemns the brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam on 22 April 2025. This, and other recent attacks, could not occur without money and the means to move funds between terrorist supporters," the FATF said in a statement.

The FATF statement comes in the backdrop of Indian authorities highlighting Pakistan's persistent support for terrorism and its funnelling of multilateral funds for arms procurement.

According to sources, such action by Pakistan warrants that the country be put in the "grey list" of the FATF.

On April 22, Pakistan-trained terrorists killed 26 people in Pahalgam, Kashmir. India has consistently held that Pakistan has given safe haven to designated terrorists and the same was evident when senior military officials were present at the funeral of the terrorists killed in Indian military attacks of May 7. Ahead of the next meeting of the Asia Pacific Group (APG) of FATF on August 25 and the next FATF plenary and working group meeting on October 20, India is preparing a dossier on the omissions and commissions by Pakistan with respect to FATF anti-money laundering and terror financing norms.

India will be submitting to the FATF for grey listing of Pakistan.

WPI inflation dips to 14-month low of 0.39 pc in May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Wholesale Price Inflation (WPI) declined to a 14-month low of 0.39 per cent in May on easing prices of food articles and fuel, and experts said geopolitical tensions could push up prices. WPI-based inflation was 0.85 per cent in April. It was 2.74 per cent in May last year.

In a statement, the industry ministry said the inflaton in May is in positive zone primarily due to "increase in prices of manufacture of food products, electricity, other manufacturing, chemicals and chemical products, manufacture of other transport equipment and non-food articles".

According to the WPI data, food articles saw a deflation of 1.56 per cent in May, against a deflation of 0.86 per cent in April, with vegetables, onion, potato and pulses seeing negative inflation. Deflation in vegetables was 21.62 per cent in May, compared to 18.26 per cent in April.

Fuel and power, too, saw a deflation of 2.27 pc in May, compared to a 2.18 per cent inflation in April. Manufactured products, however, saw positive inflation at 2.04 per cent, compared to 2.62 per cent in April. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) mainly takes into account retail inflation while formulating monetary policy.

Data released last week showed retail inflation eased to over six-year low of 2.82 per cent in May mainly due to subdued food prices. The RBI this month cut benchmark policy interest rates by a sharp 0.50 per cent to 5.50 per cent amid easing inflation. The RBI has cut inflation projections for the current fiscal year to 3.7 per cent from the earlier estimate of 4 per cent, as it expects core inflation to remain benign with the easing of international commodity prices.

The sub-4 per cent average retail inflation projection is the lowest in recent years.

ICRA Senior Economist Rahul Agrawal said the cooling in WPI was broad-based, with the food, non-food manufacturing, minerals, and fuel and power segments contributing to the dip in headline print between these months.

ICRA said crude oil prices have risen quite sharply in the ongoing month, following escalation of tensions between Israel and Iran.

STPI MedTech CoE: Pioneering India's health-tech revolution

ARVIND KUMAR

In what could be seen as a turning point, that has brought a transformation in the healthcare system to cater to the needs of burgeoning population of India, the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), has established a MedTech, a Centre of Entrepreneurship (CoE) that is transforming India's healthcare ecosystem by nurturing innovation, supporting home grown startups and addressing critical medical challenges. Envisioned to support healthtech startups in developing groundbreaking, cost-effective solutions, MedTech CoE delivers a comprehensive incubation environment that includes state-of-the-art infrastructure, advanced IoT and Medi labs, dedicated clinical mentorship, business guidance, regulatory assistance and access to investors and funding schemes.

STPI has set up MedTech CoEin Lucknow with key stakeholders as Department of IT and Electronics, Government of UP, SGPGI Lucknow, Association of Medical Device Industry (AIMED), Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ).

With the advancement of technological evolution, telemedicine and AI-powered diagnostics are enabling remote consultations and early disease detection, reducing the need for physical visits to hospitals. Portable diagnostic devices such as low-cost ultrasound machines and AI-driven screening tools for diseases make preventive care more accessible. Also, non-invasive monitoring solutions for neonatal and maternal health are boosting survival rates in far-flung areas. The MedTech-enabled integration of digital health records, mobile health apps and smart wearables leads to better health awareness among rural communities, even as Government-promoted telehealth facilities have proved to be a boon for remote villages with leading doctors from top medical institutions.

A total of 53 startups have been onboarded by STPI MedTech CoE, with 10 of them securing external funding amounting to ₹3.38 crore. Startups incubated under STPI's Lucknow-based MedTech Centre of Entrepreneurship are developing cost-effective and indigenous solutions suited to rural requirements. From AI-powered diagnostics and non-invasive medical devices to telemedicine and emergency healthcare solutions, MedTech startups are enhancing accessibility, affordability and efficiency in healthcare delivery.

Several startups fostered by the MedTech CoE have made remarkable strides in fields ranging from AI-driven diagnostics and medical training to emergency healthcare and assistive medical devices. ArficusPvt Ltd, for instance, has developed MEDHINI, the world's first generative AI-based Software as a Medical Device (SaMD), already serving over 267 B2B clients across 12+ countries and generating significant revenue from markets like South Africa and the UAE.

Similarly, Dectrocel Healthcare has introduced an affordable AI-powered pulmonary disease detection system, making specialised diagnostics available at very nominal price. Their innovations have made a mark internationally, with accolades from Quebec Market Access, Denmark Technical University and UQ Ventures, Australia.

Other ambitious ventures are revolutionising medical training and mental healthcare. ONELearningEduspherePvt Ltd has created India's first simulation-based healthcare training platform, training over 5,000 professionals across India and expanding its footprint to London, Malaysia and Johannesburg.

In today's increasingly critical field of mental health, Manodayam Pvt Ltd has pioneered an AI-powered acoustic-based detection system that identifies and assesses conditions across the mental health spectrum such as Depression, Panic, Stress, PSTD, Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, Schizophrenia, Bipolar, ADHD, Dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Juvenile Delinquency, Autism, Sexual Disorders. Manodayam has received support from the NGIS Scheme Seed Fund.

Another key area of focus has been innovations in medical devices. Medblue Innovations Pvt Ltd has developed BiliSURE, a non-invasive bilirubin monitoring device for neonates, which has won a slew of national and international awards, including the BIRAC BIG 19 Grant and Tata Social Enterprise Competition.

Sukrati MedTech Pvt Ltd has introduced an advanced laryngoscope with an in-built suction module, addressing critical gaps in emergency procedures, while Amrit Meditech Pvt Ltd is working on an affordable, compact pulmonary disease detection system, which has already been clinically validated at AIIMS New Delhi and AIIMS Raipur.

Within the MedTech CoE ecosystem, emergency healthcare and assistive medical solutions are also being actively pursued and implemented. MedCab Care Pvt Ltd has created a real-time ambulance booking platform that integrates air ambulance services across India, while Flexi Innovation Pvt Ltd has worked towards a Hybrid Assistive Chair for rehabilitation, incorporating virtual reality and gamification for better patient engagement.

Adding spin to the medical innovation, LogicBoots Pvt Ltd has introduced an AI-powered robotic nursing assistant to enhance hospital efficiency and reduce human intervention in routine medical tasks.

STPI's MedTech CoE is more than an incubator; it is a catalyst for change and a launchpad for healthcare startups driving India's self-reliance in medical technology. As a strong pillar of the Make in India and Digital India initiatives, it is paving the way for a future where cutting-edge healthcare solutions are built by India, in India, for India and the world. It further aims at the collaborations between startups and institutions like AIIMS, Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital, and international accelerators, giving startups the exposure and mentorship needed to expand.

STPI's MedTech CoE is helping start-ups develop advanced healthcare low-cost solutions for serving the needs of the country as well as the world. These efforts are not just improving healthcare access and affordability but are also pushing India towards becoming Atmanirbhar in the MedTech sector. With strong Government support and a growing innovation ecosystem, these startups are helping realise the vision of a Viksit Bharat by transforming healthcare and enabling India to lead on the world stage in medical technology.

(The author is Director General, Software Technology Parks of India. The views and opinions expressed in the aforesaid article are personal)

The Pioneer
RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE 17, 2025

PSG defeats Atlético Madrid 4-0 in Club World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Pasadena (US)

Fabián Ruiz and Vitinha scored in the first half and Champions League winners Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) opened Club World Cup play with a 4-0 victory over Atlético Madrid.

PSG largely dominated Atlético at the Rose Bowl in its first match since trouncing Inter Milan 5-0 to win its first Champions League title on May 31. Senny Mayulu and Lee Kang-in scored against 10-man Atlético in the second half of the European powers' meeting in front of 80,619 fans at the site of the 1994 World Cup final. The matchup was one of the highest-profile games in the group stage of the first 32-team edition of the Club World Cup - and treble-winning PSG excelled under another spotlight.

Atlético's Clément Lenglet was sent off in the 78th minute with his second yellow card on a frustrating day that left Diego Simeone visibly furious at both the referees and his players' mistakes.

Ousmane Dembélé wasn't in uniform for PSG after reportedly injuring a quadriceps while playing for France on June 6. Gonçalo Ramos replaced Dembélé in Luis Enrique's only change to the starting lineup from the Champions League final.

Enrique wore shorts and a training shirt on the sideline while coaching PSG in 88-degree midday California heat (31 Celsius).

PSG controlled possession early, and Ruiz capitalized atop the penalty area in the 19th minute. The Spanish midfielder long coveted by Atlético beat Jan Oblak with a clever strike into the far corner.

Vitinha followed with a goal in injury time off Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's second assist of the first half. Julián Alvarez appeared to answer for Atlético in the second half, but the goal was waved off after VAR determined Koke had fouled Désiré Doué in the buildup.

Alexander Sørloth horrifically missed an open net in the 82nd minute for Atlético. Mayulu iced PSG's victory five minutes later, and Lee converted a penalty on the final kick of the match.

Atlético got a golden chance to tie it in first-half injury time, but Gianluigi Donnarumma swallowed up Thomas Griezmann's hard shot in the box. Moments later, Vitinha slipped through the Atlético defense and scored on the break.

Takeaways

PSG looked remarkably sharp late in its taxing season, showing no sign of treating this tournament as an anticlimax. The champs are in good shape to advance from group play after winning their toughest group match on paper.

Atlético somehow looked more exhausted than its opponents, and it collected seven yellow cards that raise the danger of suspension down the road. Simeone's club will be favored in its next two matches, but will have less margin for error.

What they said

"I think that in this competition, we've set ourselves the goal to make history. We are entering a new chapter, and we need to show it's possible to reinvent ourselves. It's a good challenge. We need to keep fighting and working to win games. I was happy with the way we performed today." — Enrique

Indian women's hockey team eager to bounce back

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
London

Having started their European leg with two narrow defeats, the Indian women's hockey team will be eager to bounce back when it takes on world number two Argentina in back-to-back matches in the FIH Pro League.

Salima Tete and her side went down 1-2 and 2-3 to Australia over the weekend and will have little time to regroup before facing a formidable Argentine outfit that has won seven of its 12 league matches so far.

"Argentina is ranked number two in the world and has won 7 of their 12 FIH Pro League matches so far. Coming into this leg of the league, we knew they would be one of the toughest teams to beat," Tete was quoted as saying by Hockey India.

"But we won't go down without a fight — we'll give it our all in both matches. The team has been training well to take them on and has been working on various strategies to win crucial points against them," she added.

India, currently seventh in the standings with nine points, are aiming for a turnaround. Argentina sit second on the table and will be eyeing full points to keep pressure on leaders Netherlands.

> As you saw, the team gave Australia a tough fight in the last two matches and we're planning to do the same against Argentina
> — NAVNEET KAUR, VICE CAPTAIN

"As you saw, the team gave Australia a tough fight in the last two matches, and we're planning to do the same against Argentina," vice captain Navneet Kaur said. "We'll give it our all and aim to come out victorious. A win against Argentina will not only help us gain points but will also give the team a big morale boost as we head to Antwerp and then Berlin for our matches against Belgium and China," she added.

A penalty shattered Palestinian WC dreams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Amman (Jordan)

An engrossing qualifying journey of 16 games and the obstacles of a war came crashing down in an instant for Oday Dabbagh and his Palestinian team.

Their legacy will long continue. Players left the field in tears in the immediate aftermath at the King Abdullah II Stadium in Amman, Jordan, last Thursday after their quest for a first appearance at a World Cup evaporated on a contentious penalty awarded deep in extra time. Fans looked on, stunned.

"It's very hard," Dabbagh, the team's star striker, said.

"It was massive for us to get to the next stage - we prepared well, we had a positive atmosphere, and we had the fans with us. We gave everything, but it was gone in a moment."

Needing to win its last three Group B games to reach the playoffs for the last two of Asia's automatic spots at the World Cup, the number 101-ranked team in the world beat Iraq in Basra in March, Kuwait in Kuwait City on June 5. Five days later, it was leading 1-0 against Oman in Jordan in the 97th minute.

The Palestinians had never been in a better position in qualifying for a World Cup. Then Oman was awarded, and scored, a penalty to make it 1-1 in the last real act of the game.

Not long after the dejected players had picked themselves up, the Palestine Football Association (PFA) made an official complaint to soccer's world governing body, FIFA, about the penalty. It didn't change the fact, however, that the long road trip was over.

"We tried to put smiles on the faces of Palestinians amid their great pain," head coach Ihab Abujazar said. "The heroic players are our pride and glory, a symbol of all that is beautiful in the Palestinian nation."

Playing Away

It may have been different if the Palestinian team, admitted into FIFA in 1998, was able to play home games in front of its fans in Gaza or the West Bank in the third round of qualifying. The Israel-Hamas war meant that couldn't happen. And so the many of the team's home games have been taking place in the nearby Jordanian capital of Amman, home to a large community of Palestinians.

"It is easier to play in your home," Dabbagh, who helped Aberdeen win the Scottish Cup last month, said.

"But the circumstances there are so difficult so we choose to play in Amman as it is close to Palestine, the people are the same, and we have a lot of fans there."

There's been no domestic soccer in the Palestinian territories since the war started in 2023. Hundreds of athletes are among the more than 55,000 Palestinians killed in the conflict and sports facilities have been destroyed.

"Everything that goes on makes us all sad," Dabbagh said. "As players, we try to focus on football during the games, but we use what is happening as motivation to bring happiness to the people of Palestine."

Botafogo beats Seattle Sounders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Seattle

Jair Cunha and Igor Jesus scored in the first half and Botafogo beat the Seattle Sounders 2-1 at the Club World Cup on.

Botafogo opened the scoring 28 minutes into the game as Cunha headed in a pass from Alex Telles.

It came after a contentious yellow card to Nouhou Tolo gave the visitors a direct free kick just beyond the corner of the penalty box.

Sounders players felt the call was unfair as there had been some unobserved jostling between Tolo and Artur before Tolo shoved his opponent to the ground.

Botafogo doubled the lead in the first half's final minutes with another headed goal. Vitinho connected with his 24-year-old star teammate Igor Jesus, who sent a powerful header to the bottom corner. The Sounders played better in the second half, buoyed by their energetic subs. Four minutes after coming into the match, Paul Rothrock provided the assist for Christian Roldan's header in the 75th minute that deflected off Jesus.

The Sounders had two shots on target in a row in the final 30 seconds of stoppage time to try to tie the score, but the first was well blocked by a defender before John smothered Rothrock's attempt.

Takeaways

Seattle will now have to try to win points off the perceived titans of Group B, Atlético Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain to avoid going out in the group stage. Botafogo played good defense to hold onto its lead and is second in Group B on goal difference.

What they said

"Obviously, they're a great team, and they put us under pressure in moments, but we matched them. The difference in the first half was just quality and a couple of key moments… I think if you looked at the statistics, you would say that Sounders were in a good spot, but obviously everything is the score line, and we couldn't find that second goal." — Seattle Sounders head coach Brian Schmetzer

"The second half, in terms of our defense, it was not good. We didn't take possession and seattle scored a goal with some luck, but it was deserved.

24-member squad for AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 named

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

Having lost three forwards to injuries, the Indian senior women's team head coach, Crispin Chettri, on Monday named a 24-member travelling squad to Thailand for the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 Qualifiers.

The final squad of 23 players for the Qualifiers will be announced before the first match. The Blue Tigresses are placed in Group B of the Qualifiers, where they will face Mongolia (June 23), Timor Leste (June 29), Iraq (July 2) and hosts Thailand (July 5).

The group winners will qualify for the final tournament in Australia in March 2026. The Women's Asian Cup also serves as a qualifier for the FIFA Women's World Cup Brazil 2027.

Chettri and his squad will arrive in Thailand on Monday evening, and will train for a week in the northern city of Chiang Mai before their first game. All matches will take place at the 700th Anniversary of Chiang Mai Stadium.

The Blue Tigresses camped at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence in Bengaluru for six weeks, and as part of their preparations for the Qualifiers, played two friendlies against Uzbekistan on May 30 and June 3, losing 0-1 on both occasions.

"I was happy with the preparations in Bengaluru," said Chettri.

"We trained for more than 40 days. The training ground and all the facilities were excellent. As far as the squad is concerned, we have a good mixture of young and senior players.

"Unfortunately, we had to let go of forwards like Karishma (Shirvoikar), Sandhiya (Ranganathan) and Renu due to injuries. But that's part and parcel of football. And as compared to the Pink Ladies Cup squad (in February), we have more experienced players with us now."

The Indian coach tried various combinations during the two preparatory friendlies against Uzbekistan, rotating as many as eight players for the second game and handing out a total of five debuts.

"We had a clear plan for those two friendlies. We were trying to find the right combination for the qualifiers because we have to play almost four games in 13 days. Rotating players and giving them proper recovery time is important.

"We created many more chances in the second game as compared to the first, but the conversion was the problem, and that's what we'll work on in the coming days," said Chettri.

To adjust to the more humid weather of Chiang Mai, the Blue Tigresses will arrive in the city a week before the first match against Mongolia.

US Open champion JJ Spaun turned freefall into title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Oakmont (US)

Nobody backs their way into a US Open title. JJ Spaun wasn't about to be the first to say he did.

On a day built for umbrellas, panchos and industrial-sized squeegees, Spaun reversed his own freefall, took advantage of several others' and hit two shots that turned him into a major champion while finally, mercifully, creating a moment to remember at the rain-soaked brute called Oakmont.

"I just tried to dig deep," said the 34-year-old Californian who can now call himself a major champion. "I've been doing it my whole life."

The shots that will go down in history are the drive he hit on the reachable par-4 17th and the 65-foot putt he sank with the sun going down and the rain falling on 18.

The first set up a birdie that put him in the lead by himself for good. The second was for emphasis — he only needed a two-putt, after all — that ensured this US Open would finish with one — and only one — player under par.

The 65 footer, the longest of any putt made all tournament, closed out a back nine 32 and left Spaun at 1-under 279 for the tournament. His 72 was the highest closing-round score for a US Open winner in 15 years. But that wasn't Sunday's takeaway.

Rather, it was the 401.5 feet worth of putts the champion made over four days. And the fact that Spaun joined none other than Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson and Jon Rahm as the fifth US Open winner to finish birdie-birdie.

"I just felt like you keep putting yourself in these positions, like eventually you're going to tick one off," said Spaun, whose loss in a playoff to Rory McIlroy three months ago at The Players Championship was his third top-three finish of 2025.

But at the US Open? In that kind of weather?

None of it seemed possible when the rain started coming down during the tail end of a front-nine 40 that took Spaun from one shot back at the start of the day to four behind and fading fast.

Coaches told him, "Dude, just chill," and Spaun did

A 1-hour, 37-minute rain delay ensued. It was a break that changed everything. "They were just like, Dude, just chill," Spaun said of the pep talk he got from his coaches.

Hegerberg's leadership highlighted as key to Euro 2025 challenge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Oslo (Norway)

The leadership of Norway captain Ada Hegerberg was highlighted on Monday as key for the two-time former title holder heading into the Women's European Championship next month.

Hegerberg, the 2018 Ballon d'Or winner, headed a 23-player squad picked by coach Gemma Grainger for the July 2-27 tournament in Switzerland. "One of Ada's biggest strengths is how authentic she is," Grainger said Monday with Hegerberg sitting next to her at a squad announcement event.

"Ada will always tell me what she thinks," the coach said, adding "then you get to places a lot quicker" even if it involved "many uncomfortable conversations."

Hegerberg quipped with a smile: "That is what you get."

Norway was European champion in 1987 and 1993 and is a four-time beaten finalist, most recently in 2013 when the team had a teenage forward line of Hegerberg and Caroline Graham Hansen.

The two storied veterans and former Champions League winners — Hegerberg at Lyon and Hansen at Barcelona — with a combined 100 national-team goals are the biggest stars in the Euro 2025 squad.

The 30-year-old Hegerberg has 49 goals despite persistent injuries, and a five-year exile from the team ahead of Euro 2022 that helped push the national federation to treat women's soccer more equally.

Norway has not advanced from the group stage in the past two Euros editions though looks favored in the 16-nation draw for Euro 2025.

Norway plays in the opening-day game against host Switzerland on July 2 in Basel, faces Finland at Sion four days later and Iceland on June 10 in Thun.

"People can say there are none of the bigger names in our group," Grainger said. "You don't underestimate anybody."

Defender Maren Mjelde was picked for her fifth Euros at age 35 and with 179 national-team games. Four players left on standby include Liverpool forward Sophie Román Haug.

Norway squad

Goalkeepers: Cecilie Fiskerstrand (Fiorentina), Aurora Mikalsen (Cologne), Selma Panengstuen (Brann).

Defenders: Tuva Hansen (Bayern Munich), Guro Bergsvand (Wolfsburg), Maren Mjelde (No club), Thea Bjelde (Valerenga), Marit Bratberg Lund (Benfica), Emilie Woldvik (Rosengard), Mathilde Harviken (Juventus).

Midfielders: Ingrid Syrstad Engen (Barcelona), Vilde Bøe Risa (Atletico Madrid), Elisabeth Terland (Manchester United), Justine Kielland (Wolfsburg), Lisa Naalsund (Manchester United), Frida Maanum (Arsenal), Guro Reiten (Chelsea), Signe Gaupset (Brann).

Forwards: Caroline Graham Hansen (Barcelona), Ada Hegerberg (Lyon), Celin Bizet Ildhusøy (Manchester United), Synne Jensen (Atletico Madrid), Karina Sævik (Valerenga).

German regulator pushes for more fan control of soccer clubs like Bayer Leverkusen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Duesseldorf (Germany)

Top German soccer clubs including Bayer Leverkusen and Leipzig face the prospect of handing over more control to fans in future after a regulator intervened.

A statement Monday from Germany's antitrust regulator, the Federal Cartel Office, said it wants to see tighter enforcement of the rule known as 50-plus-1 which requires a soccer club's membership to have majority voting rights over how the team is run.

Why Leverkusen?

The regulator said recent European court rulings suggest permanent exemptions from 50-plus-1 for last year's champion Leverkusen and fellow top-tier club Wolfsburg seem "no longer possible."

It said efforts should be made in the future to ensure the club's professional soccer operations come under the control of membership organizations, but didn't name any deadline.

Leverkusen and Wolfsburg were founded as workers' teams at major companies which own the clubs, with pharmaceutical giant Bayer at Leverkusen, and car manufacturer Volkswagen at Wolfsburg.

Their long-term involvement led to the clubs getting exemptions from 50-plus-1. The regulator also said the German men's soccer league needs to ensure the clubs it oversees "offer their fans the opportunity to become a new full member with voting rights."

That appears to affect Leipzig and its relationship with drinks giant Red Bull, though they weren't directly named by the regulator in Tuesday's statement.

The club was founded by Red Bull in 2009 and is part of its international network of soccer clubs. It grants voting rights to far fewer people than most German clubs. Local media reported that only 23 members had the right to vote at Leipzig as of last year.

What are they saying?

Leverkusen said in a statement that the Federal Cartel Office's new approach was a "remarkable change of course".

The club added that it does not consider the regulator's reasoning to be "convincing" and that it will examine the ruling and reserve all legal options.

Hans-Joachim Watzke, speaker of the league's executive board, said it stands behind 50-plus-1, which he called "an elementary component of German soccer."

Why does 50-plus-1 matter?

Fan control means outside investors can't buy up German clubs outright, like they can in the English Premier League and other competitions.

It's also one reason why Germany hasn't seen the sort of spending sprees and dramatic shifts in competitive balance which followed takeovers at clubs like Manchester City, Chelsea or Paris Saint-Germain in the past.

The Pioneer
RANCHI | TUESDAY | JUNE 17, 2025

BCCI to conduct second bone test for age determination in junior cricket

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

In a significant move, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has decided to conduct an additional bone test at the junior level to ensure that no cricketer misses out on playing an extra season due to the "+1 factor" that is currently added to the calculation, which renders players ineligible by thinnest of margins.

As per the existing norms, a player undergoes a bone test for age determination via the TW3 method (test used for assessing bone age) and a +1 factor is added to determine his or her eligibility for the next season in the same age group.

However, with the rule change, a cricketer in the Under-16 boys' category, will undergo a second bone test the following season to determine his eligibility to appear in the same age bracket in case the +1 factor rules him out in the previous year.

"It is being done to have an exact age and make sure that no player loses due to arithmetical calculation rather than scientific calculation," a BCCI source said.

The bone age cut-off for U-16 boys is 16.5 years and 15 years for U-15 girls competition.

"This means that the bone age of a player has to be 16.4 or below in the following season in male cricketers and 14.9 or below in case of females for participation," the source said.

To explain the rule change further, if a male U-16 player undergoes a bone test in the 2025-26 season and the result shows a bone age of 15.4 years, he would not need to undergo another bone test the following season. Instead, a +1 factor is automatically added to their bone age.

In this instance, the player's bone age for the 2026-27 season would be arithmetically calculated to be 16.4 years, regardless of their actual bone growth, allowing them to participate in the U-16 tournament with a bone age of 16.4.

Similarly, if a player's bone age is determined to be 15.5 years or higher, the bone age automatically increases to 16.5 years or higher, making him ineligible for the U-16 tournament, since 16.4 is the final cutoff.

"It's possible that this arithmetical calculation does not accurately reflect a player's actual age, which could cause them to lose out on a year of eligibility," the source added.

In the case of U-15 girls, if a player tests 13.9 years this season, she will be eligible for the same category the next season with a bone age of 14.9.

However, if she tests at 14 or above this season, she can play this season but not the next one with cut off being 14.9.

England will hold edge over India, feels Dale Steyn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Matthew Hayden FILE PHOTO

Former Australia opener Matthew Hayden believes India will have a strong chance of winning the upcoming Test series against England if they can clinch the games in Leeds and Manchester, but South African pace great Dale Steyn has backed the hosts to triumph 3-2 in the five-match contest.

India and England kick off their new World Test Championship cycle with the five-match series, starting with the first game in Leeds on Friday. Manchester will host the fourth Test from July 23.

"I don't think England bowlers are that good, they have got a number of injuries and a number of retirees as well, that will be the challenge," Hayden said. "The northern Test matches when it's zipping around that will be key, win that one and it could well be a series that goes India's way," he added.

Since India's last red ball tour of England, the hosts' two most experienced bowlers — James Anderson and Stuart Broad — have bid adieu to international cricket.

Additionally, England's bowling arsenal is also considerably depleted, with speedster Mark Wood ruled out of at least the first three Tests due to injury.

Fellow quick Jofra Archer will also miss the opening game and Gus Atkinson is continuing to recover from a hamstring strain.

India, meanwhile, will take the field under new captain Shubman Gill, ushering in a fresh era following the retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and R Ashwin. With a youthful batting line-up and limited red-ball exposure in recent months, the visitors will face a stern challenge. Steyn did not write India off but backed England to claim the trophy.

"It is a pretty young team. Probably going to say that England are going to win the series but it's not going to come without a fight," Hayden said.

Head coach Gambhir to join India squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

Gautam Gambhir FILE PHOTO

India head coach Gautam Gambhir, who had flown back home last week due to a family emergency, will link up with the squad on Tuesday ahead of the opening Test against England at Leeds, beginning on June 20.

Gambhir had rushed back to India after his mother suffered a heart attack, and had to be hospitalised. "His mother is doing well now. Gautam will leave tomorrow and join the squad the same day," a BCCI source said. The former India opener had missed the closed-door intra-squad match between India and India A in Beckenham that ended on Sunday. In his absence, assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate, batting coach Sitanshu Kotak and bowling coach Morne Morkel supervised the team's preparation ahead of the five-match rubber.

The Shubman Gill-led Indian Test squad is searching for its first series win in England since 2007.

Women's ODI World Cup: India to face Pakistan on October 5 at Colombo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Dubai

India's marquee women's ODI World Cup match against Pakistan will be held at the neutral venue of R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on October 5, the ICC announced on Monday.

Colombo had to be added as a neutral venue according to the 'Hybrid Model' that was accepted for the men's Champions Trophy and beyond earlier this year after India refrained from travelling to Pakistan for the ICC event.

There were speculations whether ICC will slot an Indo-Pak round robin match, which is pretty much a feature in all global tournaments post terror attacks in Kashmir's Pahalgam where 26 Indian tourists were killed.

The military escalation from both sides had raised doubts about India facing arch-rivals even at world events but ICC has cleared all doubts after the release of schedule on Monday.

India will kick off their campaign against Sri Lanka at Bengaluru on September 30, and will also face Bangladesh on October 26 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, dispelling the rumours of the venue losing hosting rights of the matches after the recent stampede during the Royal Challengers Bengaluru victory celebrations.

India's contest against the Lankans is also the opening match of the ICC showpiece.

India, who are seeking their maiden title triumph, will lock horns with South Africa on October 9 and will meet defending champions Australia on October 12, and both the matches are at Visakhapatnam.

From there, India will move to Indore to face England on October 19 and then will proceed to Guwahati for the match with New Zealand on October 23.

"With the eight best teams in the women's game descending on India, alongside incredible venues and what promises to be record-breaking crowds, we are all looking forward to an unforgettable tournament," said Jay Shah, the ICC Chairman, in a release.

However, the BCCI is yet to form the Local Organising Committee (LOC) which will be in charge of the running of the tournament.

Australia will start their campaign against New Zealand on October 1 at Indore, while the high-profile match against England in a rematch of the previous edition's final is scheduled to be played on October 22 in Indore.

Meanwhile, Pakistan will play all their matches in Colombo as per the hybrid model.

Apart from the match against India, they will also play against Bangladesh (October 2), Australia (October 8), England (October 15), New Zealand (October 18), South Africa (October21) and Sri Lanka (October 24) at the Premadasa Stadium.

The first semifinal is scheduled for October 29 either at Guwahati or Colombo depending on Pakistan's progress in the tournament.

The second semifinal will be held at Bengaluru on October 30, while the final will be held at Bengaluru or Colombo on November 2 as per Pakistan's standing in the event.

India are hosting this global event for the first time since 2013, and all the eight teams will play each other in a round-robin format, with the top four entering the semifinals.

Apart from hosts India, the Aussies, England, New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka achieved direct qualification to the World Cup while Pakistan and Bangladesh entered the tournament through the Qualifiers at Lahore earlier this year.

India's WC schedule

- September 30: India vs Sri Lanka, Bengaluru.
- October 5: India vs Pakistan, Colombo.
- October 9: India vs South Africa, Visakhapatnam.
- October 12: India vs Australia, Visakhapatnam.
- October 19: India vs England, Indore
- October 23: India vs New Zealand, Guwahati

Washington Sundar inspired Sudharsan

B Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
Beckenham (UK)

Washington Sundar's meteoric rise from age-group to international cricket in a quick span of time was an inspiration for his younger statemate B Sai Sudharsan, who is all set to make his Test debut against England at Leeds on June 20.

In 2016, Washington was playing more as a specialist batter for India U-19 in the junior World Cup and within a year and half, he was playing his first ODI as an 18-year-old.

In 2021, he made his Test debut as a 20-year-old and was one of the heroes of the Border-Gavaskar triumph.

Sai Sudharsan, who is two years junior to Washington, spoke about how his "senior's" journey goaded him to work harder in order to achieve his goal of donning India colours.

"I had played a few games against him (junior level). So, it's always special. We have looked up to him a lot and the way he went up and played for the country, it was real quick, I had that in my mind," Sai Sudharsan said.

TV on sidelines of the intra-squad warm-up game with a beaming Washington by his side.

"He (Washington) did well in the IPL. Then he played for the country, so it was great motivation for me, that someone from Chennai (is playing for India). Knowing him and playing with him since we were young, it made me feel I also want to do it the same way. He was an inspiration," the stylish southpaw's admiration for Washington was there to be seen.

Washington, who has played 9 Tests, 23 ODIs and 54 T20Is for India, also spoke about the time when Sai Sudharsan was coming through the ranks as this talented cricketer from Chennai.

"Lot of my coaches and friends as well, constantly spoke about his (Sai Sudharsan's) growth in his cricketing career, always grown, only managed to get better," Washington said. "Every time I watched him (Sudharsan) on TV, there was a lot to take from his skill-set, kind of work ethic, which definitely inspired a lot of kids," he said.

D Deepesh, Pushpak drafted into India U19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

D Deepesh and Naman Pushpak have been drafted into the India men's U19 squad for the upcoming tour of England as replacements for injured Aditya Rana and Khilan Patel, the BCCI said on Monday.

The tour is scheduled to take place from June 24 to July 23. "The Junior Cricket Committee has named D. Deepesh and Naman Pushpak as replacements for Aditya Rana and Khilan Patel, respectively, for the upcoming India U19 tour of England," the BCCI said in a statement.

Both Deepesh and Naman were part of the standby players' list for the tour.

Aditya sustained a stress fracture in his lower back, while Khilan suffered a stress reaction in his right leg during the ongoing high-performance camp at the BCCI Centre of Excellence.

The team will be led by Ayush Mhatre, who shone for Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2025. The tour comprises a 50-over warm-up match at Loughborough University, followed by a five-match Youth One-Day series in Hove, Northampton and Worcester.

Two multi-day matches against England U19 will be played at Beckenham and Chelmsford respectively.

Wicketkeeper-batter Abhigyan Kundu has been appointed as the team's vice-captain.

FEI cancels equestrian events in India due to non-payment of dues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■
New Delhi

In a development that will hurt the riders and the development of equestrian sport in the country, at least 24 domestic and international tournaments have been cancelled due to non-payment of dues to the world governing body, FEI, by the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI).

It has been learnt that EFI was supposed to pay about Rs 27 lakh to the FEI officials as remuneration and allied charges for various events held between January and March 2025. However, the federation's account stands frozen due to the infighting among the warring factions, leading to non-payments of dues, forcing FEI to take off the events from the calendar.

The EFI also needs to settle accounts for unpaid salaries, various costs of tournaments hosted in the past year and other expenses running into almost two crore.

"EFI was supposed to pay remuneration to FEI officials for various Eventing, Show Jumping and Dressage events held in Delhi, Meerut and Jaipur. However, the bank has frozen the account due to different factions within the Federation claiming operational access," an EFI source said.

"It is embarrassing and the athletes are the biggest losers here, but that is the situation. The sports ministry has been apprised of the latest infighting," the source added.

What led to the mess?

The EFI was supposed to hold its election in September 2023 but litigations delayed the polls, following which a Committee of Administrators (CoA) was appointed by the Delhi High Court on May 21, 2024. The decision was challenged and, on May 29, the court reinstated the Executive Committee of the EFI as an interim measure, keeping in mind the participation of Indian riders in the Paris Olympics. The EC, in a meeting on April 11, 2025, without the presence of court-appointed observer SY Quraishi, decided to suspend Colonel Jaiveer Singh as secretary general of the Federation. Quraishi directed the EC to get the order approved from the court before its implementation.

Colonel SS Ahlawat moved the court on May 5, seeking approval. However, the application was rejected on May 7 since the decision was not conforming to the law.

"The faction that removed the secretary general notified the development to FEI and also claimed the ownership of the bank account before getting the approval of the court. The bank then froze the account due to multiple stakes," the source said.

When contacted, Col Jaiveer Singh confirmed the development. "If you read the EFI statutes, the constitution says that the General Assembly, by a two-thirds majority of votes, can terminate from the Federation any member of the Executive Committee, Selection Committee, Athletes' Commission and other sub-committees for gross misconduct or for activities contrary to the interests and objectives of the EFI.

"They decided on my removal without calling the General Assembly. It had to be rejected by the. Moreover, they attached the plea with an old case that does not stand now," Jaiveer said.

FEI Secretary General on February 11, 2025, had written to the EFI that it was cancelling the Eventing event that was to be held on February 24-28 in Meerut. EFI was supposed to clear the dues by February 7 but due to non-payment, FEI proceeded with the cancellation of the event. FEI made it clear that EFI will have to pay in advance for future events, and failure to comply will result in cancellation of future events.

Till June 16, 2025 EFI has lost 12 events, including a workshop on Para dressage, and is set to lose 12 more till mid-October. These include the Para Dressage World Challenge in Bengaluru (Oct 10-12), World Dressage (Oct 8-9 in Bengaluru), and FEI Jumping (CDS Jul 24-27 in Bengaluru). Asked how come EFI has not paid salaries and other expenses from the past when the bank account froze only recently, the source said, "You are right.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Subendra Kumar Das Son of Late Narendra Nath Das Resident of Or. No. A-II 105(T) HEC Township, Dhurwa P.O.-Dhurwe, District-Ranchi, Jhalkhand 834004, That my actual name is Subendra Kumar Das mentioned in my Aadhar Card (7348 0884 1666). That my name subendra Das has been entered in my daughter's Educational documents of Council for the Indian school Certificate Exam New Delhi. Unique ID 7405496. That my name Subendra Kumar Das & Subendra Das is same and One Parson I.e. my self. Vide Affidavit No. 541, Series No. 23-24/U1 21530, dated- 13 May 2025.

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Bank of India BOI Relationship Beyond banking

NAGRI BRANCH
RANCHI GUMLA ROAD, AT+PO- PISCA, NAGRI, DIST- RANCHI- 834006 JHARKHAND

APPENDIX-IV [See rule 8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas,
The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **Bank of India Nagri Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice **dated 18.01.2025** calling upon the borrower **Mrs. Umawati Sahu** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 16,45,002.88 (Rupees Sixteen Lakhs Forty-Five Thousands Two and Eighty-Eight Paise)** + Intt. within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-Section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the **12th day of June of the year 2025.**

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of India (name of the Institution) for an amount of **Rs. 16,45,002.88 and interest** thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

All that part and parcel of the property consisting of **(a)** Village Pundag, P.S. Jagarnathpur, P.S. No. 228, Dist: Ranchi, under Khata No. 288, R.S. Plot No. 398, Sub Plot No. 398/5, area 6 Katha 14 Chhatak. **Bounded: On the North By:** Sub Plot No. 398/6, **On the South By:** R.S. Plot No. 398, **On the East By:** 23' Wide Proposed Road, **On the West By:** R.S. Plot No. 492. **(b)** Village Pundag, P.S. Jagarnathpur, P.S. No. 228, Dist: Ranchi, under Khata No. 288, R.S. Plot No. 398, Sub Plot No. 398/5-A, area 5 Katha 08 Chhatak. **Bounded: On the North By:** Sri Basant Kumar (Kreta Nij), **On the South By:** Land of Kunwer Sahu, **On the East By:** 23' Wide Proposed Road, **On the West By:** Land of Kunwer Sahu.

Date : 12.06.2025
Place: Nagri

Sd/-
Authorised Officer

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